

**MANUALS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS**

Edited by Charles Foster Kent
In collaboration with Henry H. Meyer

**MISSIONARY EDUCATION IN
HOME AND SCHOOL**

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TO
MY WIFE
WHO LOVES AND UNDERSTANDS
A LITTLE CHILD

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INTRODUCTION

THE PLACE OF MISSIONARY EDUCATION

SOME time ago the following letter was received from the director of an institute for the training of Sunday school teachers in one of our large cities:

"You will note that the Training Institute is solely for the purpose of religious education. The question of arranging to have missionary instruction included another year in the curriculum is for the Board of Managers and the Teacher Training and Graded Work Committee to decide."

In the mind of this Sunday school worker missionary education and religious education are thought of as two quite distinct processes. In general, this was the attitude of most religious workers ten years ago when the author began an investigation of the relation of missionary education to religious education, and especially its place in the home and the church school. This distinction between religious education and missionary education was so marked and so persistent as to make certain results inevitable. The mission boards recognized more and more that the maintenance of their work depended upon rearing a generation of Christian people in thorough sympathy with missionary work, and with full conviction that its expanding needs must be met thoroughly and efficiently. For many years

these boards had been reaching down into the local church for the purpose of organizing special groups for training in missionary interest and for added support. Mission bands, junior missionary societies, girls' and boys' clubs with a missionary purpose, and voluntary mission study circles were organized wherever there were sympathetic leaders to assume the responsibility. Then the mission boards began to see that these special organizations reached only a small proportion of the children and youth in the churches. The local Sunday school was the most permanent organization in the church dealing with boys and girls. Cases were rare where it did not include within its membership practically all the children and youth in the parish. It was natural, on this account, that the mission boards should desire to interest the Sunday school in their work, and many attempts were made to break into the Sunday school organization.

The policies and the methods in missionary education ten years ago, arose out of this necessity. Missionary committees were organized in the Sunday school and special missionary Sundays were introduced into the calendar, at which time missionary programs and special missionary lessons were taught, sometimes by specially prepared teachers. The material used came from the mission boards, but rarely, if ever, had the indorsement of the general Sunday school leaders, secretaries, and editors. There was also the temptation to exploit the Sunday school for the purpose of raising money. Collecting devices of various sorts were offered for use, and appeals were made to classes and schools for the support of special objects in mis-

sion fields. Many conferences were held to discuss missionary giving in the Sunday school, and whether or not it would be right to take five minutes each Sunday or once a month, or substitute a missionary lesson for the review lesson once a quarter.

On the other hand, it was natural that the Sunday school leaders, not being in touch with the pressing needs of the mission boards, should oppose and in some cases resent these attempts to break in upon their schedule with a new program of study, giving, and service. These religious educators were providing Bible study in cycles of lessons known as the "Uniform Lesson System." All the publications were devoted to the treatment of these lessons, and all the time of the local schools was spent upon their study and discussion. The funds collected in the local Sunday school in the regular offering were used largely for the purchase of the lesson papers and supplies for the school. As a rule, children were not given any instruction or training in the habits of systematic giving, or in relating their gifts to the work of the local church in its community, or to home and foreign missions. Sunday school teachers were trusting that the pupils themselves would apply the principles of the Bible to everyday life. They were hoping also that the pupils would relate their Sunday school teaching to the need for gifts of money and service. Those who were directing regularly the religious education of the churches did not regard missions as we think of it in this book as the main business of the church, and they made little or no attempt to create a generation of Christians who would so regard it.

The effect of this situation upon the pupil and upon his conception of missions was logical. He looked upon an interest in missions as something special or optional, or something in addition to his religious thought and life. This conception was heightened by the efforts to organize mission bands and other missionary groups. Children were asked if they would join the mission band which was to meet some time through the week. These appeals were zealous and, in many cases, convincing, but, after all, it was optional with the children. To them it was something in addition to the regular requirements of religious education in the home and in the church school. The baneful effect of this procedure throughout the churches can hardly be overestimated. A delegate to a missionary summer conference went home to her Sunday school class of junior pupils with the resolve that she would change her whole point of view with reference to their religious training. She had learned in her Conference training course that the normal result of her teaching should be Christian conduct especially in all social relations. She felt also that these relationships would have increasing significance in the growing lives of her pupils, and finally comprehend community, national, and international interests, all of which should become Christian. Enthusiastic over her new ideals, she proposed to her class a course of lessons with related activities which the pupils soon discovered were missionary. Evidently, they were labeled. In a common quick response, those pupils reminded their teacher: "It is not your business to teach missions. Mr. A. does that on the first Sunday of the month!" This

remark was the logical conclusion to be drawn from our conception and procedure in times past.

Fortunately, there appeared, in time, a group of religious leaders who saw that religious education was failing to meet the requirements. It was too academic. Functional psychology, as taught in our colleges and universities; pedagogy based upon learning by doing; the principles of child development as revealed in child study; the changing conceptions of the church and its work; and the newer ideals of social service were making it increasingly apparent that there must be some radical adjustment in the aims, material, and methods of religious education.

In recent years the emphasis on social evangelism and the social gospel has had a wholesome effect upon the conception of missionary education, even as it has more and more affected the work of missions itself. If missions are to be considered an organized enterprise for the purpose of selecting individual missionaries and sending them to the needy places of the world, missionary education must directly train our boys and girls to support this enterprise. It must also make an appeal to them to offer themselves, after due meditation and prayer, for service in these fields. On the other hand, if we are to include in missions the process of Christianizing all our social relationships in the community, in industry, in national life, and in international affairs, then the scope, the aims, the methods, and the material of missionary education will be greatly broadened. It is the writer's feeling that we can never hope to establish the kingdom of God on earth by depending exclusively on special agents,

however well qualified, sent out by our churches in order that all the people may hear the gospel. The world now finds itself in closer relations than ever before. The peoples of the earth form a great family, and are in normal contact in trade, government, education, the pursuit of the arts, and in pleasure travel. The next generation, therefore, will face the problem of making effective in every relationship of life the implications of the gospel of Christ. If this be true, the aims of missionary education for the present growing generation of children must be comparable with the task which they are expected to meet. Religious education, therefore, will more and more approximate the conception which some of us have of missionary education. This much is certain, missionary education will be an essential part of all religious education.

PART I
PRINCIPLES

CHAPTER I

THE AIMS OF MISSIONARY EDUCATION

God of the nations, hear our call;
Thou who art Father of us all;
Show us our part in thy great plan
For the vast brotherhood of man.

In plastic form the nations lie
For molding, unto us they cry;
May we their urgent summons heed
And gladly go to meet their need.

May we, a nation blessed with light,
Be ever truer to the right,
That nations in our life may see
The power which we derive from thee.

Let us with earnestness of youth
Care only for pursuit of Truth.
O, may we feel thy guidance still
And heed the impulse of thy will!

Thus, as thy kingdom cometh here,
Shall it throughout the world draw near;
And loyalty to country then
Shall reach out to include all men.

—*Vera Campbell*, 1913.