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92

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SOCIAL SERVICE IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND LITERATURE IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(THE GRADUATE DIVINITY SCHOOL: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION)

BY

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CONTENTS

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CHAPTER I

THE ESSENTIAL QUALITY OF SOCIAL SERVICE

The purpose of this study is to present data concerning social service in the Sunday school. Moved alike by the pervasive social spirit of the times and the long-recognized need of providing some expressive activities for their young people, religious leaders here and there throughout the country have been gradually introducing social service into the Sunday school as material for religious education. While the movement has awakened wide interest and kindled much enthusiasm, no one seems to know how far it has progressed, what it has accomplished, or what assured solutions it offers to the problem of religious education. As there has been no canvass of the situation, and consequently no assembling of experience, it has been necessary for each leader to work out his own program and develop his own technique, and while these good people have often felt that there were other forms of significant service in which their young people ought to engage, they have not known where to find them or to whom to turn for information. With the hope not only of securing and presenting this desired information, but of accomplishing also the larger task of working out a curriculum of social service that might be experimentally tried out, this study was undertaken. Its specific aim was to ascertain what forms of service are in use, what technique is employed in carrying out a program of social service, what opportunity the average Sunday school has to engage in welfare efforts, what values have been discovered, what attitude the young people assume toward this new form of religious education, what motives are at work, what the reflex influence is, what means are taken to make benevolent offerings vital and significant, and how far it is possible to project a graded program of social service. The sources of this study, the technique employed, and the results obtained will be given in connection with each separate study.

It is fairly well accepted that education is a social process, and needs to be interpreted by established facts regarding the interactions of mind with mind. Whenever this is recognized we see at once the significance of those units of society called primary groups.