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THE EDUCATIONAL LEADER



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Teacher Education and Religion

BY EUGENE E. DAWSON

By way of review and for purposes of clarification, it will be recalled that the chief purpose of the Teacher Education and Religion Project, as conceived by the National Committee, "is to discover and to develop ways and means to teach the reciprocal relation between religion and other elements in human culture, in order that the prospective teacher, whether he teaches literature, history, the arts, science or other subjects, be prepared to understand, to appreciate, and to convey to his students the significance of religion in human affairs."

The committee, in formulating objectives, and plans for the project which officially got underway one year ago, envisioned from the outset a project which would cover a period of five years, and it was proposed that during the first two years of the project the emphasis would be upon intensive study by the faculties of the participating pilot institutions concerning ways to deal directly and objectively with religion whenever and wherever it is intrinsic to learning experience in the various fields of study. It was anticipated that during this initial stage of the project curriculum materials would be developed and new courses initiated and that, in addition, there would be refinements within presently existing courses. In facilitating these efforts, workshops were to be held, and consultants of the various disciplines were expected to visit the fifteen pilot institutions to offer counsel where needed and requested.

As one attempts an evaluation of a project still in its infancy, there are several variables to be kept in mind, some of which may be subsumed under the general classification of complexity. One need not labor the point that the objectives of the project are such that there are no simple solutions or universally agreed upon formulae for obtaining them. This has become increasingly apparent as the project has evolved. One becomes more sensitive to the many limitations which are involved as well as to the theories and procedures which merit experimentation. This problem, in itself, precludes the realization of early results, particularly those of profound and durable nature. When this fact is coupled with the complex nature of institutional life, the many local interests and problems which demand attention and certain natural limitations with respect to varied local resources, it seems altogether remark-

able that the project within a year's time has evolved to its present status. Even at this early stage of the program, several positive and healthy trends are becoming evident. As the report will endeavor to point out in a brief and cursory fashion, certain tangible results in the way of curriculum enrichment are becoming apparent. There will be more of this, as this is the very core of the effort under way. This situation, in itself, suggests a very genuine concern on the part of the pilot schools and has been one of the heartening features of the program. Most of the staffs of the related schools are enthusiastic over the project and it is stimulating and encouraging to observe the activity underway. We do not mean to imply that there is anything like universal concern and acceptance of the project on the part of faculties involved. Such would be unrealistic and would actually militate against healthy experimentation and exploration. Be that as it may, it may be reported that the project definitely has more in the way of acceptance than a year ago. One encounters less in the way of suspicion, apathy and hostility. There is support for contending that new insights are being gained and attitudes are being changed on the part of many faculty members. It is not an understatement to say that this is a crucial place at which to begin. One cannot but be encouraged over the accelerated amount of communication regarding the role of religion in higher education occurring on the part of faculty groups. In this connection, we are not only referring to the increased amount of communication on the part of staff members within a school, but beyond this to the amount of communicating which is taking place between institutions, consultants and schools, religious organizations and schools, laymen and educators. This is all to the good.

Then, too, while this program is primarily concerned with curricular activities, it cannot be denied that in several situations it has made a tremendous impact on other aspects of the institutional program. This has been particularly true with respect to extra-curricular programs of a religious nature.

One of the most rewarding developments in connection with the activity underway, is to be found in the number of individuals within the pilot centers who are being discovered and cultivated for future leadership responsibilities and roles in teacher education and religion. Some of these are even now serving as consultants to the project. Many more should be able to assume such roles in the future.

It should also be pointed out that during the course of the program there has emerged a new concern and sensitivity on the part of

the several participating institutions in assisting public institutions in coping with the many complex problems in the area of religion in public education. Conferences have been held for public school personnel and several conferences and workshops have been scheduled for coming months. In the final analysis, it is in the context of public education where the positive accomplishments of the project are expected to be felt the most. This is precisely why we are concerned with religion in teacher education.

After the completion of a year's activity, major interest in the project may be categorized roughly in three areas: General education, special courses in religion or units within courses in which the primary concern is religious literacy, and professional education.

As to the first area of interest, that of general education, such concern has been predicated on the philosophy that general education is incomplete which is devoid of the religious dimension, that if we are genuinely serious about educating the whole student, we must be sensitive in our teaching to the impact religion has made on our culture. Moreover, attention has been focused on the general education area because it is precisely at this point where most of the students in teacher education may be reached. Interest in relating the project to general education courses is being evidenced in all of the divisions of general education; the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences.

The second area of interest, that dealing primarily with religious literacy, is based on the thesis that one of the paramount needs of our prospective teachers is that of becoming more religiously literate. It is the feeling that if prospective teachers are to ultimately know youngsters, and the environmental situations in which they live, they must be more religiously literate. Such a program then, not only offers a greater amount of protection and security for the prospective teacher, but better equips the teacher to meet the needs and requirements of students.

The interest in professional education courses is revolving for the most part around philosophy of education courses, and there seems to be a growing feeling on the part of many that this represents a basic consideration and focal point of attention.

As to activities underway at the fifteen pilot centers, I should like to mention, first of all, that in addition to having had consultants available for the first four workshops sponsored by the project to date, we have made available during the current school year consultants to the pilot institutions. By now, twelve of the schools

have either had or have scheduled about thirty consultations. The consultants in visiting a school generally spend two or three days on a campus during which time they meet with the administrative officers, teacher education and religion committees, general education committees, departmental groups in the area of their specialty and individual faculty members and students. Consultants are making significant contributions on many of the local campuses, not only within the realm of the project itself, but in many and varied aspects of institutional activity.

Consultants working in behalf of the project include the following: In the humanities, Dr. Knox Hill, University of Chicago; President Douglas M. Knight, Lawrence College; Dr. Chad Walsh, Beloit College. In the natural sciences, Dr. Arthur W. Lindsey, Denison University; Dr. Kirtley F. Mather, Harvard University; Dr. Robert Moon, University of Chicago; Dean Harold K. Schilling, Pennsylvania State University. In the Social Sciences, Dr. Leo Alilunas, State University Teachers College, Fredonia, New York; Dr. Max Bernbaum, American Jewish Committee, New York; Dr. Brewton Berry, Ohio State University; Dr. Kenneth S. Cooper, George Peabody College for Teachers. In Professional Education, Dr. Harold Anderson, University of Chicago; Dr. Louise Antz, New York University; Dr. Kenneth Benne, Boston University; Dr. A. L. Sebaly, Western Michigan College of Education.

With respect to local projects underway, one of the more interesting developments is that of faculty seminars or forums which have been inaugurated on some of the campuses, for example, at Kansas State Teachers College of Pittsburg, University of Kentucky, and at Ohio State University. These are seminars in which sizable groups of faculty members have been discussing the many and varied problems and possibilities related to teaching about religion. Participants have reported these sessions to be beneficial in that they have resulted in new insights and have facilitated a greater degree of communication and understanding among the participants.

Iowa State Teachers College at Cedar Falls has been sponsoring a series of departmental dinners at which time the project has been the subject for discussion. In several institutions, for example, at Alabama State Teachers College of Troy, Kansas State Teachers College at Pittsburg, Maryland State Teachers College of Towson, New York State University Teachers College, Oswego, North Texas State College of Denton, Oregon College of Education at Monmouth, and at Western Michigan College of Education, Kalamazoo,

analyses of current courses have occurred or are taking place in order to determine the extent to which teaching about religion is already occurring on the local campuses. This would appear to be a logical early step in a project of this kind.

On several campuses, a number of course syllabi have already been modified after careful analyses. A good example of this procedure would be at the University of Kentucky, where a number of graduate courses in professional education have been modified. In at least two institutions, three new courses have been inaugurated this year in philosophy, political science, and comparative religion. Local committees at East Carolina College and Oregon College of Education were guided by the objectives of the Teacher Education and Religion Project in introducing and developing these courses. In at least five institutions, Arizona State College, East Carolina College, Maryland State Teachers College at Towson, Alabama State Teachers College, Troy, and Western Michigan College of Education, two new general education courses are expected to be introduced in the Fall of 1955 in which special consideration is to be given to teaching about religion and, in addition, several new courses bearing such titles as Comparative Religion, Introduction to Religion, and Religion in Twentieth Century America are expected to be introduced in some of these institutions.

At Towson, Maryland, a series of orientation discussions in which attention is being given to the three major religious faiths in America is now underway. These discussions have been arranged for students who are to go into teaching upon graduation.

Several members of the local Teacher Education and Religion Committee at Western Michigan College, as well as a few faculty members who have not been directly related to the committee, are currently at work on a series of essays in which an effort is being made to treat, in a very practical way, the methods and procedures employed by the writers in dealing with religion in their respective disciplines. These essays will be printed and should be available for distribution during the Spring semester.

Another series of essays, directed for the most part to the opportunities and problems involved in teaching about religion on the elementary and secondary levels, is in the planning stage at East Carolina College. It is anticipated that these writings will be available during the Fall of 1955.

Another example of the writing which is currently taking place is at New York University where some of the staff members in the De-

partment of Home Economics, in the School of Education, have an interest in contributing articles in which they will treat the complex and varied problems of a religious nature which are frequently involved in food preparation.

Finally, it should be pointed out, that in at least three institutions, namely, Iowa State Teachers College, North Texas State College, and Oregon College of Education, conferences and workshops on Religion in Public Education have been scheduled for coming months to which will be invited representatives from a sizable number of schools and colleges. The workshop at Monmouth, Oregon, for example, will be held in June for a period of two weeks and will include classroom teachers and school administrators from a number of schools in the Pacific Northwest region.

At this juncture, a word is in order concerning the activities anticipated during the second stage of the Teacher Education and Religion Project, or during the three years beginning next October. My comments will be necessarily brief and will cover four areas: Curriculum revisions and refinements, consultative services, workshops for college and public school personnel, and publications.

In the first place, with respect to curriculum revisions and refinements, I should like to say a word concerning course enrichment. During the remainder of the project, it is our hope that many institutions will become engaged in the critical analyses of courses in the humanities, in the social sciences, in the natural sciences and in professional education courses, and that the results of their analyses will be made available to other interested institutions. It is the thought of the committee, that this information can be disseminated through printed matter, workshops, conferences and by inter-visitation.

As to further additions in the way of curricular offerings, it should be said that the problem of what courses in religion, philosophy, and ethics are most valuable and suitable, the number of semester hours that should be regarded as a minimum, the nature of the text and reference materials, the level of the year in which such courses should be offered, the relation of these courses to the total curriculum, the problem of required or elective courses, and numerous other related problems are pertinent. It is the hope of the committee that some of these important questions may be answered, or that we may find some good answers from the experiences in the fifteen centers, and that colleges desiring aid may find help from the project through workshops, printed matter and conferences. It is hoped that this information can be widely known and

that through the national meetings and the School for Executives, as well as through the Central Office, this information can be widely disbursed.

As envisioned at the present time, our second area of interest, that of consultative services, would be four-fold in nature:

- (1) Consultants should be used in connection with the workshops. This will represent an important phase of the activity as will be described later.
- (2) Consultants should be made available to the institutions previously in attendance at the workshops and which are interested in the future implementation of work begun. Here we are not only thinking in terms of pilot institutions, but also, of the many additional institutions which are expected to become involved in the project and which send representatives to workshops which are expected to be held in the future.
- (3) Consultants should be made available to make a thorough analysis of various syllabi, course outlines, and bibliographical materials used by the various institutions.
- (4) As will be mentioned later, it is hoped that a sizable publication or volume will be written and it is believed that carefully selected consultants should be used in its preparation.

The third area of activity to which we shall expect to give attention is that of workshops for college and public school personnel. It will be remembered that when invitations were extended the member institutions of the association to participate in the project, fifty-nine schools made application. In view of the fact that only fifteen schools could be accepted, the committee feels a real responsibility to involve the other forty-four institutions as soon as possible, and, indeed to extend the influence of the project as far as possible within the Association membership. In view of the above mentioned objective, it is hoped that by the summer of 1956, a number of the pilot centers will be in a position to contribute appreciably to the project by sharing insights gained and materials developed during the first two years with the many teacher education institutions over the country. It should also be pointed out, that from the beginning of the project, it has been the thought of the committee, that before we moved very far there should be co-operative efforts in which colleges and public schools could work together in developing programs designed to improve the situation within the schools proper. Basically, this is a problem of great magnitude, and one in which the teacher education institutions must share a heavy responsibility. The fact that this area has been so long neglected and that the need now has become so pronounced, has made it apparent that something needs to be done by our in-

stitutions in aiding public schools and the state departments of education in solving this problem.

Finally, there is the emphasis to be given to publications in the area of teacher education and religion. Although the project has been in operation for only one year, it is notable that several pieces of printed matter have been prepared which appear to be extremely useful. We envision further developments along this line. In addition, we are proposing the publication of a comprehensive volume which we believe will be extremely valuable and helpful to all institutions engaged in teacher education. We believe that such a volume should not be strictly philosophical but should be descriptive in nature with many illustrations of how institutions have faced the problems of giving emphasis to religious and spiritual values and that it should be written by the best authorities that we can discover. We anticipate that such a volume would be widely distributed and used.

Let's Recruit!

*Report of a speech given to the Missouri
Association of School Librarians, Fall, 1954*

BY JOHN F. HARVEY

I am happy to speak on recruitment today because of its current importance. Librarians have for several years felt the need for more effective recruiting.

My talk today will be divided into three major parts. These three parts are:

- (1) The need for an effective recruiting program,
- (2) The conditions under which we must operate, and
- (3) How to recruit librarians.

These three parts—the need, the present conditions, and the technique—will be developed in that order.

The *need* for effective recruiting can be disposed of easily. You would not have chosen this subject without thinking it important. The need is shown by our many unfilled vacancies and by the jobs filled by poorly qualified librarians. My library school now has several vacancies listed for Missouri school libraries, and no names available to suggest. I can further point out that the library schools are not now full of students, nor have they been in the recent past, nor do they seem likely to be in the foreseeable future. Our library schools are almost all small and struggling. They could handle more students, and would like to. It behooves us to find these students for them.

There is another aspect of this need. Everyone knows that it exists, but no one does much about it. The library school deans expect the librarians to recruit, and the librarians leave it to the deans. "Buck-passing" is the rule. This has caused us to lose many good people by default. Most students never consider librarianship because no one talks to them about it. Ignorance of our occupation is our worst enemy.

To summarize my discussion of the *need*, we are not now getting a sufficiently large supply of well qualified people. Our problem then, is to change this situation.

I have finished my brief discussion of the need; now for the conditions under which we are operating. Some are favorable, some unfavorable. These conditions provide the limitations under which we must establish a recruiting program. We have already seen

the motivation for its establishment, now we must see its setting.

To begin with the more favorable of these conditions—we can list four. First, we do have a worthwhile and interesting occupation to sell. Our occupation provides challenging work in pleasant surroundings with public approval. Our future is good—libraries are improving and budgets are growing. Secondly, I have already pointed out that there are many good vacancies to be filled, and this should be a strong talking point. In few occupations, can the beginner start work in charge of his own unit, as head of his own operation with much freedom for development. My third point is that salaries, always important to the beginner, are respectable. They may not be fabulous, or all we deserve, but they are competitive with many comparable fields. Finally, school librarians have certification requirements setting minimums on education. They protect against untrained persons and maintain standards not now enjoyed by public librarians. We can be proud of these standards and hope they will be raised.

Now that we have surveyed the favorable aspects of our situation, we must face the unfavorable side. I have said that we have a good product to sell, but obviously we are making few sales. We need many more recruits. We must identify some of the factors which are limiting our supply. I have identified six of them.

First, we must admit that our occupation will never appeal to more than a minority of the high school and college graduates. The athletes and scientists seldom show any interest. Nor do the industrial arts, music, or art majors. They are not temperamentally suited to librarianship and should not be expected to be interested.

Without question, those who like books are our best bets, and we should look for these readers in our student bodies. Fostering book interest among students should pay good dividends. Our recruiting campaigns need waste no time on the others.

Secondly, we must realize that public opinion and popular stereotypes are not always favorable to us. Many people have experienced only the poor widow who sat in the public library three afternoons a week, or the fussy old maid who reigned triumphant in the study hall library. As more people experience the new, smiling, helpful kind of librarian, the climate of public opinion will change in our favor. I suspect, however, if the full truth were known, many of the public have no impression of a librarian at all, favorable or unfavorable. They have a completely neutral impression. So why should we worry?

Number three, to men students, librarianship is often considered

not sufficiently manly, not challenging enough. And it involves work with immature students instead of adults. Most high school and college women look forward to marriage within a few years of graduation, and training for a profession has little appeal to them. Why train for librarianship when marriage is probable?

Fourthly, many students object to the fifth year of training expected in graduate library schools. They need to begin earning a living after four college years. Most of our students still will not consider seriously a fifth year of college in any field.

Five, the library school deans, who might at first glance be expected to do their own recruiting, seldom ever see students until after their vocational choices have been made. There are three reasons for this: graduate library schools teach few if any undergraduate courses so have no opportunity to contact undergraduates in class, deans have little free time to visit prospective students, and most students have already chosen their occupations by the time they reach the college freshman or sophomore year. Since library school faculty usually teach no undergraduates, they have little contact with them, little opportunity to recruit, and no free time to go out and seek them. And even if they did, they would find that most undergraduates had already chosen another occupation.

The final condition under which we operate, at least on college and university campuses, is the competition between departments for students. Each campus department wishes to enlarge its group of majors and graduate students; with increased size goes increased income for faculty and for equipment as well as increased prestige on the campus. Many departments are actively recruiting—taking students who might otherwise become librarians. Obviously our library schools have never fared well in this competition. In the future we will have to secure more students *in spite of* these other departments, not with them sitting idly by.

In the past few minutes, I have listed the advantages and disadvantages under which we must recruit. They include several favorable conditions, but also many difficulties to be overcome. This presents a somber picture. The conditions under which we operate are not always encouraging, but are all the more challenging as a consequence. Effective recruiting is being done in scattered parts of the country, and the final portion of my talk will point out the methods by which you and I can do it, too.

This final section will be practical and also optimistic, for I do believe the future is bright if we take advantage of our opportuni-

ties. Other occupations are obtaining a good supply of promising new recruits, and we can too, if we will only go to work.

In this final section I should like to list three important ingredients in successful recruiting. These ingredients are: 100% participation, organization, and personal contact. Past attempts have often failed because they involved only a handful of committee members, no widespread organization, and little personal contact with students. I shall discuss these points in order.

In the first place, everyone of us must be a recruiter. Certain library groups have adopted a slogan like, "Each librarian find one." We will never obtain the needed number of new librarians unless we all regard ourselves as walking ambassadors of librarianship. All of us must work at recruiting to make it successful. It is not a committee job; it is the job of every one of us. So much for my first point.

Secondly, to be successful we must also organize the recruiting job. One of the chief drawbacks with present recruiting is its lack of organization, its spasmodic nature, its uneven spacing throughout the country. We need good organization to succeed, and I shall devote some time to developing this topic.

The organization which I suggest should originate with the library school. After all, they are the immediate consumers of new students, and they should be most concerned with requirements and quotas for them. In recruiting, we search for people to send to library school. Obviously they will eventually work in our libraries, but the immediate problem is to get them into the library schools.

The library schools should direct national recruiting. However, those who do the day-to-day work of recruiting must, of necessity, be the alumni—the librarians out on the job—since they are the only ones who contact high school and college students in their daily work.

A library school staff member, perhaps the Dean, should be placed in charge of each school's recruiting program. He, in turn, should organize it by alumni groups in cities, states, and regions. If good relations have been established between school and alumni, the alumni will already have organized itself into groups, and will be meeting informally at intervals for social gatherings. It is only natural that these alumni groups should also operate in the area of recruiting. These groups should act as liaisons between the recruiting alumni out in the libraries and the library school officer in charge of recruiting.

Of primary importance in this project is the loyalty of the alumni

to the school. Unless the alumni feel an attachment, or a debt, to the school, the proper foundation for recruiting has not been laid. This loyalty is built up by pleasant memories and by school attention to alumni needs. To have good alumni relation, the schools must work at it; inattention to alumni will bring indifference.

Library schools should organize their alumni so recruiting will appeal to them and be exciting; their emotional ties should make alumni good salesmen for their alma maters. Alumni groups may wish to compete with each other and award prizes for unusually effective recruiting, and local groups will often wish to finance scholarships.

Isn't this the way other schools on the campus recruit? The graduates of the physical education department, now coaching, send promising athletes back to the university. Graduates of the music school are expected to do the same thing. Loyalty to one's own school is often strong. I know liberal arts colleges which have organized their alumni all over the country to find promising students, and with very gratifying results.

While I believe the library schools should try to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps and be the primary recruiting agencies for the profession, I also urge the state library associations to enlarge the scope of their own recruiting activities. And this, of course, includes the MASL. I have seen some of *your* plans for recruiting and I find them to be good. In other parts of this talk I am recommending several of your planned procedures. If these plans are carried out fully, both MLA and MASL should do much for recruiting in Missouri. However, I do have a few suggestions.

Only if the entire membership of each association is made responsible for recruiting, will it be successful. The entire association should be organized into a committee of the whole, and put to work in an organized manner. To merely name a five man recruiting committee and leave it to them, will get you nowhere. They can do little more than issue leaflets, write letters, pass resolutions, and recruit in their own five libraries. The leaflets, letters, and resolutions will gain us few converts, and the five librarians working their own libraries are a drop in the bucket. The state will continue to lose good students by default.

I don't wish to seem unduly critical of state library association committees, merely realistic. I have been chairman of association committees myself, but I have seen how many of them work out. And only if the entire association can be aroused to recruit, will we get results.

So, my recommendation to the MASL is that each and every one of you get out and recruit. You will wish to appoint a steering committee perhaps, but remember that you yourselves must do most of the work. And I suggest this as your project of the year; I can think of nothing more worthwhile. It should make Missouri a national leader in recruiting.

I have now finally concluded my discussion of the organization necessary for successful recruiting, and have arrived at the enlargement upon the third of my three points about the ingredients of successful recruiting. Personal contact—the third point—is of great importance in recruiting. It is the only way of achieving any success in this game. Do the coaches use leaflets or resolutions or letters in recruiting athletes? Of course not. They use personal contact and informal conversation. They go out to see the student. Over a coke they talk to him and show their interest in him. This is the best method, and is the third key to successful recruiting.

Why is it the best method? Because many of our potential librarians must be *converted* to librarianship, to the idea of becoming librarians. They must be talked into it. A letter or leaflet from several hundred miles away, is not convincing to the typical high school or college student. A personal interview with all its warm, human implications, is much more convincing. Any elected public official will tell you that he wins votes not by getting his name in the paper, but by going out to shake the voters' hands. We must do the same; we must talk to students to convert them.

In this, the third and longest portion of my talk, I have already discussed the three most important requirements of successful recruiting: Extensive participation—in an organized campaign—by personal contact. Now, I shall conclude by listing several other ideas helpful to us in recruiting.

Librarians have only recently become aware of the need for publicizing themselves, but the public needs to be constantly reminded of us and our important activities. We can't have too much good publicity. As we get more and more of this favorable publicity, we will create a favorable public opinion toward librarianship, and this will make recruiting easier.

I have already indicated that I consider the student assistants in the nation's libraries to be our best prospects. They are already in library work, in a sense, and can see what it is, so should be easily converted. They are certainly accessible, too. So go after your student assistants.

Another group of good prospects are the instructors in high school

and college who show an interest in library work and have some administrative ability. There are many of them, if we will seek them out, who could be persuaded to move from teaching into librarianship.

Many of the high schools now hold career days to teach students more about each occupation. We should see that librarianship is always represented. In the past we have often lost this important day by default.

The vocational guidance people on our campuses are important to us. They can steer people to us if they are properly informed about our occupation. We must make sure they are convinced of our importance.

Two other recruiting devices should be mentioned. Many high school librarians form their student assistants into clubs which have social activities as well as library duties. These club meetings should provide good opportunities for selling librarianship. And the second device is the state association of library student assistants. Several states have these associations now, and they should provide excellent opportunities, also. Missouri should form such an association.

Now I shall attempt a summary of this talk, and I can do it briefly under its three major headings: (1) the need is great for a dynamic recruiting program since we are not now getting a sufficiently large supply of well qualified people into the library schools; (2) certain of the conditions under which we operate are favorable, such as the good product we sell, the many good jobs now vacant, and our previous lack of effort being an important reason for our failure, while certain other conditions are unfavorable, such as our lack of appeal to most students, general public opinion toward us not being strongly favorable, men expecting too little initiative and women expecting spinsterhood in librarianship, the fifth year of college discouraging many, library school deans in no position to recruit directly, and the competition for students on every campus; and finally, (3) there are three important ingredients, organizing national campaigns, and personally contacting high school and college students.

There you have it! Go to it! And may all our library schools be overflowing! Thank you.

Economic Development of the Middle and Lower Basins of the Rio Sao Francisco

BY MARY MEGEE

LOCATION

The Rio Sao Francisco in its entirety is 1802 miles in length. The entire basin of this river covers an area of 258,921 square miles with a total population of 3,741,309, making a density of 14.44 inhabitants per square mile.¹ The river is exceeded in length in South America by only two rivers—the Amazon and Paraguay-Parana Rivers. The Rio Sao Francisco rises in the State of Minas Gerais in Southeast Brazil in the Serra do Espinhaco near the city of Belo Horizonte at approximately 18° South Latitude, and runs north to about 8° South Latitude where it bends southeast to enter the Atlantic Ocean at approximately 10° South Latitude in Northeast Brazil. The river flows across or forms the boundary for six states: Minas Gerais, Goiaz, Bahia, Pernambuco, Alagoas, and Sergipe. In this study we shall be concerned only with the Middle and Lower Basins of the Rio Sao Francisco.

THE LAND

The Sao Francisco Basin is part of the old igneous and metamorphic rocks of the Brazilian Oldland, which is one of the major subdivisions of the Brazilian Highlands, a major landform of South America. Though covered with different vegetation, the Oldland may be compared in age, structure, and elevations to the Appalachian Mountains of eastern United States.

The surface of the Sao Francisco Basin, once covered with sandstone, now appears as continuous hilly upland with occasional low mountains appearing on the east and with tabular uplands appearing near the mouth of the river and at the boundary between Bahia and Goiaz on the west. The land rises gradually from the Atlantic coast to 2,000 or 3,000 feet above sea level in the Oldland.² The river itself is from 1,200 to 1,500 feet above sea level, and meanders over a level floor from 15 to 20 miles in width.³

1. Morris L. Cooke, *Brazil on the March* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1944), p. 197.

2. Raymond Crist, "Cultural Crosscurrents in the Valley of the Rio Sao Francisco," *Geographical Review*, XXXIV (October, 1944), 587-612.

3. *Ibid.*

The climate of the Middle Basin and upper portion of the Lower Basin is tropical savanna transitional to tropical semiarid. Average rainfall per annum is 40 inches, but the annual variation may be as much as 30 percent. The Basin is in the rainshadow of the serras to the east, and precipitation is never dependable. This region, along with parts of the States Piaui, Rio Grande do Norte, and Ceara to the north, is known as the "Calamity Zone" of Brazil. Years of prolonged drought and/or floods have contributed to the sparsity of population here, thus giving it the name.

Extending inland from the Atlantic for a width of about 50 miles along the lower portion of the Lower Basin of the River the natural vegetation is tropical semideciduous forest. The underlying soil is fairly rich, and is particularly suited to the growing of sugar cane, the chief commercial crop of Northeast Brazil. Rainfall is over 65 inches per annum and is dependable. Only along the immediate coast is the soil too sandy to support the forest. From the sugar cane region to western Alagoas is a transitional zone of less rain, poorer soils, and natural vegetation of savanna grass. Cotton is a more important crop there than sugar cane. The vegetation of the Middle Sao Francisco Basin which begins at the end of the cotton district is primarily the caatinga or tropical scrub forest of low thorny deciduous trees and evergreen shrubs.⁴ Soils are sandy and not fertile enough for large scale commercial crop agriculture that prevails in the Lower Basin. Soil is better and rainfall more dependable in the Upper Middle Basin in Minas Gerais. Savanna grass is the natural vegetation. On the west side of the river basin near the Bahia-Goiaz boundary the caatinga is transitional to savanna grass.

The land use of a narrow coastal strip of a few miles along the Atlantic is too sandy for commercial agriculture, and is used primarily for the grazing of poor-grade livestock. Behind this narrow strip of land, the Lower Basin is used chiefly for commercial agriculture requiring large labor supplies. The main products are sugar and cotton. Land use of the Middle Basin has always been primarily livestock grazing without forage crops. The inhabitants live as nomads herding their poor-grade livestock up and down the Basin. Some sedentary subsistence agriculture is carried on particularly near the Goiaz-Bahia boundary and in the State of Bahia northwest of Salvador. Around Joazeiro some cotton and sugar

4. Preston James, "Observations on the Physical Geography of Northeast Brazil," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, XLII, (June, 1952), p. 161.

cane are grown by irrigation. Land use of the Lower and Middle Basins of the Rio Sao Francisco can be seen in Figure 1.

FIGURE I



LAND USE OF LOWER AND MIDDLE BASINS OF THE
RIO SAO FRANCISCO

Divisions of the Basins

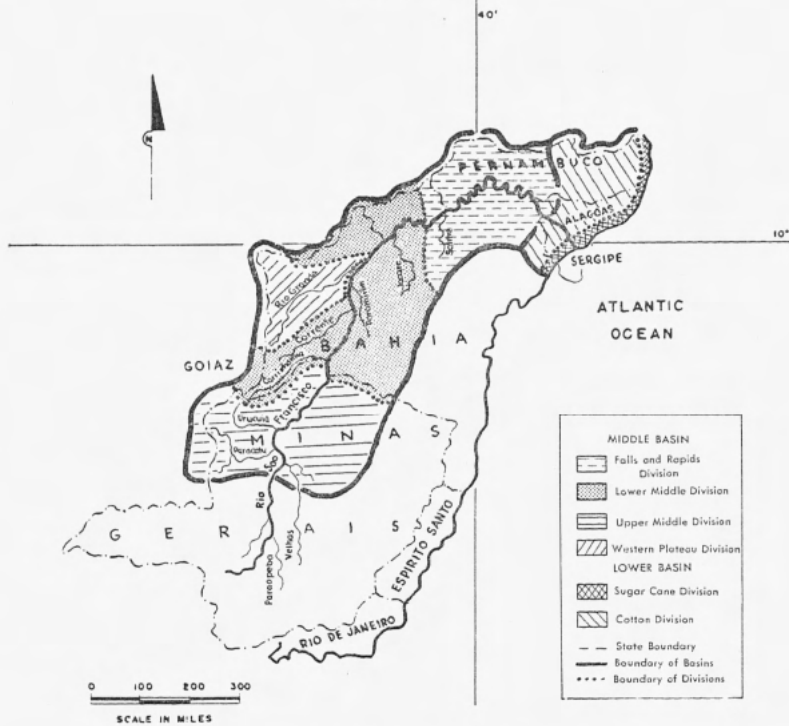
More detailed land use of the Lower and Middle Basins of the Rio Sao Francisco can be seen by separating the Basins into the following divisions:

- I. Lower Basin
 - A. Sugar Cane Division
 - B. Cotton Division
- II. Middle Basin
 - A. Falls and Rapids Division
 - B. Lower Middle Division
 - C. Upper Middle Division
 - D. Western Plateau Division

These divisions may be seen in Figure II.

The Sugar Cane Division has a width of only about fifty miles. It is the most densely populated and most important economically of all the divisions. This division has accessibility to sea transportation, and owes its development to the colonial sugar period of the latter part of the 16th century and the entire 17th century. Reliable

FIGURE II



MAJOR DIVISIONS OF LOWER AND
MIDDLE BASINS OF RIO SAO FRANCISCO

rainfall and potential hydroelectric power from the Falls Division are assets in agriculture and industry. When and if the hinterland is developed a great port could develop there. Maceio and Aracaju, capitals of the states Alagoas and Sergipe, respectively are the most important city-ports near the river mouth.

The Cotton Division of the Lower Basin extends from the western end of the Sugar Cane Division to the Division of Falls and Rapids of the Middle Basin. Rainfall is not sufficient, and soil is not so

fertile for the cultivation of sugar cane. Yet conditions are better for commercial agriculture than in the Middle Basin. Cotton produced in this division is consumed mainly domestically, since it cannot compete with lower prices of other countries, such as those of the United States. Its only real value as an export was during the 1860's when the United States, in the Civil War at that time, was not exporting much cotton.

The Lower and Middle Basins are separated by the *travessao*, an imaginary line of division based upon the marked differences in vegetation, soil, climate, types of agriculture, and population. The Middle Basin of the Rio Sao Francisco may be divided into four major divisions: (1) Division of Falls and Rapids; (2) Lower Middle; (3) Upper Middle, and (4) Western Plateau.

The Falls and Rapids Division includes 15 percent of the area and 33 percent of the population of the Middle Basin. The population density of this division is twice that of any of the other divisions of the Middle Basin. This region begins in the state of Bahia at about Joazeiro and culminates in the Paulo Alfonso Falls on the western edge of the State of Alagoas.⁵ At least 1,000,000 horsepower has been estimated as the electrical potential of these falls, though these hydroelectric possibilities still remain largely undeveloped. The principal occupations of the inhabitants of this division are pastoral.

The Lower Middle Division extends from the Minas Gerais-Bahia boundary to the western end of the division of falls and rapids at about the location of Joazeiro. This division contains 41 percent of the area and 36 percent of the population of the Middle Basin. This is part of the "Calamity Zone" of the Northeast and is more subject to prolonged periods of drought than is the Upper Middle Division. The population is clustered in small settlements which are not generally permanent habitations. The main towns of this division are Joezeiro, Petrolina, and Bonfim where sugar cane and cotton are irrigated. Rio Brenco and Remanso are towns of lesser importance. The Rios Salitre, Jacare, Paramirim, Carinhanha, and Corrente are the most important tributaries of this division. These towns and rivers may be seen in Figures I and II.

The natural vegetation is mainly the *caatinga* or thorn forest with *galeria* forests along riverbanks in some places, and the principal occupation of the inhabitants is the grazing of cattle and goats. Near towns truck crops are raised along the riverbanks and *carnuba*

5. Preston James, "The Sao Francisco Basin: A Brazilian Sertao," *Geographical Review*, XXXVIII (October, 1948), p. 660.

for wax, carao for fiber, and rubber are collected. Fish from the river is an important source of food, and the sparse population survives on a diet of fish, a few subsistence crops, and mainly meat from the poor-grade livestock. Even the clothing of nomads is made from the leather of the hides of their livestock.

Transportation to the Lower Middle Division does not encourage development. Such facilities are few and too costly for the poor people. A railroad runs from Salvador to Juazeiro, and a highway extends from Recife to Petrolina, which is also the site of an important airfield.⁶ Aside from these there is only the river itself which brackets the Northeast and Southeast, and serves as the main line of communication. It is navigable from Juazeiro to Pirapora for shallow draft steamers carrying small quantities of local goods for domestic consumption at the major market centers along the river.⁷

The Upper Middle Division includes one-fourth of the area of the Middle Basin and 21 percent of the population.⁸ This is the most potentially productive division of the Middle Basin, because it suffers less from drought. It is considered in that part of Brazil known as the Southeast. It extends from Pirapora in Minas Gerais to the Minas Gerais-Bahia boundary. Natural vegetation consists of savanna and semideciduous forest. Small local industries which utilize products of this division for local use are cotton ginning, milling of manioc flour, preparation of rice, castor oil, babacu oil, cottonseed oil, and soap. Pirapora is the main town in the division, and is located near the head of navigation on the middle river. There is railroad transportation from Belo Horizonte to Pirapora and Montes Claros, a center of secondary importance. Other towns of the Division are Januaria and Sao Francisco. Rios Urucuia, Paracatu, Parapeba, and Velhas are the most important tributaries flowing into the Sao Francisco in this division. See Figures I and II for location of these towns and tributaries.

The fourth division is that of the Western Plateau. It lies west of the Lower Middle Division along the border of Bahia and Goiaz, and includes 19 percent of the area and 10 percent of the population of the Middle Basin.⁹ This is an area of tabular uplands separated by the valleys of the tributaries of the Sao Francisco. The Rio Grande tributary is the most important tributary of this division,

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*, 659.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 660.

and flows from the southwest into the Sao Francisco. Barra do Rio Grande and Barreiras are the most important towns of the Division. See Figures I and II. This division receives more rainfall than other divisions of the Middle Basin, and there is a transition from the thorn forests to open savannas with galereia forests along riverbanks. With more and dependable rainfall and better grazing grass this division could be a better pastoral area than the other three divisions. Large areas are devoted to cattle ranges or vast ranch estates. There is, however, a lack of transportation which hinders the development of this division, and it is therefore less accessible than the other divisions of the Middle Basin.

THE PEOPLE

The population composition of all divisions but the Upper Middle Division is 51 percent mulatto, 12 percent Negro, 36 percent white, and 1 percent Indian and mameluco (white-Indian mixture.)¹⁰ Most of the Negroes and mulattoes are found in the Lower Basin of the Rio Sao Francisco, particularly along the Northeast Coast. The Negroes were brought from Africa as early as the sixteenth century to work in the sugar plantations along the coast. For the most part they have remained in this part of Brazil ever since, some intermarrying with the Europeans. The Divisions of the Middle Basin are occupied by descendants of poor Portuguese who left the sugar plantations at the end of the first big sugar period at the close of the seventeenth century. The population is of almost pure Portuguese descent with little Indian mixture.

Public instruction is nonexistent over most of the Sao Francisco Basin.¹¹ Only along the coastal section of the Lower Basin in the towns are educational facilities better, and education exists primarily for the wealthy. The high rate of illiteracy among the population contributes to the undernourishment, unsanitary conditions, extreme poverty, disease, and high death rate that exist in the Basin.¹² The people are very superstitious and adhere to the Roman Catholic faith.¹³

The Middle Rio Sao Francisco Basin was and still is a center for emigration, and it is said that the chief export of the Basin is *people*. People have emigrated to the gold mines of Minas Gerais, to the coffee fazendas of Sao Paulo, to the rubber plantations of the

10. Preston James, *Latin America*, (New York: Odyssey Press, 1950), p. 390.

11. M. L. Cooke, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

Amazon, to the cacao plantations of southern Bahia, and are now building factories and other buildings in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.¹⁴ Those who were not able to make a living elsewhere in Brazil returned apathetic, discouraged, and poverty-stricken to the Sao Francisco Basin. Emigration from this region has been going on for 300 to 400 years, and is especially great during periods of prolonged drought. Continual emigration of the most resourceful of the population in each generation has produced an attitude of resignation in the face of environmental conditions.¹⁵

Attitudes of the People Toward the Land

The attitude of the people in the Sao Francisco Basin, as in almost all of Brazil, has never been one of conservation of natural resources. Quick profit has always been the motive connected with economic development of all parts of Brazil, with some exception in the South, and this motive is no exception in the Basin, although it has never been as agriculturally or minerally rich as other areas.

It is the people, more than nature itself, who account for the calamities of drought and flood of the Middle Basin, which faces a more uncertain economic development than do the sugar and cotton areas of the Lower Basin. The people themselves have modified the physical environment to produce the economic background of poverty which prevails. Old Indian legends record periods of calamity in the Middle Basin, but there is no knowledge that these periods warranted extensive emigrations by the Indians, such as prevailed after the coming of the Portuguese.¹⁶ The Sao Francisco Basin has experienced more than 400 years of destructive land use during which the natural vegetation has been repeatedly stripped away destroying the capacity of the soil for retaining moisture.¹⁷ Portuguese inhabitants and descendants destroyed the humus by burning, by exposure to hot sunshine, and by exploitive farming practices resulting in accelerated erosion.¹⁸ Erosion due to such farming practices as concentration of agriculture on steep slopes has resulted in the change of profiles of hills and shapes of valley bottoms.¹⁹

14. Preston James, "Observations on the Physical Geography of Northeast Brazil, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

PROSPECTUS

The inhabitants of the Rio Sao Francisco Basin, particularly the Middle Basin, do not live as well as resources might permit.²⁰ More truck garden zones near market towns along the river and its tributaries could be developed. Much of the land along the river and its tributaries is suitable for the growing of sugar cane and cotton, particularly if a good system of irrigation can be worked out. The people along the river, however, are uncooperative and highly individualistic, and such programs of irrigation require a high degree of cooperation among farmers. Even if these crops could be raised they would be unable to compete with other more important areas where crops are raised on a large scale. Oilseeds, especially castor oil, show a definite promise for some prosperity from the Middle Basin. They enjoy a steady demand on the world markets today.²¹ The Middle Basin might be able to compete with other areas if its crops were cultivated by machinery instead of by hand. But machine agriculture does not provide for the population increase which the Brazilian government feels is so desirable to a more effective national unity.

Brazil is today launching the SALTE²² plan, a five-year \$1-Billion Plan, which will allocate \$135,000,000 for the improvement of agriculture. Some of this money will go to the development of better agricultural methods in the Sao Francisco Basin, including agricultural machinery and the establishment of regional centers to guide farmers in mechanized farming.²³

All these agricultural techniques could no doubt help the people of the Basin, but before such methods can be of avail, there must be a change of attitudes in the people. This change cannot take place over night or over a period of a few years. Traditions which have been practiced for hundreds of years must be slowly altered by education, improved sanitation, more nutritious and varied diets, as well as modern agricultural techniques, all of which can take place only over a long period of time.

20. Preston James, "The Sao Francisco Basin: A Brazilian Sertao," *op. cit.*, p. 161.

21. *Ibid.*

22. SALTE stands for the Portuguese words Saude, Alimentacao, Transportes, and Energia.

23. "Brazil Launches Five-Year, \$1-Billion Plan," *Business Week*, (June 24, 1950), p. 113.

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This Is the News . . .

BY ED WEST

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A radio, a world map, and a set of dictionaries form the foundation upon which is built an hour of language arts, geography, and current events.

No longer does the period bell start the class to work but the cryptic voice of the announcer beginning, "This is the news." At that point students have their pencils poised ready for the events of the day to unfold. As the announcer proceeds from item to item pencils move hurriedly taking notes of names, places, and events. Finally the radio is switched off and hands are raised to discuss the news of the day. A student reports, "Mendes France is trying to get the French Parliament to pass the Paris Pact, but the Communists in France are fighting approval." A question from one of the students—"I thought there were Communists only in Russia?" There follows a discussion of the Communists' efforts in all nations to undermine the security of the country.

During the discussion the map is in constant use. "Where is Thailand?" "How do you spell it?" "What language is spoken there?" Through such questions the map of the world soon becomes as familiar to the student as the streets of his town.

Frequently students will relate some of their own experiences in the places that are in the news. Countries such as Japan, Korea, and Germany are not as remote to the student of today as they were to pre-war students. Many times the student will have greater travel experience than the teacher. This experience is put to good use in the current events hour.

Item after item is discussed. Names and places are written on the chalk board to help in spelling. The student is now ready to write a summary of the news, paying special attention to sentence construction, spelling, and penmanship skills. Dictionaries are provided for every two students so that looking up the doubtful word is not an admission of ignorance but an indication of common sense.

From the sketchy notes taken during the broadcast the corrected notes, revised in the discussion period, serve as a basis for writing in clear, simple language the news of the day. When the student is finished writing the news, he proofreads his paper thoroughly.

When the corrected paper is returned to the student the next day, he immediately corrects the errors and writes all misspelled words in his own list. The student is given no other list of spelling words to learn.

As the teacher corrects the paper an indication of the type of difficulty the student is having begins to appear. Special drill in these constant errors is then given to the student. The student, aware that these errors are lowering the effectiveness of his daily reporting, strives to remedy them.

Some errors occur so frequently that time is taken from the next class period to reteach the area of difficulty to the class. It will become apparent in the next few reports whether the correction has reached the behavior level or not. If not, individual help is given in those cases where further difficulty is encountered.

Occasionally, as a change of pace, the radio is dispensed with and the students are asked to bring in newspaper articles which they read to the class. Here again, the student takes notes and writes up his summary. Practice in reading the intricate clauses which are found in the lead paragraph of news articles helps the student to recognize sentence parts. Frequently he is asked to include the five W's in his lead paragraph. This again, helps in developing a more varied and interesting style of writing.

Two or three times a month current events are supplemented by the study of one of the more newsworthy areas of the world. Basic information on the country or area is obtained from geography texts and to this is added information gathered from magazines, maps, newspapers, film strips and films. The Life series of filmstrips has been especially helpful in understanding the problems facing the countries of the earth.

Geography when learned in the context of current events, carries the student through the adventure of participating in the problems, tragedies, and successes of the current world scene. When language arts are used to implement this adventure, the student has a strong desire to do his best to improve his reporting skills.

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