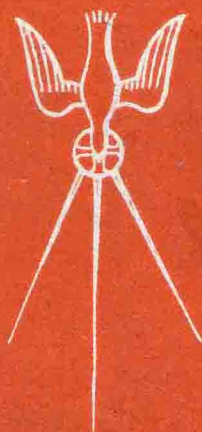




2-27 213 v

CURRICULUM CONSULTATION



REPORT OF A CONSULTATION
FOR A CURRICULUM FOR
CHRISTIAN NURTURE
29-1-1967 TO 5-2-1967
HOLIDAY BEACH HOTEL
ANTELIAS, LEBANON

CONFERENCE OF ORIENTAL ORTHODOX
CHURCHES, ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA



Report of a

CONSULTATION

Of the Oriental Orthodox Churches

ON

A CURRICULUM FOR CHRISTIAN NURTURE

Edited by :
FR. T. PAUL VERGHESE,
Principal,
Orthodox Theological Seminary,
Kottayam, Kerala,
India.

29th January to 5th February 1967

Holiday Beach Hotel,
ANTELIAS, LEBANON.

CONTENTS

1. Preface
2. List of Consultants
3. Programme of the Consultation
4. Opening Session
5. Lecture : Christian Education in the light of current Middle Eastern socio-religious patterns
—*Rev. Fr. George Khodr*
6. Lecture : Relation of Environment and Public School Education and influence of Christian Education
—*Prof. R. C. Miller*
7. Lecture : Christian Education in Orthodox Perspective : Philosophy and learning theory
—*Rev. Fr. Paul Verghese*
8. Lecture : The Spiritual and Ethical Focus of an Orthodox Curriculum
—*His Grace Bishop Athanasios of Beni-Souef*
9. Orthodox Curriculum—General Objectives and General Recommendations
10. Departmental Curriculum Objectives
11. The Ecumenical Witness of our Churches in Christian Education
12. Resolutions of the Consultation
13. Resolution of the Standing Committee
14. Tentative Budget for the Project

APPENDICES

1. Questionnaire on Christian Nurture
 2. Christian Education in the Coptic Orthodox Church
 3. Christian Education in the Armenian Orthodox Church
 4. Christian Education in the Syrian Orthodox Church of India
-

PREFACE

Catechetical instruction goes back to the very beginning of the Church's history. The teaching given to catechoumens or candidates for Baptism was held in so high regard that the teaching itself was called the Lord (Ephesians 4:17). To sit under the teaching of Christ, submitting oneself to both his words and his works, was the means to become a mature christian.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (315—386 A. D.) and St. Gregory of Nyssa (ca 330—ca 395 A. D.) were great catechists or Christian educators. So were the other great Fathers of the Church—St. Athanasius, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. John Chrysostom and St. Ephrem Syrus.

St. Cyril's 24 "Catechetical lectures" reveal how important "Christian Education" was in the 4th century Church for men and women, adults and children. St. Gregorie's "Great Catechism" can still be a model for Orthodox instruction for adults.

Despite all this rich patristic background, the Orthodox Churches have only recently come to think about structured Christian education after many centuries of neglect. During these centuries, most of our Christian education has been sub-conscious and informal—Participation in the liturgical year and instruction at home have been our main sources of Christian knowledge.

The Sunday School movement is also somewhat of a newcomer in the tradition of the Orthodox Churches. Several of them, however, have followed the pattern of the western churches in this regard for at least half a century now.

The western churches have a machinery for constant revision of their programmes in Christian nurture. They seek to make the best use of contemporary research. They have materials, training programmes and organization.

In the Orthodox Churches no such machinery exists. There is apparent need for reflection about our present patterns of

Sunday School and youth work as well as of religious instruction in Church and Government schools (as for example in Ethiopia). Revision is urgently needed. In many areas we need new materials and fresh methods.

The Antelias consultation was an attempt to begin. The conference of the Heads of Oriental Orthodox Churches had authorized such a consultation. Private negotiations with the World Council of Christian Education had begun already in Paris in the summer of 1962. But it was only after the great Addis Ababa conference of the Oriental Orthodox Patriarchs in January 1965 that the machinery for convening such a consultation came into existence. The standing committee of that conference sponsored this consultation. Without the generous financial assistance and technical advice of the World Council of Christian Education this consultation would not have been possible.

We are deeply indebted to our many consultants and speakers from other Churches. Dr. Ralph Mould, the General Secretary of the WCCE took a very personal interest in the organization and running of the consultation. Prof. Randolph Crump Miller of Yale Divinity School brought to us the wealth of his rich Protestant experience. Miss Constance Tarazar, the Christian Education specialist of Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America has rendered to the consultation services which we will always remember with immense gratitude. Her unique contribution has made it possible for us to think in terms of an *Orthodox Curriculum*. Fr. George Khodr has given us insights into the psychology and sociology of Christians in Islamic countries which are of decisive importance in planning Christian education in the Middle East. Miss Dorothea Teeter gave unstintingly of the fruits of her labours in the Middle East. Mr. Gabriel Habib did yeoman service in actually setting up the consultation and arranging for speakers. We are especially grateful to him as well as to Miss Maud Nahas and Mr. Albert Laham of the Orthodox youth movement for their co-operation and assistance.

Our thanks are especially due to the competence, efficiency and devotion of our Armenian Evangelical friend Mr. Arto Avakian who acted as recording secretary for the entire consultation.

The Armenian Catholicate of Cilicia was our host at the lovely Holiday Beach Hotel in Antelias. It was their efficiency in organizing the conference that gave some of us the confident conviction that efficiency and Orthodoxy are not necessarily incompatible. The laymen of the Armenian Church in Beirut gave us their cars and drivers, and looked after us with genuine solicitude.

The main preparatory work of the consultation was the responsibility of the Cairo Branch secretariat of the standing committee of Oriental Orthodox Churches. Mr. Yassa Hanna and Dr. Amin Hakim of the Coptic Church gave generously and liberally of their time and interest to compile and send out the questionnaire on Christian Education and get at least three responses.

Our thanks are due also to the Standing Committee of the Conference of Oriental Orthodox Churches which graciously received our report and adopted an official resolution authorizing the curriculum and training project.

*Kottayam, India,
Feast of the Nativity, 1967.*

FR. PAUL VERGHESE,
Editor.



CONSULTATION OF THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

(List of Consultants)

1. Metropolitan Malatius Barnaba,
Syrian Orthodox Church, Syria
2. Metropolitan Athanasios of Beni-Souef,
Coptic Orthodox Church, U. A. R.
3. Metropolitan Athanasios Ephrem,
Syrian Orthodox Church, Lebanon
4. Bishop Samuel, Coptic Orthodox Church, Cairo, U. A. R.
5. Bishop Karekin Sarkissian,
Armenian Orthodox Church, Lebanon
6. Fr. Mesrob Ashjian, Armenian Orthodox Church, Lebanon
7. Fr. Ibrahim Attia, Coptic Orthodox Church, U. A. R.
8. Fr. Arsen Avedikian, Armenian Orthodox Church, Lebanon
9. Fr. T. J. Joshua, Syrian Orthodox Church, India
10. Fr. Dr. V. C. Samuel, Syrian Orthodox Church, India
11. Fr. Dirayr Panossian, Armenian Orthodox Church, Lebanon
12. Fr. Datev Sarkissian, Armenian Orthodox Church, Lebanon
13. Fr. Saliba Shamoon, Syrian Orthodox Church, Syria
14. Fr. Paul Verghese, Syrian Orthodox Church, India
15. Mr. Yassa Hanna, Coptic Orthodox Church, U. A. R.
16. Dr. Karam Khella, Coptic Orthodox Church, U. A. R.
17. Mr. Puzant Yeghiayan,
Armenian Orthodox Church, Lebanon
18. Mr. Gabriel Habib, Greek Orthodox Church, Lebanon
19. Miss Maud Nahas, Greek Orthodox Church, Lebanon
20. Miss Constance Tarasar,
Russian Orthodox Church of America, U. S. A.
21. Mr. Arto Avakian, Armenian Evangelical Church, Lebanon
22. Rev. Dr. R. C. Miller, Professor of Christian Education,
Yale University, Divinity School, USA (Episcopal Church)
23. Rev. Ralph Mould, World Council of Christian Education,
Geneva (Presbyterian)
24. Miss D. Teeter, United Presbyterian Church, Lebanon
25. Mr. Ralph C. Young,
United Church of Canada, WCC, Geneva

PROGRAMME OF THE CONSULTATION OF ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CURRICULUM

29th January—5th February

Antelias — Lebanon

Sunday, 29th January

7. 00 p. m.—8. 30 p. m. *Opening Session*

- (a) Opening Prayers
- (b) Roll Call
- (c) Appointment of Recording Secretary,
and Steering and Drafting Committees
- (d) Presentation of the programme
- (e) The purpose of the Consultation introduced by Bishop Samuel
- (f) Report on the survey by Mr. Yassa Hanna—Discussion

Monday, 30th January

9. 00 a. m.—10. 30 a. m. *Lecture* : Christian Education in the light of current Middle Eastern socio-religious patterns by Fr. George Khodr
Discussion

Monday, 30th January, 1967. 8.45 a. m.

Morning Prayers were led by Bishop Athanasios of Beni-Souef

9.00 a. m.—10. 30 a. m. Lecture :

(Summary of the lecture by Fr. George Khodr)

Christian Education in the light of current Middle Eastern socio-religious patterns

The lecturer emphasized the fact that the message of the Gospel is conveyed in a given milieu, a milieu which has its own mentality and a particular psychological understanding of the people. There is no Gospel that is worded in some perennial way. The Gospel is not made of mere words but is just as much an interpretation of events and words. He stressed two aspects of Christian Education in the light of current Middle Eastern socio-religious patterns :

(1) Christian Education is not a mere repetition of scriptural verses. This is bad pedagogy, primarily because the wording of the Bible already belonged to a different milieu. This wording needs a paraphrasing which is an interpretation in its context. Such a paraphrase is demanded by the very nature of the Incarnation. We need a new translation of Jesus Christ's words, in the context of our current life.

A man is the offspring of his society. Christian Society is not identified with the Church. Our Middle Eastern society is part of Eastern Christendom. Like Western Christendom, Eastern Christendom is a victim of history.

- 11.00 a. m.—12. 30 p. m. *Lecture*: Relation of Environment and public school education and influence on Christian Education by Prof R. C. Miller
Discussion
4. 00 p. m.—5. 30 p. m. *Lecture* : Approach regarding various types of methods, etc. in public and private schools in the Middle East. By Dr D Teeter
Discussion
6. 00 p. m.—7. 30 p. m. *Panel Discussion* : The present status of Christian Education in our Churches

Tuesday, 31 January

9. 00 a. m.—10. 30 a. m. *Lecture* : Christian Education in Orthodox Perspective; philosophy and learning theory, By Fr. Paul Varghese
Discussion
11. 00 a. m.—12. 30 p. m. *Lecture* : The Scriptural Focus of an Orthodox Curriculum by an Ethiopian Speaker
Discussion
4. 00 p. m.—5. 30 p. m. *Lecture* : The Liturgical Focus of an Orthodox Curriculum; the role of the liturgical sacramental life in Christian Education by Archbishop Athanasios Ephrem and Fr. V. C. Samuel
Discussion
6. 00 p. m.—8. p. m. Reception by His Holiness Catholicos Khoren I at Antelias

(2) Our Middle Eastern Christianity faces the special world of Islam, and here arises the very problem of presenting Christianity in a different way. He, then, turned to particular aspects of Middle Eastern socio-religious patterns .

(a) Social Patterns

The Middle East in general is still to a great extent a patriarchal society. Social censorship rules our life ; and some sort of family, clan or tribal code rules over our social life. We belong to a bigger society than that of our parents. In Arabic we designate this society by the word "*Ta'ifa*." The word also means clan, with a kind of fanaticism of the clan which creates our ethics. Social customs are absolute. He referred to some instances : The very idea of virtue or obedience is understood by many of our priests as being complete surrender to our parents. This is also an Islamic pattern. A muslim adult behaves towards his parents almost as if he himself were a little boy or an adolescent. For example the lecturer cited the situation where he saw a 25-year-old young man being beaten by his father in the street, and reacting in a way almost of being happy for it.

Commanding our children is not always a disinterested thing. It is very often a kind of parental egotism. We cannot develop the personality of the child if we stick to this patriarchal pattern. The daughter and the wife are particularly under this strain. Of course in Beirut, we see an emancipation, but this is an exception. In the past, even among Christians, a young woman was engaged to be married without even having a chance to see her fiancée. Marriage tended to be a contract between two families. If this pattern is normative for us, then, women's personality cannot be developed at all.

There is also a certain kind of bourgeois, what we call in Arabic, "*Adamiah*," respectability. A good

Christian must be a respectable man, very often, such "respectable" families are bourgeois families. A "respectable" family is one which has the ability to dominate the Bishop of the Diocese. One is happy not to be involved in a diocesan council because one would have his hands dirtied. Such families don't want anything. They don't want to be involved, they want to be clean. This Bourgeois ethics is some kind of narcissism. It is a subtle way of aggressiveness.

This has an influence on Christian Education in the Church, because parents would be reluctant to let their children mingle with the ordinary people in church. Moreover, they are strongly opposed to any preaching about poverty, or social justice,

(b) Political Confessionalism

This Confessionalism consecrates a political division among Christians and Muslims on the one hand, and among Christians themselves on the other hand. Here, we are rationalizing our social and political interest. This means that the clergy are the allies of the rich classes. If you support confessionalism politically, you are thereby supporting the ruling classes. This confessionalism has its effects on teaching. In the rules of our local Church, when a Bishop is consecrated he has to take a vow not only to safeguard the faith but also to protect the rights of his community. You cannot speak of loving the other, etc.,... because it would mean breaking down the wall of partition between the confessions.

Moreover, it is understood that Christianity is an ally of economic liberalism and parliamentary democracy, while the Islamic community is understood to promote socialism. What is happening is that each is protecting its own interest. There is a confusion between freedom and Christianity. There is also a confusion between economic liberty and the freedom which we have in Christ. Berdyaev said "Christianity

Sunday, 29th January. 7. p. m.

Opening Session

Bishop Samuel of the Coptic Orthodox Church opened the Consultation with a brief inaugural address.

For many of us the Church has always been and thought of as the caring and loving mother. And when we think of Christian Education, we are thinking of the Church providing both *koinonia* and *diakonia*, fellowship and service. At this historic juncture in our Churches' history, we stop to ask ourselves the question as members of the Church, are we honestly able, do we have the facilities, to transfer to our children the Christian heritage of our Fathers? And the more we think of it, the question becomes: How are we to transfer our heritage, our Orthodox heritage in a way which can meet the challenge of the modern world?

In the midst of modern life and all that man faces in it, man loses his humanity. He is in need of a caring mother to integrate him as a child and a son. The Church is this caring mother.

When thinking of Christian Education, and when we pause to find out what our Churches have done in the field, we find that each Church has developed its own curriculum and curriculum materials. It is our aim in this Consultation to restudy what has been done and find out ways in which we may re-adapt these curricula in the light of recent developments, to consider the difficulties which we are facing, and finally to seek new ways of applying our curricula. Probably our work here will involve an important revision of our curricula. It is for this task that we have met.

Wednesday, 1st February

9. 00 a. m.—10. 30 a. m. *Lecture* : The Spiritual and Ethical Focus of an Orthodox Curriculum (Relationship of learning to life, social problems, morality, etc. Also, personal prayer, lives of saints, etc.). By Bishop Athanasios of Beni-Souef
Discussion
11. 00 a. m.—12. 30 p. m. *Lecture* : The Doctrinal and Patri-
stic Focus of an Orthodox Curri-
culum. By Bishop K. Sarkissian
Discussion
4. 00 p. m.—5. 30 p. m. *Lecture* : Suggested organizing Prin-
ciples of an Orthodox Curriculum.
By Miss Tarasar
Discussion
6. 00 p. m.—7. 30 p. m. *Panel Discussion* : Principles of an
Orthodox Curriculum

Thursday, 2nd February

9. a. m.—12. 00 noon Liturgy in the Cathedral of Antelias,
celebrated by His Holiness Khoren I,
on the feast of the martyrs of St.
Vardanank (5th century)
4. 00 p. m.—5. 30 p. m. *Lecture* : Practical requirements and
considerations in Curriculum building,
Educational, Psychological and tech-
nical. By Dr. Ralph Mould
Discussion
6. 00 p. m.—7. 30 p. m. Discussion continued on Dr. Mould's
lecture

Friday, 3rd February

9. 00 a. m.—10. 30 a. m. Looking forward; Planning for future;
Conclusions

is less sociological than social.” The Middle Eastern countries have social needs, but in order to meet the social needs of these countries, one has to develop in one’s teaching, and in one’s conveying of the Gospel, the community aspect of our faith, not sociological communalism. This is the idea of the body of Christ which is of the very essence of our faith. You have to live here in order to understand this. In the West, there is a kind of togetherness, you are interpreting the Gospel in terms of Community. Here we are defending community rights. We have sharp communal distinctions. In the future, this confusion may disappear. We need a church pattern of living. We need to distinguish between Churchness and Political Confessionalism.

Because of our Eastern and Christian legacy, we have to interpret the richness of this legacy and show the social obligations of the Church in city life. Going to the Fathers, we have to re-discover our heritage of service. We are the trustees of these riches. Some Fathers like St. John Chrysostom argue for a sharing of wealth and that property rights are not sacred. St. Basil said “When you possess too much, you are a thief.” If this is the patristic interpretation of Christianity, it will be of great import in Christian ethical teaching. I am not suggesting that Christianity is demanding socialism or liberalism. We are not to be the servants of socialism, but we cannot attack it for the sake of being merely liberal. We need to have a prophetic stand for justice. Therefore we have to follow in a sympathetic way the right of nations to develop and achieve prosperity, according to their own plan and programme and vision.

(c) Religio-cultural patterns

There is also the ecumenical dimension. In Egypt and Syria, the Governments have asked for an ecumenical catechism. We have to think of it. We are thinking of something of the sort in Lebanon.

For example, we have the ridiculous case in a public school where for the sake of *two* Maronite students, we need to have a Maronite priest for catechism, or for *one* Orthodox student, we need an orthodox priest. It is much easier to have one text and one teacher. This dimension has to be considered in our Christian Education. We are teaching some differences which have been overcome in ecumenical circles. We need to teach a new catechism, which is much deeper and therefore truer and more ecumenical.

(d) Church Nationalism

It is easier for some Christians to strengthen Church Nationalism in order to protect people against non-Christians. This is understandable because one has not to deepen them in loyalty to Christ; it is easier to deepen their national loyalty. We want them to stick more to nationalism. But this is not a true belonging to the Church. It is a false belonging as far as Eastern Christians are concerned.

We come to the problem of language and openness to Islam. Openness is the duty of all Christians in the Middle East. It is a delicate matter. It is difficult to ask people to study Islam. But if Christianity is to be interpreted by all of us, there is no other way. We cannot be simply objective. There is no objectivity without sympathy. We have to know what to deal with. After all, our task is to proclaim the Gospel in these lands. It is easier for an Arab Christian or non-Arab Christian, rather than for a Western Christian to proclaim the Gospel in the Middle East. There is a Community of birth and destiny, and a common witness for Christ to Islam. This means that Christian catechism in general has to be worded by categories understandable to Muslims. For example, to say that God is one nature in three persons does not mean anything to a Muslim. The word "*Uknum*" (person) is never used in ordinary Arabic language.

(At this point, His Grace traced the history of how this Consultation became a reality, beginning with some informal discussions at the WCC Central Committee meeting in Paris, 1962, with Dr. Nelson Chappel, the then General Secretary of the W. C. C. E.)

We have to sit down and study very carefully our environment and our heritage. We have equally to sit down and sift what is of importance and what can be transmitted, and therefore what can and should be implemented into the curriculum of Christian Education.

Undoubtedly, our work here will be a combined effort, and therefore everyone of us has work to do. We shall aim particularly at pointing out the principles and building the structure of such an Oriental Orthodox Christian Education.

Before proceeding any further, the consultants unanimously elected the Rev. Fr. Paul Verghese to be Chairman of the Consultation.

Bishop Samuel's opening address was followed by a Summary Report of Dr. Yassa Hannah's findings from the answers that the Churches sent to the questionnaire which had been prepared. The summary report was to be a survey of six main topics, of which the first was to be "Clarification," to culminate in the sixth point, viz., "Evaluation."

Due to lack of time, originally planned to be thirty minutes, the suggestion was made to have a representative from each Church on the panel the following day, when each panel member would give a report, while each member of the Consultation would have a mimeographed copy of the reports sent by the Churches.

The meeting was adjourned at 8.35 p. m.

11. 00 a. m.—12. 30 p. m. Discussion continued

4. 00 p. m.—5. 30 p. m. Reading of the first drafts of the findings

6. 00 p. m.—7. 30 p. m. Findings (cont'd)

Saturday, 4th February

The Continuation of the previous day's work. Final actions

Sunday, 5th February

8. 30 a. m.—10. 30 a. m. Liturgy at the Syrian Orthodox Cathedral in Beirut

11. 00 a. m. Excursion to Baalbeck

All polemic in modern Islam against Christianity comes from a confusion of Hypostasis with *Dhat*. We have to remember that there is a togetherness in the Godhead. And our categories have to be formulated and understood accordingly. All the idea of *Kenosis* (self-emptying) of God on the Cross is Chinese to the Arabs. Similarly the Christian virtue of meekness and humility are understood by the Muslims to be weakness. Here Christianity is considered as the weak man's philosophy. And as such Christianity is understood to produce some kind of a broken man. This misunderstanding has to be removed from the minds of people by showing the strength and power of the cosmic, all-embracing Christ.

(e) Language Problem

He did not speak of Armenians and Ethiopians, but with reference to the Arabic Speaking Churches, the lecturer stressed the fact that these Churches used bad Arabic in their Liturgies. These, he mentioned, had been translated in the 12th century, and therefore need to undergo a revision as far as language is concerned. "I am not advocating a very classical Arabic, but a correct one." This is not only true of the Liturgies and the Bible, but is more true still as far as persons are concerned. Muslims have great respect for those who speak good Arabic. In the 19th century, the Lebanese Christians rediscovered the Arabic language. Can anything comparable be said of the Lebanese Christians today?

Perhaps the most urgent task set before the Christians of the Middle East today is to have a common text of the Bible in good Arabic.

The lecture was followed by a period of discussion:

- Q. Is the correct approach to communicate Christianity to Muslims the concept of "Trinity," or does one have to go to the deeper concept of "salvation"?

- A. The *Quran* is not opposed to Christian triadology, but only to a particular Arabian form of the concept of the Trinity which existed at the time of the rise of Islam. One has to remove the sexual misunderstanding of the Trinity. But I agree that the teaching begins with Christ. not necessarily with soteriology, but with the Incarnations.
- Q. What about certain weak points in the Liturgy, e. g. absence of reference to Air travel, or to the various aspects of industrial life, in the intercession of the church?
- A. The whole pattern of our priestly life was composed for monasteries. We need a *parish* ritual for our Churches. Moreover in ancient times, the day was the unit. Nowadays, in cosmopolitan life, the night may be this unit. The very cycle of life is changing. It seems that children do not exist for the Oriental Churches. We need fundamental revision of our liturgical texts to bring them closer to our contemporary life.
-

Monday, January 30th 1967.

Relation of Environment and Public School Education and their influence on Christian Education

DR. RANDOLPH C. MILLER

I am an ignorant newcomer to this part of the world. I hope to act as a catalyst from a western perspective. I shall divide my lecture into two sections :

- I. Analysis of situation.
- II. The way in which the Church can respond to the environment.

There are four factors at work in all education :

(1) The family—the impact of any family structure is profound. The earliest years of one's life are most important. By the time one is three years old his parents have done half of all the religious education he is to have in his life.

(2) The school—there is variety in the time which one spends at school or church, or home. The teacher has still a kind of authority which even parents are starting to loose. The child at a very early age starts to weigh authorities. This pattern continues for the 6—12 years that follow. It is in the school that the process of the pervasiveness of cultural mores takes place. Value judgements and moral decisions are dominant in any culture. The child will be exposed more to the secular mores than to Church mores, because of the longer time that he spends in school than in Church.

(3) The Community itself—we don't see how this is educational. But education is primarily experience, and formation of attitudes towards what happens. It is after school hours that the community teaches—when the child is exposed to the mores of peer groups, village or town life, motion pictures, radio, T. V. etc.

(4) The Church—the influence of the Church may pervade the three factors mentioned above. But as far as direct influence is concerned the Church has only 2 or 3 hours per week of the child's time. Repetition and frequency are essential in learning. The Church is a minority influence as far as an organizational institution is concerned. Moreover, the Church is often corrupted by bourgeois and political patterns. Thus the Church is tremendously handicapped in the effectiveness of its educational role.

The child has claims made on him by all four factors. Now it is a matter of loyalty. Oftentimes, two children enrich each other's experience.

In modern society these four sets of loyalties conflict; there is more conflict than a child or adult can handle.

Unless the Church can focus the attention of the child on God's world there will be no cohesiveness, no integrating principle.

There are needs that are universal for all children. These needs correlate with what the Gospel promises:

- (i) The need to be loved and accepted. The child is loved not because he earned it but simply because he is. The mother loves the child no matter what it is, no matter how unacceptable it may be.
- (ii) Some kind of structure, law, order in one's life because there is no love without justice. There

is the need of some kind of routine, a normal expectation, a manageable world of standards and directions.

- (iii) The need or the possibility of growth—there is nothing more frightening in modern life than what it is doing to man's spirit by stunting it. This stunting is some sort of killing. There must be the freedom to grow in terms of fulfilment.
- (iv) The need for some satisfaction in the sense of mystery—this must be expressed in various forms in religious rituals, even in superstitions and stupidity. There must be some way of expressing this liturgically.

What is society doing today? We are up against a rapid social and technological change. Changes in family life are threatening value judgments and there is nothing adequate to replace them. In schooling, school objectives are not humane enough. As far as work opportunities are concerned there is an exodus from the villages into metropolises and the very inadequately trained people are those who make slums and create technological unemployment.

And yet these basic needs must be met in a new way. Society is becoming secular technically and practically. Secularity is good because it is God's gift. Secularism and scientism are replacing the religious outlook. Sometimes what is done as a result of this scientism is the animalisation and de-personalisation of man.

We need to have a biblical interpretation of the word secular. This will be a reasserting of the doctrine of creation. The Bible is fundamentally secular, but everything in it is seen from a theological perspective. Thus, the world once more becomes the arena of discipleship. There is the danger that religious education

may sell out to secular respectability. Or it can withdraw to a kind of ghetto society, leading to a false sacralization of the world. However, we can assert a welcome to the secular world, and see it as the place where Christian Education takes place.

How can the Church respond to this environment?

(1) By recognizing the power of the personal. This cannot be destroyed, for one's life is always personal. This is most clearly seen in the philosophy of Martin Buber where he speaks of an I/Thou relationship. The Thou is not It that is to be used in order to satisfy my ends. There must be the possibility of personal meeting and dialogue, and therefore the possibility of knowing, of reconciliation, overcoming alienation and hatred.

Dr. Marjorie Reeves of Oxford says that there are five marks of a true community.

- (a) The life of the group must be subject to a rule of law which is beneficent and as far as possible accepted by everybody.
- (b) All the members must be treating each other as persons.
- (c) Each member must find a significant role which he can play in the life of the whole. This is the mystery of the spirit within the whole.
- (d) The group must contain a certain element of mixture or variety. We will never understand the other until we have him in the group. But how much mixture should we have? We never know.
- (e) The group must serve some purpose bigger than the immediate purpose and interests of its members.

(2) If we are to operate and be effective, we need to have a new philosophy of language. There is a kind of scientific literal language that might be relevant secularly speaking, but we need something more than a literal or one-dimensional language if we are to express religious insight; for instance the Bible uses a mixture of language games.

There are several types of language. Some languages can be called “scientific difficult” proper in its place and time; another can be called “scientific simple” such as the language used in a catechism, but no one dies for it. There is the “poetic difficult.” There is also a “poetic simple” language; this is the language of the Gospel, the language of the heart, discernment and commitment. This is the very heart of our next step in this Consultation.

The trouble is that we have taken our lead from Paul who, when he talked “scientific difficult,” Eutychus fell asleep. We must rather follow the example of Jesus when he talked to 5,000 they didn’t go home to sleep.

Because the secular world is God’s world we do not labour in vain.



Tuesday, 31st January. 9.00—10.30 a. m.

Christian Education in Orthodox Perspective ; Philosophy and Learning Theory

FR. PAUL VERGHESE

I shall divide my lecture into two parts :

- I. General Structure and Basic Orientation,
the Objective of the Curriculum.
- II. Pick out from the Christian Tradition
certain elements that should be incorporated
into the Curriculum

1. The Orthodox Church cannot say that there are special Orthodox principles for Curriculum construction. What they can put forward is something that should be valid for all Christian Churches. There are Christian principles as seen from the perspective of the Orthodox tradition. They should be applicable to all Christian Education.

2. Orthodox Christian Education is a *life-long* process. There is no particular point at which it begins or ends. For the child of the Orthodox parents Christian Education begins even before baptism, for we know that attitudes are formed at an unconscious level from the time of birth at least. Death itself is regarded as an event in the educational process of a Christian. The life-long time span of Christian Education has to be kept in mind for Curriculum construction.

3. The main milieu of Christian growth is an interpenetrating structure composed of three strands :

- i. the daily life of the community in the world
- ii. the liturgical year of the Church
- iii. the life cycle of persons in the Church

We see that the pattern of Christian instruction from the earliest time conformed to a two-fold structure—daily life and liturgical life. This is the case in the earliest catechetical treatise we have, the *Didache*. But we find by experience that the life cycle of persons—i. e. their baptism or wedding, their children's baptism, death in the family, other crises in the lives of persons also serve an educational purpose for themselves as well as for the whole community and should not be overlooked in curriculum planning.

4. An Orthodox curriculum should be directed to the best use of these three strands for the growth of persons in community in relation to God and to fellow-men but the strands cannot very well be treated separately. Any formal instruction given has to be related to these three strands, and the main purpose of such instruction should be to illuminate these three strands as they affect the person in community. The comprehensive goal of Christian nurture in the Church is to make membership in the Church as the Royal Priesthood more fully grasped, more fully understood, and more faithfully realised. The Royal Priesthood of the Church means first standing in the presence of God, on behalf of the whole of creation, in a life of prayer and eucharistic worship, thus being offered up to God, in Christ the High Priest, by the Holy Spirit. It means participation in the eternal self-offering of Christ on behalf of the whole creation. Secondly it means the manifestation of God's presence in the world, through the life of self-sacrificing service, in loving care for all human beings, in speaking the word of truth in the power of the Spirit—the prophetic and pastoral or diaconal ministry of Christ in the world. It is in the context of this two-fold diaconia that the

koinonia is to be built up—the *oikodome* (edification) of the *koinonia* (fellowship). Christian nurture is this (a) *oikodome* of the community for (b) the worship of God on behalf of creation and for (c) the manifestation of God to the creation.

5. All the three strands have reference to a community or communities in which the Christian lives. There are three such primary communities in which the Christian participates at various levels—the church, the family and society. In the case of children and young people, educational institutions (schools or colleges) form the core of their participation in society. All the three communities take their meaning from the central community, the Church.

6. Participation in the Church is at various levels, going both up and down from the local congregation, which is the basic level of participation. The levels go upward in circles which grow larger and more varied—e.g. the local ecumenical community of Christians, the particular Church (Syrian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian, etc.) as a whole, the national group of Churches, regional or international organisations in which the Church participates, the universal Church on heaven and earth etc. The levels go downward with increasing intensity of participation—the youth group, the Sunday school class, the discussion group or prayer group of which one is a permanent member. Christian growth takes place at all these various levels and Christian Education has to take these fully into account.

7. The family is also a community within the Church in which the Christian lives and grows. It is not just children that derive their growth from this community. The mutual relations between parents as well as between parents and children belong fundamentally to the pattern of Christian growth. Education takes place here, and instruction has to assist in

the process. Both parents and children have to grow in the family. Christian education must deal with both.

8. The levels at which the Christian participates in society with non-Christian fellowmen are many and varied, but there are certain basic priorities for the Christian. (a) It is a world which has been sanctified by the presence of the Church in it. (b) His commitment to the whole of humanity is the overarching frame into which all his concerns should fit. The kind of commitment we often find in our churches is what can be called communalism, where we think of the Christian community's interests as somehow in conflict with other communities in the nation or national loyalty in conflict with other nations and by that perspective we render the Christian witness totally ineffective. The shift from the communalism to the vision of the whole of the human community for which Christ died should stand at the forefront of our concerns in devising a Christian Education Curriculum. The temptation to teach our heritage in such a manner as to inculcate attitudes of communalism should be watched in all the curriculae.

Christian Education should gradually expand the consciousness of the Christian to embrace the whole of humanity, at regional, national, local as well as at international levels.

9. These three strands are part of daily life. There is a great danger in looking upon the Church as preparatory for daily life. Education is in life, for life, by life. After all we grow up in daily life, and we are taught in daily life. The Royal Priesthood is fulfilled in daily life; informal education is carried out in daily life, through the Radio, TV and other mass media, the normal human relations within the family, school, nation etc. But the question is how the Christian should be discerning in the use these as a means of

growth e. g. the Sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony should be opportunities for growing in the faith, for the whole congregation.

II. In this second part of my lecture, I shall make an attempt, a difficult and necessarily incomplete attempt, to look at 12 aspects of the Christian Tradition. For me, there are three fundamental principles on the basis of which we appropriate Tradition at every time and in every generation :

1. The historical and eschatological orientation. Tradition is the history of the eschaton. It is the way in which the seed of the Kingdom has grown in history. It is the *Omega* comes into history, moving towards its consummation and dynamically transforming history and humanity;
2. Tradition is maintained in the community of the Holy Spirit. It is the whole life of the community, not just a set of writings, or of unwritten facts.
3. It is always incumbent on each generation to have the freedom of discernment to see the past, the direction in which God wants it to go, and the way in which things are developing at present. Tradition is not an unhuskable coconut. It is the way in which the Church has to reshape its own obedience, in the light of the past, in view of the future, in the context of the present.

Now let us turn to the 12 aspects, as examples of creative use of the experience of the past.

(a) **The Old Testament** is the first. We have to discern in it what is normative for us. This we have to do :

1. in order to understand the event of Christ, as a preparation for the incarnation of the Son of God.

2. in terms of its expectant-messianic i.e. a historical eschatological existence. It is not some kind of futurologist existence, but it looked back on God's dealing with them in the past only to know how to conduct themselves in the present and what to look for in the future.
3. in terms of the O. T.'s concrete affirmation of things. They stressed tangible reality; they said, "This thing is where God's manifestation takes place." They had a theophanic perspective. Concrete reality—events and things—was the medium of God's revelation—not just words.
4. Moreover, the Old Testament people had a tremendous prophetic passionate concern for righteousness—not just personal holiness, but social righteousness (e. g. Amos).
5. Theirs was a living dynamic quality of *community* life, within which the life of the person was seen as an integral part.

(b) **The life of our Lord.** In it we should pay special attention to two central aspects among many others :

1. **His acts** which revealed the inter-relationship between the material and the spiritual : e. g. healing and forgiving ; opening the eyes was for him at once spiritual and physical. The true meaning of his acts is found in this inter-relationship between physical experience and spiritual healing and illumination.
2. **His way of teaching.** It was never discursive. It was usually a "logically odd" way of presenting things. He didn't give quick easy answers, because he saw that the questions

asked implied certain presuppositions. He posed fresh questions to promote a living concern and interest, and to make people themselves ask new questions.

(c) **The Apostolic Church.** Let me read a passage from Paul's Letter to the Corinthians "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be built up, the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God, is not a God of confusion but of peace." Here we see the *Oikodome*, the building up of the Church as a whole. There is no division of the Church into the teaching Church and the learning Church. The whole Church is a teaching community and a learning community. It is open to mutual instruction and correction, but the whole Church has the responsibility for discerning the truth.

(d) **The Post-Apostolic Church.** The significant phenomenon here is the *catechumenate* (the period of waiting before the individual Christian was admitted into the fellowship), probably sometimes it took a person 2 years or more to be formally admitted to the catechumenate. Then there was a period of 40 days in Lent, when the catechumens were given formal instruction in the ethical life. Probably we should begin to re-establish the catechumenate. This use of Lent in the light of modern conditions is most necessary and useful for a disciplined preparation of life.

However, there were some dangers in the Post-Apostolic Church which we should avoid: they tended to believe that the Church was Noah's Ark. We now have to be more careful about the relation of the Church to the world and cannot think of salvation purely in terms of salvaging persons from a perishing world. What happens in the world is the material for the coming kingdom of God.

(e) The Development of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

What has often been criticised as the Constantinian compromise, is perhaps the most significant advance. It is during this period that the Church became a social factor, and took seriously the principle of the incarnation—"the logos became flesh." This is expressed even in Byzantine architecture, where the Church was a symbol of heaven on earth, the merging of the coming kingdom with history.

However, there was the temptation to identify the Kingdom of God with the Byzantine Empire, and the Church protested strongly against this too facile identification through the eschatological witness of the Monastic movement. The monks were the beatniks of their time, the non-conformists of Egypt and Byzantium, who questioned an easy accommodation to this world without tension.

Up to that time the sermon had a powerful weight since to witness to Christ was to risk one's life. Christianity was illegal, persecuted, unpopular. To speak the word of Christ cost something. But in the Constantinian period, words became fluffy, meaningless, devaluated. The Church devised a way, a technique to compensate—theology was put in the Liturgy; it was introduced into the services of prayer of the Church. Liturgy became the vehicle of dogma or teaching.

The great contribution of this period is in pointing out the importance of existential participation in the event. The principle of education by participation became further established in the Tradition. With the decline of the catechumenate the importance of the family as a milieu of religious instruction becomes greater. There was equally a shift of ethical instruction from the catechumenate to the Confessional. Thus there was ethical instruction in the context of the person's actual problems. Contextualism is not so new.

•

But we have to avoid two major perils from this period.

- (i) Ethnicism—the identification of the Church with my ethnic community. Not only makes it difficult to assimilate those of different ethnic origin, but develops unchristian communal parochialism.
- (ii) The inability to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials so obstructive to developing a living, dynamic, relevant and growing tradition.

(f) **Monasticism.** There has been a misunderstanding of monasticism in our churches. Following the monastic vocation was a way of affirming the need to choose the single pearl of great price at the cost of everything else. Also a way of battling against the devil on his own ground. Some of these monastic values need to be recovered : such as those we find in the *life of St. Makrina* and in the *Rule of St. Basil*.

- (i) working with one's own hands ;
- (ii) working in order to serve ;
- (iii) equality of master and servant in service. The spiritual centre of our mission in the modern world should be a monastic life, relevant to the needs of men and women for discipline, depth and discernment.

(g) **The Medieval Catholic Pattern.** In this period the Church became the treasury of all knowledge and culture due to the so called Barbaric invasions. But realistically the Church can no longer hope to be the Teacher of the world. It is true that the precision of the Scholastics helped to develop science in the West. But in such precision there is the danger of overarticulation in theology. Therefore, we need to be more

precise and yet at the same time modest about what the Church can teach, and about all knowledge of ultimate reality. ▲ certain relativisation of theology as a contextual formulation of God's truth for our time is needed.

Two aspects of this period have to be rejected : overemphasis on jurisdiction ; and the ecclesial control of the individual and society, which led to the secularist reaction.

(h) **The Reformation.** The Reformation in the Western Church is part of the Church's Tradition, with certain positive elements, which we need to realise :

- (i) a return to the Bible and its importance ; and
- (ii) an emphasis on the glory of God in contrast to the glory of the institutional Church.
- (iii) the love of God as more central than legalistic, canon law centred ethics.

But we have to be cautious :

1. We must not fail to put the Bible in its Eucharistic context.
2. We must not be as tardy as the Reformation was in re-discovering the ministry of the laity.
3. Later developments in the Reformation failed to take and understand the Church seriously and opposed the Tradition and the Bible to each other.

(i) **The beginning of polemic theology, and Denominational or Confessional Education.** In a sense it was good that polemic theology created vitality in the theology of the Church. But polemics is a dangerous trap, despite its usefulness to bring creative tension and enrichment of meaning into theological reflection.

It is in this kind of teaching that we see the distortions of the concepts of the Episcopate, the Eucharist, the Doctrine of the Holy Virgin. We see in this controversy all sorts of emotional reactions on both sides. We have to go deeper than the polemic and get a creative understanding of these concepts so central to the Incarnation and to the Church's life. Here is the greatest contribution to be made by the Orthodox tradition to the ecumenical debate.

For instance, the doctrine of the Holy Virgin must have its proper place as an integral part of Christology and Ecclesiology.

Similarly, the rich doctrine of the Eucharist, the heart and centre of the Church's life has been distorted beyond recognition by polemic theology. And it is here that we have to contribute to the ecumenical movement in re-discovering the ancient heritage in this regard, which transcends the categories of the western debate since the last six centuries.

(j) **Pietistic Education.** Here the emphasis was on individual religion, of God in the heart. This was a reaction against lifeless academic theology. We have to recover the importance of last man's personal access to God but we must never end up in individualism and social irrelevance in the search for the "religion of the heart."

(k) The *Neo-Orthodox* Barthian reaction against subjective religion and liberalism and the Niebuhrian stress of participation in society, a participation which, however, must not entail an easy compromise. The tension between purity and effectiveness has to be maintained in all Christian ethics. There is no ethic without tension in our present world.

(l) Finally, there is the contribution of *Liberal Christianity* and the Social Gospel, with its tremendous

concern for health, education and welfare, as well as social justice. These concerns belong integrally to the Gospel, though they are not the whole of it.

These elements have been mentioned merely to illustrate the wealth of the Church's tradition in relation to both content and methodology. An Orthodox Curriculum cannot be student-centred or content-centred, but rather centred in God in Christ by the Spirit, and in the life of the Church in the world.

Wednesday, February 1st, 1967.

The Spiritual and Ethical Focus of an Orthodox Curriculum

BISHOP ATHANASIOS

Our topic embraces many subjects :

(1) **The Scriptural element**—when we read the Fathers, we find that the Scriptures were part and parcel of their lives. And when texts were used, they were used by people for whom the Scriptures ran in their blood. If we examine the Liturgy of the Coptic Orthodox Church, we find that the Bible has a major place in it. For example, the Lauds are full of Biblical hymns : (Exodus 15, Psalm 136, the Hymn of the three children in the furnace, and the last three Psalms, 148—150). As for the Eucharist we have 7 portions from the Scriptures : 2 psalms, 2 from the Holy Gospel, a passage from the Pauline Epistles, a passage from the Catholic Epistles, and a passage from the Book of the Acts of the Apostles.

The personal Horologion (Prayer book for the seven canonical hours) has 76 psalms which are recited by the people, and 11 portions from the New Testament. Thus, a Christian has to be evangelical, he must live the Gospel by eating and drinking from the scriptures.

Considering this element, what do we demand of an Orthodox Curriculum ?

- (a) Our curriculum should teach the Bible as extensively as possible.

- (b) There should be sufficient care given to memorisation. It has been a method in the East. Memorisation is a fundamental method of education for oriental peoples, at any rate.
- (c) The Bible should be explained in relation to the environment. For example, I attended the explanation of the parable of the sower in one of our villages. The teacher said that a farmer had a good piece of land, which he used for sowing his seeds. But he was lazy: there were many deep-rooted weeds which he was too lazy to pluck from the roots, because he had to dig deep. So in due time the weeds started to choke the sown seeds. Then the farmer was lazy in irrigating the land, so the ground became hard. And as the farmer was sitting lamenting his bad fortune, the pedestrians used the land for a footpath, crossing over the land to reach their destinations. This was a practical way of teaching the parable of the sower, and I am sure that the farmers who listened to the teacher will never forget the parable, because it was true to life.
- (d) Our curriculum should establish the *habit* of Bible study both for individuals and for groups.
- (e) The Bible should be used even in our extra-curricular activities. It should be used in writing songs, in making records, recital competitions, etc.

(2) **The spirit of the Doctrine**—we have a certain spirit in our Doctrine. Some say that salvation is through faith. Others say that it is through the individual's effort. The Bible says that salvation is initially through faith, but we feel also that there is a human side, not in the initial stage, but later on, throughout one's life. St. Paul said, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Therefore,

we see that there is initial salvation and the process of salvation.

What do we mean by the spirit of salvation ? We mean :

- i. that there is the joy of salvation
- ii. that the old man and the devil work against salvation ;
- iii. that there must be contrition side by side with joy.

There must be sorrow for weakness. There must be scrutiny, for it is the fruit of self-criticism, and there must be a rejoicing in emancipation.

(3) We have to ask ourselves, “ Which do we want to establish : *sound health for all or simply heroism for individuals ?* ”

We often teach the Saints as individuals distinguished in certain virtues whereas they were men who were Christian. We are not teaching heroism. Hunger for heroism is a common disease among us. We have to remedy the situation by :

- (a) giving care first to common *virtues*: co-operation, love, honesty, mutual respect of opinion, service, work, punctuality
- (b) establishing balanced *habits* of spiritual nourishment such as Bible-study, prayer, keeping and observing feasts, group activities, confession, Holy Communion, and fasting. Habit-forming is a fundamental method of education.

(4) **Care for the individual** Modern education pays attention to the individual. There is enough salvation for all, but we must also take care of the individual. What does this mean for our Curriculum? It means that we must not close the door on spontaneity.

If we are too enthusiastic for Tradition, as something of the past, we forget that the Holy Spirit is living in the Church. Tradition should not suffocate creativity and the activity of the Holy Spirit. The individual needs today the power of discrimination—what to read, what to see, whom to have as friend, what radio programmes to hear and which TV programmes to watch ?

(5) **The unity of the spirit.** We recited the first part of Ephesians 4: 3 in our morning prayer. Our curriculum should give more time for discussion, to group projects where people work together, in which we will discover that every individual has his good side. Discussion was not used in old times. It was a matter of ordering and being ordered, probably due to the fact that monastic rules ordered and regulated life in society. The monk obeys because he practises self-denial. Ascetic obedience is the practice of self-denial. But in the Church people have not denied themselves totally. Thus, obedience in society should go side by side with conviction.

(6) The relation between Tradition, the present world, and the future. Education is a process of guidance for the modern individual. Traditional thought and behaviour patterns are to guide us in our action. If we neglect what we have inherited we will lose our way. Similarly, if we force on modern man the old ways, he too will lose his way. However, we believe in simple piety, that Christianity is not learning but that it is life. It is said that a certain Church organised a competition for reciting Psalms. There came a brilliant actor and recited the 23rd Psalm in all eloquence, skill, gestures and everything else that he thought was necessary for a good performance. But then there came a simple peasant and recited the same Psalm in all the simplicity of his faith. In the midst of the people's applause, the actor stepped forward, and congratulating the peasant, said to him, "I know

the Psalm : but you know the Shepherd.” We do want to know the Psalm, but above all we want to know the Shepherd.

(7) Although a Curriculum is ultimately divided for age-groups, what should it say?

- (a) It must say something to the family. I don't pretend to know what it has to say. The family should take care of the Church calendar, not because the Church says so, but because it is the spiritual punctuation of life. The family should prepare members for Communion. It should encourage discussion among the children. The parents themselves should be self-criticising and integrated in their behaviour.
- (b) It must say something to the teacher. He should know child psychology and how the child develops. But above all he must know what to say to the child in a practical way. He must know how to do a clever thing in a simple way. He must be a good story-teller, a good singer, and a loving guide.
- (c) What should the Curriculum say to the Church ? It should say that the Church should be a dynamic structure. Today, the first job of the priest should be to look for the Christian person. The priest is no more a design engineer, but a field engineer. The large majority of our people is dispersed in the world. Our first work is to search for them and find them.

The services of the Church should suit people's circumstances. Since 1959, the Patriarch has ordered to have 5 Masses celebrated on 5 different altars in the Cathedral in Cairo, everyday throughout the year. He wants to provide every individual the opportunity to participate according to his circumstances. This also means that not all Church services should be equally ceremonial,

The Church should take care of two things: "Not to be too lenient"; and "Not to be too strict." The first kills scrutiny; the latter kills freedom and Christian joy. "This is how we may know that we belong to the realm of truth, and convince ourselves in his sight that even if our conscience condemn us, God is greater than our conscience and knows all. Dear Friends, if our conscience does not condemn us, then we can approach God with confidence, and obtain from him whatever we ask, because we are keeping his commands and doing what he approves. This is his command: to give our allegiance to his Son Jesus Christ and to love one another as he commanded." (I John 3: 19—23). We live by faith, not feeling. Above all, teach the people to be faithful.

Following the lecture there was a period of discussion during which the lecturer answered questions. Among these:

Q. Should not the priest be above all a good example to his flock?

A. Yes, I agree, but being a good example does not mean not to search for the Christian person.

A comment was made on the importance of having the Curriculum document say something about Ecumenism and the attitude of the Oriental Orthodox Churches on the subject.

Whereupon, it was decided:

TO ASSIGN FR. PAUL VERGHESE, BISHOP SAMUEL, AND BISHOP SARKISSIAN TO WORK OUT A DOCUMENT GIVING AN EXPRESSION OR A FORMULATION OF WHAT ECUMENISM MEANS TO THE ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES, TO BE PRESENTED LATER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CONSULTATION.

Consultation of Oriental Orthodox Churches on Christian Education

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

I. The Purpose of the Consultation

Following the decision of the Conference of the Heads of Oriental Orthodox Churches held in Addis Ababa, in January 1965, that a curriculum for Christian Education be prepared for these Churches, and in continuation of the initial work done in connection with the Cairo meeting of the Standing Committee in this respect, we are gathered together in the present Consultation for the purpose of developing a co-ordinated Curriculum to offer guidance to all our Oriental Orthodox Churches, permitting necessary modifications and adaptations deemed necessary by each for its use. Such a Curriculum, we believe, should conserve all the essential elements of our Orthodox heritage. It should also be such that it will convey these elements to the present and future generations, with an understanding of the social changes, new ideologies and new patterns of life. We must develop this Curriculum not only in view of the modern world, but also in terms of a rediscovery of ourselves and of the renewal of our Church life.

II. The Curriculum in Relation to :

(a) the Environment

In drawing up a curriculum we should consider certain environmental factors. On the one hand there are religious and social situations affecting our Communities, such as, the fact of religious pluralism, ethnicism, the new developments in ecumenism, the changing patterns of family life,

the progress in technology and social changes. On the other hand, there are also several forces which make their impact on the educational process, such as, the role of the family, the methods and content of public and private school education in our societies, the part played by the Community itself in imparting certain social values, the role of the Church in the total life of the person, and the Church's influence on all the factors mentioned above.

(b) the Development of the Child

The child, whose integration into the life of the Church is our special concern needs basically to be loved and accepted. He should be given only a manageable structure of life, which should grow step by step, all the time making him feel the mystery surrounding life.

These basic needs should be so satisfied by Christian Education that the child will find his place in the Church realizing that he belongs to a community which is not confined merely to this world, but that he is called as a member of this community to fulfil significant responsibilities in this world itself by co-operating in nation-building and in working for better social and ethical conditions.

Though we put our stress on development of the child in this context, we are aware of the fact that Christian education is not limited to the nurture of the child. We should organize programmes for bringing to Christian maturity both the youth and the adult as well.

III. The Orthodox Approach to Christian Education

The ultimate goal of Orthodox Christian Education is to lead the person as a member of the Church to fulfil his responsibilities in the world, out of a sense

of being a child of God, redeemed by Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, offering glory and thanksgiving to God the Father. This education is a process which is worked out within the fellowship of the Church and in which as much of the fulness of life in the Church is presented to the person at every stage of his development, as his age and capacity would permit. From this point of view Orthodox Christian Education should lead the member of the Church to participate fully in the Eucharistic life of the Church, and to fulfil his Christian responsibilities in society and nation. We should so develop our Curriculum that our monastic tradition is viewed as a vocation in life for creative and dynamic involvement of the Christian in the totality of human life, and that married life is taken in its sound Christian sense of partnership between husband and wife as the basis for family. We should be careful to avoid the individualistic conception of life, and the world-renouncing ideal of ascetic piety.

From this perspective, the following major aspects of Church Tradition should be specially considered: the Liturgical-Sacramental life; Scripture and History; Doctrine, Spirituality and Ethics, all within a context of the socio-religious environment in which this Tradition has been, and is being, expressed.

In organising a curriculum of Orthodox Christian Education, we must take into account several principles:

- (1) the historical—eschatological framework in Orthodox teaching,
- (2) the presentation of Church life in its fulness: Liturgy, Scripture, Doctrine, and Spirituality in an integrated pattern which involves the practice of Christian personal and social virtues in daily life.

- (3) the psychological, intellectual and educational development of the child at every stage.
- (4) the times at which the Church herself prepares her people for particular responsibilities and new roles in life, such as, confession, marriage, ordinations etc., and
- (5) the pattern of the Church's Liturgical Year.

In addition, we feel it essential that the family should, at every level of the person's development, be involved in, and related to, the educational process.

In our programme of education for fuller participation in Orthodox Church life, we should emphasize positive facts and avoid all polemics.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend :

(1) That a general Curriculum Design be prepared in English to guide all our Churches, with necessary adaptations in working out their own curricula :

(2) That this Curriculum Design be closely graded year by year, and yet permitting other groupings according to need ;

(3) That this Curriculum Design include one year of Pre-School, six years of Primary, three years of Pre-Secondary, and three years of Secondary Education ; that the last three years of Curriculum be organised with an understanding of the problems of youth, in order to enable the Curriculum to be adapted for youth group programme and also to serve as an Introduction to adult education, in accordance with the accompanying statement ;

(4) That the Curriculum Design provide thirty-six lessons a year in each grade, taking into account the need for revisions, examinations and holidays to be allowed for festive occasions ;

(5) That the Curriculum Design give room for :—

- (a) general instructions referring to its implementations with an understanding of the method and content of teaching in public and private schools in our societies ;
- (b) general instructions with reference to the training of teachers ;
- (c) general directions for youth activities and programmes, and adult education in accordance with the accompanying statement ;

(6) That the Curriculum Design take into full account the belonging together of our Oriental Orthodox Churches and our ecumenical involvements ;

(7) That our Churches develop a method of teaching which will make Christian Education relevant, significant and satisfying to the aspirations of modern man ;

(8) That our Churches consider the task of adapting our liturgies to modern situations ; and

(9) That by the production of books and literature at various levels we try to lead our people to be sensitive to our common needs, and thereby to implement the proposed Curriculum.

Departmental Curriculum Objectives

Pre-School (Age 5 and under)

A. Age-group Introduction:

The formation of basic religious attitudes begin in early infancy, within the complex of family relationships. The feelings and character of parents propagate themselves in terms of tenderness and dependableness shown by parents. Learning is by impression rather than expression i. e. by use of the senses. There is a beginning of the sense of mystery. Children think in fantasy terms. The child needs to feel accepted and at home in the Church.

B. Curriculum Objectives:

1. To develop a sensitivity to and experience of the mystery of our communion with God, the invisible world, and the communion of saints within the context of worship in the home and in the gathering of the Church.
2. To begin to develop an understanding of God as the One who created us, who loves us, and who cares for us throughout our lives, knowing us, knowing our needs and frustrations, and helping us to accept His will, both in our joys and in our sufferings.
3. To understand the Church as the family of God by extending the sense of family to the Church as a family.
4. Thus, in satisfaction and enjoyment of our relationship with God in the family of the Church, to respond to Him in simple acts of worship (e. g. the sign of the Cross, veneration

of Icons, signing simple liturgical responses, etc.), in love towards our family and friends, and in daily experiences in play.

5. To develop the capacity to trust in God and in His grace in times of great emotional stress and suffering in the life of the child.

I. Early Primary Department (Ages 6–8)

A. Age-group Introduction :

School, Church and Society supplement family influence. God's place in the child's thinking is further expanded in terms of law in nature, astronomy (observation of heavenly bodies in movement, e. g. sun, moon, stars), the external world, life and death (including the awareness of the inevitability of his own death)...as well as mystery in worship. He begins to distinguish between empirical fact and fantasy thinking. He has no historical sense. By age 8, he can read.

B. Curriculum Objectives :

1. To build upon the understandings, skills (i. e. practices) and attitudes introduced in the family and in the Pre-School department.
2. To expand the understanding of our relationship with God in terms of :
 - (a) Habit-building in personal prayer and corporate worship ;
 - (b) The Bible story of the major events in the history of salvation, i. e. man's life with God, in the context of his daily life ; the meaning of death and resurrection, life beyond death.
 - (c) The celebrations of the events mentioned above in the Sacraments, Feasts and Saints' days of the Liturgical year.

II. Later Primary Department (Ages 9–11)

A. *Age-group Introduction :*

A developing moral sense in terms of law is primary : e. g. “It isn’t fair !” The child can think in historical terms and can begin to look at the Bible and the Church chronologically. Parents fade into the background and the child learns from his peers. A child who is ostracized develops a distorted sense of value.

B. *Curriculum Objectives :*

1. To develop the child’s awareness of his own responsibilities in relation to God and to men, through a preparation for the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion ; in relation to his ability to make moral decisions in daily life, and in relation to his peer group, especially in terms of influencing or leading his “gang” in a positive or negative way in relations within the group and in relations (or the lack of relations) with peers outside the group.
2. To encourage the child to participate more fully in personal prayer and corporate worship, through discussion and memorization of prayers, hymns, psalms, and other liturgical texts of the Church year.
3. To lead the child to a greater awareness of the history of the people of God, through further study of the Bible and its use in the liturgical life of the Church and in personal use ; and in study of the lives of the Saints, particularly in relation to certain historical church buildings and geographical sites in their immediate surroundings.
4. To help the child understand the very world in which he lives, to develop positive attitudes

towards the nation and the government ; and towards other nations, especially neighbouring nations ; to begin to develop especially in terms of the various religious groups with which he is in contact. (Note: A careful study first needs to be made to see at what ages such teaching should be implicitly or explicitly given.)

III. Early Secondary Department (Ages 12–14)

A Age-group Introduction :

The child begins to question the authority of parents and Church. “Why should I?” is the the key question. He begins to acquire a fuller vocabulary of the Church and can think more rationally and critically about doctrine and the Bible. There is a great amount of emotional turbulence, a search for one’s own identity, and the need to dedicate oneself to someone or something.

B. Curriculum Objectives :

1. To develop a sense of personal commitment to and responsibility in the life of the Church.
 - (a) as a life in Christ, through a study of the Gospels, with an emphasis on their historical significance ; and on concepts of authority and freedom within the concept of Truth, in relation to the child’s own personal problems.
 - (b) as a life of witness to the truth of the Gospel in imitation of the Apostles, Martyrs, Saints and Fathers of the Church, through a critical study of the New Testament and the continuing History of the Church to the present day, along with our participation in the life of the Church, and the application of these spiritual guides to our own mission in the world today in our respective contemporary situations. And to develop a special unit of study on mission.

- (c) as a life of spiritual nurture and worship, through the practice and enjoyment of fundamental Christian virtues in daily life, the practice of certain acts and responsibilities in the worship and sacramental life of the Church, and study of lives of the saints of daily life, (i. e. non-monastic saints). In addition, we need to stress a personal appropriation of the youth's experiences leading him to a consciously chosen reorientation of his own life.
- 2. To encourage the further study and understanding of the Church's nature, life, and faith by especially employing a certain amount of discussion and youth group techniques in the third year of this department to serve as a transitional year to the later secondary or youth group programmes.

IV. Later Secondary Department or Youth Groups (Ages 15-17)

A' Age-group Introduction :

The teen-ager seeks to stand on his own feet. This often leads to rebellion, as he finds his own dominant-sentiment. Sexual conflicts are biologically unavoidable. He needs to work on processes of decision-making, especially in relation to ; life vocation further, the meaning of marriage and family, the right understanding of sex, friendship, etc. Significant decisions are taken at this stage in the life of faith. A fresh and more responsible dedication of one's own life to God in Christ can also be made at this stage.

B. Curriculum Objectives :

- 1. To help develop an ability to discern our unique role as responsible members of the Church for the work of salvation of the world.

- (a) through a realization of the “transfiguration of life by the renewal of the mind,” by conscious participation in the sacramental life of the Church and all that it implies for our daily lives,
- (b) through a critical analysis of contemporary social and religious patterns and the personal and social issues we face in our societies (e. g. apparent conflicts between scientific and religious view, peace and war, poverty, service of the Church in society, creative responsibility and participation in national and civic life, ecumenical action, etc.), in an attitude of openness and co-operation;
- (c) through a preparation for vocational and marital responsibilities by a study of the Sacraments of Chrismation, Holy Orders and Matrimony, and in special service in the Church;
- (d) through development of a sense of personal devotion and dedication to Christ through a more intense life of prayer and worship study of selected biographies of heroes and Saints of the Church past and present, study of particular books of the Bible, self-examination and self-criticism, especially in relation to spiritual life, confession, etc...
- (e) through a special study of the missionary enterprise of the Church, in its historical context and contemporary task, with an emphasis on the acceptance and continuation of that task,
- (f) through encouraging the fulfilment of leadership capabilities, and discussion of the

charism of leadership in relation to servant-hood, and also in relation to questions of conformity, discernment, etc...

2. To develop the units of study mentioned above in a manner adaptable for formal classes or for short-term units for discussion in youth groups, vacation camps, youth projects, etc ...



Youth Christian Education in Oriental Orthodox Churches

I. Youth Education—Some Principles

(a) Christian Education is a continued and expanding process through all life, and therefore, youth education is an integral part of the total process of Christian Education undertaken by the Church. Accordingly, the Consultation of the Oriental Orthodox Churches has deemed it appropriate to suggest the production of a workable guideline for a programme of Christian Education extending beyond the High School age, that is the age of 17.

(b) The guiding principle of youth Christian education should be, not so much of a teaching process, as rather a way of creating possibilities for youth to participate in a responsible way in the whole life of the Church. Education recognizes and encourages youth initiatives and gives the means and the opportunities for a fuller personal and community commitment of youth in prayer, study and action.

(c) Youth participation in the life of the Church may create sometimes a tension between the old and the new generations. Christian Education should make the older and younger members of the Church conscious of the creative potential of such tensions which can point out the need of the Church for a continuous renewal of her life and for the actualisation of her message by her most faithful and dynamic people. The unity of the generations composing the one people of God is not necessarily destroyed by such tensions. It can be rather enriched and strengthened by this diversity of responsibilities in the fulfilment of the common aim of all the members of the Church.

(d) A Christian Education Programme should take into consideration the age, the intellectual capacities and the particular considerations of youth participating in the life of the Church and in their changing society.

Three main categories of youth between the age of 17 and 30 are considered by the present proposal.

1. College and University Student groups, taking into consideration their own needs and the needs of the Academic Society.
2. Rural and Urban working groups.
3. Young married couples, who need special attention and pastoral care in the field of marital problems and child education.

II. Suggested Structure

(a) Team units composed of a limited number of persons will come together weekly for a determined period of prayer and study. In order to experience a community life, each team will work out according to its needs and social conditions, a programme of activities of witness and service in the Church and the Society.

(b) A system of co-ordination and supervision between the teams can be established by the young people themselves or by their Church authorities.

III. Programme

The programme or the life of the team or whatever unit is adopted by the local Church, should include at least three inter-related aspects :

A. Prayer :

1. Personal and common prayer meetings

2. At least a full-day retreat to experience together in prayer and meditation, a deeper sense of spiritual encounter with God and with one another.

B. *Study :*

1. Bible Study aiming at the discernment of the plan of salvation in History and at the recognition of the Will of God and our new obedience as living in a new World.
2. Study of the liturgical cycle and its effects on the spiritual and ethical life of the person in community.
3. Study of the Church History and Tradition with the purpose of discovering the dynamic continuity of the Christian Faith for the enrichment of our present spiritual life directed towards the future with hope.
4. Study of the problems and opportunities of our changing modern society—ideological, economical and socio-political changes—with a spirit of openness, understanding, love, participation and service.
5. Study of the local and world ecumenical situations, such as sectarianism and confessionalism on the one hand, and the different oriental and western efforts of Christian Unity on the other.

C. *Action :*

1. Active participation in Church services, such as parish or mobile Choirs and other related activities.
2. Teaching in Sunday schools, leading younger teams or groups as well as other pastoral, intellectual, artistic and social activities.

3. Carrying on behalf of their movement, organisation or Church certain pastoral and relief services to the needy and the poor.
4. Participation in ecumenical gatherings which usually provide positive challenges of living with others and of witnessing with them to Christ and to his Church in the World.
5. Active participation in national or international youth and student movements working for the realisation of a more human, a more just and a more peaceful social order.

IV. Leadership

(a) Any programme of Christian Education directed to youth should aim at the promotion and the training of new young leaders. Our Oriental Churches are in great need of leaders or of servants not only in quantity but mainly in quality. A new type of young leaders or servants should be promoted with a new vision of the Church as the people of God transforming history and the world from within.

(b) The team can be considered at least one of the most important places to direct Christian Education for youth. It can be a concrete living community out of which leadership could be promoted. It is sometimes also necessary to organise special training seminars for the preparation of leaders or servants in different fields of education, witness and service.

(c) A flexible creative collaboration should be established between the young (potential) and the experienced leadership of the Church. Therefore, the leadership of a team could be conceived as the responsibility of two persons :

1. One person chosen from among the members of the team, who could be responsible for organising the pastoral, intellectual, liturgical and other activities of the team.

- 2 An adult person—priest or layman—appointed either by the team itself or by the youth organisation to which the team belongs or by the Church authorities. This person could direct, advise, or supervise the theological and social studies and actions of the team.

IN CONCLUSION, what is said of the team as a basic living unit in the process of Christian Education can be said of a group of teams which could constitute a movement of prayer, study and action. In this way, this kind of movement will be manifesting concretely in this life the Holiness, the Unity, the Universality and the Apostolicity of the Church.

Adult Education

I. Introduction

The continuous growth of the people of God as active members of the Body of Christ is a basic responsibility of the whole Church.

As stated in the decisions of the Heads of our Oriental Orthodox Churches in Addis Ababa, January 1965, we feel the urgent need for reintegration of modern men with the life of the church.

The richness and varieties of the liturgical and sacramental life of the church were the main sources of training adults. Church Calendar, rituals, festivals, Saints' days and traditional events and customs have a deep impact in training adults if they could be interpreted and used intelligently. The Church could produce out of them varieties of programmes.

The Christian adult meets many challenges to his christian faith in the modern world. He needs to be helped in finding answers to the daily problems facing him. He seeks guidance and encouragement in adapting himself to the rapid changes taking place around him.

When we speak of the necessity of christian education for adults we have in mind not only their continuous growth in faith but also their active engagement in the renewal, mission and unity of the whole Church for the grater service to God and humanity.

Adult education should embrace the whole scope of adult concern in life such as worship, witness of faith, Christian home and professional, social and civic issues.

II. Types of Adult Education

We recommend to our Churches to give ample time, effort and concern to the training of the adults following suitable patterns such as :

(1) Giving special care to the liturgy of the word in the Orthodox liturgy by better reading of the lessons so as to communicate meaning.

(2) Planning a year's programme of Sunday sermons according to the needs of modern life and adaptable to the Church Lectionary.

(3) Using Church festivals and rallies of saints' days for spiritual and social training.

(4) Forming regular study and/or activity groups such as professional associations, mother groups, family unions, benevolent societies etc....

(5) Arranging short term courses and occasional public lectures.

(6) Arranging for special retreats, conferences, camps, lay centres and summer resorts.

(7) Encouraging church publications and correspondence courses.

(8) Arranging evening classes and Seminars for university graduates and professional groups.

(9) Making libraries available in parish halls.

(10) Planning and encouraging larger and more intimate family gatherings.

(11) Helping participation in religious, social and civic responsibilities, services and projects.

(12) Make family counselling possible.

III. Approach and methods with adults

In addition to the main approach of involving adults in the Church life we may use the following .

(1) To use human situations and problems as an approach.

(2) To allow for as much discussion and sharing in ideas as possible.

(3) To use a variety of educational methods such as panels, projects, debates, audio-visual aids etc ..

(4) To use field trips such as visiting hospitals, institutions, backward areas and slums etc....

(5) Arrange for book reviews and summaries of books.

IV. Resources and Publications for adult education

(1) Publishing short study courses on particular subjects.

(2) Publishing simplified Bible commentaries.

(3) Editing devotional helps and daily readings, meditations and prayers.

(4) Reviewing old customs of placing ikons in a special corner at home for prayers.

(5) Publishing booklets for pre-marital training and christian home life.

(6) Producing filmstrips, charts etc. for the use of adult groups.

V. Encouragement and Training of Leaders for adult groups

When the programmes expand to include more and more Christians in responsible participation in the Church's life, new leadership will be called for in large quantities, arrangement for short courses of adult leadership training should be organized at the Diocesan level.

Leadership Training

Introduction :

We believe that leadership training is an urgent task, because so much depends on the training of the person who will transfer the spirit and aims of curriculum to the children. The impact of the teacher is very influential upon the children. The teacher should be trained to be a good example. "Religion is caught as well as taught." The teacher must have sufficient knowledge of the faith and practice of the church and as well as skills to communicate effectively.

All training sessions should include from time to time workshops and demonstration teaching sessions in which teachers can ask questions and express their own ideas. Lectures are essential for the presentation of basic information and for interpretation by competent leaders, but much is learned only in practice.

We recognize the need for working much harder at enlisting persons to become teachers and to undergo training in order to become qualified to handle the church's educational tasks. And we especially need competent leaders who will train others in such tasks.

Leadership training should be done at the following five levels :

A. New Teachers :

The candidates for teachers' training course can be those who have undergone the course of Christian education in sunday schools or church schools. They should also have a sound basic general education, as well as natural aptitude for teaching. The length of such a training course will vary according to circumstances. The programme of the course consists of :

I—(a) The christian vocation and spiritual life of teachers :

1. What does it mean to be a person ?
2. What does it mean to be responsible ?

(b) Faith and practice of the church :

1. Outline of theology.
2. Outline of Bible.
3. Church history (General and particular)
4. Sacramental life and liturgical year of the church.
5. The church and the world (The church's mission in the world).

II—Psychology of the child :

1. Stages of child development.
2. Education and methods of teaching.
3. How learning takes place.

III—Practical application :

1. Understanding the curriculum and its application in teaching.
2. Preparing the lessons.
3. Use of audio-visual aids.
4. The techniques of administration in Sunday schools (outdoor activities, grouping, worship, enrollment, discipline, alms, stewardship, prayer group, choir, relation with parents, etc.)
5. Opportunities should be given to the candidates for practical training under the guidance of experienced leaders.

B. Training of teachers already in service :

The teachers should continue their training after having been engaged in teaching. They should be aware of the fact that learning has no limits. They must renew themselves during the course of teaching by means of :

1. Having a regular study of the Bible together with others and continuing the study of theological subjects through a guided reading.
2. Sharing their problems and experiences in teaching, evaluating and planning with their fellow teachers.
3. Presenting papers on and discussing some special subjects (e. g. liturgical, theological, spiritual, methods, etc.)

C. Occasional and seasonal conferences :

Such refresher conferences can be organised by each diocese or by the centres of different churches, competent persons should serve as speakers or resource leaders during such conferences, but group work and discussion should be given a prominent place.

D. Parent-Teacher relations :

There should be periodical meetings between Sunday school teachers and parents of students.

In these meetings :

- (a) Parents can exchange with each other their own needs and recommendations.
- (b) They should be informed on the church's teaching programme especially for their children.
- (c) They must be aware of their responsibilities in their children's religious growth.

Besides these meetings :

- (a) Parents can be invited to visit Sunday schools occasionally.
- (b) Parents can also help to reach other parents to get them involved.
- (c) Teachers should visit parents in their homes.

E. Priests' and/or Superintendents' training :

The priests and superintendents have an important responsibility in implementing the curriculum. Therefore, they should be trained in :

- 1. General principles of Christian Education.
- 2. Understanding of the principles, objective, and materials in the curriculum.
- 3. Supervision and training of teachers.
- 4. Parent and family education and relations.

Recommendations on Printed Resources :

- 1. Teachers' guides to be used in their training.
 - 2. The need of commentaries on the Bible.
 - 3. The need of publication of a periodical in English (quarterly or half-yearly).
 - 4. A reading list of books and articles.
 - 5. Translation of relevant articles from other languages.
-

Churches have attended the Second Vatican Council and other Roman Catholic Conferences.

4. The basic attitude of our Churches towards the Ecumenical Movement now can briefly be outlined in the following statement ;

We understand the Ecumenical Movement to be the work of the Holy Spirit who brings all those who confess the name of Jesus Christ our Lord into the fulness of that unity which is found in the love, truth and common witness of our Lord, into the fulness of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church extending through time and space, into the fulness of communion with God in Christ by the Spirit and with each other in the Church, here on earth and in the heavens. No unity can be conceived without that love, truth and witness : likewise disunity itself obscures the understanding of that truth in its fulness and distorts the glory of God in the sight of men.

5. Therefore, the ecumenical movement is understood as .

- (a) The recognition of a new relationship *with God in Christ*. The closer we draw near to God, the closer we come to each other.
- (b) The commitment to the constant recovery and the faithful preservation by the Churches of the Tradition of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church throughout the ages from which all of us have been drifting in various ways and degrees.
- (c) The recognition of a new relationship *with the world* through our common ministry of carrying out the self-sacrificing service to men and the proclamation of the Gospel in the world.

6. We acknowledge also that the three concrete ways in which the ecumenical movement has been, and is being carried on are :

- (a) Common Prayer
- (b) Dialogue with each other and common study and
- (c) Common action through cooperation in activities of a social character.

These three ways have to be unceasingly continued with the largest possible participation of all the Churches. And we believe that through them the life of the Churches will undergo a process of healthy renewal which is an absolute condition for any genuine and fruitful witness to the common task entrusted to us by our Lord Himself. Any form of proselytism, such as uniatism or intentional distortion of the theological, liturgical, canonical and spiritual traditions of our churches contradicts the very spirit of ecumenism. All Christians and all churches or christian movements should abstain from such methods and actions which can only create obstacles on the way to Christian unity.

7. We give thanks to our Heavenly Father that after many centuries of stagnation, due to historical conditions of a most varied nature, our Oriental Orthodox Churches are becoming more and more aware of their ecumenical responsibility and actual commitment. But at the same time we realize that our ecumenical task cannot make any real and permanent impact if we do not start from the Church School. The participation in ecumenical conferences by a few specialists in our Churches cannot by itself ensure that the Churches themselves are drawn into full participation in the ecumenical movement. We need much literature to be produced by such people on the various aspects and developments of the ecumenical movement so that our church people may be soundly informed about and become more responsive to their ecumenical calling.

The most important question that faces us now is how can christian education help our Churches produce an active ecumenical commitment and stimulate the ecumenical vocation of the members of our Churches ?

The following ways should be followed in our curriculum of christian education :

- (a) To study the history, theology, liturgy and spirituality of other Christian Churches with the sincere desire to understand them as they are, and to avoid such knowledge that may misrepresent their teachings and distort their real picture. We can greatly profit from an openness in learning of the practices and insights of Churches with traditions different from ours as we all face the challenge of today's world.
- (b) To avoid personal hatred in condemning heresies and errors both of the past and of present times. The theological errors should be condemned explicitly: such condemnations, however, should not result in enmity and hatred. It should manifest our concern for truth always expressed in charity.
- (c) To give special place to prayer for Christian unity not only in our own liturgical tradition but also by sharing in common services of prayer, such as the week of Prayer for Christian Unity within the limits of the canonical provisions of our Churches.
- (d) To meet and cooperate with other Christians, to study together the problems that the Christian Church confronts today, and to undertake joint activities in various fields of Christian action. In student christian movements, our student associations, organizations and movements should cooperate through their own distinct

traditions and their identity should be maintained and be made alive and active in order to be a genuine contribution to the student christian movements at large.

Through such approaches and methods in our christian education we believe that the ecumenical witness of our Churches will grow and bear fruit for the kingdom of God.

Resolution of Thanks

We, the delegates of the Oriental Orthodox Churches meeting in a consultation on an Orthodox Curriculum for Christian Education, place on record our most sincere and profound gratitude to the World Council of Christian Education and specially to Dr. Ralph Mould, its General Secretary, for making our work possible by providing both financial assistance and expert guidance; to the Armenian Orthodox Church, Catholicosate of Cilicia, for offering us their generous hospitality and spiritual fellowship; to Professor Randolph C. Miller, Miss Constance Tarasar, Miss Maude Nahas, Miss Dorothea Teeter, Father George Khodr and Mr. Gabriel Habib, our speakers and Consultants from sister Churches, for making available to us their rich experience in this field of work; to Father Paul Verghese for the most efficient way in which he presided over our meetings and directed its proceedings; to Mr. Arto Avakian, our most conscientious Recording Secretary, for his untiring labour in keeping on record all that was transacted in our meetings; to the secretaries and others who have worked behind the scenes for the successful carrying out of this work; and to the Cairo office of our Secretariat for all its planning and preparations for this Consultation.

Resolution Seven

Continuation of the Curriculum and Leadership Training Project

The Standing Committee of the Oriental Orthodox Churches resolves :—

1. That the Standing Committee received an interim report from the Consultation on Christian Education, held at Beirut from 29-1-1967 to 5-2-1967, setting forth the main conclusions and proposals of the Consultation for consideration and authorisation.

2. That a full report of the Consultation be published in English, and if possible, adaptations or abstracts of the same in Arabic, Amharic, Armenian and Malayalam.

3. That an Editorial and Training Committee be appointed to administer and co-ordinate the Curriculum and Training Project, with authority to make decisions in regard to the preparatory planning, production, approval, printing and distribution of curriculum materials centrally produced in English for adaptation and use in the various Churches according to need, and also to plan advice and assistance to the Churches for leadership training.

4. That financial resources be sought by the Editorial and Training Committee from the churches of the world with the aid of the World Council of Christian Education, to help underwrite the Curriculum and Training Project for an initial period of five years beginning in 1967, it being understood that a considerable portion of the budget for the total project including production and publication of materials in the different Oriental Orthodox Churches should be raised by themselves.

5. That the Editorial and Training Committee be authorized, subject to resources being assured, to appoint a person from the Orthodox Churches to be a full time or part time Editorial Secretary for the Curriculum and Training Project, with at least most of the following qualifications :

- (a) Sufficient background in Orthodox theology and tradition.
- (b) Some experience in Church School teaching and some possibility of experimenting with materials.
- (c) Some knowledge of Child Psychology
- (d) An adequate mastery of the English language and some writing ability.
- (e) Some ecumenical background and experience.

6. *Nominations for Editorial and Training Committee:*

That the following persons be appointed to form an Editorial and Training Committee to guide the administration and execution of the project :

- 1. Bishop Athanasius of Beni-Souef, Coptic Orthodox Church.
- 2. Father Saliba Sham'un, Syrian Orthodox Church.
- 3. Father Mesrob Ashjian, Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia.
- 4. Father Paul Verghese (Chairman)
- 5. Ato Getaneh Bogale, Ethiopian Orthodox Church.
- 6. The Editorial Secretary of the Curriculum and Training Project (ex-officio).
- 7. Two consultants from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch in view of the possibility that the materials may be of use also to

this Church and in order to benefit from their experience in Christian Education.

8. A consultant to be proposed by the WCCE in agreement with the Editorial and Training Committee, in order to benefit from the experience of similar curriculum projects elsewhere.

**A Tentative Budget Frame (only for giving a general estimate)
for the Curriculum and Training Project of the
Oriental Orthodox Churches**

1967—1972

Year	Salary & Office		Travel & Meetings		Training Prog.		Printing & Materials	
	Cen.	Loc.	Cen.	Loc.	Cen.	Loc.	Cen.	Loc.
	U. S. \$							
1967	1,500	250	1,500	500	500	500	500	--
1968	3,000	500	1,500	500	1,500	500	1,500	1,500
1969	3,000	500	1,500	500	2,500	500	3,000	1,500
1970	3,000	500	1,500	500	2,000	500	6,000	2,500
1971	3,000	500	1,500	500	2,000	500	6,000	3,000
1972	1,500	250	1,500	500	2,000	500	3,000	3,000
	15,000	2,500	9,000	3,000	10,500	3,000	20,000	11,500
	Total—Churches		20,000					
	Total—WCCE		54,500					
			<u>74,500</u>					

////////////////////

CONFERENCE OF ORIENTAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES

STANDING COMMITTEE

Cairo Associate Secretariate



Questionnaire on

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

This questionnaire is prepared and sent to our sister Churches as responding to the second Standing Committee resolution No. 10 which says :—

“With regard to the curriculum of Christian Education, the following resolutions were adopted :—

- (a) The Standing Committee authorizes the Associate Secretariate of Cairo to assume the responsibility for organising the Consultation to prepare a Curriculum of Christian education for our Oriental Orthodox Churches, preferably to take place in connection with the next meeting of the Standing Committee.
- (b) A preparatory committee, consisting of H. G. Bishop Samuel as Chairman, H. G. Archbishop Severius Zakka Iwas and Mr. Mikre Selassie G. Ammanuel as members, be appointed to follow up this work.
- (c) The preparatory committee has to draw up a budget for the curriculum consultation project and forward an application for aid to the World Council of Christian Education.
- (d) The member churches be asked to contribute in part towards the expenses of the Consultation.
- (e) Each member church be asked to nominate two delegates, experts in Christian education, to the Consultation and the names to be sent to the Associate Secretariate of Cairo.
- (f) The preparatory committee is authorized to invite experts and observers from other Churches to the Consultation on the Curriculum of Christian Education.”

The items making up this questionnaire deal with Christian nurture in the Church. It includes a variety of questions to meet the variety of conditions in our member Churches.

If there are other groups of Christian Education in day schools, youth meetings, and other organised meetings for women, labourers or rural people ... etc., kindly answer separately the questions which pertain to any of these agents, or institutions.

If any question does not represent your conditions, please leave it. If you have more details to add about your Christian education, please write them at the end of the questionnaire.

Following are the main sections and sub-divisions of this questionnaire :

I—Questions clarifying the Present State of Christian education in the Church :—

- (a) Present organization of Christian education in the Church.
- (b) Results affected by this present organisation.

II—Aims of Christian education :

- (a) Aims of general programmes of Christian education.
- (b) Aims of specific programmes of Christian education.
- (c) Indirect aims of Christian education.

III—Christian Education Curriculum :

- (a) Programme planning.
- (b) Preparing the Teaching Material.
- (c) Evaluating the set programmes.

IV—Guidance and Teaching Personnel .

- (a) Qualifications of a Christian education teacher.
- (b) Administration.

V—Factors influencing Christian nurture in the Church :

- (a) Relation of church nurture to other nurturing groups.
- (b) Challenges to Christian faith.
- (c) Revival and pioneering developments in Christian education.

VI—Conclusion : Most pressing needs for the Church's fulfilment of its message of Christian nurture.

I—Questions clarifying the present state of Christian education in the Church.

A—Present organisation of Christian education in the Church.

1. What name is given to Christian education in your Church?
(Sunday schools—Christian nurture—church nurture).
2. What are the main institutions which deal with Christian education in the church?
(Church councils, clergy, societies, libraries, institutes.)
3. What is the extent of Church guidance to these institutions?
 - (a) Is the bishop's guidance a true, active one or is it merely a sponsorship to these institutions on special occasions?
 - (b) Are there specialised bodies for guidance and organisation?
 - (c) Is the priests' guidance an active one?
 - (d) Do they share in teaching?
 - (e) Do they train the teaching staff?
 - (f) Do they share in planning the programme?
 - (g) Are the deacons regular in their teaching?
 - (h) Do they share in the various other Christian nurture services?
4. Is there a general system for Christian education in the whole Church as a unit?
 - (a) What is the administrative level for such a system?

- (b) What are the limits of its power and responsibility in view of the carrying out and evolution of Christian education programmes ?
 - (c) Who is the first responsible for Christian education in your Church ?
 - (d) What is the make-up of the committee directing Christian education in your Church ?
 - (e) Who is directly responsible in every bishopric for Christian education ?
5. What are the facilities granted to these institutions for Christian education ?
- (a) Is there room in the Churches for teaching ?
 - (b) In what other Church buildings does teaching take place ?
 - (c) Are there opportunities for communal worship ?
 - (d) Are the children grouped into stages and classes ?
 - (e) Does the Church income supply the Sunday Schools for the expenses incurred ?
 - (f) What are the possible sources of income for spending on Sunday schools' services ?
 - (g) Does the Church try to print the lessons ?
 - (h) Does it prepare pamphlets and publications to guide its teachers ?
 - (i) What is the percentage of the churches that make facilitating contributions towards Christian education ?

B—Results effected by this present organization.

1. To what extent does Christian education embrace the Church's children ?

- (a) What is the percentage of regular attendance in relation to the total number of the Church's children?
(Notice that the number of children from 5—20 years equals 40% of the total population).
 - (b) What is the percentage of male children's attendance? of female children's?
 - (c) What is the percentage of male youth attendance? of female youth?
 - (d) To how many children is there one teacher?
 - (e) To how many youngsters is there one leader?
 - (f) Is Christian education considered compulsory in the various stages? To what extent is this being applied?
 - (g) What is the number of periods or meetings per week with respect to each of the various levels of Christian education?
 - (h) Are any "adults"? and of what ages, receiving religious teaching?
 - (i) Are the methods of teaching used in church similar to, better, or worse than those in state schools?
 - (j) What are the most interesting subjects of Christian Education to students? and why?
 - (k) What are the subjects in which the students show disinterest? and why?
 - (l) What are the difficulties that hinder the generalisation of Christian education programmes?
2. What is the effect produced by Christian education on regular attendants, as regards:

- (a) Is there a marked difference between regular attendants' conduct in society and irregular ones ? and why ?
- (b) Do they continue in the church membership after the end of Christian education regular classes ?
- (c) Were those consecrated to church service formerly attending Christian education classes ? (If not mainly so, what do you think are the reasons for such failure to direct them to such vocation ?

II. Aims of Christian Education.

A—Aims of general programmes of Christian nurture.

- 1: Is Christian education backed by clearly defined purposes ?
 - (a) What are the aims and purposes upon which this teaching has been founded ?
 - (b) Can these purposes be considered complete and fully embracing all aspects of Christian faith and life ?
- 2: What is the proportion of the following lessons in relation to the whole curriculum :
 - (a) Theological and doctrinal lessons ?
 - (b) Holy Bible lessons ?
 - (c) Lessons showing Christian daily conduct ?
 - (d) Lessons about our duty towards our society ?
 - (e) Lessons to strengthen family ties and relationships ?
 - (f) Lessons about the church and its service, its history, its weaknesses and strength ?
 - (g) Lessons in the original language of the Church ?

3. (a) What kinds of help does your Church need to fulfil its expected aims ?

(b) Do you feel that your Church's "expected aims" are fully adequate or valid today ? (If not, how would you state what you feel the expected aims ought to be ?)

B—Aims of specific programmes in Christian education

1. Are there specific programmes for the regions far off the church such as rural and remote industrial areas ? Is the curriculum organized ? What is the percentage of attendance as regards:

(a) Children.

(b) Youth.

(c) Deacons.

(d) Labourers.

(e) Rural people.

(f) Women

(g) Young girls.

(h) Fathers.

(i) Variety meetings.

(j) People in trades and professions:

2. What are the various activities characterising Christian education in such areas to fulfil its specific aims ?

3. What are the points that need be stressed in Christian education programmes for the treatment of Christian social bonds in such areas ?

4. Do these programmes make-up or satisfy the need for churches—attendance ?

5. Are there supplementary curricula for Christian Education in Christian homes ?
 - (a) To what extent can these be considered complementary to Christian nurture in the church and schools ?
 - (b) To what extent has the “ Family ” been an influential authority or power in Christian nurture ?

C—Indirect aims of Christian Education.

1. Does Christian education give attention to such indirect means of education as influential characters, social relationships, active functional members in the life of the Church and its services ?
 - (a) Have the Churches been educating for agreement by consent rather than giving freedom to individuals to explore and personally decide about the issues of Christian faith and ethics? (i. e. freedom of decision?) or are both cases true or desirable ?
 - (b) Is there any training in the practical aspects such as feasts, charitable deeds, community and neighbourhood service, sharing in the Church service ?
 - (c) Do the lessons comprise factors contributing to the economic betterment of the different classes ?
 - (d) Running alongside the lessons, are there any elements contributing towards artistic development, such as drawing, music, and religious drama ?
 - (e) How is this carried out practically ?
2. Are there extra-curricular activities such as social, recreational, and sports ?

- (a) What are these activities ?
- (b) Does the Church give special attention to clubs in school holidays, in view of the fact that “peer groups”, more than instruction, influence the Christian formation of persons ?

III. Christian Education Curriculum.

A—Programme—Planning

1. Is there a set unified curriculum for all or does each agent set its own ?
 - (a) What is the date of the latest set curriculum ?
 - (b) How many times has the curriculum undergone changes since this teaching has started to be organized ?
 - (c) What is the number of instructional years comprised in the curriculum ?
 - (d) Does the curriculum comprise enough subject matter for teaching evangelization to those who have no christian experience ?
 - (e) Does the curriculum lend itself to a wide-scale use of the Holy Bible ?
 - (f) Does the curriculum allow for making use of the Church's heritage in way of hymns and prayers ?
 - (g) Does the curriculum allow for discussing the social order in which the Church lives ?
 - (h) Does the curriculum fix the weekly lesson or does it allow for flexibility to adapt to the environment and circumstances ?
2. Does the curriculum take into consideration the environmental needs of the various classes and age levels ?

- (a) Are there special programmes for the illiterates ?
- (b) Does the curriculum possess enough flexibility to encounter forthcoming events such as increased co-operation between your Church and other Churches, or developing schemes for fighting poverty, for instance ?
- (c) Are there programmes used in common with other denominations ?
- (d) Are there local problems taken into consideration in the curriculum ?

B—Preparing the teaching materials.

1. Are there books for helping teachers and children on the curriculum ?
 - (a) Do these books fulfil the required purposes ?
 - (b) What kinds of lessons or illustrations are there for the different levels of children ?
 - (c) Are the audio-visual aids sufficient with respect to all the lessons of the curriculum ?
 - (d) Do the set lessons fulfil their purpose from the standpoint of sufficiency and subject-matter ?
 - (e) Are they easy to comprehend as to language ?
 - (f) Are they vivid to capture the reader's interest ?
 - (g) What is the response made by those who use them:
 - i. teachers.
 - ii. pupils.
 - (h) What is the opinion of church leaders about them ?
2. Mention some samples from the heading of the subjects in the different curricula, showing their trends and purposes.

C—Evaluating the Set Programme.

1. Are the set curricula fitting to :
 - (a) age.
 - (b) sex.
 - (c) Rural problems.
 - (d) Labourers' problems and remote areas.
 - (e) World and ecumenical movements.
2. What criteria do you consider appropriate for evaluating the programme content ?
 - (a) Are examinations used for such an evaluation?
 - (b) When are these examinations given ?
 - (c) What is the effect they produce ?

IV. Guidance and Teaching Personnel

A—Qualifications of a Christian education teacher.

1. What are the principles considered when selecting a Christian education teacher, and what should be the minimum requirements for such a teacher from :
 - (a) The religious point of view ?
 - (b) The educational point of view ?
 - (c) The scientific standing ?
2. What is the system of guidance and supervision of Christian Education Teacher .
 - (a) On the part of the clergy ?
 - (b) On the part of devoted laymen ?
3. Does the teacher's activity extend to a follow-up of cases and co-operation with families to help solve their children's problems and others ?
4. Are writing and editing encouraged among Christian education teachers ?

5. What is the percentage of their intellectual production as compared to that of the Church ?
6. Are their clerical ranks granted to Christian education teachers ?
7. Are the teachers interested in regular church and theological higher studies ?

B—Administration

1. What is the system or tradition followed in the administration of Christian education ?
2. Is there an intellectual unity between the clergy and Christian education teachers ? What is the extent of their co-operation ?
3. Are there regular meetings for Christian education teachers to foster ?
 - (a) their training.
 - (b) their spiritual development and participation in Church life.
 - (c) Administrative services.
4. Are there special handbooks for helping Christian Education teachers in their services ?
5. Are there spiritual and intellectual meetings of the teaching personnel from the various bishoprics ?

V. Factors influencing Christian nurture in the Church.

A—Relation of Church nurture to other nurturing groups :

1. Today certain Christian and character groups, beside the Church, provide nurture, such as : youth movements, camps, lay centres, Y.M.C.A., Y. W. C. A., scouting, student groups, campus miniseries.

- (a) Do your churches regard these as competitors for the time of members ?
- (b) Or, do they understand and welcome such efforts ?
- 2. What are the core differences in the nurture they provide from that of the Churches ?
- 3. Do these groups attract loyalties and influence persons more decisively than the churches ? why ?
- 4. Have the churches anything to learn from these groups ?
- 5. What do you see, therefore, as the “ distinctive role ” of the Churches’ nurture ?

B—Challenges to Christian Faith :

- 1. If there be in your country any crises of belief in the existence of God, to what extent do you attribute it ?
 - (a) Do you feel that Christian nurture bears some measure of responsibility ?
- 2. Are people accepting the kind of authority they experience in the Church and respect its decisions or do they turn them into a subject for discussions ?
- 3. If there is in your country a gap between theological thinking and that in Christian nurture, what might be the reason and subject of such a gap ?
- 4. Does the Church encourage freely any research work in the theological and behavioural fields, acknowledging the results achieved by the members, or does it satisfy itself with inculcating its beliefs and teachings ?

5. What intellectual and practical counter-measures has your church taken in confronting these challenges ?
6. What are the Churches' most pressing needs for effectively meeting the challenges to Christian Faith ?

C—Reviving and pioneering developments in Christian Education:

1. What is truly new, reviving, pioneering, and freshly productive in the Christian nurture work of your Churches ?
2. Are there expected revivals in the Sunday school to make it a more effective instrument for Christian nurture ?
3. Describe to what extent it has progressed or changed in its services, in the last 10 years.
4. What new trends, means, principles are being now followed in contrast with 10 years ago ?
5. Have your Churches pioneered in social service and social action groups as a form of nurture ?
6. How do you evaluate the revival and pioneering developments ?
7. What evidence is there of educational renewal and revival ?

VI. Conclusion

Most pressing needs for the Church's fulfilment of its message of Christian nurture.

1. What are the Church's pressing needs in respect to :

- (a) Curriculum for both regular programmes of Christian nurture and for specialized groups and situations? (answer in specifics).
 - (b) Content emphasis.
 - (c) Concepts and ways of learning, methods and group discussion techniques?
 - (d) Revival and pioneering?
2. What is the commonly shared work to be expected from the committee of Christian education of the Oriental Orthodox Churches?



about 4% of the Christian population. There is one teacher to about 50 children and one to every 30 youngsters.

Christian education is considered compulsory in the public schools, but it is specially applied in preparatory and secondary schools. While pupils in public schools have two Christian nurture lessons per week, the Church nurture is given once a week. There is a room for adult classes (between 18 to 30 years) in the Church nurture.

Methods of teaching are not so much better than those in state schools due to limited possibilities. Stories, for children and for contemporary problems for grown-ups are the most interesting subjects for Christian education. Students show disinterest in lessons unrelated to the environment.

One of the difficulties that hinder the generalisation of Christian education programmes is that branches are rather tied to their own specific trends than to central leadership.

II. Aims of Christian Education :

A. Aims of general programmes of Christian Nurture :

Christian education in the Church is backed by clearly defined purposes :

- (a) Learning the elements of faith and means of devotion :
- (b) Tying the child to the Church and nourishing him by the Holy Bible.
- (c) Deepening of the practical meaning of Christian conduct and behaviour as an individual and as a family member of the larger society.

In public schools, aims are :

- (a) Learning the elements of faith in accordance with the Creed.

Christian Education in the Coptic Orthodox Church

I. A. Present organization of Christian Education in the Church :

“ Church Nurture ” is the name given to Christian education in the Coptic Orthodox Church. Active workers are voluntary lay-readers and a few deacons as leaders. The Bishop guidance is active on the Church educational institutions while the Bishopric of Religious Education is responsible for organisations, developing programmes and preparing teachers. The priest participates in teaching and guidance or training as well. Some participate in programme planning. There is a “high Council for Church Nurture” formed by a Papal order. While H. H. the Pope is the prime president of Church Nurture, every bishop is the one directly responsible in every diocese.

The Christian Nurture takes place in the Church itself, in some adjacent rooms, and in buildings of some religious societies. There are opportunities for communal worship. Pupils are classified in classes according to their ages. The Church income (contributions or donations) supplies the Sunday Schools for the expenses in proportion varying according to the circumstances and possibilities of each church. Churches do some publications and print some lessons, but they are insufficient.

B. Results effected by this present organization :

25% of the total number of children, which is equivalent to 10% of the Christian population, are regular attendants. Boys are 8%, girls are 12%. Male youth attendance is about 6%, and female youth

- (b) Fixing the doctrinal points that are common to higher religions.
- (c) Covering for the cultural pattern of the contemporary society in one's nation.
- (d) Deepening the behavioural values for the development of a good citizen.

All these purposes can be considered complete and embracing all aspects of Christian faith.

The Christian curriculum contains :

- (a) 15% theological and doctrinal lessons.
- (b) 30% Holy Bible lessons.
- (c) 10% lessons showing Christian daily conduct.
- (d) 5% lessons about our duty towards our society.
- (e) 5% lessons to strengthen family ties and relationship.
- (f) 30% lessons about the Church and its service, its history.
- (g) 5% lessons in the original language of the Church

But in day schools we notice that :

- (a and b) 50%
- (c, d and e) 25%
- (f and g) 25%

The Coptic Church is in need for studies to prepare and train efficient workers, textbooks for teachers, increasing the material possibilities for printing lessons, pictures, gifts for children, publications of books for children and youth.

We feel that to-day's expected aims are ; renewing and completing explanatory books concerning the teaching of the set syllabus.

B. Aims of specific programmes in Christian Education :

1. There were specific programmes for rural and remote areas. But at present they cannot be considered adequate due to shortage in workers and in appropriateness of lessons to changing circumstances and conditions. The rate of attendance in such meetings is high.

2. The various activities characterizing Christian education in such areas to fulfil its specific aims are handicrafts to raise the social standard, as in the case carried on by the bishopric of Social and Public Services. We need strengthening the bonds between various groups in the congregation to the Church, and other programmes for the family life as well.

C. Indirect aims of Christian education :

1. Christian education gives attention to indirect means of Education as influential characters, social relationship, active functional members in Church. Moreover, there is training in the practical aspects such as feasts, charitable deeds, community and neighbourhood services. Some limited lessons comprise factors contributing to the economic betterment of some classes, while other lessons contain elements for artistic development, such as drawing, music and religious drama. This is practically carried out in youth family activities, "Church Clubs" especially during summer, and exhibits, summer courses.

III. Christian Education Curriculum :

A. Programme-planning :

Concerning the Church, there is a unified curriculum. The latest primary curriculum was set in 1965, the secondary in 1952, then renewed in 1957. The curriculum has been changed 5 times since 1920. Twelve instructional years are comprised in the Church

curriculum. There is a place for Bible study, Church hymns and prayers. But it neither comprises enough subject-matter for teaching Christian witness to the world nor allow for discussing the social order in which the Church lives. The curriculum fixes the weekly lesson with little flexibility on occasions.

The day schools curriculum is for all different denominations. It has undergone changes twice since first organised. The last one was set in 1966, for twelve years' education. There is no place for Church hymns.

While the Christian Curriculum cares of rural attitudes, the environmental needs are not taken in consideration in the public schools curriculum.

Some lessons in the newly set curriculum passes enough flexibility to encounter for the coming events.

B. Preparing the teaching materials :

1. Some books are available, but they do not completely fulfil the desired purposes as the day schools curriculum can do. The Church uses pictures as illustration. But lessons lack the technical element. Teachers and pupils find them of limited use and help.

In the day schools curriculum, most of the lessons are taken from the Bible. They are interesting to hold the children's attention. Both teachers and pupils make use of them. Church leaders feel they are adequate and they give their opinion in selecting the authors of these books.

2. Samples of Junior-Adults programme :

Unit 1: Self catering

- (a) How I face my failures.
- (b) How I overcome my bad habits.
- (c) How to use my talents.
- (d) How to develop self-control.
- (e) How to confess:

Unit II: The Church

- (a) Its meaning and symbols.
- (b) The seven daily prayers:
- (c) Church readings.
- (d) The Holy sacraments.
- (e) The intercession of saints.

Unit III: How to behave at the university, Bible, kinds of friends, Love as basis of human relationship. The Christian and :

- (a) Scope for readings.
- (b) Contemporary spirit.
- (c) Means of witnessing.
- (d) Preparing for future.
- (e) Understanding sex.

Unit IV: Bible characters.

Unit V: Bible study.

- (a) How it has reached us.
- (b) How to study it.
- (c) Its sections.

Samples of Day Schools Curriculum :

Primary level: God the Creator, Noah's Arch, Joseph, Samuel, the life of Jesus, Some virtues appropriate to children : animal care, donation, obedience, prayer, respecting the house of God.

Secondary level: History of the Bible, the Bible and science, Inspiration from the Bible, Study of Isaac, David, Timotheus..... The Apostles' Creed.

The individual's rights in Christianity. Christianity and social and Political organisations. Christianity and communism and socialism and Israel and exploiting capitalism.

In all the curricula pupils are required to memorise some selected passages from the Old and New Testaments.

C. Evaluating the set programmes :

Both are fitting to age but they need some adaptation. While the Christian curriculum is generally a rural one, the day schools curriculum is on the contrary. Both need discussing labourers' problems and ecumenical relations and movements.

For the curriculum and pupils' evaluations, oral questions, interviews are used in the Church curriculum but oral and written examinations are not used to decide the success or failure of pupils.

IV. Guidance and teaching personnel:

A. Qualifications of a Christian education teacher :

1. In Sunday Schools, teachers are well acquainted with the Christian education programme. They are whole-hearted Church participation. In day schools, there is no specialised teacher in Christian education.

2. Most Christian Education teachers in the large cities are university students or secondary school pupils. In villages, workers are of various standards.

Guidance, help, and encouragement are arranged locally by some bishops and priests.

3. The teacher's activity may extend—in some churches—to a follow-up of cases so as to help families solve their children's problems according to possibilities.

4. The Church needs to encourage Christian education teachers to write and publish books and articles.

5. Teachers who can attend the evening courses at the theological Seminary in Cairo can be granted their clerical ranks as "Church Readers."

B. Administration :

Church Education is presided in every branch by a superintendent under the Church's supervision. There is an intellectual unity between the clergy and Christian education teachers. Regular meetings for Church teachers are held to foster their training and for the sake of their spiritual development and participation in Church services. Some handbooks help Christian Education teachers in preparing their lessons.

V. Factors influencing Christian Nurture in the Church :

A: Relation of Church nurture to other nurturing groups :

Today, certain Christian and character groups, besides the Church, provide nurture, such as: Lay centres, Y. M. C. A.; Y. W. C. A., the Churches do not regard these as competitors for the difference of fields. Most of their aims and activities are social rather than religious, so these groups do not attract loyalties more decisively than the Churches. But their advanced social experience might assist Christian education leaders.

B. Challenges to Christian Faith :

There are some crises of belief in the existence of God among learned youth traced back to world-wide atheist writings. Methods of Christian education bears some responsibility. These crises may have indirect effects which can be noticed among laity in discussing the Church's decisions. Meanwhile, there is some flexibility in theological discussions, with whole-hearted respect to Church doctrine.

To confront these challenges the Coptic Church encouraged discussions in youth meetings to meet their quests. But the Church still needs cherishing old heritage for effectively meeting the challenges to Christian faith.

Christian Education in the Syrian Orthodox Church of India

I. The present system of Christian education in the Church.

A—Present organisation of Christian education in the Church.

The name given to Christian education in the Syrian Orthodox Church of India is “Sunday Schools.” Each parish has one or more Sunday Schools and they are directly under the control of the parish committee of which the parish priest is the President. These schools are grouped into District levels and each district has its own Inspector. The whole Church is divided into ten dioceses and each diocese has a Director for its Sunday Schools. Above all these directors there is a Director-General appointed by the supreme head of the Church.

These Sunday Schools are the chief institutions that deal with religious education in the Church. The bishop has an overall supervision of the Sunday School activities. The central unit of the Sunday Schools is the Orthodox Syrian Sunday School Association. All the Sunday Schools are affiliated to this Association. There are annual orientation training camps for the teachers. In certain parishes the priests take very active share in the teaching where as in many other parishes the priests do not find time for that. But they render all enthusiastic encouragements in its planning and working. Wherever there are deacons they share in the teaching.

The Sunday Schools have an administrative level represented in an Executive Committee. The Committee is composed of a Bishop nominated by the Holy

C. Reviving and pioneering developments in Christian Education :

Recently we have the 1965 curriculum, but the material is not yet ready. Publishing books in application of recent curriculum is badly needed.

No doubt, during the last 20 years Christian education enlarged, spread and many varied experiences were gained. Some audiovisual aids were added, but still to a certain extent. A new trend to social activities is one of the interests, of many workers in Christian Education.

VI. Conclusion

The most pressing needs for the Church's fulfilment of its message of Christian nurture are :

- (a) Sufficient sponsorship, full-time workers of spiritual and technical abilities.
- (b) Generalising and developing audiovisual aids.
- (c) Forming centres for consultations, conferences and study-groups, as well as retreat houses to promote leadership unity.
- (d) Sufficient literature for children and youth to back indirectly the curriculum books.
- (e) Rewriting the lessons in an attractive way.

We expect from the Committee of Christian education of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, a unified magazine, a guiding programme, fundamental lessons according to the Oriental Orthodox doctrine.



regular attendants are keen to continue in the Church membership. Some of them become greatly devoted to church services.

II. Aims of Christian Education.

A—Aims of general programmes of Christian nurture.

Christian education is backed by clearly defined purposes, which aims to leading one to Christ by being a loyal member of the Church. These purposes are considered complete and fully embracing all aspects of Christian faith and life.

These are the proportions of various materials in relation to the whole curriculum :

(a) Theological and doctrinal lessons	25%
(b) Holy Bible lessons	30%
(c) Lessons showing Christian daily conduct	10%
(d) Lessons about our duty towards our society	5%
(e) Lessons to strengthen family ties	10%
(f) Church History	20%

The Church needs trained personnel and suitable modern teaching aids for communication.

B—Aims of specific programmes in Christian education

There are no specific programmes in Christian education in India.

C—Indirect aims of Christian Education.

Some training in the practical aspects such as feasts, charitable deeds, community and neighbourhood service are some functions of Christian education. By means of stories, Christian education contribute to the economic betterment of the different classes. Music and drama are elements contributing forward artistic

Synod, the Director General, Publishing Officer, and the Directors from the Dioceses. The Committee is practically responsible for carrying out the evolution of the Christian education programmes. The Holy Synod is the first responsible for Christian education in the Syrian Orthodox Church in India.

Christian education takes place in parish halls, Church schools and in other buildings attached to the churches.

Children are grouped into stages and classes to receive their religious education. Church income often supplies the Sunday Schools for the expenses incurred but voluntary contributions are the sources of income for spending on Sunday school services. Lessons are printed and published by the Church to guide its teachers. As a whole 80% of the churches make facilitating contributions towards Christian education.

B—Results effected by this present organisation.

Christian education embraces 70% of the Church's children. About 65% of the male children and 70% of the female children attend the Sunday Schools. There is one teacher to every 20 children. Sunday School education is declared compulsory in all stages. Children meet for two hours in a week for religious education. Adults do not receive any systematic religious education. Methods of teaching used in the Church are similar to that in State schools. The life of Jesus Christ, the lives of the Saints and Fathers and Old Testament stories are those that the children like better than catechisms and theological lessons. They like these because the teachers can present these lessons in such way that would catch the interest and imagination of the children better. The difference in standard among pupils and teachers brings in a difficulty in the generalisation of the Christian education programmes.

There is a marked difference between regular attendants' conduct in society and irregular ones. The

development. From the extra-curricular activities we mention social services, picnics and sports. No clubs are held in school holidays.

III. Christian Education Curriculum.

A—Programme—Planning

The Church has a unified curriculum. The date of the latest set curriculum is January 1965. Ten instructional years are comprised in the curriculum. It does not comprise material for teaching evangelization or allow for discussing the social order in which the Church lives. The curriculum allows for making use of the Church's heritage such as hymns, prayers and Bible study. The environmental needs of the various classes and age levels are taken in consideration. There are no special programmes for illiterates, or programmes used in common with other denominations.

B—Preparing the teaching materials.

Books are consulted by teachers and children. They fulfil the required purposes. Lessons are arranged according to the age level, but audiovisual aids are insufficient. Even both teachers and pupils have good response to such lessons.

(No samples were mentioned in the Church answers)

C—Evaluating the set programme :

Set curricula are fitting to both age and sex. Rural problems are not taken in consideration. Annual examinations are used for evaluating the programme contents. They always produce good results.

IV. Guidance and teaching personnel :

A—Qualifications of a Christian education teacher.

Principles considered, when selecting a Christian education teacher, are good understanding of the Bible

and fundamental doctrines of the Church based on Sunday School study. There is no follow-up of cases or co-operation with families in solving children's problems. Clergical ranks are not granted to Christian education teachers.

B—Administration :

Good co-operation takes place between the clergy and Christian education teachers.

Regular meetings are held for Christian education teachers to foster their training, their spiritual development and participation in Church life and also for administrative services.

V. Factors influencing Christian nurture in the Church.

A—Relation of Church nurture to other nurturing groups :

Certain Christian and character groups, such as : youth movements, lay centres, Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C.A., provide nurture, but they are not regarded as competitors, because of the difference in emphasis and approach. In India these groups attract loyalties and influence persons more decisively than the churches because of new methods and means. Churches have many things to learn from these groups.

B—Challenges to Christian Faith :

Christian Nurture bears some measure of responsibility towards the crisis of belief in the existence of God. People accept the authority they experience in the Church and respect its decisions. In theological and behavioural fields, no serious research work is going on at the moment. Confronting the challenges to Christian Faith no practical measures have been taken.

So the Church's most pressing needs for effectively meeting the challenges to Christian faith are the adequately trained personnel,

Christian Education in the Armenian Orthodox Church

I. A—The present state of Christian education in the Church.

“Religious Education” is the name given to Christian education in the Armenian Church of Antelias. The central committee of Religious Affairs, the council of Sunday Schools, and the Educational Committee of the Dioceses are the main institutions which deal with Christian Education. The Bishop’s guidance is purely a sponsorship in the works of these councils. There are specialized bodies for guidance and organisation. In some cases the priests’ guidance is an active one. In some parishes they share in teaching, but they neither train the teaching staff nor share in planning the programme. While the deacons are regular in their teaching in Sunday Schools, they do not share in the various other Christian Nurture services. There is no general system for Christian education. Each diocese has its own system. They are similar ; not necessarily identical. The Parish Council is responsible for Christian education in the Church, while in every diocese the Diocesan Educational Committee is concerned.

Many facilities are granted to these institutions for Christian education, such as, buildings attached to the Churches and in primary schools where children are grouped in stages. There is a place for communal worship. Donations help in financing Sunday School’s services which have a certain budget. The Church prints the lessons, pamphlets, and other educational publications.

C—Reviving and pioneering developments in Christian education :

Revivals are expected in the Sunday School to make it a more effective instrument for Christian Nurture. It has been progressed in the last 10 years, for a considerable proportion.

New curriculum and trained teachers as far as possible, are being now followed in contrast with 10 years ago. Churches have pioneered in social services and social action groups as form of nurture. In a word, there is a concern for renewal everywhere.

VI. Conclusion.

Most pressing needs for the Church's fulfilment of its message of Christian Nurture :

The Church's pressing needs are :

- (a) A curriculum for specialized groups.
- (b) New methods and ways of learning.
- (c) Revival and pioneering.

What we expect from the Committee of Christian education of the Oriental Orthodox Churches is a joint action to make the Christian Education meaningful and effective to suit the needs of the situation.

B. 1. Results effected by this present organisation :

All those who go to community schools regularly follow Christian education. There is one leader at least to ten youngsters. Only in Parish Schools Christian education is compulsory. The plan is one hour to all per week. But very few of the adults from eighteen years onwards are receiving religious teaching. Methods of education in Church are better than those in state schools. The life of Jesus and the history of the Church presented through the lives of great figures are the most interesting subjects to students, while they find no interest, either in some of the Old Testament stories, or in catechisms prepared in the form of question and answer style, and those subjects which teach morality in a formal way. Meanwhile, some difficulties hinder the generalization of Christian education programmes, which are lack of co-operation so far, difference of tradition and difference of methods and aims.

2. Effect of Christian Education on regular attendance :

There is a marked difference between regular attendants' conduct in society and irregular ones. No doubt, their Christian education enables them to understand the importance of their membership in Church after they end their regular classes in Church education. Some of them do consecrate for Church service.

II. Aims of Christian Education :

A—Aims of general programmes of Christian Nurture :

Aims are based on the principle of providing a sound knowledge of the Christian principles of human life and to keep them in constant and active communion with the Church. Practical teaching on Christian service is missing in the present system. While the Holy Bible lessons have the largest place, theological and doctrinal lessons are limited. Lessons

showing Christian daily conduct, and family life are quite considerable. Lessons about the Church, its services and its history, occupy the central part.

The Church needs, training of the teachers and a new series of books. A revision is necessary to fulfil the desired aims.

B—Aims of specific programmes in Christian Education :

Rural areas are very much reduced in the Armenian Church, so there are no specific programmes for rural education.

The only specific programme besides the regular teaching in parish schools is the educational system as applied in Sunday Schools.

In the existing system there are items that contribute towards religious education such as music, drawing, drama, choir singing. But there are no special items such as feasts, charitable deeds, community and neighbourhood service, etc. Sharing in the Church services is practised regularly.

Curricular activities are school clubs, visit to historical monuments, showing of films, sports, etc. occupy an important place.

III. Christian Education Curriculum :

A—Programme Planning :

There is a set unified curriculum for each diocese. They are similar to each other, but not necessarily identical. The latest set curriculum in Lebanon goes back to 1961. Since teaching started to be organised it has been changed twice. It comprises five instructional years. Although the curriculum allows ritual hymns and prayers, it has no room for discussing the social order in which the Church lives. In spite of satisfying the environmental needs of age level, there are no programmes for illiterates.

Intellectual production is very limited as compared to that of the Church. Clergical ranks are not granted to Christian Education teachers, some of whom are interested in regular Church and theological higher studies.

B—Administration.

The diocesan system is to send a full-time supervisor to each school who keeps in constant touch with the work carried on. Regular meetings for teachers to foster their training, their spiritual development and administrative services are needed.

V. A—Factors influencing Christian Nurture in the Church :

1. The Church welcomes the efforts of youth movement, Lay centres, Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A. as centres providing kinds of nurture.
2. Meanwhile they may differ in practical aspects of our Christian life and witness
3. Though they do not influence the persons as the Church can do, the Church benefit from such groups.
4. We see that the distinctive role of the Church is to educate men to become fully committed members of the Church.

B—Challenges to Christian Faith:

To some extent Christian Nurture bears some measure of responsibility towards any crisis of belief in the existence of God. The implementation of theological teaching in the proper context of human life may cause a gap between theological thinking and that in Christian Nurture. The Church has taken counter-measures in confronting challenges to Christian faith

B—1. Preparing the teaching materials :

There are very few books for helping the teachers and children on the curriculum which do not fulfil all the required purposes. The Church has pictures for children, while films are added sometimes. Anyhow, material and curriculum need to be revised.

2. Samples from the heading of the subjects in the curricula :

1st year : Stories from Old and New Testament.

2nd year : History of the Old Testament.

3rd year : History of the New Testament.

4th year : Knowledge of the Armenian Church.

5th year : Catechism, doctrinal and moral.

6th year : Armenian Church History.

C—Evaluating the set programme.

The set curricula are fitting to the age and sex, but they are far from touching rural problems, labourers' problems, world and ecumenical movements.

Examinations are used for evaluation ; three times a year and the final in June.

IV. A—Guidance and Teaching Personnel:

When selecting a Christian education teacher, no definite strict rules are considered in this respect. Usually they are priests or graduates of a seminary or graduates of Sunday Schools.

The educational committee of a diocese together with the director of the school have the right for guidance and supervision of Christian education teacher.

There is a need for teacher's activity to extend to a follow-up of cases and co-operation with families to help solve their children's problems.

intensive preaching in churches, strengthening Church education in Schools and families, organising youth movement, encouraging sunday schools, etc. But still the churches' most pressing needs for effectively meeting the challenges to Christian faith are in a hope of having a devoted young generation of clergy and well-trained lay teachers for Christian education in school and among adults.

C—Reviving and pioneering developments in Christian education

Sunday Schools and students organisation are truly new and reviving, pioneering and freshly productive in the Christian Nurture work of the Armenian Church. Though Sunday Schools are in constant growth but they still need new methods and new administrative organisation, Social services are being encouraged.

VI Conclusion :

1. A careful revision of the present status and systems is needed:
2. We expect from the committee of Christian Education of the Oriental Orthodox Churches:
 - (a) A new awareness of the urgent needs.
 - (b) Mutual enlightenment.
 - (c) Sharing material for teaching.

////////////////

