1924

Problems of training for leadership in religious education in Sweden

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SCHOOL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE

Thesis

PROBLEMS OF TRAINING FOR LEADERSHIP IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SWEDEN

Submitted by

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INTRODUCTION:

One of the most vital problems among the Christian people of America to-day is that of Religious Education and how to secure well-trained leadership in that field. In fact all over the world since the time of the Great World War with its hardening effect upon humanity, the Christians have felt the burden of responsibility heavier than at any other time. Something must be done. No effort will be too great in the work of uplifting the human race. The world needs Christ and His ideals. But where and how are we to find the leadership inspired of those ideals - the leadership that is willing to work for the attainment of Christ's ideals?

The demand for leadership is great in Sweden. Probably the conditions there in regard to this matter are exceptional; atleast entirely different and opposite to the conditions existing in America. It is an old country with old traditions which are difficult to change. School and Church are intimately related. Every child is taught the Lutheran Religion in school. Religion is an obligatory subject in all schools. The question is; Is such religious obligation the best solving of the problem in a state monarchical government? In recent years there have been several tendencies which point to a change in the near future. Is the State and Church going to be separated? If so, what will become of the religious education now taught in the schools? Already the question is being discussed as to whether or not religious instruction should completely be taken away from the schedule of the elementary schools. The radical socialists are in favor of

its elimination. The change has gone so far that in the last "Undervisningsplan för Rikets Folkskolor" (Plan of Instruction for the Schools of the State), October 31, 1919, the hours for religious instruction in the elementary schools were reduced from six hours a week to only two hours. There has been an attempt to alter the form of Luther's Smaller Catechism that, for centuries, has been the means of imparting the rudiments of religious instruction.

As a result of all this a heavy burden is put upon the Free Churches. How are they going to face the changed situation? They feel the responsibility. There are already forces at work. Religious education was one of the greatest problems discussed on the Fourth Ordinary Free Church Conference in Stockholm last February. The first and greatest demand of the Free Church is trained leadership. To be able to discuss the question more deeply, it is necessary to make a survey of the prevailing conditions in Sweden and get the background clearer in mind.

Part I

PREVAILING CONDITIONS IN SWEDEN

A. A Geographical Survey:

Sweden is one of the largest countries in Europe. Its area is 173,035 square miles, nearly one and one-half times that of Great Britain and Ireland together.[1] Because of its length (its greatest length being 1000 miles), the nature and the climate vary widely in different parts of the country. The northern part comes within the Arctic Circle. Here the summerlight, (in Lulea the longest summerday is slightly more than twenty-three hours), in conjunction with the mildness of the climate caused by the nearness of the Gulf Stream has an extraordinary effect upon animal and plant life. This part is intersected by large river valleys and with great mountain lakes. These rivers are of great importance for the transport of timber from the vast pine forests and in the erection of electric power stations. The highland, with its large iron region in the northern part, continues in the north-west part of Central Sweden and forms the second largest iron region which is estimated to contain over one hundred and twenty-two millions of tons. Except for this part, Central Sweden is a lowland. In the Southern part more favorable climatic conditions exist. Here a rich cultivation is possible even in the highland of three hundred and twenty-five to six hundred and fifty feet above the sea-level. The most fertile and richest district in Sweden is situated in this part.

1 A Book about Sweden, 1922, p.5.
The Statesman's Yearbook, 1923, p.1350.

B. Economic Conditions:

Sweden is a producer. Her prosperity lies in the vast natural resources. There is a great supply of wood and iron, - materials without which the world never can get along whether times be good or bad. Many see in this condition partly an explanation of the exceptional position Sweden was able to hold during and after the World War. " While the rest of Europe is still laboring painfully to get back to something like normal conditions, one country seems to have completed its readjustment and reached a new economic equilibrium on the basis of the requirements created by the 'peace crisis'. That country is Sweden, the one country in the world that could if it cared, boast a currency with a pre-war value equal in stability to that of the dollar."[1] According to the same source only fifteen per cent. of the total national debt is held abroad.

Sweden has always been an agricultural country. However, there has been such a development of the industries that during a quarter of a century the industrial population increased from one-fourth to more than one-half. To-day the population is about equally divided in the pursuit of agriculture on the one hand, commerce and industries on the other. Sweden takes, at the present time, a prominent place among the industrial nations of the world. The following tables show the distribution of the industries.

[1] Edwin Bjorkman, "Sweden's Currency - Rival to the Dollar", Current History, December, 1923, p.399.

Branch of Industry	Factories	Workpeople	Value of Output Kronor
Bar-iron and steel works	107	22,207	355,733,108
Iron and steel goods factories	414	16,156	207,310,067
Mechanical workshops	904	50,598	569,600,600
Wharves and dock yards	128	14,733	156,672,633
Metal goods factories	181	6,300	121,563,433
Stone quarries and dressing works	136	4,196	12,556,369
Brick works	249	8,432	46,060,966
Flour and grain mills	1,075	3,510	228,000,838
Sugar works	26	7,794	261,487,375
Malt-liquor breweries	284	5,973	106,073,126
Tobacco factories	15	5,167	158,804,509
Dairies	1,119	3,691	150,350,366
Margarine factories	22	651	49,135,666
Cotton-spinning and weaving works	76	13,407	223,253,717
Wool-spinning and weaving works	121	10,671	198,113,859
Needle works	161	8,842	141,296,025
Tanneries	177	2,583	111,044,031
Shoe factories	154	9,671	201,990,727
Match factories	17	7,599	63,383,819
Other chemical industry works	396	9,587	282,987,530
Electric-power works	526	4,088	112,452,622

The distribution of the population in main occupational groups. The left hand column indicates the distribution of the population according to occupation.

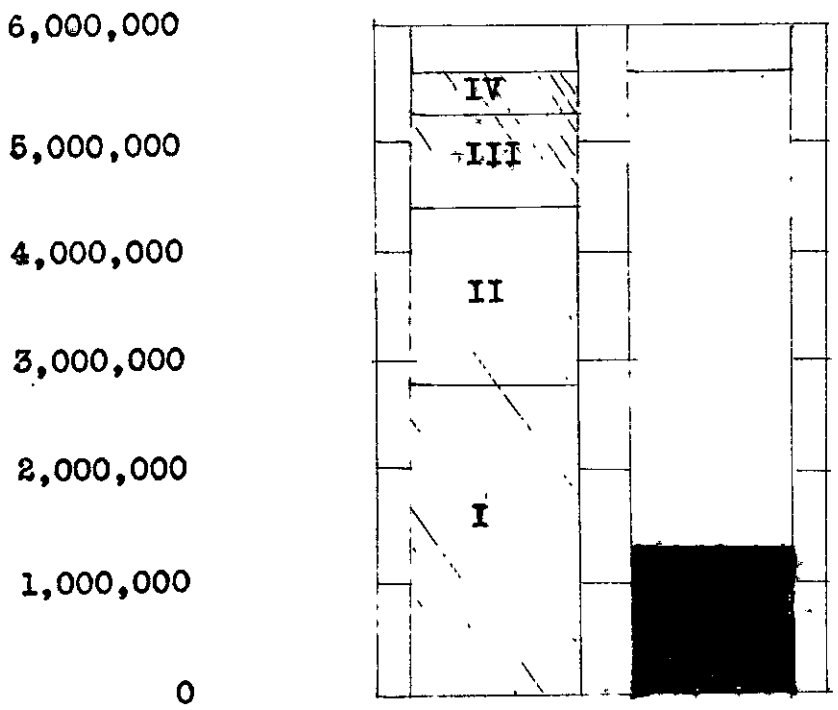
I Farming

II Manufacturing

III Commerce

IV Independent Crafts

The right hand column indicates the relation between town population (black) and rural population (white). [1]



[1] A Book about Sweden, 1922, p.47.

C. Social Conditions:

The population in Sweden, December 31, 1921, was estimated at 5,954,316; per square mile 34.41. It is entirely of Scandinavian stock with the exception of 29,500 Finns, 7,100 Lapps and 3,500 Jews. The Swedes belong to the Scandinavian offshoot of the Teutonic branch of the Aryan race. Their number has been estimated at nearly eight millions. Of these 1,500,000 are in United States, America; about 450,000 in other European countries; and 300,000 of them in Finland. The following tables show the growth and movement of the population during the last decades, according to The Statesman's Yearbook.

Movement of the Population [1]

Births, Deaths, and Marriages

Year	Total Living Births	Illegitimate Living Births	Still-born	Marriages	Deaths Exclusive of Still-born	Surplus of Births over Deaths
1917	120,855	18,060	2,811	35,524	77,385	43,470
1918*	117,739	-	-	38,626	104,183	13,556
1919*	114,505	-	-	40,327	84,247	30,258
1920*	138,505	-	-	42,829	78,112	60,393
1921*	126,770	-	-	39,206	73,460	53,310

* Provisional

[1] The Statesman's Yearbook, p.1351.

EMIGRATION[1]

Year	Immigrants	Total Emigrants	To United States of America
1914	8,636	12,960	9,589
1915	6,357	7,512	4,538
1916	6,713	10,571	7,268
1917	5,811	6,440	2,462
1918	4,932	4,853	1,416
1919	7,809	7,337	3,777
1920	10,841	10,242	6,691
1921	8,551	8,950	5,430

[1] The Statesman's Yearbook, p.1351.

The Growth of Population has been as follows:- [1]

Year	Population	Increase per cent. per annum
1880	4,565,668	0.95
1900	5,136,441	0.71
1910	5,522,403	0.73
1920	5,904,489	0.69

The Population divided in 1910 as follows:- [1]

	Male	Female
Unmarried	1,690,313	1,686,141
Married	800,340	910,345
Widowed	105,170	221,816
Divorced	2,906	5,372

In 1921 there were 2,925,988 males

" 1921 " " 3,028,328 females

[1] The Statesman's Yearbook, p. 1351.

On December 31, 1910, there were 21,708 foreigners in Sweden[1] including subjects of -

Finland	5,538
Norway	4,537
Germany	3,400
Denmark	2,900
Russia	2,900
United States	816
The United Kingdom .	288
Other states	1,329

[1] The Statesman's Yearbook, 1923, p. 1350.

D. Race Characteristics and Political Conditions:

"It is possible that ancestors of the present Swedes inhabited the country about 15,000 years ago, it is certain that they did so some 5,000 years, a longer period than any other European nation can look back upon in its present territory, with the exception of the kindred race in Denmark".[1] Through those long ages the racial tradition has developed unbrokenly. No foreign conquerors have ever held the country in submission. No serfdom has ever suppressed the peasant. They have always had a voice in the conduct of the nation's affairs. Evidently this self-governedfreedom has stamped the character of the people.

The numerical weakness of the Scandinavian nations has in one way been their weakness. They have not been able to play any aggressive role in the world's history. But in another way it has turned out to be their strength. Instead they have been able to use their energies in the upbuilding of their own nation, and they have developed a peculiar intimacy of patriotism of which a larger country is unable. Sweden has not been involved in any war since 1809. During this time the nation has progressed remarkably on economical, social and scientific lines. Art and literature have prospered.

The present form of government in Sweden is that of Constitutional Monarchy. The executive power is in the hands of the king, who acts under the advice of a Council of State, head of which is the Minister of State. The Riksdag (Parliament) consists

[1] A Book about Sweden, 1922, p.16.

of two Chambers. The system of voting is proportional. In recent times the Social Democratic party has had a strong influence, which is the reason why the Constitution has been placed on an extremely broad democratic basis, perhaps the most democratic in Europe.

E. The Religious Conditions:

1. History:

a. The State Church: It seemed to take a long time for Christianity to reach Sweden. The first time the words of Christ were spoken before the Swedish people was in A.D. 830 by a monk from France, the Apostle Ansgarius. Not before 1008 was the first king, Olof Skotkonung, baptized. During the whole Middle Ages the Swedish Church was related to the Pope of Rome. During this time Sweden made a great contribution to the Christian life of Europe through Saint Birgitta, who organized an order that was sanctioned in 1370. The Swedish Reformation in the sixteenth century came together with a political one. At the Riksdag in Vasteras, 1527, it was determined that God's word should be preached in Sweden and that the King, not the Pope, should be the highest authority of the church. During the following centuries the church developed and received the specific Swedish characteristics.

b. The Free Church Movement: As early as the seventeenth century there were people who demanded individual freedom in the choice of denominations preferred. Through the "konventikleplakatet" in 1726, all private meetings of religious character were prohibited and this law was in force until the year 1858. Many of the new sects organized in England and America in the nineteenth century had found their way to Sweden, and under the protection of the Dissenter Law of 1873 they organized one of the State-recognized denominations.

2. The Present Conditions:

a. The State Church: Sweden is one of the few countries that still keeps a close relation between State and Church. But in recent years a movement has been tending, throughout the Scandinavian countries, toward the separation of State and Church. The Lutheran Protestant Church is recognized as the State Church in Sweden and the mass of the people belong to this. The king has to be a Lutheran. The clergy are chiefly supported from the parishes by taxation and the proceeds of the Church lands. At the census of 1910, the number of "Evangelical Lutherans" was estimated at 5,497,689. Aside from the Lutheran population there were Protestants, Dissenters, Methodists, and Baptists numbering 14,715; 3,070 Roman Catholics under a "vicar Apostolic residentia" in Stockholm; 6,112 Jews, and others. [1]

b. The Free Churches: "The Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society sustain evangelical work as follows: 1,819 churches, 1,268 preachers, 72,873 members, 1,501 Sunday Schools, 87,697 scholars." [1] This movement of the Free Churches has paid a great contribution to the country. There has been a revival of other churches. "The evangelistic movement within the State Church, with a large interest in foreign missions, is in no small degree due to the influence of forces set in motion by the Methodists. It cannot, however, be said that the need for an evangelistic emphasis in Swedish Protestantism outside the State Church is at an end." [1]

[1] The Statesman's Yearbook, 1923
World Survey, Foreign Volume, p.56.
The World Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1923, p.199.

The Free Churches of Sweden have recently organized the "Samarbetnings" or United Work Committee. Last February the Fourth Ordinary Free Church Conference was held. Different subjects were discussed such as the education of the youth of the Free Churches, the religious instruction and the united work of the different denominations. An address was sent to the King concerning the "Religionsfrihets Kommitteen" (The Committee of Religious Freedom). This Committee was established by the king to make investigations in that field. There are such questions to be solved as the laws of marriage ceremony, burial service, the right of Free Church members to hold an office in the state such as Minister of the Cabinet, teacher of Religion, teacher in the Public Schools, and so on.

F. The Educational Conditions:

1. The General Educational System:

a. Administration of Education: The close connection between education and the Church is peculiar to Sweden. Both Church and School range under the Ecclesiastical Department. Every parish has atleast one common school financed by the State and parish. The State is now contributing twenty per cent. of the cost. A local schoolboard has charge of details touching the schools of each parish. The pastor was formerly an ex-officio member of the Board, but according to recent ruling he must be elected like the others. Special attention has been paid to the school inspection. The State appoints inspectors that visit the schools, investigate, examine and report to the school authorities. The schoolboard fixes for every district, the plan of instruction under the guidance of a "Normal Plan" that is drawn up by the Ecclesiastical Department.

b. Elementary School: In Sweden there is only one per cent. illiteracy. Public elementary education has been compulsory since 1842. The age of required attendance is between seven to fourteen years. Children not attending school under the supervision of the Government must furnish proofs of having received private instruction. This compulsitory system has kept the per cent. of illiteracy low. As a result, among the recruits of 1916, only 0.16 per cent. were unlettered, and only 0.32 per cent. unable to write.

The common schools are called "Folkskolor" or the People's School. The common school period covers six years, and

is divided into a primary course of two years and an elementary course proper of four. The common school gives instruction in the following subjects: Religion, Swedish, Arithmetic, Elements of Geometry, Swedish History, Geography, Nature-study, Drawing, Gymnastics, Music and Handwork. The amount of work is equivalent to the work covered in the eight grades here. In 1921 there were in the elementary schools 25,384 teachers and 707,520 pupils.

The table on the following page shows the time schedule per week in different subjects in the various grades according to the last Plan for the elementary schools of the State, October 31, 1919.

c. Secondary Schools: There are two systems of schools in Sweden. The elementary school or people's school is not a common basic school. Separated from the elementary school runs the "secondary schools". For several years they give nearly the same instruction in some subjects, but the foreign languages are absent from the curriculum of the elementary school. A boy is admitted to enter a secondary school for boys, after three years in the people's school, at the age of nine. The secondary schools have two divisions: the real-school of six years and the gymnasium of four years. The number of hours per week devoted to the various subjects in the secondary schools for boys is shown in the table of the next page. Those schools are located only in the cities and the large towns. The State is responsible for the finances. The community provides the buildings. A small tuition is charged.

For the girls there are special secondary schools, usually with three years of preliminary work and seven or eight

Schedule of Hours for Teachers and Pupils [1]

A-Form

A Seven-Grade School

Subjects	Primary Grades		Grammar Grades					Sum of Hours
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Religion	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	14
Swedish								
Speaking and reading	7	7	6	5	5	4	3	37
Writing and Grammar	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	34
Arithmetic and Geometry	3	4	4	5	5	5	5	31
Home and Community Study	3	3	4	-	-	-	-	10
Geography	-	-	-	3	2	2	3	10
Nature Knowledge	-	-	-	2	3	3	3	11
History	-	-	-	2	2	3	3	10
	19	21	21	24	24	24	24	157
"Arbetsovningar"	33	2	2	-	-	-	-	7
Drawing	--	--	-	1½	2	2	2	7½
Music	1	1	2	1½	1	1	1	8½
Gymnasium with Play and	1	2	3	3	3	3	3	18
	5	5	7	6	6	6	6	41
	24	26	28	30	30	30	30	198

[1] Translation from Undervisningsplan for Rikets Folkskolor, 1919, p. 77.

Number of Hours per Week Devoted to Each Subject in the Secondary Schools for Boys

Subjects	Real-School Year						Real-Gymnasium Year				Latin-Gymnasium Year			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Religion	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Swedish	5	5	6	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	2	3	3
Philosophic propaedeutics	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	1
German	6	6	6	4	4	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
English	-	-	-	5	5	4	3	3	2	4	2	2	2	2
French	-	-	-	-	2*	2*	-	4	4	4	-	4	4	4
Latin	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	6	6	6
Greek	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7**	7***
History	2	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Geography	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	-	-	2	1	-	-
Mathematics	4	5	5	5	4	5	7	6	6	6	5	4	4	5
Biology	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	1
Physics	-	-	-	2	1	2	3	2	4	3	2	1	2	2
Chemistry	-	-	-	-	2	1	2	2	2	2	-	-	-	-
Handwriting	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drawing	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Gymnastics	4	4	4	4	4	6	6	6	6	4	6	6	6	4
Music	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
TOTALS	32	34	35	35	36	37	37	38	40	38	37	38	40	38

* Optional: Those taking French are excused from Drawing
** Those taking Greek in the third year are excused from Mathematics (4 hrs.) and Drawing (2 hrs.) and take English only one hour
*** Those taking Greek in the fourth year are excused from Mathematics (5 hrs.) and Drawing (2 hrs.).

The School Review, November, 1923, p.690.

years in the school proper. These are private institutions, and are mainly dependent on tuition fees. Some receive aid from the State and from the local government.

The difference between the people's school and the secondary school makes a transfer difficult and expensive. It keeps the intelligent children of parents with a small income from acquiring a higher education. The system does not satisfy the demand of a modern democratic society. As a result of the democratic awakening there has been an attempt in an opposite direction. New types of schools have already been created; In 1905 the co-educational real-school in the smaller towns, and in 1910 the municipal middle school, (built on the foundation laid by the people's school) gained recognition by the State.

d. Present Reorganization: Among the working classes there have been and are, at the present time, two great demands:
(1) That the people's school be the common basic school for all, and the lower grades of the secondary school be abolished;
(2) That the State should provide equal opportunities for girls as for boys. A great step toward the realization of these demands came in 1918 when a social democratic cabinet was formed with an elementary school teacher as Minister of Education. A committee was organized to work out the plans for a reorganization. The main report was delivered on April 28, 1922. It was proposed that the foundation for all schools must be laid in the public people's school with a six-years'course. No other institution can receive financial aid from the State or the community. For secondary education are proposed four different kinds of schools;- real-schools,

girls schools, gymnasia and lyceums. All students' fees should be entirely abolished. The State takes over the main burden of expense. The local community has to provide the buildings.

There has been another recent change. The Swedish law of 1918 requires the public school education ending at fourteen years, to be continued by a minimum of 360 hours, or a period above that, up to a maximum of 540 hours. Those can be distributed over atleast two years, and at most three years. There are two lines of schools, one of vocational studies and one of general studies of an advanced character.

2. The Religious Educational Program:

a. The State Church:

(1) Current Program in Different Schools:

As State Church and School always have been and still are so closely related in Sweden, the main subject in the elementary school is religion. The most important part of the instruction in that subject has been the imparting of Luther's Smaller Catechism in the pupil's life. But there has been an awakening. One of the most vital problems in the school-world in Sweden today is a change in the form and the method of religious instruction in the elementary schools.

(2) Recent Reformations:

(a) Time offered on the schedule:

In the law of 1918 the hours of religious instruction were reduced to two hours per week. Before that year, five hours religious instruction per week were required in the elementary school. The table on the following page shows the distribution of hours in the proposed schedule of the New Real-School and the New Gymnasium.

(b) Instruction and text-books:

Another question is that of text-books as basis for this instruction. As early as 1903 the first notion appeared in the Riksdag. The question was taken up again in almost every session from 1908 until the present. A committee was appointed in 1911 to prepare a new text-book as a guide in the moral and religious instruction.

Proposed Schedule of Weekly Class Periods in Religion in the New Real-School [1]

Subject	Class				Total
	I	II	III	IV	
Religion	2	2	1	2	7

Proposed Schedule of Weekly Class Periods in Religion in the New Gymnasium [1]

Subject	Latin Gymnasium				Modern Language Gymnasium				Real-Gymnasium			
	Class				Class				Class			
	I	II	III	Total	I	II	III	Total	I	II	III	Total
Religion	2	2	2	6	2	1	4	3	2	1	-	3

[1] The School Review, November, 1923, pp. 695-699.

The prepared books have all seemed unsatisfactory, and the work is still in the hands of the board. A solution of the problem is given in the "Undervisningsplan for Rikets Folkskolor", October 31, 1919, a translation of which is found on page 32. "The attempt thus made to alter the form of Luther's Smaller Catechism cut deep into the religious traditions of the Swedish people, to whom this book has been the means of imparting the rudiments of religious instruction for centuries."[1] The criticism was great. The conservatives in the State Church consider it impossible to turn from the church traditions. The radical socialists want all religious instruction taken away from the elementary schools. They have no use for it.

(3) Teacher-training in Religion:

Every public school teacher, except those in the larger cities, has to teach this subject in the Normal Schools of the State and the Colleges of Education. The positions as teacher in religion at the secondary schools and the gymnasium are held by the Theology Doctors who are graduated from the Theological Department of the Universities.

(4) Present Programs in Local Churches:

Very little is done in the State Church in the Sunday School field. To the State Church tradition belongs the confirmation of the youth after finishing school. But this is no longer compulsory.

[1] Pearson, Schools of Scandinavia, Finland and Holland, p.30.

c. Curriculum[1]

Religion

Aim.

The aim of the religious instruction in the elementary schools (folkskolor) is to give the pupil according to his capacity and needs, suitable knowledge of the origin, content, and development of Christianity so as to promote his religious and moral development.

A-Form

Seven Graded Schools

Class 1. Stories from the Bible simply told (especially from the Gospel) with the view in mind to lay the foundation for the child's first religious and moral conceptions. In connection with that, short verses from the Bible to memorize, several psalms (from the Swedish Hymnal), morning and evening prayers, and grace at meals.

Class 2. Stories from the Gospel and the Old Testament simply told. In connection with that, short Bible verses to memorize, some psalms and hymns, the Lord's Prayer and the Benediction.

Class 3. A selection of parts from the Old Testament (especially stories in chronological order in the Bible text). Short Bible verses to memorize, psalms and hymns.

[1] Translation from 'Undervisningsplan för Rikets Folkskolor', October 31, 1919.

Class 4. A selection of parts from the Gospel, in chronological order, suited to the age. Short verses from the Bible to memorize, and psalms and hymns.

Class 5. A selection of parts from the Book of Acts, in chronological order. Jesus' sermons and parables. Bible verses to memorize and hymns.

Class 6. A selection of parts from the Old and New Testament with a special strong religious and ethical emphasis. The Sermon on the Mount and a short respresentation, adapted to the child, of the Christian Doctrines of life and faith. Simple stories from the history of the church, especially from the history of the Reformation. In connection with that, the reading of Luther's Small Catechism as an historical expression of Luther's concept of the main articles of Christianity.

Class 7. Stories and descriptions of characters and events of importance, showing the development and establishment of the religious and moral life during different ages. In connection with that, reading from the Bible and other literature as foundation and as illustration of the teaching. Short respresentation of the ritual of the church service and a survey of the ecclesiastical year.

b. The Free Churches:

The Sunday School work is almost entirely in the hands of the Free Churches. A Sunday School is connected with every church. According to the Year-book of 1922 of the Methodist Episcopal Church of Sweden, the statistics show that there are two hundred and eighteen Sunday Schools in this Church, 1,470 teachers and other officials, and 21,550 children. But the work is in the hands of a staff of untrained workers. In the last years, a national movement among the youth of the Free Churches is noticeable. There are two organizations:-

(1) Fria Kristliga Studentforeningen, an organization among the graduate students at the universities with 330 members.

(2) Fria Kristliga Gymnasistforbundet, an organiza- among the under-graduates with about 500 members.

Part II

EXISTING PROBLEMS IN THE FIELD OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SWEDEN

A. Problem of the Decreased Instruction in the Public Schools:

The survey of the educational conditions in Sweden shows the tendency of a rapid decrease of the time offered in the curriculum of the public schools to religious instruction. Yet in the secondary schools religion is ranked among such subjects as history, languages, etc., and given the same amount of time. The last Kurs-plan shows many desirable improvements in the field. Memorization of the Lutheran Catechism is no longer required, and the Bible is more widely used as a textbook, and the teaching is laid on a broader plan. Still the conditions raise the question as to whether or not religion in the future is going to drop out of the public school curriculum and be replaced by the subject of ethics. Of course, there still remains the ideal solving of the problem. The old conservatism of the State Church must leave place for a freer spirit, - for broadmindedness.

B. The Question of Non-Christian Teachers in Religion:

The State furnishes the training courses for the teachers of the public schools. The Normal School training covers four years. From the beginning of its history, religion has been the most important subject in its curriculum. There has also been a thoroughgoing instruction and training in teaching religion. The technique of teaching religion is separated from that of teaching other subjects. The teaching has mainly been done in accordance with the catechetical way of instruction. Every public school teacher has to teach religion whether he wants to or not. There is a long standing rule that the teacher must be a good Christian and a member of the Lutheran Church. He should look upon his task as teacher, in the good Lutheran way, as his "call". Our time is not favorable to the growth of idealism. Everybody wants a living. To be a teacher is a rather good position. Many enter the field without the ideal point in view. It is a way of support. Whatever his beliefs may be, he has to teach religion. Many a conscientious teacher has, later on in life, been put in a rather difficult position. What is one to do? In the cities and larger towns it is possible to get a position with teaching in only a few subjects which do not include religion and escape from this trouble, but in the country school no such solution will be possible.

It is obvious that the teaching of the subject will suffer from this unsatisfactory condition. There is an important personal factor in religious education that cannot be over-looked. "The teacher is always greater than his lesson and what he is, is greater

is greater than what he says. The religious education of the young depends more on the gift of persons, on contact with lives, than on anything else." [1] The danger of destructive teaching in this subject is certainly greater than is commonly recognized. In many cases it would without doubt be better to omit it entirely from the schedule than to have it offered by those who do not give personal assent to its teaching.

[1] Cope, Religious Education in the Family, p.259.

C. The Historical and Ethical Interpretation of the Bible:

"There is no human need more vital, more permanent, more continuous, or more universal than the moral and religious need."[1] But religious education is not merely teaching ethics. Religion has to do with the relation between man and his maker. Education means more than instruction. Education is a unitary process. Instruction is only a part of it. Under the present conditions of teacher-training, there is great danger that the instruction will be reduced merely to a study of the Bible as history and literature. Will that give the child a religious education? Religious education means much more than instruction in the literature, the history, and the philosophy of religion. Religion is a matter of thinking, feeling and willing. "Religious teaching results in religious feeling, religious acts, and religious knowledge. This involves prayer, conversion and the usual phenomena of the religious experience."[2] The aim ought to be to develop Christian personalities. But in this process the greatest factor is the power of stimulating personality. "Life can only come from life, and lives can only come from lives. Personality alone can develop personality."[3]

1 Athearn, The Church School, p.255.
2 Athearn, Religious Education and American Democracy, p. 10.
3 Cope, Religious Education in the Family, p.260.

D. The Problem of Leadership:

Probably in no other field is the demand for trained leadership so great as in that of religious education. It has to deal with the finest and most sacred part of the human nature. It is of supreme importance that those who deal with these vital matters should have the finest and best training. No age before has been in such great need of men and women who think in terms of spiritual values. Those in Sweden that have the training necessary for a leadership in the field of religious education are the teachers in the public schools. The State furnishes the teacher-training courses in religion and employs the teachers in the public schools. The situation arises where the Free Churches are almost entirely lacking a competent and trained staff of leaders. In brief, the situation is as follows: Compulsory teaching of religion in the public schools by State-trained religious teachers has not proved satisfactory to the adherents of the Free Church. The Free Church has determined to create its own system of religious teaching, but as yet it has no adequate system for training its leadership for this technical service.

Part III

A SUGGESTED PROGRAM FOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING

A. To Meet Immediate Needs under Present Conditions:

1. Kind of Leaders Needed:

The conditions already discussed in this thesis and the problems discussed in connection with the reformations in the field of religious education, point at a time when the Free Churches have to face new problems. They will, in a higher degree than at present, have to share the burden and responsibility of the religious training of the youth with the State Church. It is shown that the Free Church is almost completely lacking the necessary workers. The first duty of the Free Churches is to fill this need. It seems to be the only means of solving the problems. They have no right to wait longer. A well-trained leadership will not be built up in the same day that it is planned. It takes time. And the need is great.

The suggested program that is going to be developed here is worked out from the standpoint of the Free Churches, especially with the Methodist Church in Sweden in mind.

Preceeding discussions show that the need of trained leadership is not only a need of the future; it is even greater at the present time. There must be more trained leaders to carry on the program of the Free Churches of today. The immediate aim will be to make the present Sunday School as strong as possible in the local churches. They are at the present time in charge of an army of untrained and unsupervised teachers and officers. The need for trained workers is great. The leaders needed may be classified in three groups:

(1.) Teachers and other officers (Officers of the Council and the Executive Staff)

(2.) Organized supervision (Superintendents, Religious Directors)

(3.) Teachers for teacher training courses.

2. Source of Religious Leaders:

Where are those leaders for present and future needs going to be found? At first there is the present staff of teachers in the local churches that need a further training. If they do not have the training needed they still have one advantage, they have the experience back of them to build on.

The second place to find the material for leadership is in the young men and women's classes. As will be developed later in this paper, it will be of value to change over those classes into training classes for teachers and give them the needed information and knowledge. To be sure of leadership in a future, it will be worthwhile as soon as possible to have the leadership problem in mind when dealing with the youth of the later adolescence, those that are later on going to be members of the young men and young women's class. Then is the right time to train them for usefulness for others.

The third place to seek for leaders is in the student and gymnasium organizations of the youth from the Free Churches (F.K.S. and F.K.G.), and among the students preparing for teaching at the Normal Schools.

3. Qualifications Essential to Leadership:

The Sunday School teacher must realize he is not a teacher in the merely secular sense. He must rather take it in the sense that Jesus was a teacher. He is a moulder of human souls. "The object of the Sunday School is to impart the great truths of morality and religion and to translate them into action and character." [1] The leader must be able to meet those needs. To be a teacher in Sunday School requires both skill and knowledge. "Native ability makes skill in teaching possible, knowledge and training added to natural endowment make such skill an actual and dependable personal possession." [2] Those qualifications that are most important for leadership in this field can be summarized in the following points; personal good characteristics, spirit for service, a vital religious life and a good preparation.

4. Training Courses:

a. In the Denominations: At the present time the Free Churches are not economically strong enough to carry on a very large program with training courses. They have still to support, through taxation, the State Church. But through co-operation the Free Churches might be able to start with a program.

The aim of those training courses should be to train leaders of a special kind in the different denominations, such as

1 Pattee, Elements of Religious Pedagogy, p.II.
2 Brown, Primer of Teacher Training, p.11.

superintendents and religious director. The vital purpose must be to make the situation clear, put forward the problems and needs and give information and training how to meet those problems. They will then go back to the different local churches and denominations and give back some of the inspiration and vision.

The courses offered will be of two kinds: summer courses for a longer period of time and series of lecture weeks in the larger places.

b. In the Local Churches: The leaders who have attended the training courses will now be responsible for the work in the local church. They will come back not only with inspiration but also with a definite plan to work after. To train the teachers of Sunday School is the task of the local churches. In some places, as will be taken up later, it probably will be possible to work out a community plan for teacher training to meet the present needs. There is one advantage over the conditions of the present time and has to be taken into account when organizing the work. There is a common background to build on. Everyone to work with, from the teacher to the child, has a common background of Biblical information secured in the public school. It will surely, even at the present time, be of importance to have the curricula of the elementary school in mind when planning the work of the Sunday School. It is of value to have some unity in the plan.

The aim of the training courses will be to make real teachers. The method to be used can be divided into three parts:

(1) The teacher must be given a broad, spiritual interpretation of the lessons to be taught later on in the Sunday School.

(2) The methods and principles of teaching.

(3) Child-Study.

There are three kinds of teacher-training courses possible to work at the present time.

(1) A regular weekly teachers' meeting with a definitely planned program, careful preparation, and competent leadership.

(2) The young men's and young women's class has as a goal to secure and train the future leaders.

(3) In some places where possible a community plan of teacher training courses will be worked out.

In connection with this work, a definitely planned reading courses under competent supervision will be carried on.

B. To Train Future Leaders:

1. A Suggested Program:

How to meet the needs of present day conditions is discussed, but as before mentioned the tendencies of further change in this field are great. Something has to be done for future needs. Before planning the work a suggested program has to be laid down. This plan is worked out on the assumption that almost no religious instruction is to be given in the public schools and so the Free Churches have to stand for it entirely. At the same time the economical conditions are supposed to have changed, The Lutheran Church will cease to be supported by the State.

At the same time it has to be mentioned that the old heritage of the experiences of church work in Sweden, such as Swedish church history, music, art, architecture, literature, biography, etc., has to be taken up by the Free Churches too. It is their duty to carry on this typical Swedish religious experience to following generations. This rich contribution interpreted in the right way will be the unity and consistency of the program carried on by any church in Sweden. The ideal in the idea of a national church will live in another form, only more broadened in its conceptions. Considering the question of text-books to be used, much of the literature in this field in the public schools are suitable for this program.

The center in the future program will be a church school. The Sunday School will, in the future, become more

efficient. A larger interest is being manifested in religious education. Its program must undergo a thoroughgoing reconstruction, its organization a more effective administration. The work has to be extended. Week-day instruction has to be included.

Some uniformity in aim and mode of procedure in the religious education all over the country will be looked for as now. The institutions for religious education will, as other public schools, receive support from the State. And yet all strictly denominational interests have to be cared for. The religious education will, as now, stand in a certain connection with the elementary education. It will be required for graduation from the public schools. In such a way at the same time as the interests of the different denominations are cared for, the teaching will come under some supervision and control. A National Interdenominational Educational Board with representatives from all denominations will decide in large, the curriculum, requirements, teacher training, support, and other important questions.

2. Training Institutions for Professional Workers:

To carry out such a program as this will require a new staff of teachers specially trained. The training in teaching religion at the Normal Schools will no longer be compulsory, and yet there will be courses offered for those who want to take up that kind of teaching. The aim is still to maintain a high professional standard for teachers in religion. The best men and women of the country, with technical skill, educational vision, and

professional ideals will take part in this important work.

According to the conditions in Sweden there will be two centers for the professional training of leadership in religious education.

The Normal Schools: The traditional training courses in teaching religion at the Normal Schools are to be changed over as before referred to. The students graduating from those schools are going to furnish the staff of teachers in religious education of the children of elementary school age.

To begin with, atleast the same amount of hours has to be offered to the subject. The following shows the subject religion and the hours per year..

Classes	I	II	III	IV
Hours per years.	4	8	8	6

During the four years' course at the Normal School, twenty-six semester hours are given to this subject. During the first three years the emphasis is laid upon the building of a good foundation of Bible knowledge. The second year Church History is brought in and the third year the Christian Doctrine of Faith, Christian Belief, and Ethics, History of Missions and the History of the Swedish Church. Besides that, every year, in connection with the practical teaching work, seminar work is given to the principles and methods of teaching the Bible.

The student of the Normal School gets the knowledge that is necessary for a religious workers. He

gets instruction in Literature, History, Economics, Natural Science, Psychology, and some Philosphy. The aim of those hours given to religious education is to form spiritual growth and vocational information and skill.

These twenty-six hours that are given to Religion should be distributed as follows:

(1) Bible.

Classes	I	II	III	IV
Hours per year (16)	8	4	2	2

(2) Suggested courses to be fitted into the following schedule:

(a) Principles and General Methods of Religious Education, (6 hours)

(b) Fine Arts in Religion, (4 hours)

Classes	II	III	IV
Hours per year (10)	2	4	4

With time new courses should be taken up and the work broadened out.

The Theological Schools and the Universities: There will be departments for the training of professional leaders in religious education at the theological schools of the different denominations. In those departments the teachers of high schools, colleges, Normal Schools, and directors of religious education will get their training. Graduation from college will be required. All time will be given to specialization in this field. The specializa-

tion may be begun in college. The requirements and courses will be centered around the needs of the four groups of students in those departments.

(1) Graduates from Normal Schools (with their special training in religious education) for further specialization.

(2) Educational training for the ministers.

(3) Courses for teachers in colleges and Normal Schools and for Religious Directors.

(4) Training for foreign missions.

Besides work in the vocational major field there will be required of all students of the department a certain amount of courses in Religion, Religious Education, Psychology, Philosophy, and Fine Arts.

CONCLUSION:

At the present day such a program of church schools, free and independent of one all-dominating church, seems realizable. It cannot be built at once, but must develop gradually step by step. There must first be a period of adjustment of the old to the new. The suggested program made to meet the immediate need of leadership, put into practice and realized, will fit this period of adjustment and will train those of the Free Church that they may take over the responsibility of a greater task in the future.

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