

machines. There are a number of companies that are accepting this at face value. They produce commercial products and sell them off the shelf to the military for research installations. There's wide interest in industry — the American Management Association, for example, has sponsored two conferences and exhibits on teach-

ing machines and program learning already and we are getting ready to do a third one out on the West Coast in November; so the interest is quite broad in both the military and industry. As far as the academic fields go, it's a little slower. We need to get the products more reliable and less costly.

Mr. Anderson: How would the teacher unions react to this proposal?

Mr. Bumpus: Somebody once made the remark and I won't say that I necessarily agree, that any teacher who could be replaced by a machine deserves to be.

8mm Sound and the Distribution Bottleneck

By JIM CAMPBELL

Two related problems effectively bottleneck expansion of film use in the church—the number of rental prints available from primary sources and the cost of release prints. Evidence that the cost of release prints in 8mm sound may be considerably reduced has led to an optimistic belief that these two related problems may be solved. But at the same time, 8mm raises the problem of how to introduce a new medium into a market (the church) that has no equipment for its use.

THE GOAL of the church film producer is to get the maximum use of his product. He prices it with this in mind. As a rule he must also include in his price the cost of production amortized over expected sales and rentals.

Maximum film use occurs when the film is included as an integral part of some on-going church program such as the discussion stimulator for a specific Sunday church school lesson or the main resource for a church-wide mission study. But this cannot be done as long as films are distributed primarily on a rental basis. If, for instance, the curriculum writers made it necessary for a certain film to be used in all churches on the fourth Sunday in October, how many copies would be needed to service over forty-five thousand Methodist churches? (Surveys indicate about two-thirds have 16mm projectors.)

The present rental system of films, and to some extent the design of church films, is based on precedents carried over from theatrical exhibition. The fact that educational films can and often should be re-used is rendered impotent when they must be ordered from some area depository and rent paid for each use. The high rental rates virtually rule out small group use where most effective learning takes place. Consequently, we must think in terms of sale.

Four things influence the quantity of a product sold to the church: (1) how

closely it is tied to a church program (2) how well it is promoted, (3) how it is priced, and (4) how good the quality is. In the case of films we have found that all of the above factors are under control, to some extent, except that of price.

8mm Economy

The curves of Fig. 1 show the relation of unit cost to number of units. The unit price of a typical 16mm twenty-minute film is charted as a solid line. It is supposed that the production cost was \$20,000 and that an additional \$10,000 was needed for promotion,

packaging and other merchandising costs. The total film cost of \$30,000 is spread over the number of units indicated in the ordinate. The abscissa charts the cost in dollars of individual units.

It is evident that if we were to turn away from a 16mm rental economy we would have to think in terms of sales in the neighborhood of two to four thousand copies to take advantage of the obvious price break that occurs in larger quantities. It theoretically ought to be possible to sell this large amount with good promotion. But it has never been done—never have such large sales of films even been approached despite isolated experiences of high promotion and subsidized pricing.

Numbers of sales to churches are not only inversely related to price, but there are price levels beyond which churches will not go. We do not know for sure where these psychological price

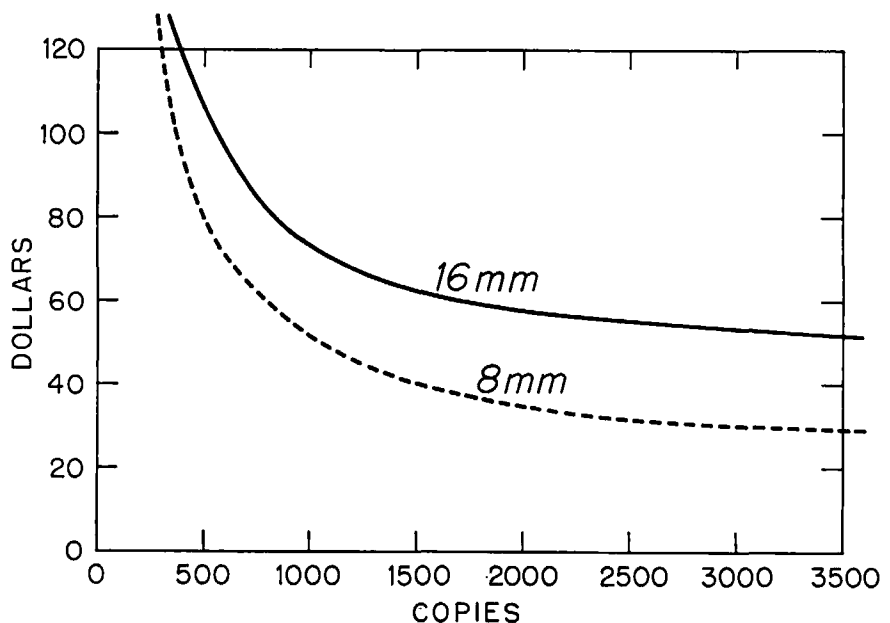


Figure 1

Presented on October 3, 1961, at the Society's Convention at Lake Placid, N. Y., by Jim Campbell, Dept. Audio-Visual Resources, Television, Radio and Film Commission, Methodist Church, Nashville, Tenn.

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breakoffs are, but at present we assume that \$30 is the maximum price most churches will pay for a film. Above this price, they expect to rent the product.

The broken line on the chart indicates the same film in 8mm sound. The production cost, \$20,000, and the merchandising and promotion costs, \$10,000, are the same as the 16mm film. The only difference is the price of the individual prints. This we estimate at approximately half that of 16mm.

The graph shows that at 1500 copies the 8mm cost is within a few dollars of the magic \$30 price; by 3400 copies, it is reached. We feel that by combining 16mm rental income with the 8mm price structure we can lower the release print price of this twenty-minute film in 8mm sound to around \$30 and, thus, draw the quantity unit price.

Who will buy them? Who is the market? There are about 25,000 16mm projectors in Methodist churches but no 8mm sound projectors. The history of 16mm indicates that the establish-

ment of a new audio-visual medium in the church is usually a slow process. But because of the promise of this new medium, the church is prepared to invest some money in some system to accelerate the use of 8mm sound films.

Under investigation now are systems involving simultaneous sale of equipment and materials. But many questions remain unanswered.

Gaining Acceptance

Is the church ready for the new medium? Quite a lot of time and money has been expended to educate leaders in the church to use motion pictures. In spite of this, motion pictures are frequently misused. Will it now be possible for church leaders to learn to use these new tools with small groups and smaller screens? Are procedures and organizations in church A-V committees and/or libraries adequate to handle distribution and storage of films?

Is the church financially able to re-

spond to the new medium? Will churches with 16mm projectors purchase a new 8mm projector? If some system of merchandising equipment and films together is attempted, will response be heavy enough and immediate enough to offset the immense expenditure of money to underwrite such a venture?

Are the general agencies of the church ready for this new medium? Have they educational needs that can be met with short motion pictures? Can the machinery of film production—script clearance, production supervision—be streamlined sufficiently to provide enough titles for a market expansion needed to make 8mm sound film economically feasible in a direct sale market?

Research on all these questions is in process. At this time results are encouraging. With the other advantage of 8mm—lower cost equipment, lighter and more compact equipment—it will be a real loss if the church cannot discover some way to utilize this medium soon.

The Application of 8mm Film for Commercial Use

A Digest

By G. W. STANWIX

THE Author advances the interesting proposal that 8mm library subjects could be released in the form of 16mm "double-8" film. Such double-width films could carry two 8mm subjects, printed in opposite directions "head-to-tail." Thus, Reel 1 would be projected in one direction and, at the end, the entire film spool could be turned over, which would bring the other half, or Reel 2, in position to be shown. At the end, the film would be ready for showing again without rewinding. Advantages and disadvantages of this method are pointed out. Such films could be made by special reduction from 16mm or 35mm originals.

Digested from *British Kinematography*, vol. 40, no. 1, January, 1962.

It is suggested that the double-8 film would be less liable to damage than the single-8 and also that greater image steadiness would be encouraged. Existing double-8 subjects in this form could be slit into single-8's if required. The use of projector cassettes would be feasible. A projector could be made to run either double-8 or single-8. For special purposes, it would also be possible to produce the 8mm original as a single row of pictures on one side of a 16mm film, making the other half of the film available for special soundtrack or identifying purposes.—*Russell C. Holslag*, JM Developments, Inc., 116-118 West 29 St., New York 1, N.Y.