

This article was downloaded by: [University of Birmingham]

On: 05 October 2014, At: 13:17

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>

What Should be the Training of Pastor's Assistants

Richard Morse Hodge D. D. ^a

^a Columbia University, New York

Published online: 09 Jul 2006.

To cite this article: Richard Morse Hodge D. D. (1908) What Should be the Training of Pastor's Assistants, Religious Education: The official journal of the Religious Education Association, 3:4, 151-157, DOI: [10.1080/0034408080030409](https://doi.org/10.1080/0034408080030409)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0034408080030409>

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>

and places important obligations upon school boards, superintendents and teachers.

"It is apparent that familiarity with the English Bible as a masterpiece of literature is rapidly decreasing among the pupils in our schools. This is the direct result of a conception which regards the Bible as a theological book merely, and thereby leads to its exclusion from the schools of some states as a subject of reading and study. We hope for such a change of public sentiment in this regard as will permit and encourage the reading and study of the English Bible, as a literary work of the highest and purest type, side by side with the poetry and prose which it has inspired and in large part formed.

"The National Education Association wishes to congratulate the secondary schools and colleges of the country that are making an effort to remove the taint of professionalism, and other abuses, that have crept into students' sports. This taint can be removed only by leading students, alumni, and school faculties to recognize that inter-school games should be played for sportsmanship and not merely for victory.

The highest ethical standards of conduct and of speech should be insisted on among teachers. It is not becoming that commercialism or self-seeking should shape their actions, or that intemperance should mark their utterances. A code of professional conduct clearly understood and rigorously enforced by public opinion is being slowly developed, and must one day control all teachers worthy of the name."

What Should be the Training of Pastor's Assistants

RICHARD MORSE HODGE, D. D.
Columbia University, New York

Pastors' assistants have not brought pastors the relief from excessive responsibilities that was desired.

Church visitors are invaluable. They are generally women. But time is lost in training them after they have been engaged for their work.

Other social workers who have the technical training necessary are more*or less hard to secure.

Assistant ministers are generally young men fresh from theological schools. But they are not trained as they should be in necessary work for which older ministers have not themselves received an adequate education.

Slow as ministers may have been to respond to many hitherto unrecognized claims of society upon the church, the clergy **never-**

theless are outrunning the promoters of the theological schools in practical endeavor to meet the demands of the times. And a church staff is left to undertake, as best it can, much which its members have not the technical training to do as it ought to be done.

If some churches are too complacent over the results of work undertaken, it must be attributed in the main at least to the want of object lessons in how well such things can be done when directed by properly trained workers.

The problem is an educational problem.

Educators cannot assume, however, that the church work of today is the church work for which men and women must be trained for tomorrow.

It is this assumption which has resulted in the present demand for trained workers outrunning the supply.

The whole question must be approached from the opposite end. We must raise the previous question of what work the church should undertake.

The church may be a sacred institution. So is motherhood. But we do not agree that the feeding, sanitation, educational and other home duties of a mother are the same yesterday, today and forever. Traditional method is not precedent for means of meeting conditions or securing results which workers of a former time did not anticipate. It is a fair question whether the divinity which shapes our institutions cast them into fixed moulds or created them living organisms with the power of adaptation to environment and of growth.

Theological schools must have vision and anticipate the kind of workers which will be demanded for church enterprise a generation ahead. Only in the light of a vision of this character can we determine how the church staff should be trained.

i. *The Work of the Church.* Religion is complete living. The church is an organized society of some members of a community, which attempts the expression of life in forms of activity not adequately provided for by the family, school, trades, play, or civil and other institutions already established for its people. The church is essentially a new society, as new always as was the apostolate inaugurated by Jesus 19 centuries ago. For its message is nothing if not good news—news of how to live and of opportunities to live more ideally.

A church is responsible to its adherents for opportunities for:

(a) worship, (b) education in religion, (c) organized effort to promote complete living, within or beyond the bounds of the parish, whether involving a moral reform of individuals and their

espousal of the cause of Christianity, or the improvement of the conditions of health, wealth, morals, education or amusement, (d) and a democratic intercourse of the members of the congregation.

2. *The Experts Required.* The church must have experts to direct the four lines of effort enumerated. A church staff seems to call for the following specialists: (i) Preacher, (2) Director of Religious Education, (3) Director of Social Work, (4) Church Visitor. A woman may fill either of the directorships mentioned, as well as a man. As a church visitor, a woman excels.

The minister is already an expert in worship (including preaching), and in promoting the democratic intercourse of a congregation. He is trained in some measure to direct organized efforts of various kinds. But a highly organized church calls for several social workers of technical skill. The minister, moreover, cannot qualify as an expert in the religious education of the young. For he has not been trained in his theological seminary in child psychology and the science and art of teaching.

Young ministers, from whose number assistant ministers are generally drawn, are receiving more instruction than older clergymen enjoyed in sociology and institutional church work. But they are taught little or nothing of educational science. Too commonly divinity students, who undertake Sunday-school work at local churches, teach adult classes instead of children.

3. *The Training of Church Experts.* The training of teachers for Sunday schools involves courses in genetic psychology and the social life of childhood and youth, in religion and its history and literature, in the principles and methods of teaching, in Sunday-school organization and the management of juvenile societies. In addition to such courses, there must be a model Sunday school for the observation and practice of teaching.

Every theological seminary should have a department of religious education. A few seminaries offer some lectures in the subject. Not one, I think, has a model Sunday school. A department of religious pedagogy without a model school can give instruction in name only in the methods of true educational science. For true teaching is through self-expression, and lecturing does not furnish more than theory. Lecturing, but for the study it stimulates students to undertake, is teaching by impression and illustrates by its own method the very way children cannot be taught

Parish visitors need to be trained in canvassing and home-making. They must be versed in ideals of home-life and the arts

164 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

of expressing them in conversation and putting them into practice with hand and heart

Under a director of social work with executive skill, are often needed workers of technical skill, such as kindergartners, nurses, managers of employment bureaus, superintendents of recreation, executives for the organization of men's, women's, boys' and girls' clubs, and missionaries to the needy.

The training of all of the members of a church staff devolves, I think, upon universities, universities with theological departments. Not a few special institutions have been established for the training of social workers of different kinds. But theological schools have endowed courses in religion. Other courses, in sociology, psychology, education and hospital economics and domestic science, for instance, are furnished by other departments of a university. In the end, the expense attached to the duplication of endowments for instructors and officers of administration must compel the consolidation of these special schools with universities, and theological seminaries with universities. The logic of the tendency of the times seems to argue it.

4. *Emphasis in Church Work.* It is far from enough to plan ways and means of training experts for a church staff. They look well on paper. But we cannot expect anything to be done towards putting our plans into operation until their purpose is felt, by the church and her institutions of learning, to be of prime importance. Whatever is put first will be prosecuted in spite of difficulties. But what is considered of secondary importance is likely to meet with comparative failure. Work which is placed in the false position of insufficient emphasis is sure to suffer from unfair discrimination.

We may diagnose conditions to learn, what are the responsibilities of the church to society, but we must ascertain in the process, the relative importance of the responsibilities which we discover. A prescription implies a proportion of ingredients no less than their enumeration.

Our question is not so much what the church must do as how its activities shall be prosecuted. The solution in which a church's characteristics are held determine its real character. The question is one of church purpose.

The positions which I have so far taken in this paper are not of themselves worth while. For they are not seriously challenged. If the theory of the church has been correct all along whence is our pious discontent with the results of our efforts? Christians have always been earnest. Obviously, something must ail the church. Churchmen are pretty well united in confessing that

the trouble is bondage to tradition. But nothing is better than loyalty to intelligent tradition.

My own answer to the question is that the unintelligent tradition is the primacy of preaching.

The apostolic church emphasized preaching. So did the reformers of the seventeenth century. The church puts preaching first today. We crowd Sunday with sermons and often several weeks of the year with daily sermons.

To vary the terms, the church has emphasized work for adults over that for children. Preaching is an hortatory rather than an instructive form of address. It presupposes more knowledge, than does teaching. Preaching would be more instructive than it happens to be if only a preacher were called upon to preach but once a week and could pack a week's study into every sermon. But preaching at best is more appropriately addressed to adults than to children. Teaching is a more natural form of persuading children of the claims of religion than preaching can possibly be. The church exercises more energy in an effort to supply preaching for adults than teaching for children, and the preaching is much better done than the teaching.

If the church put the really first thing first, what should come second would be better done than if it was put first, and as well done, in its way, as what might be given first place among its endeavors.

The apostolic church was concerned primarily with adults because the first generation of Christians expected the end of the world in their own time. The reformers of the seventeenth century found preaching in Latin and they preached in the vernacular. Luther proclaimed the greater importance of teaching children, and his advice has been neglected, as has much else of the essence of early Protestantism.

Is doctrine perpetuated in obsolete forms? This can be done only if it is thus preached to adults. Grown people can be trained to think in a measure in historic and antiquated forms of speech. Children can learn the terms but cannot think in them, nor would they ever be able to, if preaching did not continue to make the old terms familiar to hearers after they grew up. If metaphysical theology be relied upon for the substance of Sunday-school instruction, religion will seem unreal to children and the Sunday school will fail to excel as an institution. Is the church ever too traditional to take up new methods of work? You can preach the sufficiency of effort along conventional lines, and busy or lazy persons will be more or less easily persuaded. But you cannot interest children in activities not immediately practical. Hence preaching to adults must be balanced by at least as vigorous a teaching of children.

The church is not the only institution which has had to meet the question of the relative importance of teaching children and preaching to adults. The state relies, for the creation of intelligent and patriotic citizenship, far more upon the education of children at school than upon speeches addressed to voters. In the foreign work of the church itself, missionaries find their religious problem too acute not to rely principally upon the religious education of children for results. Even those who are prejudiced against missionary enterprise return from visits to foreign countries with distinct praise for the educational institutions established by missionaries for the young.

And what of the founder of Christianity? Jesus relied little upon preaching to crowds, but essentially upon teaching a few young men, in order to establish a Christian society. The Sermon on the Mount was for his immediate friends. To the crowds he told stories.

Every one admits that it is better to develop Christianity in a person during his childhood and youth than later in his life. But we are confronted with the primacy of preaching, perpetuated through the momentum of tradition and the fact that ministers are trained almost entirely in how to prepare sermons.

The church practice is to pour children into the Sunday school at infancy and allow them to divide into two streams at about twelve years of age, the smaller stream flowing on in the Sunday school and the larger stream from the Sunday school. Some years later, a portion of this larger stream is deflected again into social meetings of preaching. Psychology meanwhile teaches us that adolescence is the period of greatest religious susceptibility, and experience demonstrates that with really good teaching in a Sunday school, boys and girls are even more interested in religious instruction during adolescence than when they are younger.

Why should not the present practice of a comparatively few churches with excellent Sunday school become general, of educating people to be religious during childhood and youth and to engage them from the beginning of adult life in constructive institutional work for the redemption of society? It is the most thorough and easy way, and the most economical, because the most natural. This will be done if the training of children in religion becomes the chief purpose of the church. Otherwise the success of the church in religious education will remain doubtful.

Theological seminaries must educate a ministry for society as it is constituted, and not for a fictitious world of a purely adult population. It is only protestant theological schools that have overlooked the existence of children.

It is not too much to say that preaching can be overdone. A preacher will prove more effective if he has to prepare one sermon a week than two or three. As it is, his ideas are so quickly learned by his listeners, by means of some 150 addresses a year, that in a few years he is apt to find that further remarks from him are superfluous and he becomes forced to seek another pulpit. Congregations are in more or less danger of becoming gospel-hardened, from a surfeit of preaching. Religious activity itself comes to mean, to many, little more than the preaching of one Christian to another. None of the time which most members of a congregation can devote to church attendance is left to them for church work, after they have gone to all the meetings of worship. Worse than all, congregations are too easily schooled in a habit of entertaining religious emotions without immediate expression in activity. Theorizing should be proportioned in some degree to practice, the amount of talk indulged in to work undertaken and the number of occasions for arousing emotion to opportunities for action.

The intelligence demanded of the church, I take it, is a habit of open-mindedness, with its inevitable vision. No plan, however wise of specializing or training a church staff, nor suggestion concerning what is most worth while in church effort, can hope to secure the endorsement of all progressive church workers, to say nothing of other churchmen. But is it too much to hope that the vast majority of those who hold with the writer of this paper, that the church remains the best organization for advancing the kingdom of God, will unite upon a *method* of attacking the problem of how a church staff should be trained? And is it not obvious that the method required is to raise the previous question of just what the church is called upon to undertake, tradition aside?

If so, this is a special problem for every local church. For the theological seminary schools it is always a question of providing the peculiar leaders which will be demanded for a generation to come.

New Books

Brief notices of new publications in the field of religious and moral education or related thereto.

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.

Personalism, by Borden P. Browne, Houghton, Mifflin, \$1.50, net. The N. W. Harris lectures delivered at the Northwestern University. A remarkably keen and thorough study in philosophy indicting many modern metaphysical conceptions, leading to the interpretation of knowledge and phenomena in terms of personality. A book that will increase the author's already strong reputation in philosophy.