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# A Post-Graduate School With A Purpose

By Matthew B. McNutt

THE country parson seldom meets a fellow pastor. He has few opportunities to hear any one speak but himself. His own library is scanty and he often has access to no other. Travel is out of the question for him. It is little wonder, therefore, that his sermonic material and inspiration run low, thus, to be ever giving out to others and with such limited means of getting spiritual and intellectual food for himself. City pastors are away, from one to three months in the year, filling up and fortifying themselves for the next year's work. Farmers have their short courses in the Agricultural colleges. They have their County Institutes, and their various fairs and expositions. Farm-demonstration trains are sent out through many States by means of which farmers have opportunity to hear experts in Agriculture, Horticulture, and Animal Husbandry and to see what can be done by scientific methods. If city pastors and farmers need such helps it is even more necessary for the farmers' preachers to have similar opportunities for becoming better and more efficient leaders and pastors.

The Post-graduate Schools for Rural Ministers, such as have been held the last three years with co-operation of the Department of Church and Country Life of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., under the direction of its Superintendent, Dr. Warren H. Wilson, solve the problem. The teachers give the needed help and inspiration. Their courses satisfy that long-felt heart and soul and mind-hunger among country preachers, which none know anything about except those who have served in country churches.

## A Manifold Purpose

These Post-graduate Schools, lasting about three weeks, serve a manifold purpose.

(1) **Instruction.** The Post-graduate School is designed to give up-to-date instruction in the English Bible, Rural Sociology, Religious Education, Farm Economics, Farm Co-operation, Country Church Administration and in other subjects related to the welfare of country people.

The lecturers and teachers are scholars, not amateurs, in the subjects they teach. They speak out of actual experience and thorough study of their respective subjects. The instruction given, therefore, is not only authoritative but it is of the practical kind that every rural minister can take home with him and put into operation on his own field, with such modifications, of course, as may be necessary to fit local conditions.

Then the discipline of this class-room instruction, for a man who has been out of college and seminary for a long time is highly beneficial. Country ministers are apt to become lax in their methods of study. They need the stimulus that comes from measuring up with others in class-room work.

(2) **Perspective.** No minister can do his best work, or even good work, who does not sometimes get away from his parish, that he may see it from a distance and give the elements a chance to assume their normal proportions. A minister above all other servants needs a clear head and to keep a perfect balance of mind and temper that he may interpret life rightly to others. There is nothing like a look through the eyes of a school such as this, for enabling men in rural parishes to see things in their right relations.

(3) **Fellowship.** Those engaged in the same occupation or profession like to get together occasionally. In fact, this personal contact with men of the same profession is necessary to the highest efficiency. A peculiar strength comes through it that is plainly felt but can hardly be described. The rural pastor craves fellowship with men of his profession but has little chance to enjoy this boon throughout the whole year. The Post-graduate School affords this opportunity.

(4) **Team Work.** Rural pastors as individuals may be doing excellent work in their respective fields. But the game of building up the country church and the country community is weak and ragged, as a whole. The ground is not covered. The work is not properly connected. The players do not know each other. There is no better place for country preachers to get acquainted with each other and with the principles and methods of successful country church work than in the Post-graduate School where they can rub elbows in the class room, break bread together, or cross bats on the baseball diamond.

(5) **Clearing House.** The rural ministers who attend these Post-graduate Schools come with a fund of valuable information pertaining to the rural church and rural life. They have a great variety of experiences and methods of work, some successful some unsuccessful. Every man is bubbling over with something to tell and more to ask. Sometimes the lecturer can hardly proceed, for the questions which the ministers want to ask and for the instances and experiences they have to relate. Oppor-

tunity is given in the classes, of course, for discussion and for a free interchange of ideas, methods and information, all of which is most profitable. Then the men have opportunity to talk face to face with each other in their rooms, or as they walk or eat together. The school thus becomes a clearing house for methods, ideas, facts, and experiences bearing upon the church and country life.

(6) **Vision.** "Where there is no vision the people perish." Much less can they grow without vision. A country preacher constantly working alone is apt to reach the limit of his ability. He sees no further possibilities in his church and community and in himself. He begins to feel that his work is done in that place and is tempted to get out and turn it over to another. He is not especially discouraged, but he just comes to the conclusion that he has "reached the end of his rope." What he needs is a new vision. He gets it by viewing his work in the light of what other country pastors are doing. He sees it at many new angles. His imagination has new materials upon which to play. He returns to his church from the Post-graduate School full of new and bigger plans for his people, possibilities of which he had never before dreamed.

(7) **Inspiration.** The Post-graduate Schools are a source of inspiration to rural ministers. They are real mountain-top experiences. The new and strong expositions of the Scriptures, the devotional meetings, the fellowship, the instruction, the discussions, and the new outlook upon the work all tend to revive the spirits of men. The very atmosphere is laden with stimulating influences. To breathe in it is to feel like pushing out into bigger undertakings and more vigorous service for the Kingdom.

It is well worth going a long journey to meet and hear Dr. Warren H. Wilson, the head of the Department of Church and Country Life, who lectures at nearly all of these schools. No rural minister who hears this champion of the country church and of the country people fails to realize that a more abundant life is coming to the tillers of the soil. There is something about Dr. Wilson's enthusiasm and victory-achieving spirit that is contagious. He thrills his hearers. He is full of his subject and he speaks with conviction.

(8) **Rest and Recreation.** They give rural pastors the needed rest and recreation. People grow weary ever doing the same things and continually looking at the same faces and objects, no matter how much they enjoy their work or love their companions and associates. Rural ministers are no exception to the rule. A change of work and of scenery and coming in touch with different people, even for a short two weeks, is restful and invigorating.

(9) **Efficiency.** The ultimate Purpose of the Post-graduate School is to help the men to efficiency. This age requires work done well. The great business concerns are more and more exacting in the administration of their affairs, and in the quality of the service rendered by their employees. They are expending large sums of money to secure efficiency. It is good business. Men everywhere are becoming less and less tolerant of inefficiency. If the rural church is to hold her own she must do her work well. She must be efficient. The time is past when people will bear with loose, slipshod service in the church just because it is the church. Efficiency is demanded here the same as everywhere else.

It ought not to be true that "the children of the world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." The church should lead the world in doing her work in the best possible way.

In the summer of 1913 the Department of Church and Country Life will co-operate by special arrangement with the following Summer Schools, on the dates named:

The Summer School of the South, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, June 24-July 15.

The Summer School of Theology, at Auburn Theological Seminary, Auburn, N. Y., July 7-19.

The Summer School at the State College of Agriculture, Ames, Iowa, July 7-19.

The Summer School of Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, July 20-25.

The Summer School of the University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo., July 23-Aug. 7.

Estes Park Summer Schools of the Young Men's Christian Associations, Estes Park, Colo., July 23-Aug. 7.

Summer School of Alma College, Alma, Mich.

In addition the Department will be represented at the following summer conferences and institutes by a speaker on the Country Church and Community:

Student Conference, Y. W. C. A., Eagles Mere, Pa., July 24-Aug. 3.

Silver Bay Conference, Missionary Education Movement, July 11-21.

Rock River Assembly, Dixon, Ill., July 28-August 3.

Summer Conference, Westminster, Md., Aug. 4-8.

Summer Assembly, Hollister, Mo., Aug. 5-17.

University of West Virginia Summer School, Morgantown, W. Va., July 7-18.

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