

Make it Worthwhile

By Frances Moses*

"I wonder if a D. V. B. S. is worth the money we put into it?" This question was asked by a pastor and it certainly is worth consideration.

My answer is, "It can be." How you answer the question relative to your D. V. B. S. lies with you.

The points considered are not new, but they are timely. As you read this, pastor, deacon, D. V. B. S. worker or parent, interpret it as it reflects your duty toward this effort.

The attitude of pastor and church toward the D. V. B. S. is important. It needs your faith, your confidence and your support to make it the effective part of the church program that it should be. Do not feel that once the director is appointed that you can breathe a sigh of relief and wait for the demonstration program to see how hard everyone has worked. An evangelist once said following a difficult altar service, that he felt little support from the Christians. "I felt as if they were watching me to see how hard I was working." Christians, what a sad thing that was, and it is equally as sad to have the director and teachers of a D. V. B. S. put in many hours of work with little or no prayer support and help from other Christians. Our attitude toward the D. V. B. S. is reflected by the children. If they are made to feel that it is a place to play and wait around for the handcraft hour, your school will not be worth what is put into it.

Would you as a church think of calling an evangelist and a musical team, and then never mention the services in prayer or to friends in the community. Would the pastor think that including it in his Sunday announcements was sufficient? There should be a very definite program of advertising, visitation and prayer groups set up with laymen helping the pastor contact unchurched children that might be reached for Christ through your D. V. B. S. Is it enough to pass the teacher of a class her manual the night before the school starts. Five days or ten days of teaching one class for approximately two hours each day requires much preparation. Teachers should have their books a few weeks ahead so she may read the lessons all through. A set of D. V. B. S. lessons are arranged in a unit, each day is important in the presentation of the whole. A teacher should know the end from the beginning, and be building up each day toward a climax which will tie the lesson material together for the children she is teaching. The director should have things so organized that she can truly direct the school and not merely be errand runner for the teachers. There is no field of endeavor which we would think of entering without sufficient preparation. Let us not make D. V. B. S. an exception.

The time which the school is in session should be one of calm efficiency. Each person working in the school should know his duties and be about them. Children are used to rules and regulations in their day schools, and they will quickly follow the director and teachers in what is expected of them. If the workers are at loose ends, the children will soon recognize it. If the program is well planned and efficiently run, the children will drop into the schedule.

If the D. V. B. S. is considered as an evangelistic appeal for children and the director and teachers carry this thought with them at all times, whether they are worshipping

together, praying, singing or even working with their hands, opportunities to reach a child may open itself. The emphasis should not be on handcraft or even the lesson as such, but on how the point of the lesson can be interpreted to meet the needs of the children. If we thought of the D. V. B. S. as a Children's Revival would we put more time and planning into it? The time spent in a ten day school and the money involved can pay tremendous dividends if properly used.

I consider directing or teaching a D. V. B. S. a solemn obligation. One has between 20 and 30 hours of teaching time—equal to six or more months of Sunday School teaching. And there is not only a lesson to teach, but the opportunity to witness while on the playground or during handcraft period. What a challenge! It should drive a teacher to her knees, and the church to their knees for their D. V. B. S. workers when they consider the wonderful opportunity.

There is a saying concerning our children: "Their future is in our hands." This is true. It is our obligation to "train them up in the way they should go." Also let us remember that as a church, "Our future is in their hands." We must raise up a generation of Reformed Baptist children, firmly grounded and strong in the faith, if we expect to have a church in the future.

Let us take the D. V. B. S. endeavor seriously. If we meet the challenge God will "exceedingly abundantly" reward our efforts.

* Member of Children's Committee of R. B. Y. P. A.

D. V. B. S. DIRECTORS NEEDED

There is an urgent need for D. V. B. S. directors this summer. Many churches want Vacation Bible Schools in their local church this summer and are asking for a director. We need YOU.

If you would like to do something for God, this is your opportunity. Perhaps you are planning a vacation this summer; could you give part of that time to help win little ones for Him?

Pray about this great need and then contact Lic. Ruth Harding, Bridgewater, Maine, and tell her you are ready to do your part. A Vacation Bible School training course is available that will help you work with confidence.

LET'S MAKE OUR GOALS FOR 1955-1956

VISION—Traffickers in drugs and liquors are exploiting our youth. Broken homes and unsaved parents surround our churches. Let's lift our eyes and look upon the harvest of boys and girls ripe for either Christ, or to become a prey to the devil. Let's begin to fervently pray that God will enlarge our vision and help us to see our part in winning these boys and girls for our God.

PREPARATION—Write to your child evangelism director and express your desire to enroll in a Teacher Training correspondence course, where you will get information to help you begin your BIG VENTURE for Christ. Get a list of the materials available to child evangelism leaders. Secure information about your denominational children's organization.

ACTION—Launch out in faith. Experience the thrill of watching little interested faces turned up to you as they drink in the WORD OF GOD. See the Spirit talk to their little hearts. Lead them into a knowledge of Christ as personal Saviour.

FELLOWSHIP—Share your experiences and ideas with other Junior Crusader Club leaders. Together, we can push the battle against Satan and all his plans but a few cannot do it all. It takes all to successfully plan and carry out a program that will win our boys and girls. However, here a little and there a little and GOALS are soon accomplished.

INFORMATION—Keep accurate records of the number enrolled in your club, the number of calls and contacts made, and the number of memory verses learned. Records are essential.

Vacation Bible School

In 1927 more than 17 million children received no religious education of any kind. In 1947 this figure had grown to 25 million, and today it is even greater. This is one of the compelling forces which makes it imperative that each church in our denomination plan a Vacation Bible School to be held this summer.

Vacation Bible School reaches not only "stand-bys," but also previously unreached teachers, pupils, and parents for the Sunday School, Church, and other Christian services. It makes profitable a portion of leisure time, thus helping prevent juvenile delinquency; and presents a most concentrated Bible study. In ten days the pupils get 25 to 30 hours of concentrated spiritual training which is presented in an integrated program of devotion, study, memory work, handwork, and supervised recreation. The study and devotional periods make the Lord real to children, build up confidence in Him, strengthens their desire to serve Him, as well as making the Bible a familiar and loved Book. V. B. S. develops leadership, gives missionary vision and a desire to win others for Christ. Because of the very nature of the study classes, a greater number of children are led to a personal faith in Christ and into activities of the church.

As the V. B. S. progresses, the pastor becomes closer to the children of the school and gains access to new homes in the community, thus enlarging his ministry. V. B. S. also enlarges the public's acceptance and appreciation of the ministry of the church.

Can we afford to neglect this part of our church's religious education program? The actual monetary cost need be no burden to the local church because V. B. S. sells itself. There are several ways of financing a school including making the school a part of the regular church and S. S. budget, two or more community churches co-operating and sharing expenses, taking a free will offering of satisfied parents at the Demonstration Program, or by the school's being sponsored by an adult Bible Class or Young Peoples' Society of the church. In some churches the expenses of the director are taken care of by the young people, while the S. S. buys the supplies.

We must have V. B. S. in each local church this summer; we must not fail to do our part in bringing the Gospel message to the boys and girls of our community.