

of the communicants' classes, and made an appeal for the active cooperation of parents.

2. For actual communicants.

More difficult than to get people into the church, is the problem of keeping them up to Christian standards, and of leading them into the life of service and of prayer.

About four months after being received into church membership, each member receives a personal letter from the minister, inviting him or her to a conference in the church parlor. At that conference are assembled all who have joined the church by profession of faith for the past two years.

The conference opens with a frank discussion of what they have been getting out of their new essay into the Christian warfare, and of what they are putting into it; of their problems and difficulties, their triumphs and defeats.

Then the minister tells of the new communicants' classes he is planning to form; of certain persons whom he is anxious to win; of certain classes of boys and girls who must be won now, or who, otherwise, will drift away; and above all, of how much it means to be carried into church membership on a tide of prayer. All this is done in the most intimate and confidential manner.

These communicants are then formed into a League of Prayer for five weeks (that is, until Communion Sunday). They pledge themselves to pray daily for some one, and work to bring that "some one" to the communicants' classes; they further pledge themselves to be praying intensely at every church service while the minister is preaching.

This Prayer League with its twofold obligation becomes the inner circle of one's ministry. By it we test the efficacy of prayer, we maintain the ideal of individual soul-winning, and it gives to the minister a most magnificent sense of triumphant power to realize that as soon as he begins to preach, these young co-workers are pouring out their soul-energies in prayer for him and for those whom he is trying to reach for Christ.

New Westminster, B.C.



Institutes of Religious Education in the Presbytery of Chatham

By Rev. Henry Dickie, D.D.

So regularly and systematically have Institutes of Religious Education been held throughout the Presbytery of Chatham during the past five years, that in 1916 only five places remained in which there had not been an Institute, namely, Calvin Church, Chatham Township; Buxton; Fletcher; Goldsmith; and Puce.

The Presbytery's Committee, accordingly, arranged last year that the Institutes for 1916

should be held at these places, and the contiguous congregations were asked to send their representatives there.

The time agreed upon was November 6th to 10th, and under the energetic leadership of our convener, Rev. W. H. Burgess, B.D., of Harwich, the Institutes were successfully carried out, and financially more than paid for themselves.

Thus, while every year the whole Presbytery has been reached in this important work with a new programme and new speakers, the centres of meeting have been so changed that, at some time or other during the five years, every congregation has had the advantage of being a centre for an Institute.

This year it is proposed to carry the war into Africa by holding an Institute in every one of our 27 charges. If this can be successfully accomplished, as I firmly believe it can, it will be a fine tribute to the interest which these Institutes have evoked in religious education, and to the development that has taken place through religiously continuing the work from year to year. Indeed, so interested and capable have many become, that the last series of Institutes was carried through entirely by our own workers, with the exception of a single speaker at two of the Institutes.

The things we have found to be absolutely essential for success are:

1. A Presbytery Convener of life and light and leading, well supported by a properly distributed and active committee.
2. Plans made in good time, and thoroughly advertised in the congregations concerned.
3. A clearly defined programme with good informational addresses, bringing to the attention of those assembled the latest and best in religious education.
4. Opportunity for discussion, with a few persons chosen in advance to open it, that the feeling may be quickly engendered that it is free for all to take part in.
5. An exhibit of our church publications and the best books on Sunday School and young people's work, with opportunity for purchase.
6. The evening meeting made popular and full of inspiration, because, unlike the afternoon, it will be attended by many, outside the regular delegates, from the church and community in which the Institute is held.
7. An offering at each meeting which will easily provide for all the necessary expenses.

The results in this Presbytery have been decidedly encouraging. Congregations could be named in which a complete revolution has been effected. In every such case a wide-awake and deeply-interested minister was at the back of it, but it was the Institute which gave him the opportunity to accomplish it.

Chatham, Ont.