

***Turn Your  
Sunday School  
Into A  
Bible School***

A DOLORES PRESS PUBLICATION

© w. euGene Scott, 1972  
389 CHURCH STREET  
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF. 94114  
PHONE 861-3667



By Gene Scott, Ph.D.



Copyright, © 1972  
by w. euGene Scott, Ph.D.  
San Francisco, California, U. S. A.

All Rights Reserved

*The text of this publication, or any part thereof, may not be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without permission in writing from the author.*



*This picture was produced by a student artist at Memphis State University for a series of lectures given by Dr. Scott as Religious Emphasis Week speaker.*

## PREFACE

Melodyland Christian Center (across from Disneyland in Anaheim, California) has carried a significant tape in its library of tape ministries for several years. Its title is "Discipleship," by Dr. Gene Scott\*.

This tape contains a lecture by Dr. Scott to the adults in Sunday auditorium session at Melodyland when the church was still small and meeting at its old church location. It was the public presentation of a new approach to Sunday School which marked a turning point in the growth and development of that great church which now exceeds 4000 in attendance.

Dr. Scott was Consulting Pastor for Melodyland at the time (and continued in that capacity for many years). I became Minister of Christian Education at the church through several of those same developing years. I listened to Dr. Scott's tapes (both the one referenced above and others given only to the leadership) until the concepts were committed to memory. I had the joy of building on those concepts and seeing their fruit in lives truly taught and shaped by the word of God.

"Turn Your Sunday School Into A Bible School" places Dr. Scott's concepts on this subject in print for the first time. I know other pastors and ministers of education will find this book a rewarding study and valuable aid in their work. I recommend it from the perspective of having proved its concepts.

ALLEN PORTERFIELD,  
Minister of Education  
Melodyland Christian Center  
1969 - 1972

\*Copies of this tape are available from this publisher.



### About the Author



Dr. Gene Scott is a scholar and lecturer who has made a vital impact on Christendom with his Bible teaching to groups encompassing virtually every denomination. Though raised a minister's son, he rebelled against tradition early in life and became agnostic in college. His search for a faith caused him to change majors on every degree.

A hard study of the resurrection of Christ led to a firm faith, and Dr. Scott is now known world wide as a writer and preacher of the Christian faith. He has written the story of

his return to faith under the title: "Jesus Christ: Super-Nut or Super-Natural" as well as several other books. Scott went on to complete a Ph.D. in Philosophies of Education at Stanford University. At Stanford his Doctoral Dissertation dealt with the theology of Reinhold Niebuhr and he did specialized studies in comparative religions and far eastern religious philosophies.

His life has many chapters. Dr. Scott is President of World Services, International in San Francisco, California. In addition he serves as Preaching Pastor with his father at Wescott Christian Center in Oroville, California and as President of Wescott Sunday School Services, Inc. He has served two of America's largest Evangelical churches as Teaching Pastor at Calvary Temple, Denver, Colorado and Consulting Pastor at Melodyland Christian Center in Anaheim, California. He also served as educational consultant to Foreign Missions Boards on assignments taking him to schools on every continent. As a businessman he acts as President for five different corporations and in this grueling activity has been forced to make his Bible teachings apply to life where it's "at." Recorded tapes of his lectures and preaching have been widely circulated by Bible Voice, Inc., of Hollywood, Wescott Christian Center of Oroville, and the Melodyland Christian Center of Anaheim.

I have known Dr. Scott personally for over 23 years. As a man, his life has consistently expressed the message he speaks. The publishers are most pleased to be identified by this book with another of his works in written form.

—EARL HERRICK  
Vice President  
Dolores Press, Inc.

## Introduction

A record album by Stewart Hamblin contains a song which begins softly with the phrase, "Don't send your kids to Sunday School." Then Hamblin rings out the next line with a loud shout, "Get on out'a that bed and take 'em!"

This typifies an approach to adult attendance in Sunday School that has dominated recent years. The keynote has been repeated emphasis on adult **responsibility** to Sunday School. The principal methods have been heavy promotion, extrinsic motivation, and abundance of enthusiastic pleas for parents to attend.

Parental responsibility needs emphasis, and promotion with extrinsic motivation plays a necessary role; but this cannot be the foundation for adult growth. Adults have enough intelligence to recognize when their needs are met. More adults are won in the long run by concentration on effective teaching programs that obviously meet their needs.

The fact that adults must still be motivated by continued external pressures after so many years of Sunday School emphasis (i.e., promotional schemes



or stated obligation) is a commentary on the fact that normal adult methods are not meeting needs. Close analysis reveals that the usual adult program in Sunday School produces problems that make the meeting of major Christian adult needs well nigh impossible.

## THE PROBLEMS OF THE AVERAGE ADULT PROGRAM

The average Sunday School limits its grouping of adults into one of two patterns: (1) age level groupings with classes running from, say, twenty to thirty-five, thirty-five to forty-five, etc. and (2) men and women classes. In both of these cases the sole criterion of entrance on any one Sunday is that a student be of a certain **chronological** age or a particular sex.

The primary educational purpose behind such adult grouping is the concept of "like interests." Like-age, or like-sex takes for granted a certain commonality of interests. Grouping on such a basis presumes that a teacher can bring the lesson to focus on the common interest areas of the teaching group.

Actually, the existence of a "like-age level" is a questionable basis for **any** type of education. Age-levels are non-existent except as statistical figures. There exists such a variety of "age-developments" in individuals that psychologists and human development specialists have more recently begun to discuss the concept of "organismic age." "Organismic age" expresses a statistical average from the summation of many different development patterns that is even



more abstract. In any case, there is inadequate correlation between interests and chronological age or sex to justify age-levels and sex becoming the **sole** basis for educational grouping.

In Christian Education the dependence on chronological age or sex as the only grouping principle becomes unsound in another way. Such limited groupings entirely neglect spiritual development, or what we could call "Spiritual Age." Spiritual age **ought** to be the **fundamental** grouping principle for Christian Education.

All education by definition **is a deliberate effort by the processes called teaching to effect, or help to effect, change in a pupil toward some ideal.** Christian education, too, is an intentional effort to contribute to change in pupils toward an ideal. The measure of success is the life change which results in pupils as the fruit of teaching; the direction of the change is toward the Christian ideal of a life possessed of Christ and expressing the things of God. More to the point, the progress is from self-life to the ideal of spirituality which literally means in the New Testament Greek, "the expressions of the Spirit."

The New Testament seems very clear on the development pattern which ought to determine Christian Educational grouping. In Hebrews, chapter 5, the writer speaks of "some as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

13 For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

14 But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age (or full of Wisdom, spirituality) . . .

The sixth chapter opens with the admonition, Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, (which following verses describe as the simple starting points in the faith), let us go on unto perfection . . .

I Corinthians 8 and Romans 14 focus directly on Christian development-stages in the discussions of the weak and the strong. The implied concept in both these passages is a **development** from weakness to strength. There is also the obvious warning that the strong must carefully control indulgence in liberties quite rightfully theirs or face the risk of killing the weak for whom Christ also died. Further implied is the concept that true development in Christ from weakness to strength is desirable.

When writing to the Corinthians, Paul states in the first epistle, chapter 2,

. . . Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

10 But God hath revealed them **unto us by his Spirit:** for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

11 For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?



Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

12 Now **we have received**, not the spirit of the world, but **the spirit which is of God**; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

14 **But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God**: for they are foolishness unto him: **neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned . . .**

16 . . . who hath known the mind of the Lord . . . But we have the mind of Christ.

These verses, and others could be added, always convey the concept of development along a **spiritual plane**. The movement is a life change from milk users to partakers of strong meat, from babes to "full age," from beginning principles of Christ **on** unto perfection, from weakness to strength, from the "natural man" to one having received the Spirit which is of God and having the mind of Christ. Chronological age and sex designation do not provide for this spiritual development. Indeed, the spiritual change can be effected on varieties of chronological age and regardless of sex.

More important to see is the fact that mere chronological grouping or sex grouping poses problems which actually **hinder** growth development in the things of God! As long as every adult class in the Sunday School is open any Sunday to whomever comes of the correct chronological age or sex, then every class, every Sunday School, has the potential of strangers to the faith, babes in Christ, first-timers, and Christians having infinite varieties of Spiritual age.

Such a grouping condition produces the following problems.



## 1. No Meat

In any Sunday School class where strangers to the faith, "babes" in Christ, and all varieties of spiritual development are mixed, the teacher is limited to the "milk" of spiritual things or the beginning principles of the faith. Underlying every scriptural discussion of progress in God from milk to meat, from beginning principles to perfection and from weakness to strength, is the clear implication that babes in Christ cannot immediately digest strong meat, partake with the strong, or become perfect at once. The risks of spiritual indigestion, killing the weak, and overreaching the babes, must always be considered when spiritual ages are mixed. The clearly implied scriptural rule is to yield to the needs of the babes when they are present, and thus the strong in God—i.e., those needing strong meat—are undernourished when all are taught together.

Every adult Sunday School teacher recognizes this problem when his class begins to grow. The careful teacher keeps his presentations at the level of milk for such a spiritually mixed audience, and rightly so. The result has been repetition and stagnation for the older Christians. Other more reckless teachers have opened the door to strong meat and exposed babes to concepts and discussions that could kill them spiritually in five minutes.



Even secular education recognizes the need for development in life philosophy before exposing one to every alternate doctrine. I remember a class taken in social philosophies at the Doctoral level when at Stanford University. In this class, the professor alternately took the role of a communist, fascist, and socialist to challenge American Democracy from competing frames of reference. It is significant to note, however, that background pre-requisites for the course included study of the American Constitution in Elementary School, required years of U.S. history and government in secondary school, required years of American Government and U.S. History in undergraduate college, and graduate pre-requisite study which included a term thesis defining American Constitutional Democracy. When standing so firmly on American Democratic philosophy that hardly anything could shake us, the students were given the challenges of alternate faiths.

The Bible firmly declares the same need to actually "be strong" before partaking with "the strong." Babes in Christ must be founded on the starting principles before they can progress **from** those principles! Yet **all** our adults cannot be treated as Babes if we have a healthy Christian education program.

The inevitable choice to a teacher in a growing school that groups only according to age or sex differences, is to stagnate growth by remaining always at the level of milk, or risk killing weaker ones by giving strong meat to the strong that need it.

## 2. No Communication to Some

Related to the same fact of spiritual growth is the impossible problem of adequately meeting the needs of **both** Christian and non-Christian in the same teaching environment. As long as **every** class in the Sunday School is open to all who attend of particular chronological age or sex, the necessary truth of I. Cor. 2 is completely neglected. William James has pointed out in his **Varieties of Religious Experience** that a common characteristic of all deep religious experiences is that they cannot be communicated in words, they must be experienced to be understood.

Like love, a deep religious experience defies definition, but is easily recognized when experienced. Ask a ten-year-old boy to **define** love. His reply may be, "You oughta' see my sister!" Verbalization is out of reach, but he knows the phenomenon when he sees it.

The accomplished semanticist may fail just as miserably, but he'll understand love when it happens.

Exactly this same truth is pointed out by Paul in I Cor. 2 when he reminds us that the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit, nor can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned. But we have received, he declares, this spirit of God and have the mind of Christ.



There are some concepts of the Christian walk understandable after a genuine encounter with the person Christ or His spirit. Such concepts are totally beyond intellectual comprehension prior to the experiential encounters. Another analogy can help to illustrate this point. One can study the behavior of parenthood. He can budget himself to live as he would have to live were a baby to come into the home. In fact, he can practice the sacrifices in life that go along with raising a child. For example, he can roll a bundle of blankets, place a bottle in one end and begin walking the floor at night. He can even get a record of a baby crying and turn it up full blast as he paces the floor. After a night of carrying the blanket-bundle, he can leave exhausted for work the following morning. The second night he repeats the process, walking the floor with the bundle. The next day he works more exhausted. The third night he begins the walk with the bundle again. And so on the practice goes . . .

After sufficient months of this, the net result would be a conviction never to have a child.

But any parent can testify that when the bundle contains life, and the babe is in the arms, the walking of the floor becomes an insignificant price to pay for the joy of the child that came.

Likewise, to discuss some elements of Christian behavior to one not having encountered Christ is to turn the stranger against Christian life or to discuss meaningless experiences. Yet the lives of men like David Livingston, Adonirom Judson, the Apostle Paul, David Brainerd, and many others whose Christian life

have been marked by great suffering, still offer undeniable evidence of the great satisfaction of the Christian life.

In short, an incommunicable gulf exists on certain things of the Spirit between those having genuinely met God and those just being introduced to Christian concepts. Mixing these two different groups in every Sunday School class again ties the hands of the teachers with the spiritual group, or runs the risk of not communicating to others.



### 3. No Development

One of the most difficult distinctions is that of defining the difference between teaching and preaching. This writer has encountered some who think if the speaker jumps up and down and shouts with sufficient volume, he is preaching; if he stands still, he's teaching! Others have the attitude that if you can let attention drift, twitch babies under the chin, run in and out during a presentation, sleep at intervals, and during each moment of attention still get something to "bless you," then the man is preaching; if you have to listen to every word—"old dry teaching!"

It can be seriously doubted that a universally accepted distinction can be made. Yet, under traditional grouping standards neither the preacher nor the teacher can have the privilege of fully developing a subject. Both must deal with a constant turnover of listeners and be limited to presentations that are comprehensible in one listening session.

A **teacher** in every role, except Sunday School, enjoys the chance to develop subjects. The concept of consecutive sequence in courses and cumulative understanding of subject matter at least ought to be part of Christian development somewhere in the church program. **Neither** the preacher nor the teacher



has the privilege under traditional grouping. Preachers sometimes indulge in series preaching to give more time to develop a broad subject; but invariably they face the problem of people attending who have missed prior units in the series.

Teachers likewise struggle with this problem. The desire to treat the lesson materials properly leads the teacher into laying necessary foundations for two consecutive Sundays in a quarter. The following Sunday an enlargement campaign begins. The neighboring Sunday School must be beat in a contest, and, lo, forty-five people show up the third Sunday not having heard the first two foundation lessons.

So long as every class in the Sunday School is open to any one attending of particular age or sex on any Sunday, a teacher is hindered from consecutive development of a lesson. She cannot leave off at a certain point one Sunday and take up at that point the following Sunday. The grouping system and emphasis on growth in every class allows some to be present each Sunday that will never know where the class left off the previous time in a consecutive development.

Many concepts necessary to Christian growth can never be presented properly in one session. Some can never be understood without background preparation involving more than one Sunday School lesson. Indeed, many of the theological problems that have plagued Evangelical Christianity have been due to too much "piecemeal" study of God's book. How can the book of **Revelation** be understood without thorough back-

ground in prophecies of the Old Testament. The book of Hebrews can never be appreciated properly without background in Old Testament worship practices. On the list might go. Teachers need a chance for consecutive development of subjects!

How far would a third grade teacher go if each day she had to re-teach the first and second grades to some who came new each day. How far would our Bible Schools develop students if each class had to meet needs of total strangers every time they came together. Mark notes in his **Gospel** that Jesus chose his disciples that they might be "with him." Jesus' church stood firm on those that he kept with him long enough to thoroughly develop the basic ingredients of his kingdom, not on the mass of traffic that listened to His preaching and teaching at intervals. And there are many examples of Jesus taking the disciples aside and unfolding mysteries in consecutive order that strangers hearing the first time would never comprehend.



## 4. Limited Methodology Allowed

Variety in method, assuming skill in the use of the varied methods, is certainly recognized as good teaching. The mixing of varied spiritual backgrounds destroys the possibility of unlimited variety in teaching method.

Let's take one example, the discussion method. A discussion by definition deals with **uncertain** issues. A discussion focuses on a question for which there is no one answer. "When the Civil War officially began" is not a discussion question; that is a question of fact. "What caused the Civil War" is a good discussion question. The discussion brings into focus opinion, value judgments, and alternate answers. The purpose of the discussion group, having agreed there is no certain answer, is to consider every element of the question and every alternate possible and reach a consensus on the best answer.

A discussion by its very nature opens the door to "strong meat" that cannot be indulged in the presence of babes in Christ and sinners without risking spiritual indigestion and lack of understanding. Furthermore, the sheer urgency of evangelism makes it undesirable to spend time on the uncertainties of the



gospel when some are present, facing eternity, who may have only the one chance to hear the essential **certainties** of the gospel.

Making every class a mixture of all spiritual ages produces the conflict of great risk to babes and strangers if some varieties of teaching method are used. Yet those same varieties of method have great value in developing the strong.

## 5. Too Much Material Faced

The mixing of all spiritual ages in every adult Sunday School class added to a curriculum area stretching over seven years of lesson material poses an exhausting situation for every teacher. Add to this the fact that Evangelical churches are hybrid theological mergers from a multitude of backgrounds and the situation becomes potentially dangerous to spiritual development of babes and strangers.

It is doubtful that any part-time teacher, as most Sunday School teachers must be, can adequately master such a scope of material as seven years of curriculum. Any student of commentaries quickly discerns that a man may be competent in one area of scripture but seldom master it all. The most respected commentators will not be taken as authority on all subjects in the Bible as much as on certain specialty areas.

The average lay teacher has a maximum of two to three hours to prepare a lesson. This is simply not enough to thoroughly master a new Biblical lesson, particularly if it is controversial. Added to this time-limitation is the fact that Evangelical churches are a hybrid group. They are built, in the spirit and revival, out of great theological variety. Though we have



been merged in the work of the Spirit, it is unreasonable to expect that life-time roots in a differing theological tradition can be removed in a stroke.

Most of our churches have difficulty finding good adult teachers. Those that are chosen face the possibility of confronting controversial subjects in the curriculum with inadequate time to prepare. It can be expected that past training in another theological heritage will certainly influence interpretations in such times of brief preparation.

The problem becomes even more acute if adult classes on controversial subject matter are opened to class discussion. The varied theological background of the constituency is bound to produce some **surprises.**

There would be no dangerous problem if babes and strangers were not present in **all** our Sunday School classes. As long as babes and strangers **are** present, there needs to be a consistency of diet and a sticking to the certainties of the gospel until foundation is laid in the spiritual life of "little ones." Far more harm than good will come to babes and strangers if adult teachers take positions in the classroom running contrary to the steady diet from the pulpit. Differences should be settled behind the scenes or in congregational groups limited to the strong, not in the presence of those just introduced to the concepts of Christ and the church.

Not necessarily because of intent, but because of too much material to teach, too little time to prepare,

great mixture of church background brought together in one church family, and all classes open to every spiritual age, each teacher faces a task with too much spiritual risk entailed.

One other problem is becoming acute in churches of our constituency because every teacher has to handle too much material. We now teach a generation of young adults having grown up on much the same series of Biblical lessons and only a presentation that digs deeper than the ordinary can challenge contemporary Sunday School adults. Again, too much material with too little time to prepare cripples the lay teacher's effectiveness.



## 6. Needless Duplication

The problems just discussed are staggering for any teacher to face and overcome. Yet, the habitual approach is to make **every** teacher in the Sunday School face the same set of problems. Traditionally, every teacher teaches the same lesson with the same teaching problems because every class is open to all who come on any Sunday of adequate chronological age.

Every teacher is therefore limited to (1) milk of the word or risks harm to babes and strangers, (2) lessons that can be understood by first-timers and therefore cannot presume consecutive development over many sessions, (3) methods that deal with certainties and never risk exposing the babes and strangers to that indigestible or incomprehensible, and (4) inadequate preparation because of too much material with which to deal.

The greatest need of our adults in Sunday School is some way to provide opportunity for avoiding the problems named above. There are merits to the traditional system of grouping (it is not the purpose of this study to discuss these, but they are hereby recognized) and we are not suggesting its total elimination. The thesis is that **every class ought not to duplicate these same problems**. Many churches across the land have learned it is not necessary.



## THE ELECTIVE SYSTEM

Every one of the above problems can be met by providing adult electives in a Sunday School that runs prescribed terms. Many churches across our nation have begun supplementing, or replacing parts of, their present system with elective subject matter courses dealing with such topics as Personal Evangelism, Prophecy, Holy Spirit, How to Study the Bible, Cults, Church History, Teacher Training, and the Life of Christ.

The idea of offering many different subject matter courses is not new and has often been referred to as the "cafeteria" approach to Sunday School Curriculum. There is little done to meet our primary teaching problems, however, if these classes are left open to optional attendance on any Sunday that one attends.

The elective system is only most effective if the classes are taught within a definite and prescribed time limit (say 13 weeks or 26 weeks long). Students must sign up for enrollment just as with a teacher training course. In signing up they must accept certain requirements for the privilege of the course, such as commitment to faithful attendance during the period, and in some cases to certain lesson preparation requirements.



Mere growth or popular appeal ought **not** to determine the success of electives. Two students properly taught in personal evangelism will win more to a church in a subsequent year than all the adult classes combined have won in some churches across the land.

The elective system presumes that the difficulties of mixed spiritual ages and fluctuating traffic in the traditional classes hinder the chance to actually teach toward effective life change. The hindrance, as already pointed out earlier, is that the clientele of such classes cannot be effectively moved from milk to meat, natural to spiritual things, etc. — in short, effectively developed. The purpose of elective classes is to provide opportunity to develop the same students during a consecutive time period. Even if fewer enroll in these subjects initially, the permanent change for spiritual good that can result in the selective clientele of elective classes will enable the few to produce many more than any extrinsic method might have done.

Few churches have sufficient space and personnel to add electives without altering their present program. Most of the churches with whom we have worked have felt that the immediate need of elective opportunity merited some drastic changes in their traditional program. Others, however, have added some electives with very little alteration of their usual procedures.

To pick the extreme examples of the change, some churches have felt that the obstacles to effective

teaching posed by traditional procedures (those obstacles we have named above) post a maximum limit to every teacher's efforts. They have thought it best, therefore, to narrow the spiritual variety problem and the magnitude of lessons in normal quarterlies to one large class. Usually, this became the Pastor's Bible Class, or certainly someone who would handle the lesson in a way consistent with the leadership of the pastor. The limitations on method and the need to stay at the level of milk and avoid controversy that are demanded by a class open any time, to anyone, virtually demands a controlled "up-front" presentation (i.e., lecture, panel, or controlled questioning).

One outstanding teacher could therefore handle a large class at this level of teaching with sufficient success to allow the freeing of other classrooms and teachers to present a lesson without the hindrances of such spiritual age variety, rotating attendance traffic, and impossible magnitude of lesson material.

Some churches have been able to make the change in one quarter. One auditorium class supplanted all others using the normal quarterlies, and every other teacher and class began teaching an elective. These electives would run the prescribed time, and then the teacher would begin the same subject again, in the same room, but with a new group of pupils. The graduating pupils would receive certificates and then either enroll in another elective or return to the large auditorium class for a time.

Others have moved more slowly. I recall one church that originally had a Pastors Adult class, a



Young Adult class, a Men's Bible class, and a Ladies' Bible class. The ladies liked their room, their group, their method, and their teacher. They prayed together, sang a little, worshipped the Lord, reminisced a bit, and discussed the lesson a while. They refused to be moved or changed. We didn't change them! The men's class in this same church also resisted change.

The Young Adults, however, caught the vision of the need for some electives being added. Something had to give way; there was just no extra classroom or teacher. With only one class willing to move, we had to select from the alternates of electives the **one** needed most. We chose Personal Evangelism. The Young Adults merged with the Pastor's class to free their teacher one quarter to prepare the course. The following quarter the first 26-week course in Personal Evangelism began. Many of the original Young Adults class became the nucleus of the first personal evangelism course. By the time the Personal Evangelism course was taught a second time (with a new group of students), the merits of the elective system convinced the men of the need for more, and the Men's Bible Class merged with the Pastor's Class (though some had already left to join one or other of the Personal Evangelism installments) and their teacher began preparing the first course on Cults.

In another situation we had a Ladies' Bible class that was willing for any change just so long as they did not lose their teacher. Their teacher began the first course on Cults lasting 26 weeks. Twenty-six weeks

later she began the same course over again; most of her ladies stayed with her the second time. Twenty-six weeks later she began the same course over again; some of her ladies stayed with her the third time. Twenty-six weeks later she began the same course over again; a few . . . etc. After a while the ladies began leaving voluntarily to join other classes or electives and no one forced them to do anything!

The one thesis of this paper is that somewhere the opportunity must be provided to teach the same pupils the same subject (even if only two or three) in order to give the chance for true educational **development**. How much of the present must be sacrificed depends upon each individual church circumstance; but to sacrifice the elective opportunity entirely because of the resistance a few have to **any** change is a great price to pay and misses great victories possible in adult education.

**Who teaches these courses?** One of the first questions encountered in any discussion of electives is, "Who teaches such courses. Doesn't it take specialists and experts?" No. If a layman can teach the quarterly, we believe he can handle an elective even more effectively. He still must organize and master material, he must present a lesson, hold a class in interest, etc. The change is for the better. He now teaches a class selectively limited to those interested in his subject (whereas before they may be present only to win an airplane for their children), and he has to master a limited subject matter in comparison to the wide range of curriculum previously taught.



In fact, we find the elective system expands the teaching personnel potential. In a class open to all spiritual ages and open to all of a particular age or sex, any time they come, great skill in delivery becomes as important as any other feature of teaching. Many are in every class because of a contest, through obligation, or to please a friend. They may be first timers encountering the subject. The teacher must have the delivery skill to gain attention even if interest in the subject is absent. Few laymen have developed these skills.

In an elective, poor delivery is accepted if the material is accurately and thoroughly presented. Any college and university student can testify that some of the poorest delivery in teaching found anywhere is encountered in college circles. I remember a geology class where the professor talked rapid fire, mumbled indistinctly, turned his back to the class, and wrote with both hands on the board. In another comparative religion class the professor was a visiting professor from Japan for one year. He spoke English with an accent, read his lectures, and lacked sufficient voice volume to fill the room. Two seats from me a blind girl took notes in braille with the continuous pecking on her braille board. In both cases it was an exhausting effort to listen. Yet, I hung onto every word for just one reason; each teacher could communicate more about the subject in 45 minutes than I could discover in 45 hours reading. Wanting to learn the subject, I listened in spite of the delivery.

Though the cases are seldom so extreme, we find that laymen lacking in excellent delivery still function well in the selected environments of the elective subjects.

### **Is the Elective Program only for a large church?**

The second question encountered in discussions of the elective program is its possibility for a small church. Some churches no more than 50 in attendance and with only one adult class have started one or more electives. They have started them in buses or automobiles outside the church. We've also found that electives can be conducted in rooms or places not so acceptable for regular classes. In classes open to anyone that comes, we have to be concerned about the structural setting, for the Sunday School class may be the first and last impression of the church. In electives we are usually teaching the steady members of our group who can function in less adequate conditions. We've even found that electives can meet away from the regular church structure. A traditionally grouped class, if it meets in some other area, may not return for church, or may start another church! We've found an elective class, however, in something like Cults, can meet in a neighborhood house and usually they will return to church.

**Where do the strangers go?** The answer to the question "where do strangers go" takes several paths. The answer naturally depends upon how much of the former Sunday School grouping system is retained. If only one auditorium class remains, the strangers are



directed to it, and if they come without prior knowledge, they are not even aware of the electives. If a member of an elective brings a friend and he insists on remaining with him, the situation is similar to a visit to a Bible School, college, or university. The stranger sits in as an invited guest but realizes that the teacher has no obligation to bring him up to date on the subject or consider him in the presentation. Such visits should be limited to not more than three or four times.

Some churches stop all electives during the enlargement campaigns and have all classes in a growth emphasis enlargement campaign auditorium class. The Pastor teaches. All other teachers give their time to visitation and follow-up as part of the enlargement program. During the "elective vacation" they add to their preparation for the new beginning of the elective's subsequent quarter. By this means the heaviest turnover of new visitors is handled in the large auditorium class. In this class there should be constant reminders and motivation by the teacher for new enrollees when the electives begin again.

**Where do we get curriculum for electives?** Most all religious publishing houses have recently taken major forward steps in the production of undated Sunday School quarterlies. These quarterlies can only be used most effectively in the elective grouping organization. Precisely because they are undated, they lend themselves to repetition each quarter with a different group of students. To teach the quarterlies with utmost effectiveness the entire 13 lessons in consecutive order need to be digested by the

students. Only an elective system that enrolls a certain group of committed students at a given time and does not allow new students to step into the class development until the same class begins over at a new time can profit to the highest degree from undated quarterlies.

In addition to these, every course published by religious publishing houses for teacher training progress (with manuals and certificates) can be taught in electives if they meet the church needs in other respects.

Beyond this, a group of key churches of the Evangelical tradition in the United States and Canada, have united with the writer in a teamwork sharing program to speed the development of courses actually proven in the church situation. Many other individuals who have worked with the problem of electives have joined in a team linked together in a consultant service by this writer to pool their efforts in developing electives, the sharing of problems, and a common attack in meeting their problems. Some have been developing courses for some time, and some are only beginning their planning. At certain key churches served by this writer as a consultant, the teachers of local Bible Schools, seminaries and colleges have been trained in this task of developing curriculum. We consider this exciting work only beginning.

Why don't you join the vanguard of local church leaders determined to turn your Sunday School into a Bible School that really trains its adults.



## BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A HOLE IN ROME

THE LAST WORD

THE STRANGEST STORY IN THE BIBLE

OH LORD, DELIVER ME FROM  
MY PROBLEMS . .

*but let me keep my pigs!*

FROM "LODEBAR" . . . *a place of no pastures*

BORN BLIND? *So what . . .*

*Don't bother me with questions,  
just show me the need.*

LIFT UP NOW THINE EYES

FOUR MOUNTAINS IN A TROUBLED LAND

JESUS CHRIST . . .

*Super-Nut? . . . or Super-Natural?*