

A Study of Church-Related Activities Among Kentucky Teachers

Drewry Meece, Jr.*

Certain events in the United States in recent years have focused attention upon religious values in the public schools. Among these events stand the New York Regents' prayer case and the Schempp-Murray cases,¹ in which the United States Supreme Court ruled respectively that a prayer prescribed for public school use by a governmental body and laws requiring Bible reading in public schools were unconstitutional.

It seems to the present writer that perhaps more fundamental to the religious development of youngsters than a two- or three-minute teacher-directed devotional in class daily on school time are the religious values of the teachers. To measure this intangible factor, of course, is a difficult, if not an impossible, task, and little serious effort appears to have been made in this area. The present article, however, is based on the assumptions that amount of time spent by teachers in church work is an important index to the strength of their religious values and that time spent by teachers in this voluntary activity generated by and/or closely associated with their religious faith can be quantified.

How much time do teachers spend in church work? If they do not spend very much, does this provide cause for concern? And, since some may feel that teachers cannot spend both relatively large amounts of time in church work and adequate amounts of time for lesson preparation, is it possible for teachers to spend relatively large amounts of time in both of these areas of activity? The writer

* Chairman, Department of Education at Campbellsville College, Campbellsville, Kentucky. This paper is based on his doctoral dissertation at the University of Kentucky.

1. See William B. Lockhart, Yale Kamisar, and Jesse H. Choper, *The American Constitution: Cases and Materials* (St. Paul, Minnesota: West Publishing Company, 1964), pp. 794-813.

has attempted to provide answers for the above questions by studying the two variables, amounts of time spent by Kentucky teachers for church work and for lesson preparation. Data for the study were collected during the academic year between the Supreme Court's ruling concerning the New York Regents' prayer case (June, 1962) and the ruling concerning the Schempp-Murray cases (June, 1963).

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY

Certain terms are used throughout this article as follows: *Church work* refers to all work done by teachers for or in the name of the church, including committee meetings and planning in addition to regularly scheduled church activities. The term *teachers* includes the 96 per cent of full-time classroom teachers in elementary and secondary schools in Kentucky during academic year 1962-63 who were members of the Kentucky Education Association. *Lesson preparation* refers to the following activities performed by teachers on school or non-school time to aid in the performance of their teaching job: textbook study, non-text reading, collection and organization of materials and preparation of lesson plans, and other intellectual, academic, and cultural activities.

Data were secured through use of a questionnaire mailed to each tenth full-time teacher on the mailing list of the Kentucky Education Association. The sample, which responded anonymously, is considered adequately representative of the universe of Kentucky teachers when compared by sex, teaching level, percentage with baccalaureate degrees, and size of schools represented. Of the 2,448 subjects in the proposed random sample, approximately 40 per cent returned usable responses to items concerning time spent in church activities.

In this article, teachers' relationships to church organizations and amount of time they spend in church work are shown in frequency distributions. To test relationship between time teachers spend in church work and time they spend in lesson preparation, the chi-square method of statistical analysis is used. The independence hypothesis is tested against the .05 level of probability.

FINDINGS

Table 1 categorizes teachers by their relationships to church organizations.

TABLE 1.—Relationship of teachers to church organizations

Church Organizations	Relationship		
	Participant	Member	Officer
Church	180	230	46
Sunday School	164	134	113
Other Church Organization	36	15	36*
Church and Sunday School	202	270	80
Church and Other Church Organization	49	52	24
Sunday School and Other Church Organization	17	10	39**
Church, Sunday School, and Other Church Organization	222	178	71

*The greater frequency of officers than participants may be explained by the hypothesis that certain leaders of children's activities consider themselves officers but not members.

**Certain leaders of children's activities may consider themselves officers but not members or participants in the strictest sense of the term.

Table 2 classifies teachers by amount of time they report spending in church work.

TABLE 2.—Time spent per week by teachers in all church work

Hours	Frequency	Percentage
Less than One	231	23.077
One	154	15.385
Two	228	22.777
Three	130	12.987
Four	99	9.890
Five	62	6.194
Six	47	4.695
Seven	11	1.099
Eight or More	39	3.896
Total	1,001	100.000

Almost one-fourth of the subjects (23.077 per cent) spend less than one hour per week in church work. As time spent per week in church work increases, percentage of teachers decreases with two exceptions. One of these is the category "Two" hours which shows an increased frequency over "One" hour. The other exception is the truncated category "Eight or More" hours.

Teachers who spend relatively much time and those who spend relatively little time in church work do not differ significantly in the amount of time they spend in each of these three areas of lesson preparation: textbook study, non-text reading, and collection and organization of materials and preparation of lesson plans.² Significant frequency difference is found, however, in church work versus "other intellectual, academic, and cultural activities." Table 3 categorizes teachers by time spent in church work and time spent in "other intellectual, academic, and cultural activities."

TABLE 3.—"Other intellectual, academic, and cultural activities" versus church work

Hours Spent Weekly in "Other Intellectual, Academic, and Cultural Activities"	Hours Spent Weekly in Church Work				
	Less than One	One	Two	Three	Four or More
	G				L
Less than One	71	42	46	24	35
One	34	26	35	21	51
Two	38	26	52	31	54
Three	25	17	27	19	37
Four or More	47	24	39	15	46
Total	215	135	199	110	223

$$\chi^2 = 30.93; \text{d. f.} = 16; p < .02$$

2. Drewry Meece, Jr., "A Study of Relationship Between Certain Personal and Professional Variables and Time Spent in Lesson Preparation by Kentucky Teachers," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1965.

One significant cell is labeled "G" because observed frequency is greater than expected. The other significant cell is labeled "L" because observed frequency is less than expected.

Teachers in the "G" cell have this weekly combination of time spent in "other intellectual, academic, and cultural activities" versus church work: less than one hour versus less than one hour. Teachers in the "L" cell have this weekly time combination: less than one hour versus four hours. Teachers in the "G" cell spend relatively little time in both "other intellectual, academic, and cultural activities" and in church work. Teachers in the "L" cell spend relatively little time in "other intellectual, academic, and cultural activities" and relatively much time in church work.

CONCLUSIONS

From findings of the present study the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Kentucky teachers spend relatively little time in church activities. Almost one-fourth spend less time in these activities than is commonly consumed by evangelical Sunday School attendance or Catholic Sunday Service attendance. More than 38 per cent spend less time in these activities than is commonly consumed by evangelical Sunday School and morning worship attendance, Jewish Religious School attendance, or Catholic Special Service attendance. Six of ten spend less time in these activities than is commonly consumed by the sum of Sunday School, morning worship, and another church auxiliary attendance. As time spent per week in church work increases, the number of teachers involved tends to decrease. Besides the truncated category "Eight or More" hours, the only exception to this trend is the increased frequency in the "Two" hours category over "One" hour. This increase may be accounted for by a relatively large number of teachers who attend only Sunday School and the Sunday morning worship service. Inasmuch as these data indicate that Kentucky teachers spend relatively little time in church work, they supply reason for concern because of this condition.

2. The trend appears that as teachers spend more or less time in church work, they tend to utilize more or less time respectively in one type of lesson preparation. No significant statistical relationship exists between the time spent in any other type of lesson preparation and time spent in church work. Unfortunately, more teachers than expected spend relatively little time in both lesson preparation and church work. As many as expected spend medium amounts of time and relatively large amounts of time in both church work and lesson preparation. Fewer than expected who spend relatively much time in church work spend relatively little time in one area of lesson preparation. In other words, this study reveals no trend that Kentucky

teachers who spend relatively large amounts of time in church work neglect their school work.³ Rather, it indicates a very slight tendency that as amount of time teachers spend in church work increases, amount of time they spend in lesson preparation increases also.

RELEVANCE OF STUDY

Of what relevance is this study to the typical community, particularly to the church and to the school?

Many lay teachers, while teaching in the schools of the Commonwealth, serve through their churches without pay as an expression of their religious values. Teachers vary in amount of time so spent from less than one hour to more than eight hours per week.⁴

Certain teachers pastor small missions or churches in mission areas and other underprivileged areas which are unable to provide pastoral salaries necessary for an adequate standard of living. Thus, the availability of positions in professional education has made it possible for certain missions and churches in these areas to have pastors with at least some degree of academic training beyond high school. This can reasonably be assumed to have improved the quality of pastoral leadership in these areas.

Certain individuals are employed as teachers in public school systems while they are attending seminary.⁵ This employment provides a method of financing a theological education for these students, and it fills a sometimes grave need of certain school systems for teachers. It seems plausible to expect that these seminarians spend at least an optimum, if not indeed a maximum, amount of time in church work.

Some teachers may serve churches as part-time paid lay employees such as music and/or educational directors and secretaries. Some churches which need these services at least on a part-time basis are financially unable to provide them on a full-time basis.

-
3. For another study supportive of this finding, see Drury [sic] Meece, "Moonlighting in Kentucky," *A Service Report of the Bureau of School Service*, University of Kentucky, VII, 2 (May, 1966) [sic]
 4. Meece, "A Study of Relationship Between Certain Personal and Professional Variables and Time Spent in Lesson Preparation by Kentucky Teachers," *op. cit.*, p. 116.
 5. See "Critical Teacher Shortage Brings Appeals to Incoming Students," *The Tie*, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (May, 1967), p. 3.

Teachers who spend considerable amounts of time in church work deserve to know the results of the present research. Other teachers who give amount of time they spend in lesson preparation as a reason for refusing to spend more than minimal time in church activities would do well to consider the findings of this study. School administrators who recommend teachers for teaching positions and boards of education which hire them deserve to have access to the knowledge provided by this empirical investigation. All these individuals, along with other citizens interested in the intellectual development of youth, especially the parents of school children, deserve to be informed of the finding in this study that teachers' expenditure of time for church work does not cause them to spend less time than expected in lesson preparation.