

Solving the Country Church Problem

GARLAND A. BRICKER

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BRICKER # SOLVING COUNTRY CHURCH
PROBLEM

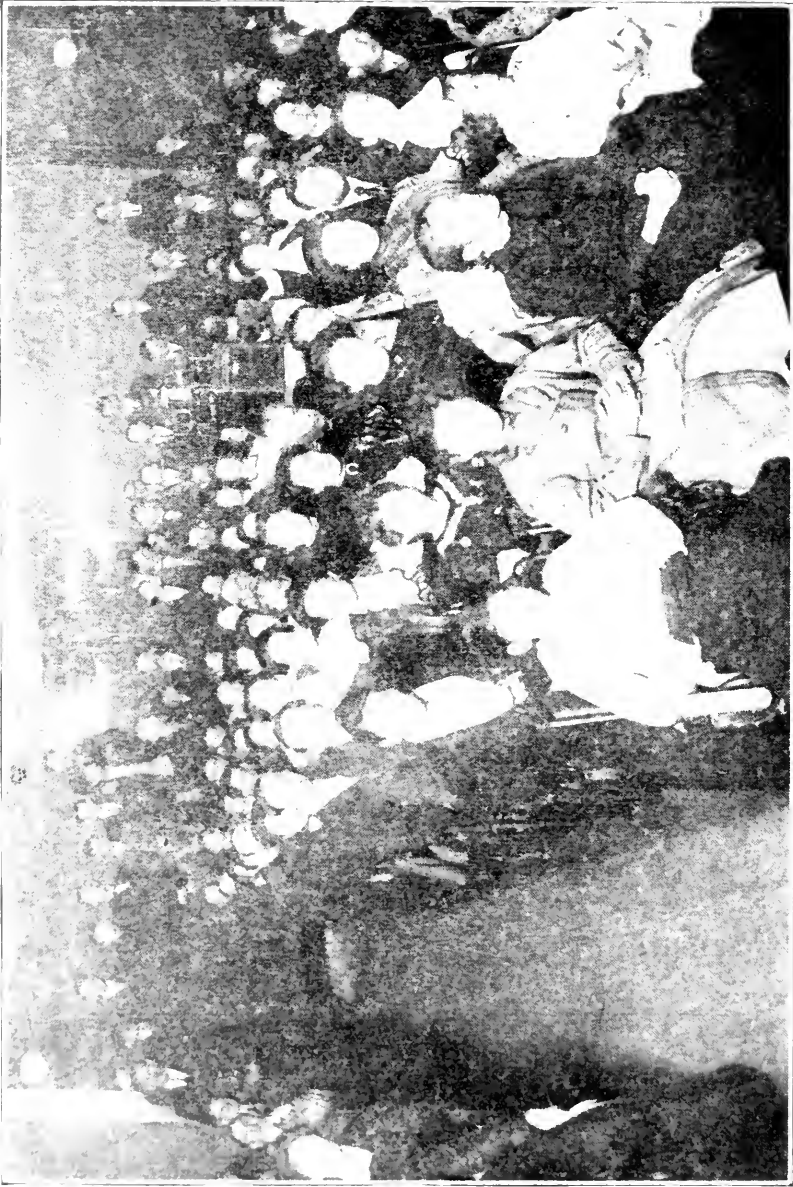


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A COUNTRY LIFE CONFERENCE

HELD BY COUNTRY PEOPLE FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE DEFICIENCIES, THE POSSIBILITIES, AND THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE RURAL INSTITUTIONS.

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

By

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In Co-operation with

Fourteen Collaborators



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TO THOSE WHO LOVE THE LORD
BY SERVICE
IN RURAL COMMUNITIES
THIS BOOK IS CONSIDERATELY
DEDICATED.

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PREFACE

THAT a rural Church problem exists is usually granted without debate, and it is upon this assumption that the collaborators of this volume have proceeded in their work. The question naturally arises, How shall this problem be solved? and that has been the guiding consideration in the preparation of this book.

The solution of so great a problem is not a one-man's job. There is at present great need of a first-class symposium on the subject of solving the country Church problem. Not a symposium of theories merely, but a forum for the best thought of practical rural workers that shall incorporate experience, wisdom, knowledge, and timely suggestions born of mature reflection. That some of the fundamental essentials necessary to the solution of the country Church problem have already been worked out, and therefore now exist, is the contention of the writer. The writing and collecting of the contributions composing this book represent a plan to bring out from under the bushel a few lights to guide the pioneer rural leader and Church worker on his pathway to a realization of the really efficient country Church.

The men and women who have collaborated in this work were chosen because of their special fitness

PREFACE

to write on the special subjects assigned to them. This fitness has, in every case, been born of experience. There has been no effort to work out some abstract theory, nor to establish one. An attempt has been made to arrange the contributions in that order which is the most suggestive for considering the problem under discussion.

The question may be raised why a professor of agricultural education should so far interest himself in the rural Church problem as to take the initiative in the compilation of a symposium, which may be a step in its possible solution. To such an inquiry the editor of this volume gives the following cogent answer:

First. No leader in a profession can be truly interested in its members without also being interested in their environments. The teachers of agriculture, who must in no small degree spend their lives in country communities, will naturally become rural social leaders; and to make this leadership most effective for good, it should be exercised through, or in connection with, the moral atmosphere of a live and prosperous Church.

Second. No man lives to himself alone; neither should the narrow walls of one's own immediate pursuits limit the soul's vision into the beauties of another's vineyard. Each angle at which a social problem is viewed gives a new insight and the possibility of greater achievement in service.

Third. In investigating rural conditions in Ohio and elsewhere in connection with his studies and

PREFACE

travels during the past three years, the writer has found several rural ministers who were attaining varying degrees of success along different lines of rural Church work. This observation prompted him to the endeavor of making a collection of these various experiences and achievements, that others who are interested in the country Church might be helped by them.

Fourth. The interrelation of the three great fundamental institutions of the rural community—the home, the school, and the Church—is such that the assistance rendered to one of them will have a desirable reflex influence upon the others. One of the surest ways to secure a redirection of the rural school is to have a redirected country Church.

Columbus, Ohio,
September 1, 1913.

G. A. B.

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH
PROBLEM

CHAPTER I

Introduction: The Problem in Perspective

BY GARLAND A. BRICKER, B. PED., M. A.,
Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education, Ohio State University, and Managing Editor of The Rural Educator, Columbus, Ohio.

Interdependence of Rural Industrial Evolution and Social Development

THE solution of the rural problem depends upon development along two distinct, co-ordinate, and mutually dependent lines: one has reference to industrial evolution and the other to social transformation. In any society, however primitive, the industrial life must be economically profitable before a social structure, however simple, can be maintained. The social fabric is limited by industrial prosperity. On the other hand, a low social life will not inspire the highest industrial efficiency. While a social life can not endure at high-tide with an industrial ebb, neither can great industrial evolution be realized without a corresponding flow of the social life of a people to inspire it.



PROFESSOR BRICKER

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

The Institutions Concerned in Rural Industrial Evolution

The industrial evolution in the open country concerns itself with the perfecting of a system of agriculture in which labor, business, and science play the leading parts. The institutions that have been created for accomplishing this task, and that may justly be held responsible for it, are the agricultural colleges, the experiment stations, the departments of agriculture, the agricultural high schools, the agricultural courses of the public schools, both elementary and high, the various agricultural associations, organizations, and clubs, the farmers' institutes, and the grange and similar bodies. The ultimate aim of the activity of all these is a more intensive and profitable agriculture—the production of more and better raw materials for food, clothing, shelter, and æsthetic enjoyment of man, from the smallest area of land through the least expenditure of money, effort, and deterioration of the soil. It is a purely economic aim, and doubtless owes its tremendous momentum to the selfish disposition in the individual man, combined with the growing need of the race.

The Institutions Concerned in Rural Social Development

The social transformation has to do with the rehabilitation and the readjustment to modern rural conditions of those institutions through which rural social life finds its expression, or else with the creation of new organizations that shall serve and satisfy the social instinct of country people. The institutions that are of a right burdened with this responsibility



A SHELL

This church building is located in the midst of a very profitable agricultural region. The farmers are careful to keep it in repair, clean it regularly, and speak of it as "our church." Well, it must be! For the past twelve years not a single religious service has been held in it. The last service was a township Sunday school convention, in 1900. The farmers of the community seem to feel that the presence of this church building is necessary, and give of their substance to keep it in repair. No one there would advocate the removal of this skeleton of a defunct social organization. The "labor income" is evidently adequate to sustain a flourishing Church organization, but the traditional Christian virtues seem to be lacking; the predominating aim of life among the people here is an economic one. Socially speaking, can the people of this community be rated as good farmers?

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

are the rural home, the rural school, the country Church, and such other organizations as have for their object the betterment of rural life. The compelling force back of all these institutions is the social instinct of the individual—an inherent character of the race. The direction in which this instinct expresses itself will determine the nature of the institution, whether cohabitive, religious, educational, or recreative.

The Insufficiency of the Economic Aim as a Life Motive Force

The economic aim of the agriculturist is not the ultimate aim of life, and to make it so, either in fact or supposition, will only insure the final failure of the great movement for which it is responsible. Social workers, therefore, who regard the economic aim only as a means for contributing to the permanent uplift and development of humanity, may well become alarmed with reference to the prominence which the economical ideal is assuming in the life and ideals of country people. We do not wish to be misunderstood in this view of the matter under discussion. It is not the purpose to decry wealth as a means for the accomplishment of better things for humanity or for the realization of better conditions of life on the farm: our voice is raised against the disposition of making it the end of effort. A money-grasping rural population can never realize its highest development. A scientific agriculture, to be permanent, must be accompanied by a corresponding development of the fundamental rural institutions—the rural home, the

THE PROBLEM IN PERSPECTIVE

rural school, and the country Church. Besides these, but not independent of them, must be organizations through which play, amusement, social intercourse, and other social instincts of the people may find expression. These institutions are the core of country life, and unless scientific agriculture contributes to the evolution and maintenance of these, it can never be supported by an intelligent population, which is absolutely necessary to its final success as a conservator of the human race. An institutional awakening of rural communities can not, therefore, be ignored; and rural education, inasmuch as it aims to realize this awakening, is, from the larger point of view, even more essential than education in agriculture.

The Church as a Social Institution

We now have a clear perspective as to the relative importance of the economic and the social forces involved in rural life development. We frankly acknowledge that social life and institutions in the open country are in a state of decadence. We may well now consider the causes that have had the deteriorating effect, and especially the means and methods of rehabilitation, together with the experiences and convictions of active rural workers who have met with a reasonable degree of success.

We must, at the outset, recognize that the social institutions are the machines through which social energy works, and that the social leaders are the engineers. There is abundant social energy in every rural community; the great trouble is, it is allowed to

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go to waste or is misdirected. In other words, this rural social energy does not flow through those tried and fundamental institutions in which it is most desirable that it should flow. The energy is there, but the machines are clogged, or they leak—perhaps both. Social institutions must be the organizations of the people whom they serve. Rural institutions must be permeated with the rural idea of things, and adapted to work in harmony with the mechanism of the rural system, its mode of life, its customs, and its ideals. They must fit into the rural economy.

The country Church is one of these institutions. The divine conception of the Church is perfect; but the human interpretation of that conception and man's organism through which to work out that conception is necessarily fallible. Yesterday man invented and constructed a human mechanism adapted to the social life of his day, through which the eternal principles of God might act. Since yesterday man's social life has changed, and his social mechanism is no longer adequate to the needs of to-day; his genius must make a new adaptation of his social machine to meet the requirements of this generation. To-morrow the social structure will have experienced further change, and again the human organization will need to be reconstructed. Seventeenth century institutions and equipments are not adequate to the needs of a twentieth century civilization.

As a social institution, the rural Church has its definite sphere of activity. It can not hope to become, and indeed should not become the center of

THE PROBLEM IN PERSPECTIVE

every community activity. The center of the purely intellectual activities of the community should be the rural school. The rural home must awaken to the necessity of opening its doors to take under a private roof the purely social affairs of the young life in the community. Here will be supplied the much-needed paternal protection and maternal restraint too often lacking in public gatherings and in community buildings, which belong to everybody and are controlled by nobody. To the Church are surrendered all matters pertaining to the moral, the religious, and the spiritual life of the community and its individuals. The country Church, therefore, becomes a community center for those social activities that involve any of these phases of life.

The Problems of Leadership and Discipleship

It must be confessed that there are two more important factors involved in the solution of the rural problem, and they are also included in the country Church problem. The first factor is that of leadership, and the second is that of discipleship. Everywhere in rural communities there is a woeful lack of leaders, which is only equaled by the inability and unwillingness of country people to be led. An awe-stricken horse will die in preference to being led from a burning barn by his master; and to-day there are thousands of rural communities in America that are socially dead, because their people will not follow a leader.

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The Rural Problem is Integral

It must not be overlooked that the rural problem is an integral one. It can not be solved by the rehabilitation of any one of its fundamental institutions. The rural institutions are so interrelated that the decadence of one will have a depressing effect upon the others; and the reviving of one will tend to enliven the remainder. On the other hand, the whole social structure can not be set aright through the awakening and redirecting of only one of its institutions. While undertaking to solve the country Church problem, the rural school and the rural home need serious attention and must not be neglected. The rural problem needs to be attacked as a whole.

CHAPTER II

The Economic Relations of the Farmer and His Church

BY WARREN H. WILSON, PH. D.,

Superintendent, Department of Church and Country Life, Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, New York.

IN a general way, the farmer and his Church are related through the working of four principles. First of all, the Church is a typical expression of the farmer's economic welfare. Second, the improvement of the Church, as of any social institution, is made only from the profit of farming. It can not be expected of any community that social institutions be improved by the use of borrowed money. Third, the farmer should give of his prosperity, measured in part by his profit, to the support of the Church. Fourth, the ethical discipline which is essential to productive and profitable farming is the traditional, ethical code of the Christian Church.



DR. WILSON

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

1. The Church as an Index to Rural Economic Welfare and Social Life

The Church is the expression of economic welfare in the country. It may be called a register of the well-being of the farmer. In America the Church is a free institution. Not only is it free of governmental control, but all Churches are free of power to compel by tradition. The people in America are not autochthonous, but have come to the soil from afar. They have gone through the enfranchising experience of migration. Criticism and discussion have characterized their movement from one land to another, across the seas and usually from State to State. Upon such a population the control of tradition is no longer possible. The establishment of a Church among them, granting one factor, is possible only with their free consent. That one factor is universal education, which, with some modification, is general throughout the United States.

This kind of a Church, riding upon the waters of rural opinion and assent, is a quick and sensitive register of the welfare of the people. It reflects in its establishment their abundance or their want. It registers in its form of organization the type of their mind and the degree to which organization has proceeded in their social life; and, more than all, it conforms to the economic type to which the farmer belongs.

The Four Types of the Historic Country Church.—This conformity of the country Church to the economic type is the most startling evidence of the play

ECONOMIC RELATIONS TO THE CHURCH

of economic forces upon it. Indeed, the present disturbance of country Churches is due, primarily, to the transition going on in the country between one type and another. Broadly speaking, there have been four types of farmer in America, and each of these types, produced by the economic struggle in the country, has built his own Church, and stamped upon it his own typical character.

The pioneer made his Church individualistic, emotional, like himself. Because the loneliness of the mountain and the prairie had gone into his soul, he stated it in his doctrine of personal salvation and organized it in his methods of periodical revival; and he built it into his buildings, which centered around a pulpit.

The household farmer, the genial, economic type which we all know, whose life was characterized by the perfection of the economic group in the farm household, had his Church like unto himself. The country Church in his day was a cluster of families, and it had no general interests, typically speaking. It was a perfect institution in that it rounded out—in leisurely thinking, formal and systematic theological preaching, and genial, wholesome living—the best ideals of the Christian world at that time. But it must be remembered that the worshiper in the pioneer church would have thought the church of the household farmer the temple of worldliness. The household farmer would have been restless and unfed in the violent, emotional atmosphere of the pioneer church.

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

The third economic type in American country life is the speculative and exploiting farmer. He was foreshadowed in the household farmer, who tilled the soil for first values only. There is little to choose between this and exploitation. The speculative period began when the first values of the land were exhausted, and when the Eastern farmer could not compete with the Western tiller of virgin soil. About 1890, after years of westward migration, when the free lands of the West were gone, a price was put upon every acre, broadly speaking, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Missouri River.

The period of speculative farming has produced three sub-types of farmers, every one of them influential in the religious life of the country. They are the farm tenant, the absentee landlord, and the retired farmer. Ask the minister in the Middle West who these people are, and he will tell you of his profoundest anxiety. Their influence upon the Church is greater than that of theologians, of seminaries, and of evangelists. Under the speculative holding of land, 40 per cent, 50 per cent, or 60 per cent of the farmers around the country church have become renters. In the villages and towns, the retired farmer is usually an unprogressive, ungenerous, and disappointed member of the Church, while the absentee landlord occupies the central place in influence; but, so far, has evaded all proper demands of the Church in the country.

The Coming Type of Country Church.—The fourth economic type of countryman is the scientific and or-

ECONOMIC RELATIONS TO THE CHURCH

ganized farmer. One can say but little of his influence, because it has not yet become mature. It is easy to see that he, too will build a church like unto himself. It will have many of the characteristics of the "Institutional Church." It will be a social and community center. It will have an intelligent interest in scientific farming. Its minister will preach in terms of the farm, and its organization will be co-operative, in obedience to the new spirit, and its outlook will be world-wide. Such Churches are already well organized and matured in certain defined regions, in which husbandry is also mature, scientific, and organized.

These statements illustrate in part the close relation between the Church in a free commonwealth and the economic life of the people. It is so intimate that the Church may be called the thermometer of the welfare of country people. This statement may be expanded in numerous ways, for the Church reflects very promptly the social character of the people, being democratic or aristocratic, conforming to the tribe and feud spirit, or obeying the community sense as it grows; responsive also to the world-consciousness which some communities have acquired.

Especially is the Church the reflector of actual economic prosperity, in contrast to financial prosperity, in the country. The definition of prosperity by L. H. Bailey in his book, "The Country Life Movement," will be written in the country churches. He says: "My reader may wish to know what constitutes a good farmer. I think that the requirements

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

of a good farmer are at least four: The ability to make a full and comfortable living from the land; to rear a family carefully and well; to be of good service to the community; to leave the farm more productive than it was when he took it." Such prosperity means a permanent population. It means the continuance of the same people in the community; satisfied, contented, and industrious. In this satisfaction of a permanent population, the Church in the country is an essential factor; and a contented, continuing population expresses its mind and organizes its permanency in the country Church.

2. Church Improvement Dependent upon Labor Income

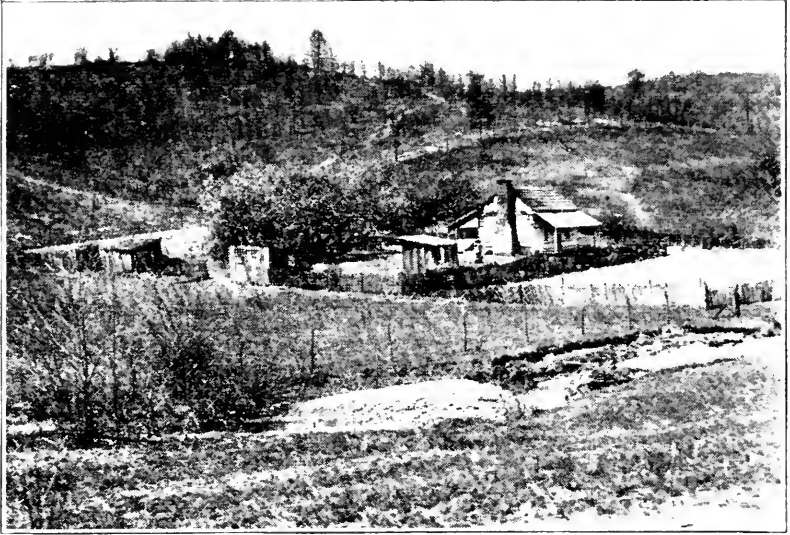
The second economic relation between the Church and the farmer is one which characterizes all social institutions in the country. These institutions are supported not out of borrowed money, but out of the profits, or "labor income," of the farmer. We are hearing a great deal in these days about the high price of farm land. It is cited as an illustration of the farmer's prosperity. These high prices are not due in any way to the farmer's labor or skill. They come of themselves, unsought, and they may depart again in spite of all the farmer can do. Their value to the farmer, however, is in the increase of his capital. Against this capital he can borrow for the improvement of his land. They enlarge his working credit. On this credit he can purchase farm machinery, better stock, and fertilizer; and with it he can pay for labor, to the improvement of his land and the increase of

ECONOMIC RELATIONS TO THE CHURCH

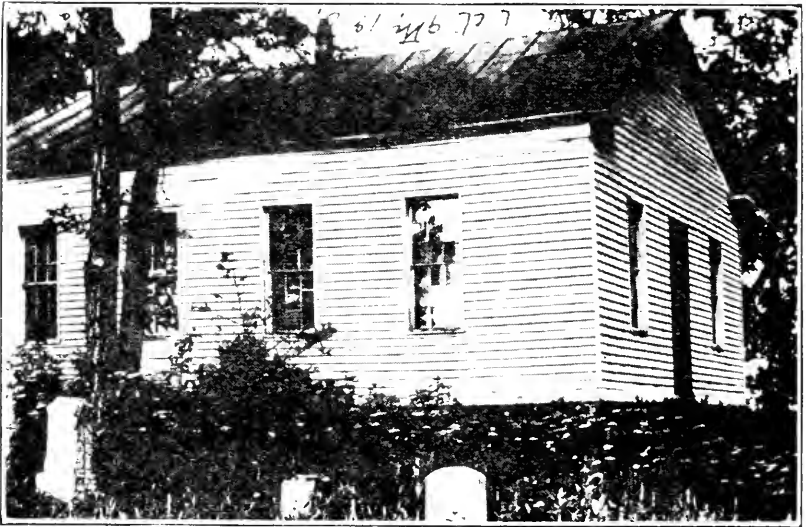
his productive property. But he can not, because his credit is better, pay for better social institutions.

The improvement of social institutions comes solely from the profit of the farm. This is written into all the Old Testament laws, which ordered that the farmer should pay to the support of religious institutions, "as the Lord had prospered him." No doubt a country community could be expected to build a church at the beginning on borrowed money, because such a church would be a necessity of life. Likewise a schoolhouse might be built by mortgaging farm land, but it would be a bare institution, suited to the service of mere necessities. Our present-day problem is the improvement of the Church and of the school. The increase of ministers' salaries, the rebuilding of country churches, the consolidation of country schools—all these improvements wait for the increase of the farmer's "labor income," by which I mean the net profit he has in return for his work.

The Cause of the Retarded Country Church.—The meaning of this is that the Church in the country is, above all other institutions, retarded in its development until the farmer shall prosper. It can not go forward, the minister's salary can not be adapted to the increased expensiveness of living, the Church can not be organized as an effective social center, housed in a new and elaborate structure, until the farmer has an income adequate to this increased social expenditure. The rural moralist will not rightly urge the spending of borrowed money for the improvement of social machinery.

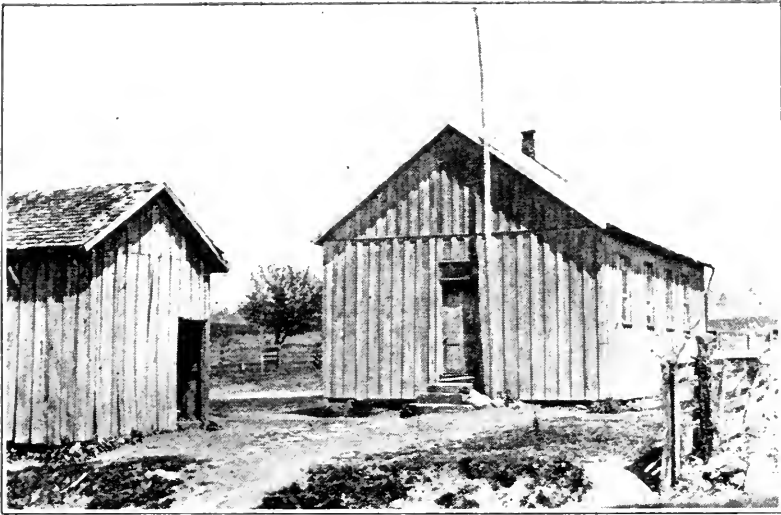


ONE OF THE FARM RESIDENCES

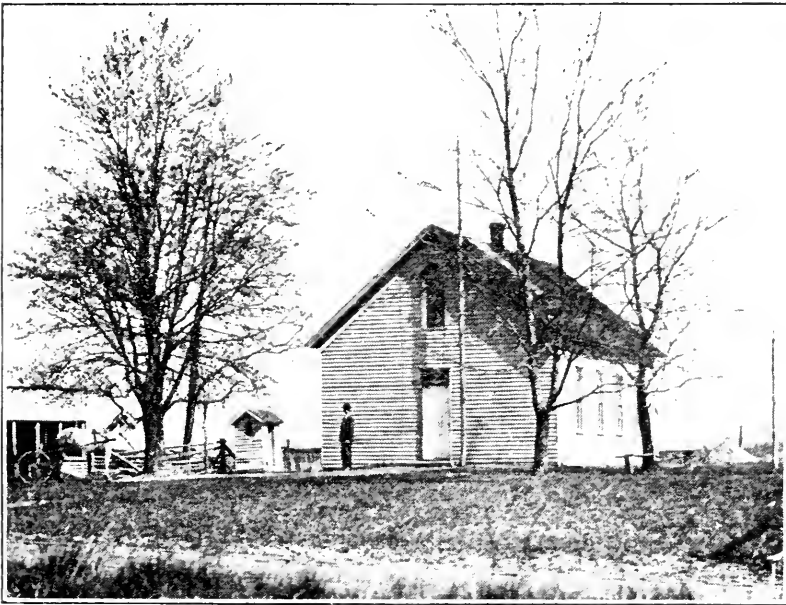


ONE OF THE CHURCH BUILDINGS

Types of buildings of four institutions in a rural community where the labor income is very low. They are faithful indices



ONE OF THE RURAL SCHOOLHOUSES



THE HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING

of the economic prosperity of the community as a whole, which is absolutely dependent upon the land.

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

This explains why country institutions are retarded in many places. The farmer is not meaner than other classes of men. Indeed, he is more interested in the Church in the average instance than the townsman is; but he has too small an income from his labor to feel justified in an expenditure upon better churches, consolidated schools, and stone roads. In the State of Missouri, on good farm land, the general testimony of farmers is that after paying the legal rate of interest, the farmer retains merely enough from his labor to pay the bills at the store. In New York State, in the township nearest Cornell University, among farmers who have benefited greatly by the service rendered them by the College of Agriculture, the yearly "labor income" among six hundred and fifteen farmers, whose affairs were intensively studied, was found to average four hundred and twenty-three dollars. This is a little more than one dollar and twenty cents a day. If these men, who are accounted so prosperous, have an income so small, how are farmers in other sections of the country to be estimated? They consider themselves unable to pay for the improvement of rural social institutions, including the Church. The reason underlying this opinion is what I have stated, that such improvements can not be paid for with borrowed money: they can only be paid for out of profit—and profit is lacking.

Iowa is accounted a prosperous agricultural State, but the editor of *Wallace's Farmer*, in a recent address, publicly declared that the margin of profit in

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Iowa corresponds to the margin of child labor on the farm. He declared that the "labor income" of the farm is the "labor income" earned by the child. This does not speak well for the prosperity of Iowa. It would not be worth mentioning here, if it were not a highly representative condition. There are more States in the Union with a lower prosperity than there are with a higher prosperity, as compared with Iowa. It is difficult in Iowa to persuade farmers to improve their schools and to better their roads. It is difficult to persuade them that they can afford any rural social improvements. The agent, however, of machinery, of fertilizer, or the seller of pedigreed stock can convince the Iowa farmer that his wares are needed on the farm. In a rough way, the Iowa farmer is right. He has the money for productive improvements, because his land value has increased, but he has not the money for social improvements, because his profit has not increased as fast as his land value. In order to have social improvements in the country, the farmer who is able to survive in that region and to maintain himself as a farmer, must have, above the normal rate of interest upon the selling value of his land, a "labor income" that is satisfactory and reasonably permanent.

An Agricultural Ministry?—For this reason the Churches in the country are bound fast to the economic improvement of farming. They have an immediate interest in it. Those Churches have prospered in the country that did not pay their ministers, but required them to earn their living as farmers,

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because economic prosperity and religious prosperity were embodied in the same man. A Menonite bishop in Pennsylvania has an eighty-three-acre farm, from which in 1911 he took:

1,300 bushels corn, at 75 cents.....	\$775 00
800 bushels wheat, at 95 cents.....	760 00
Tobacco.....	953 00
Dairy products.....	500 00
Total.....	<hr/> \$2,988 00

His labor expense for this was about \$620. Adding \$750 to this for a 6 per cent interest on the investment and \$150 for fertilizer, you have a total expense of \$1,520, which leaves a balance of \$1,468 for the bishop's own "labor income" from a farm of eighty-three acres. This minister is an ideal representative of the natural union of economic and religious affairs. We have here not a relation, but an identity. One can not commend Menonite organizations to most American folk. It is not a conscious organization, but a traditional one. It will not serve outside the range of this tradition; but it illustrates, for the moment, the value, both for religious tenacity and for productive farming, of the union of economic and religious aims.

In the Mormon Church, also, the minister has no salary. He must always be a farmer. On the same reasoning the Mormon is a good farmer, because the bishop of the State is, in his own person, both a prosperous farmer and a successful religious leader. He can not be the one without the other. Without

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commending the ingenuous arrangement, it illustrates the close union of economic success with religious power.

3. The Lord's Share of the Farmer's Profits

The third principle is that the farmer should give of his prosperity to the support of the Church. The argument here concerns the Church in existence in the country. If it is true, as stated before, that the Church has a close relation to the general economic experience of the people, and that the Church is related in its improvement to the profit, or "labor income," of the typical farmer in the community, then it follows that the farmer should recognize his profit, or "labor income," from the farm as a religious thing.

Farming becomes, with the serious man, an experience of Divine Providence. The man who tills the soil is very near to Nature, and induced by her many phases and moods to think upon the divine. He is constantly contending, both in antagonism and in co-operation, with the forces of nature, which have always reminded the human being of the unseen. He can not plant his crop except there be faith in him. He must believe in the orderly process of nature or he can not do the work of a farmer, and as "we learn by doing," rather than by what is told us, he comes in his very instincts, and certainly in all his thoughts, to be a believer. Nature is so vast and her many phases so new, her resources unbounded, so that a man lives in wonder and moves in an atmosphere of humility. The danger with the farmer is of fatalism

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and of too great submission of himself. The almost invariable experience of a farmer is some religious feeling and belief.

There is needed, however, a definite cultivation of country people in the matter of giving. For this reason Biblical writers have their clear-cut preachments in regard to the tithe. The Old Testament expressed definite ideas in law and in prophecy along this line. There was no doubt of their sense of the intimate relation between the economic and the religious life of the Hebrews. The writers of the Old Testament were preaching and legislating for farmers. The Psalms are countrymen's songs. They bespeak the intimacy of religious life with landscape, with forest, and with field. Above all, in the social organization of the Jews it was written into their very philosophy and enacted into their laws, that he who prospered should proportionately give to the support of the worship of God.

In our time these principles have been somewhat modified. Persons of great devotion still consider themselves bound to give a tithe. Their influence is greater than their power to convince others and to enlist them in obedience to Old Testament law. The two methods which prevail in modern Churches are the system of giving in envelopes, and what is called the budget system. These two closely related methods of organizing rural prosperity have great value in the training of country people in the recognition of economic prosperity as a religious experience.

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The Budget System of Giving.—In the budget system, the Church determines in a democratic way what moneys shall be spent during the coming year. This has the effect of regulating benevolence and puts the Church in the place to command, as well as to protect, the benevolence of the community. The total amount to be given by the group of rural workers is then distributed among them according to their known income or ability to pay. This assessment is cheerfully met by the members of the country Church, if only it be arrived at in a democratic and effective manner.

The contribution for the year being thus determined, envelopes are distributed throughout the congregation, in order that each member may give in a uniform receptacle, for each Sunday in the year, a fraction of his yearly contribution. By a duplex envelope having two pockets, the member is given control of the distribution of his gifts between local benevolence and the general interests supported by the Church. There can not be a better method devised than this for the gifts of a group of people who are under no authority, and who voluntarily support out of their profits an institution closely related to their living. It is democratic, simple, flexible, and gives to the people themselves the powers of recall and of initiative, which in politics are very slow of enactment.

4. The Traditional Christian Character and the Farmer

The fourth principle is that the moral character of the productive and profitable farmer is the tradi-

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tional Christian character taught in the old-fashioned Church. To produce and to thrive, the farmer must be austere, honest, and industrious. These things have been taught in country Churches for generations. I will allow that in the present generation, owing to the disturbed condition of country life, due to reasons I have already named, there is very little rural preaching. We are reminded by a great agricultural teacher that the best of our preachers need to learn "to preach in terms of farm life." They do not do so at present. The minister who goes out into the country to preach where he does not live, from a town in which he may or may not preach, is city-minded. He does not think like a countryman. He does not preach the productive, profitable virtues. He talks about archæology and eschatology. He tries to fit men for a heaven unseen by the example of generations long since dead. He carries with him an atmosphere of town and railroad and city life. The books he reads are about urban affairs. The daily newspaper, which he studies every morning, is printed in the city, and probably despises the countryman. But this is a temporary condition. Old-fashioned preachers used to dwell on honesty, industry, austerity. Let us look at these for a moment to see what of value they have for productive and profitable farming.

The Traditional Virtues.—Only an honest man can do well in the country, because co-operation is not organized; it is an atmosphere in the country, and its performances are not obligatory; they are volun-

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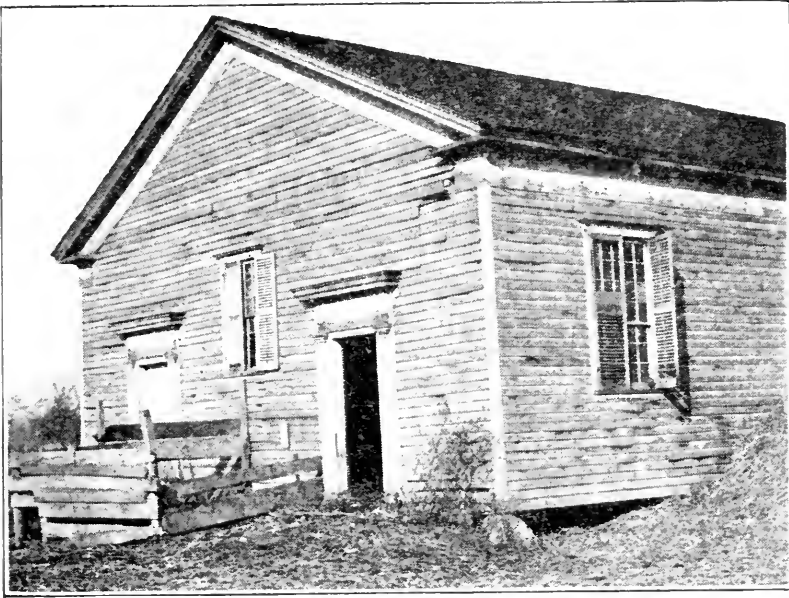
ary. Country people will not co-operate with a man whom they do not respect and whose integrity is doubted. They will not give him work. They will not lend to him nor borrow from him; and just so far as a man is dishonest in the country, he is by so much less productive and less able to command that instinctive co-operation, without which good farming is impossible. In spite of the American unwillingness to co-operate in formal ways, agriculture is essentially co-operative in informal, instinctive, and mutual ways. This is a constant, daily experience of the farm, so that the Church in the country must teach and must illustrate the domination of honesty over self-interest in the farmer. Especially is this true in the country community, because every man's motives, as well as his actions, are there transparent. Disguise is impossible and hypocrisy is not attempted. Every man lives before the eyes of his fellows, and character is accurately known.

In the same way the Church must teach industry. This is also a part of the traditional message of the Christian Church. The nations who are to-day called Christian are more nearly free from idleness than any peoples in the world; and it is in large part due to the organization of economic response, by religious doctrine and by homiletic appeal. The country minister, therefore, who cares for the country, sees the necessity of continual culture in the labor of the farm. As a matter of fact, in no other sphere of modern life is industry so universal, making due allowance for local difference, as it is in country life.

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But the most productive of all traits in the country is austerity. "All good farmers are austere," says the economist, and he defines austerity to mean "the producing of much and the consuming of little." Generally, religious life in the country has this austerity. It enters into all the establishments, especially rural. This austerity is, however, not a preachment, but first of all it is a practice. It grows out of the grim struggle with the soil—the necessity of securing enough of what the soil will produce for its tiller, and an abundance wherefrom he can secure not merely a product, but a profit. As farming becomes increasingly profitable, it becomes increasingly austere, because profit is got from the producing of more and the consuming of ever less. It is not to be wondered at that this austerity has taken in our time the form of expelling from the country all play activities, and excluding in a marked degree from the country community degenerate individuals and irregular types, who are in doubt about their devotion to productive work.

This austerity has crystallized into definite religious forms, for to be austere means that the men shall rule, man being the producer and woman being the consumer. It means also that the old men shall rule over the young men, the women, and the children. This means a government of elders, and rural religion is generally elder-ruled. In the Churches in America that have survived upon the soil, or that have been born from the soil, the governing figure is the "elder," and the "elder" is an economic type.



"GOD'S BARN"

The Church organization here at one time paid a minister a decent salary of \$1,200. Doubtless the structure was built, and for a short time maintained, on "borrowed" capital; *i. e.*, the amount contributed by the farmers to sustain this Church was at first more than the "labor income." Finally the Church society disbanded, the building abandoned, and subsequently used for a barn.

The nearest church to this community is four and one-half miles distant. Hundreds of people were at one time served by this deserted church, who still might be served by a church located here. There is a social and spiritual need for a Church organization in this particular community, but before one may be maintained, there must be better farming, in order that the labor "income" may be increased. Austerity, combined with intelligent industry, will be much-needed virtues in the farmers of this region. An agricultural and home arts training for the oncoming generation may be the condition for the best realization of these virtues and the blessings resulting from a good rural Church organization.

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Projected into a religious form, he stands for austerity; that is, the producing of much and the consuming of little. His austere doctrine and grim, hard views of life are the religious and moral corollaries of the stern struggle in which he has dominated his religion, his household, and his land, with a productive and a thrifty mind.

The Marginal Rural People are Representative.—These four principles may not exhaust the theme, but they are elements in the bond of union which holds the Church in the country to the life of the people there. Only one thing more need be said. The point of attachment, by which the economic life is related to the religious, is in the marginal people of the country. What is here said may not be obviously true of the prosperous farmer, and it may have no bearing upon the degenerate or indolent farmers of depleted sections. It is meant to be a description of the religious and economic union of the life of people barely able to survive. These people on the margin of rural prosperity are the typical and, therefore, they are the representative, people in the country. When one speaks of the country community, he must measure every word by its power to describe the surviving type; and the man and the family who can barely get a satisfactory living in the country—they represent all classes there. By their condition are institutions made, and out of their life the common experience comes. What is true of them is common to all. They live the representative life. Others have special and peculiar privilege, or special and

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peculiar suffering. Institutions are not made of things special or peculiar, but they are built out of representative conditions. The representative life in any community is the life of people barely able to survive with satisfaction in that community.

These, the marginal people, aspire for a living. Their ambitions are measured by a desire for the necessities of life. Their prayers are breathed for food and shelter, for a living wage, and for the common, universal necessities—education, music, news, social intercourse, and hope. This prayer of itself is the deepest of all religious aspirations. It is a desire for the satisfaction of economic wants, and in the Bible of the ordinary man the most precious of all passages is that written, it is said, by a countryman, in which he declares that his religion is a belief that God satisfies the economic wants, for he says, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want!"

CHAPTER III

The Limitations, the Opportunities, and the Possibilities of the Country Church

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1. The Limitations of the Country Church

THE limitations of the country Church are many, as every one who has observed the situation knows full well. What are these limitations? It is important to know. An institution, like a person, may have faults and not know it—defects that could be overcome.



REV. MR. McNUTT

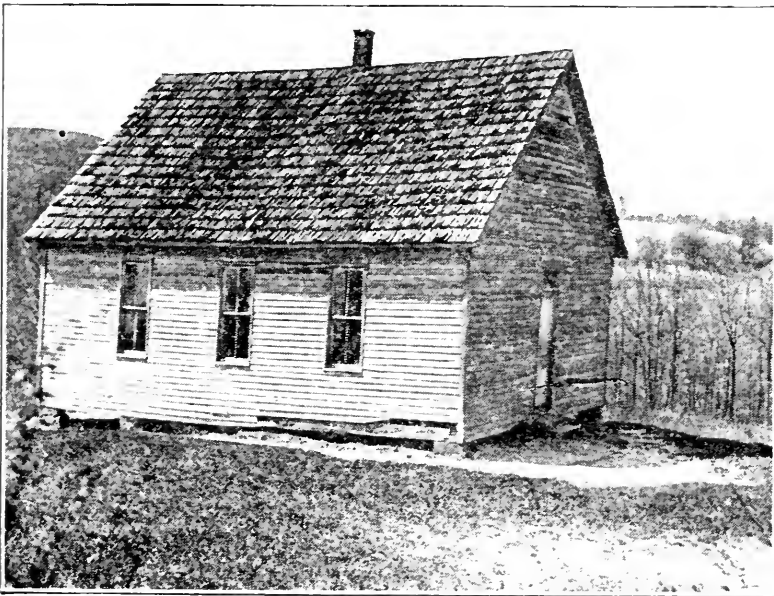
It is a great kindness to any person to have some faithful friend to point out to him his shortcomings.

“O, wad some power the giftie gi’e us
To see oursel’s as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us
And foolish notion.”

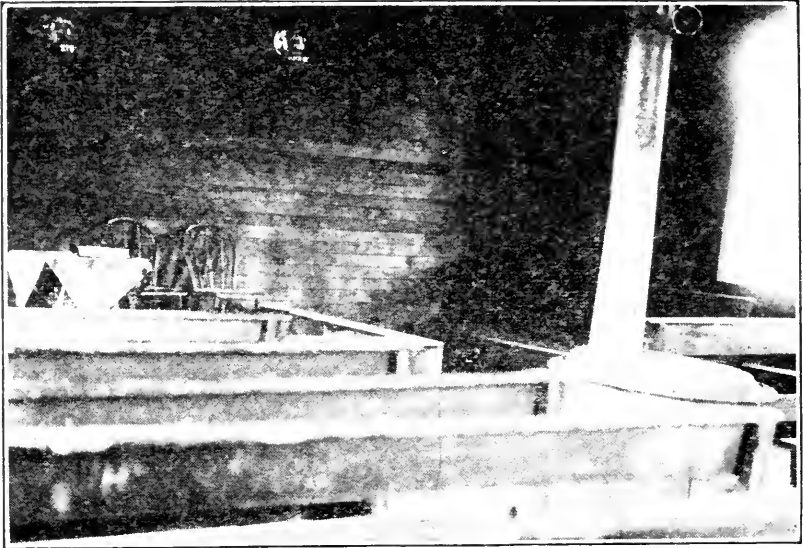
As the good angel of the manse has mirrored to many a Dominie the little peculiarities that would hinder his greatest usefulness, and thereby help him



THE APPROACH TO MT. CARMEL CHURCH



THE MT. CARMEL CHURCH



THE INTERIOR OF MT. CARMEL CHURCH

FIFTY YEARS BEHIND THE TIMES.—NOTES.

The road here traveled by Christians is surely sufficiently rugged to cause them to walk circumspectly.

The membership of Mt. Carmel Church about three years ago was seven. A "big meetin'" during the subsequent winter doubled the membership, and there was great rejoicing at Mt. Carmel. A distant relative of one of the leaders in the little church, who lived in a neighboring county, was employed to preach at Mt. Carmel every other Sunday. It was agreed to pay the minister five dollars each preachin' Sunday; but there were those in the Church who soon became of the opinion that too much of the Church's money was going to one family—the family to which the preacher belonged. A faction of nearly half the congregation was formed, which demanded that another minister should be secured—one who did not have any ties, either by blood or marriage, with the family in question. The result was a split in the Church, which was already too weak for effective service against sin.

There are many Mt. Carmels throughout the land. Rural people must learn to co-operate socially as well as economically; and co-operation may frequently mean self-denial on the part of families and individuals.

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to overcome them, the writer of this chapter, in the same spirit, would call attention to the limitations of the country Church.

Antiquated Buildings and Equipment.—In the first place, the average country church building and its equipment are fifty years behind the times, and are wholly inadequate to serve the modern needs of the rural people. There stands the little old-fashioned church of our grandfathers in the midst of the farmer's up-to-date machinery and other modern equipment. If our grandparents were again to return to earth, these little old churches, which they built with their hard-earned savings, would be about all they would recognize among the many new things they would find here now, unless it would be the "little red schoolhouses." And I fear they would miss, most of all, much of the piety and the spirit of devotion and worship that in their day was so common. Should any of these dear old grandfathers on this return trip go to the garret and haul out an ancient grain cradle and start to cut a swath around that sixty-acre oat-field, the grandson would think he had lost his mind. But would not the aged saint have just as much reason for thinking that his son was "out of his head" when he attempts to reap a twentieth-century spiritual harvest with all the old-time church equipment?

Some friends told me recently of a Children's Day service held in a country church located in the great corn belt in Central Illinois, where there is probably the richest soil in the world. At this service eleven touring cars, with at least a total valuation of \$10,000,

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drove up around that little old church, which would hardly bring \$200, furnishings and all, at public auction. The writer saw it. The seats were nothing but straight board benches, and were said by one of the ladies to be "regular back-breakers." The building was bare and unattractive within and without.

There was little money here for Church support—\$300 a year for half the time of an aged, broken-down minister, who lived and preached also in a village seven miles distant, but who had just resigned. This is pathetic. Would that it were an exceptional case! But there are many such rural churches.

Inadequate Financial Support.—The writer talked with a country minister in the community adjoining the one just considered, who was serving four such country Churches. He said he was going to resign his charge in the fall, because his salary did not afford him a living.

A second limitation, therefore, is inadequate financial support. Outside of one hundred and fifty of the largest cities in the United States, there are seventy-five thousand ministers who receive an average salary each of \$573 a year. This is not a living wage at the present high cost of living. It is no more than the common, unskilled laborer is paid, who requires no special preparation for his work. It is very much lower than is paid for any other kind of skilled labor, or in other professions. Railroad engineers get an average salary of \$1,200 a year, and policemen \$1,000. No man can be efficient and dis-

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charge the many duties incumbent upon the country minister to-day on the wage that the rural preacher receives at the present time. It is simply impossible.

Inefficient Leadership.—Lack of efficient leadership is another limitation of the country Church. In the first place, our country ministers are not properly trained, either in colleges or the seminaries, for the work in country parishes. We may go back still further, and include the preparatory and the public schools. There is little of the real country mind and spirit and life in any of them. The subject matter taught is either foreign to the country, or it is taught in such a way as to disconnect it from the farm. The proof of these statements is found in the fact that so few men and women trained in the higher institutions of learning seek country positions as their first choice, with the intention of remaining there permanently.

The trend of the rural minister and teacher, as they gain experience and become proficient, is ever away from the rural church and the rural school, first to the larger town and finally to the city, the ever-enticing goal of "greater opportunity" and "wider field of usefulness," so-called. It is bad training that puts such foolishness into men's minds. The back-to-the-country Church movement among ministers comes only when they or some of their family break in health—when there is lack of physical capacity for hard work.

Weaknesses of the College and the Seminary.—The average college and seminary professor knows little about the country at first-hand; and he cares less, or

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he would take more interest in the rural people. (I have no grudge against any of them.) Most of these men have been reared on the farm; but the country they now know is the country of their youth, which is a very different thing. Perhaps they have been back to the farm a few times for a vacation. If they have studied the country at all, it has been a study about the country, rather than the country itself. How can these gentlemen, at such long range, therefore, either inspire young men and women to serve positions in the rural districts or train them to be efficient in that service?

Certain theological professors maintain that it is not for them to teach men to farm. There is little danger of their doing that, but there is great danger of their training young men away from the farm who are needed in the service of the country people.

Our seminaries and colleges will have done something for the country Church if they so impress young men that they will consider a country field of labor worthy of a life-work, the same as a foreign mission field or a position in a city. But they can do much more than this. They can instruct their students how to preach and teach the truth to country people in terms of country life—how to open up to the farmer the book of Nature in such a way that he may see God in it and through it, that he may come to a better understanding of the life and the forces about him, and how to use these forces to the best advantage. Besides, a study and discussion of rural conditions and institutions in seminary and college would

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be an invaluable aid to those who expect to work and live in the country. A study of the country life itself, its joys and sorrows, its pleasures and habits, its possibilities, its hopes, and its compensations, would be a real asset to the country minister.

Country Church administration would be another appropriate theme for study. It is too much to expect of the country minister that he shall solve all these things for himself after he has begun work on his field. He has something else to do then. I do not mean that the country minister does not need all the training he usually receives, but that he needs something in addition to the ordinary college and seminary courses.

The Need of Readjusting Ecclesiastical Administration.—If our rural ministers were better fitted for their work, they could not render their best service under our present system of country Church administration.

As a rule, our country Churches are served by ministers who live in towns several miles distant. Each has two or perhaps three or more places at which to preach. The different communities served by a single minister quite likely present different conditions which require different methods. He has not much time to spend in shepherding his country flock, and his supervision must of necessity be very general in its character. He really does not get much acquainted with his country folk. He is not of them. He lives elsewhere. Our country Churches will never be rightly served until they can have resident pastors.

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Lack of co-operation among the different denominations and with other rural institutions is another thing that limits the usefulness of the country Church,

So often we find a number of weak Churches in a rural community, each struggling along with its own little program, leaving the bulk of the work needing to be done still untouched. Sometimes petty jealousies are found lurking between one denomination and another, making any kind of community work impossible. As a result of these things, the Church presents to the world no solid front, either for evangelizing or teaching the world, or for defense against false doctrines and other evils. Many an inroad has thus been made through the Christian ranks by the evil one, while the disciples of Christ tarry to settle some ecclesiastic difficulty.

Lack of Vision.—What the Church in the country has failed to accomplish may in most cases be traced to a lack of vision. For, as the Scriptures say, "Where there is no vision the people perish." "The blind can not lead the blind." Leaders without vision are like dead men; they make no demands—except to be buried—either upon their constituency or upon the Almighty, who is able and willing to do more for His people than they can think or ask.

Rural preachers often do not ask and work for the biggest and best things. They see the farmer struggling for existence—often living the life of a slave—and have nothing to offer; or where the farmer is succeeding, they allow him to build great

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houses and barns, stock his farm with blooded cattle, put in the latest machinery on the market, buy his neighbor's farm, or purchase an automobile, and never present to him the proposition of a better church, a more comfortable home, a more efficient school, or a richer and more wholesome community life.

The young people, in endless procession, are allowed to march away from the farm to fill city positions without ever having been impressed with the needs and possibilities of life on the farm.

The recreational facilities of the rural people are often either neglected or they are turned over to commercialized agencies, which are frequently defrauding and demoralizing. Little effort is made to develop the home talent of the community. There is meager opportunity for social intercourse. Life on the farm grows more and more monotonous. There is nothing left but work, work, work! The people grow tired and restless, or they have n't enough life left in them to desire anything better. They want to get away from the farm, and they go by the thousands. Who can blame them for going? The country Church needs a new vision of its responsibility in the social life of its people.

Summary of Limitations.—Lack of vision, inadequate leadership, failure of adjustment, a mistrained ministry, poor equipment, and insufficient financial support constitute, in my judgment, the most serious limitations of the country Church of to-day.

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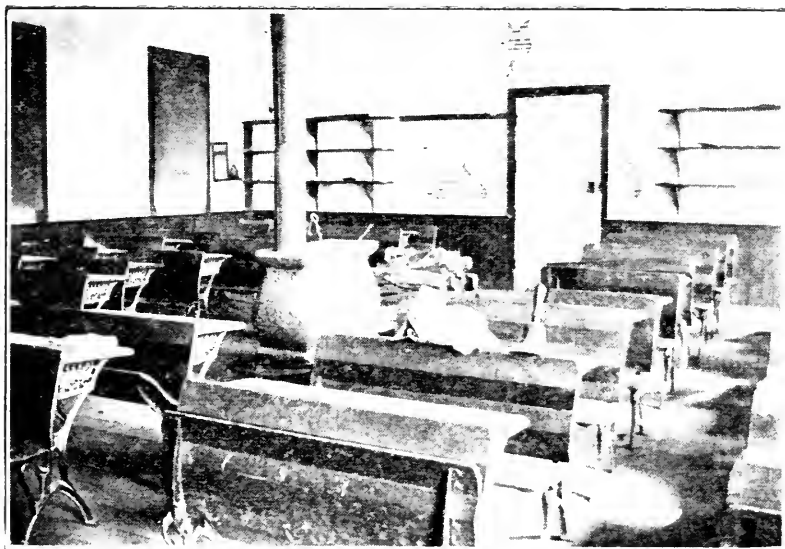
2. The Opportunities of the Country Church

Although the limitations of the rural Church are many, its opportunities and avenues for service are more. Indeed, the opportunities for moral and religious service in the open country are so numerous, and the need so pressing, that they create a responsibility of such great proportions that the limitation-bound Church is all but paralyzed by it. The rural Church machinery can not move the great social burden that is crushing it. Let us consider some of the most important opportunities.

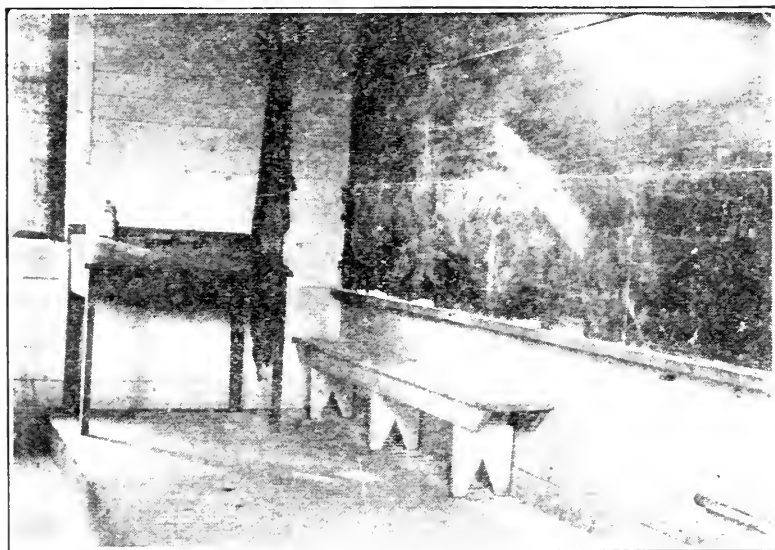
Co-operation of Rural School and Country Church.—As to the co-operation with other rural institutions, the country Church has been slow to see and to grasp its opportunities to place the leaven and to inspire.

While the Church stands for education, she has been content to see the country school worry along at a snail's gait, making little progress in half a century. The majority of our country schools are still taught by untrained teachers, at a wage not larger than is paid to a common day-laborer, with very poor equipment, and often amid surroundings and conditions that endanger the health of the pupils, and which tend to corrupt their morals.

Has not the Church a mission to inspire something better for the education of our country boys and girls than these poorly-equipped and poorly-taught public schools, which are now so common in our rural districts? The deficiency of the rural system of education is an opportunity of the rural religious organization for a most helpful service.



INTERIOR OF PLEASANT HILL SCHOOL
Pleasantness all gone.

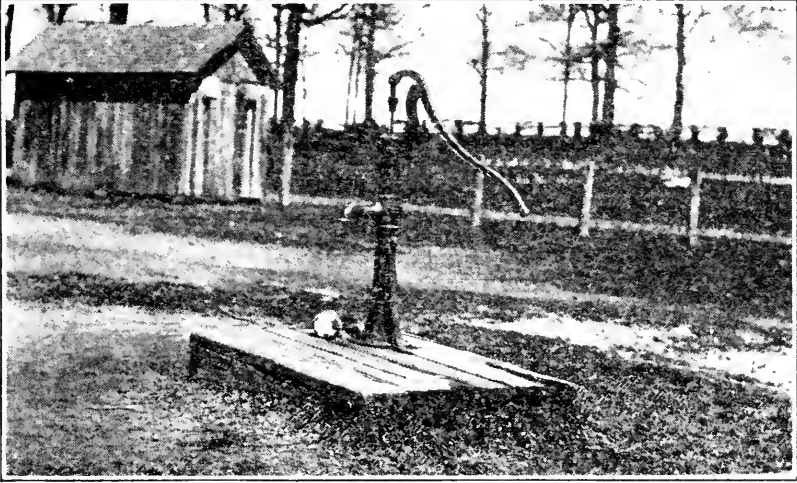


THE TYPICAL EQUIPMENT OF THOUSANDS OF RURAL SCHOOLS
Little more than reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic can be
taught with the equipment of this school.

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Championing Rural Life.—Farmers form a class far more numerous than those engaged in any other industry or business. The world is dependent for the necessities of life upon the farmer's products; yet his cause as a social being and citizen of the State is the last to be championed. The city boys and girls are protected by law; but whoever heard of a child-labor law being enforced for country children? Working and living conditions have been investigated in city homes, stores, schools, shops, factories, and mines. Laws have been framed to prohibit abuses and inhumane treatment of men, women, and children, but too often they are not regarded on the farm and in farm homes. Are there no such abuses in the country, or are the country people so abundantly able to take care of themselves? That there is frequent abuse of labor, of the birthright of children, of sanitation, of morals, of civic righteousness, of marital relations, of social intercourse, and many other infractions of common decency, can not be successfully denied. A potent country Church might do much to remedy these conditions that are now so often tolerated in rural communities.

Church Mediatorship in Securing Co-operation.—Some effort has been made at class organization among farmers, but as yet it has only begun. The principle of co-operation is a Christian principle, but as yet it has been little developed among the millions of people who till the soil. The rural Church has a great mission to perform in bringing the country people up to the point where they can and will work



THE DRINKING CUP AT HEN PECK SCHOOL



A CROWDED, DUSTY CORNER OF A RURAL SCHOOL WITH AN OPEN WATER BUCKET AND A COMMON DRINKING CUP

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together in natural co-operation for their own good and for the good of the whole race. A closer co-operation between country and city also would be mutually helpful.

The spirit of suspicion that so commonly exists among farmers is frequently mentioned as one of the chief causes that prevents them from working in co-operation with themselves or with city people. Truth, honesty, and uprightness are virtues that the Church inculcates in its members, and all true Christians must practice them. Let the country Church be vigilant in regard to its membership. When membership in a Christian Church becomes a reasonably sure guarantee of the establishment of these virtues in the thoughts and actions of the individuals so favored, suspicion among those who are blessed by Church relationship must become practically nil. Either voluntary or forced fidelity to Christian principles will thus become the corner-stone of all forms of co-operation among those country people who associate themselves with the prepotent country Church. On the other hand, a similar moral guarantee in respect to the members of city Churches would make possible an economic co-operation between the rural Church membership as a producer of raw materials and the city Church membership as the consumer of such materials; and the conditions for the exchange of manufactured articles on a co-operative basis in the reverse order would be equally favorable. Doubtless many economic co-operative associations for the mutual benefit of country and city people might be



A HOG LOT, WHICH CONTAINED ABOUT FIFTY HOGS, JUXTAPOSED THIS
NARROW RURAL SCHOOL LOT

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

formed through the mediation of Church organizations. The rural Church has here a great mission in making right conditions, in pointing out the way, in encouragement, and in initiation. This done, and the country Church will, to a large degree, have measured up to her duty in providing for the economic welfare of her people; for no one will claim that the Church should become an active commercial or business agent.

Readjustment.—Times are ever changing, which bring forth new needs and conditions. To meet these new demands successfully, institutions must ever be changing their methods and their equipment. The business world has recognized this, and has accommodated its methods to the changes. City institutions, including the Church, have kept up with the times.

While the farmer has adopted the new things in farming, he has been quite content to move along the old lines with reference to his Church and his school. Whatever has come to him of the new civilization has been forced upon him from the outside, rather than developed within him by natural processes at work in his own community. He neglects the new adornments and equipments because he has not been educated to appreciate them. The farmer buys a piano at the solicitation of an agent, but may have little musical taste or appreciation. For this reason we find many musical instruments in rural homes, but few players; books with few readers; pictures and other home decorations, with little knowledge or appreciation of art.

OPPORTUNITIES AND POSSIBILITIES

Life on the farm has changed as elsewhere. There is a different kind of social life needed now in the country from what our fathers had. There are many new needs and demands. The Church, to minister to these new conditions, should adopt suitable methods. But in a multitude of instances the old methods are still in use, and these are not successful. There is a new type of country Church needed now. The country Church must adjust itself to modern conditions.

Summary of Opportunities.—While the many opportunities of the country Church have by no means been exhausted, the chief ones have been briefly considered, and these are: co-operation with the other social institutions of the open country, the championing of rural life, mediatorship in rural business and industrial evolution, and readjustment to the new régime in rural affairs, to say nothing of the opportunities for rural evangelization, which is fully discussed in Chapter X.

3. The Possibilities of the Country Church

Turning now to the third part of my subject, I would write hopefully and enthusiastically. I am not among those who attach little importance to the Church of the country folk, or who believe it has outlived its usefulness.

The first step towards showing and realizing the possibilities of the rural Church is to get a vision of the country life of to-day, and of what is to be done for the country people.

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There is something vastly more needed than to hold a preaching service once a week, or once a month, as in some cases, and to conduct a Sunday school. Thousands of rural Churches have failed in recent years under such a program, good as it might seem. There was a time when a single program of preaching sufficed. Not even a Sunday school was needed. Life in the country was simple in those early days. Knowledge of people and things had not expanded. My mother has often told me that reading, writing, and spelling were all the branches taught in the country school when she was a girl. But some people feel now that they can hardly afford to buy all the text-books which our children are expected to study in school. Knowledge has increased. Formerly, the country parson, teacher, and doctor were the only educated persons in the community; but it is not so now. The farmers have the daily newspapers, books, and magazines; and many of them are high-school and college graduates, and these are rapidly increasing.

The Rise of New Conditions in Country Life.—The social life of the country in earlier days was so simple that it flowed on almost automatically. The neighborhood gatherings were spontaneous, and centered in the good old-fashioned “huskin’-bees,” “apple-peelin’s,” and such like. The very work itself was so adjusted as to afford much sociability. Now, however, a lot of new social forces have appeared that must be reckoned with.

Again, the country people have much more money

OPPORTUNITIES AND POSSIBILITIES

to spend than they used to have in the pioneer days. The land has been cleared, or drained, or irrigated. Orchards have been planted and roads made. Permanent buildings have been erected, and mortgages paid off. Telephone systems and rural mail routes have been established. The preliminary work incident to the settling of a new country has been done. The farmer is ready for new tasks. The rapid increase of population has put far greater demands upon agriculture as a business. Agriculture has become a science, which calls for a new education of those who till the soil, a new type of educators, a new literature, and new legislation.

Many discoveries have been made in recent years concerning man's living conditions. The laws of hygiene and sanitation did not much concern our forefathers. Many lives were lost on the farm from typhoid fever and other diseases before the dangers arising from a polluted water supply and contamination from other sources had been discovered. Rural sanitation and nursing are to play a large part in the new rural life.

The Dream and Then the Dawn.—The farmer has only begun to dream of a beautiful, comfortable, convenient home. Architecture and landscape gardening have not hitherto been in his program. Mr. Farmer has not thought much about installing into his home the modern appliances which help to lighten the work of the rural housekeeper and home-maker.

But the dawn of a new country life is at hand. In the face of these new rural conditions and achieve-

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ments, the country Church finds itself confronted with new demands. The possibilities of its usefulness lie in meeting the issue now before the country people.

The Message.—The rural Church must continue to preach, as it has done in the past, the gospel of repentance and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ; and then, in addition to this, it should preach the

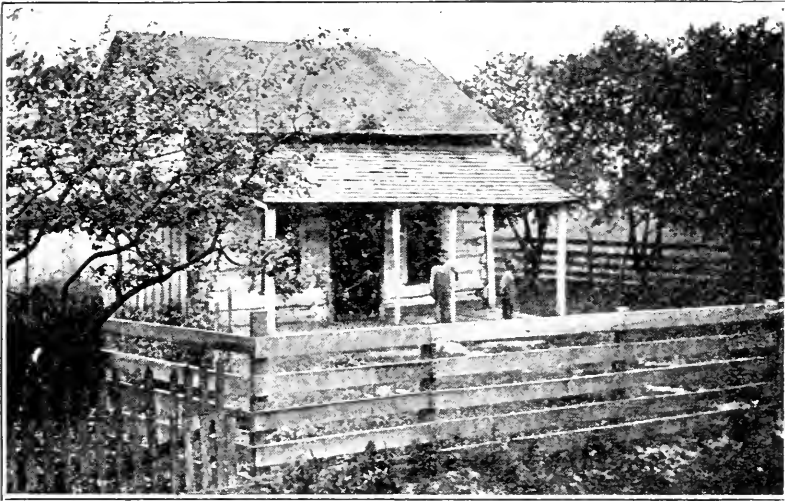


A NEW COUNTRY RESIDENCE THAT NEEDS THE SERVICES OF A
RURAL ARTIST

gospel of social service in terms of modern rural life. It must have a message for the farmer who is robbing the soil and leaving it in a depleted condition of fertility for the generations to come after him. It must have a message for the indolent farmer, who does not know how to till the soil with profit; or who, through bad business methods, is failing, and is having a hard

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life and not able properly to support his family and the institutions of his community. The rural Church must have a message for the prosperous farmer who has more money than he knows how to use most intelligently, who seeks only "to get more money to buy more land to raise more corn to feed more hogs



RESIDENCE OF A FARM TENANT

The rural Church must have a saving message for both the man who lives here and his absentee landlord.

to get more money." It must have a message for the absentee landlord and the retired farmer, whose interests in the rural community lie no deeper than to draw high rents from their lands. It must have a message, too, for the farm tenant, who oftentimes works and lives under great difficulties and discouragements; for the rural school-teacher, officers, and patrons of

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the public school; for the grange and other farmers' organizations, and for every other agency that has to do with rural life, either directly or indirectly. The rural Church must have a message for the new rural home and the community which surrounds it. It must take the progress of the centuries and the best in our civilization and focus them upon the countryman and his family in such a way that not only a few farmers, but the farming people as a class, everywhere, may realize the more fruitful and satisfying type of rural life, which is possible in this present age, and which is due them. So that it may speedily come to be said that the industrial, educational, social, recreational, religious, cultural, and home advantages and facilities are as good for the tillers of the soil as for any other class of citizens in the United States of America.

It is possible for the rural Church to give such a message to the country people. A faithful interpretation of the Scriptures in the light of modern rural life will supply this gospel of social service to the husbandman.

The Message in Action.—Preaching is one thing; doing the Word is another. The Scriptures teach, "Be ye not hearers of the Word only, but also doers."

Every message that comes through the Church should be accompanied with an honest effort to put that message into practice, whether it be to quit sin or to build a decent road to the church or the market.

The rural Church need not become a bureau of politics, but it can inspire good citizenship and pa-

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triotism, and give its patrons opportunity to cultivate and practice these virtues. The rural Church need not become a public school, but it can cultivate the spirit of inquiry and research in the community. It can put its people in the attitude of learners. It can champion the cause of rural education, and do many practical things to help the school teacher and the school officers.

The rural Church need not turn itself into an amusement house, but it can do wonders in leading its people into wholesome recreations. The rural Church is not supposed to teach scientific agriculture, but it can pave the way for it by putting the farmers in touch with literature on the subject and other helps. The rural Church can set before a whole community an example of good business and of neat, beautiful, and sanitary home surroundings, by conducting its own business well and by keeping its buildings and grounds in first-class condition. The rural Church can help the farmer to great co-operative systems by being itself the greatest co-operative institution in the community—the greatest social servant.

The Church that does practical things for its community is the Church that wins its way into the good graces and affections of the people. Nothing is foreign to the active, serving rural Church that concerns the welfare of the farmer. There is simply no end to the possibilities of the wide-awake rural Church. Let it study the life of its people, the community, and the country itself—its resources, its handicaps, and its

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possibilities. Let it make a complete survey¹ touching every item of rural life, chart and tabulate the results, and celebrate victories, achievements, and anniversaries. Let the country people "talk up" the preacher, the Church officers, the services and ministries of the Church, the public school, and the community. We may glorify country life and farm life by making it happy, bright, joyous, and profitable. Let us exalt the farmer and the business of farming. In all phases of rural work we must advertise, advertise, advertise!

All these things and many more are possible for the country Church. The one thing necessary is to set about intelligently and in earnest to realize the best things for the country and the country Church and people—and it shall be done.

¹ The first essential in the revival of a country Church along scientific lines is to make a social survey of the community which the Church serves. A social survey is simply taking an inventory of the social stock in a community. The Church as a human organization is a social institution. It is dependent upon the people of its vicinity, their conditions and relationships. The twentieth century country Church should know the institutional relationships of all the people in its territorial sphere of influence, as well as their prosperity, their social status, their religious inclinations, their education, their relative abilities as leaders, and their disposition to be led. These facts must first be known before intelligent plans of action may be formulated and effectively carried forward. This survey should be made by the local Church itself; for this activity in itself will tend to have a stimulating reaction.

The best brief directions for making a social survey known to the Editor is entitled, "A Method of Making a Social Survey of a Rural Community." The author of the pamphlet is Prof. C. J. Galpin, and it is published by the University of Wisconsin, at Madison, as Circular of Information, No. 29, January, 1912. Persons writing for the same should address the Mailing Department.

Other excellent and helpful bulletins on survey work are: "The Survey-Idea in Country-Life Work," by Dean L. H. Bailey, of Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.; "A Social Survey for Rural Communities," by George Frederick Wells, Tyngham, Mass. (10 cents a copy); and the various reports of surveys made in several States by the Presbyterian Department of Church and Country Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

CHAPTER IV

The Centralization of Country Churches

BY DR. CHARLES B. TAYLOR, *McArthur, Ohio.*

It has been my lot to spend about forty years ministering to the needs of various groups of country



DR. TAYLOR

Churches among the hills of South-eastern Ohio. What I have to say applies to the conditions which have confronted me, increased my burdens, and hindered the efficiency of my work. I thank God for the recollections of a long, precious, and happy ministry, but can not but be saddened a little when I think how much more I might have accomplished had there been

a wise centralization of Churches.

1. Conditions

The population of the rural districts of South-eastern Ohio is steadily decreasing. The county in which I reside has lost one-third of its population within the past thirty years. Some of the townships have scarcely one-half as many inhabitants as they had thirty years ago. Columbus, Dayton, and the

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other manufacturing cities are full of people from these hills. They are in the factories, the railroad yards, and the stores. Kansas, Oklahoma, and other Western States have furnished homes for many more.

A great many of our young people become college students. As a rule, when they leave their homes to enter college, they leave them never to return except as visitors. Very many of them have become ministers and teachers; but their ministry and teaching is far away. One family may be used as an illustration. It is a large family, whose members take to books as a duck takes to water. There are three sons and six daughters. Of the sons, one is a minister in Missouri, one is a superintendent of schools in a town of Western Ohio, and one is an employee of the National Cash Register Co., at Dayton. Of the daughters, one is a wife and mother in Colorado, one is a trained nurse in Texas, one is in Dayton, one in West Virginia, one is in college, and one teaches the first grade in the public schools of her home town, and is the only one of them left among the hills.

A few years ago, when I sustained official relations to the teachers and schools of the county in which I live, there were three young women, superb teachers, who remained with us until I began to flatter myself that we should have the benefit of their life-work. They are all gone. One teaches English in the high-school of a city in Western Ohio, and the omniverous maw of Columbus has gathered in the other two, one of whom is a faithful teacher in the

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city schools and one is the wife of an honored professor in Ohio State University.

2. The Effects

The effects of this continued emigration upon the schools and Churches of this region are deplorable. The schools, which used to number forty pupils, now have ten or twelve. As for the Churches, let a few concrete illustrations present the situation.

(a) In a certain sparsely-settled community, eight miles from any railroad, and the same distance from any turnpike, one can stand upon the summit of a hill and see three churches, one close by one's side, one a half mile to the right, and one across a valley on another hill, less than a mile away. One is a Methodist Protestant Church, one a United Brethren, and one a Free Will Baptist. All the people living within range of these three churches are not enough to maintain one Church well. Not one of the three pays more than \$75 annually for the support of a pastor.

A minister who was appointed to serve one of these Churches told me about his first service there. He rode ten miles over a bad road in the cold weather. Arriving at the church, he found a congregation of four persons, one of whom was trying to coax a fire out of wet fuel and a smoky stove, while the other three stood shivering around it.

(b) In the hamlet of R—— there are about twenty houses and three churches—Disciple, United Brethren (Liberal), and United Brethren (Radical).

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There are enough people in the hamlet and in the surrounding community to make one good, hopeful Church, if the three could be combined. As it is, the little Churches are dying, and the community suffers the loss.

(c) In a number of places in this part of Ohio, Methodist Episcopal and Methodist Protestant circuits cover the same ground, thus dividing the energy of the people and multiplying the labors of the ministers.

(d) In many places Churches of the same denomination are too close together. Some good old man in years gone by wanted a church close by his house. A young minister, full of zeal and ambition, came to the circuit and thought that it would be a fine thing to be able to report a new church building on his field of work. The good old man and the young minister got together, and the result is a church on Beech Hill, a little more than a mile from the church at Pine Fork.

One Example of an Over-Churched Field.—A good example of the general condition of affairs comes from the field where I spent the last three years of my pastoral work. At the southern extremity of the field is the village of T——, with about two hundred inhabitants. There are four churches in the place—Methodist, United Brethren, Presbyterian, and Christian. Two miles east is another Methodist Church, and a mile and a half north is another United Brethren Church. The entire population living within convenient distance of these six churches is about nine

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hundred. The aggregate membership of these Churches is about two hundred and seventy, or about forty-five to each Church.

Four ministers labored among these Churches, their fields extending elsewhere over wide circuits.

The Methodist Episcopal minister supplied five churches. On one Sunday he preached three times and rode eighteen miles. On the next Sunday he preached twice and rode ten miles. He conducted five series of special revival services during the year, and did a large amount of pastoral work, visiting the sick and burying the dead. His salary was \$500 a year and a parsonage.

The United Brethren minister had seven churches under his care. He preached at each place once in three weeks. During the year he held seven series of special services. The churches were widely scattered. The preacher's salary was \$475. With that pitiful amount he supported his family, paid house-rent, and kept a horse.

The brother who ministered to the Christian Church had four churches under his care. His salary was about \$480.

My field consisted of four little Presbyterian Churches, extending along a line from north to south. On one Sunday I drove twenty-four miles and preached twice, and occasionally three times. On the next Sunday, I drove eight miles and preached twice. The territory under my pastoral care was twenty-one miles long and eight miles wide. The visitation of the sick and the large number of funerals

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to which I was called added much to the burdens of the work. Like the other brethren, I was expected to hold a series of special services at each church. I preached about two hundred sermons each year, and drove nearly two thousand miles over rough hills and, for the most part, red clay roads. The winter trips were hard for a man of my age. My salary was \$800.

Four preachers ministered to twenty churches, and the work broke down strong men. The other three received salaries which were pitifully inadequate. Our congregations were small. The little Churches lacked the enthusiasm which comes with numbers. And the pity of it was that we covered practically the same ground and crossed and re-crossed the tracks of each other every day.

The Benefit of Church Consolidation.—A wise centralization could easily reduce these twenty churches to ten, while supplying ample church privileges to the entire population of that region. If this were done, a number of good results would follow.

The churches would number ninety to a hundred members each. Now they number forty-five to fifty. There would be ten live, pushing, interesting Sunday schools, instead of twenty feeble, struggling organizations. The neighborhoods, now divided in their interests, would each have a central rallying point in both religious and social affairs. One minister could be released to labor elsewhere. Two of the remaining three would care for three churches each, and the third would have four. These fields would be fa-

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more easily cared for than the present charges. The salaries now paid to the four men would make living salaries for the three. There would be a freshening and quickening of the religious life of the whole region, and we feel sure that the great Head of the Church would be pleased, and would give His rich blessing.

These are the conditions in this region, and, to some extent, they represent the conditions among country Churches generally.

3. Difficulties in the Way of Centralization

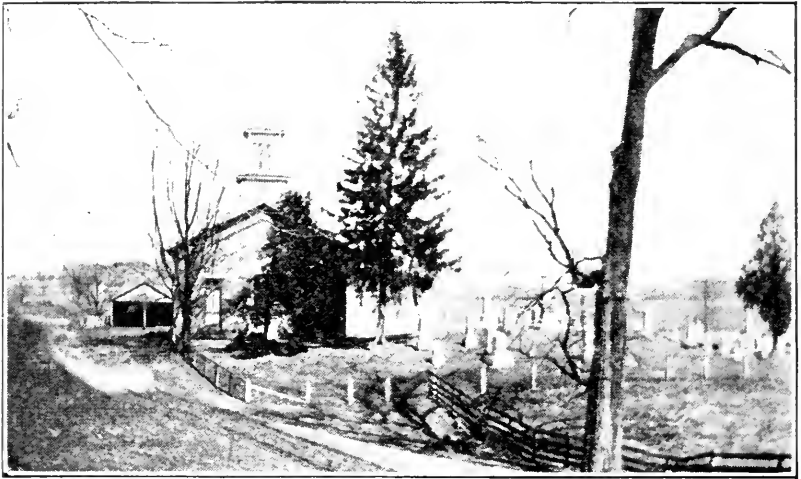
It is easy to take a map of a community and mark out with one's pencil just how the churches should be centralized. But when one goes on a field and tries to centralize churches, he soon finds that he is not dealing with a map, but with people. Let us frankly face the difficulties.

First. Difficulties arising from local attachment. For example, one who has not labored in such fields can not realize how centralization is made difficult by the fact that very many of our country churches stand in one corner of "God's Acre," the little country cemetery where the friends and relatives are buried. In the summer season, when the flowers are blooming, the people assemble early, and before they enter the church they visit the graves and decorate them with fragrant and beautiful flowers.

One can not but sympathize with these people. When we talk of centralization, one good woman says, "O, if we should leave our church, they would

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let the graveyard go down. One old man says, "I have worshiped in that little church all my life. There I sat by mother's side; out there in the yard she sleeps. There lie my two children and my sister, and there they will lay me to rest. I can't think of giving up our church to go elsewhere."



"IN ONE CORNER OF GOD'S ACRE

This is perhaps the strongest of the considerations, local and sentimental, which stands in the way of centralization.

Second. An exaggerated idea of the differences between denominations stands as a barrier in our way.

Really, in all the great essentials of faith and practice, the denominations which occupy the territory above described are on common grounds. The things in which they agree are great and many. The

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things in which they differ are few and small. They all preach repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. They all urge prayer, uprightness, love of God and love of one's neighbor. While I love the Presbyterian Church and feel most at home within her borders, I could very easily be a Congregationalist or Methodist, without violence to my convictions of truth, and with hearty, earnest fellowship with my brethren.

Third. The greatest difficulty is from the ecclesiastical powers higher up—the Conferences, Synods, Associations, and superintendents, whose vision seems to be bounded by the work in their own denominations, and who push with impetuous zeal the interests of “our Church,” as if that were the whole Kingdom of our Lord and Savior. On reading the above statement, I realize that it is too strong, but I let it stand as illustrating a tendency.

4. What Shall We Do about It?

First. The first thing to do is to get the Church at large awake to the need of the centralization of the country Churches. The present condition of these Churches is a woeful waste of the Lord's money, the labors of His ministers, and the energies of His people. It is a detriment to the spiritual life of country communities and a hindrance to the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God in the souls of men. *It is a burning shame and a sin against God.* Whenever the Church is really awake to these truths, we will find a way to centralize.

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Second. Let the ministers on these fields emphasize the great truths in which the Churches agree. Let them preach to their people the pressing need of union. Let them urge the people to worship together, and hold social reunions. Hold a picnic at Pine Fork for the people of Pine Fork and Beech Hill. Get the young people to intermingle. When the hearts of the people flow together, the union of two Churches is not difficult.

Third. God hasten the day when denominations whose faith and methods are practically the same shall be united in one. To some extent this has been done. Forty-three years ago, when I began my ministry, the Presbyterians of Washington and Athens Counties were divided among four denominations—Old School, New School, United, and Cumberland. They have now all come together here, and the good results are apparent. Similar unions should take place elsewhere, only on a much broader scale. There is no longer any adequate reason for the existence of the Methodist Protestant Church separate from the Methodist Episcopal Church. Surely, there is no adequate reason for the continued existence of the two United Brethren denominations. If two or three unions would take place along these lines, it would help wonderfully in solving the country Church problem.

Fourth. But the great thing to do is for the different denominations interested to get together with a determined purpose to centralize the country Churches by a fair system of exchange. "A fair ex-

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change is no robbery." Let a committee be appointed, one from each denomination represented in the field, and let this committee look over the field carefully and prayerfully, and decide what should be done. For example, suppose there is a Methodist Church and also a Presbyterian Church on Clay Run. The Methodist Church numbers sixty members and the Presbyterian Church thirty. Meanwhile, over on Sugar Fork there is a Presbyterian Church of sixty members and a Methodist Church with thirty. The right thing to do is for the Presbyterians on Clay Run to go to the Methodists, and for the Methodists on Sugar Fork to go to the Presbyterians. Let the committee visit these fields and hold meetings with the people, and get them together.

We stand ready for helpful suggestions from any source. We are ready for any practical and practicable method. But let us make up our minds that, for the sake of our Lord and His Kingdom, the centralization of these Churches must and shall be accomplished. If we really mean to do it, we will find the way.

It is very interesting and encouraging to see the efforts that the various Church denominations are making to secure the centralization or consolidation of the weaker Churches in rural districts. The need is becoming so insistent that a real earnestness is beginning to take hold of bodies that are from time to time delegated to consider this subject. As Dr. Taylor suggests, the Church organizations, through

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their higher officials, must not only encourage the movement, but must take definite action to accomplish desirable results. If the various Church bodies continue to neglect this plain and pressing duty, the people themselves may be expected to take the initiative—with varying results.

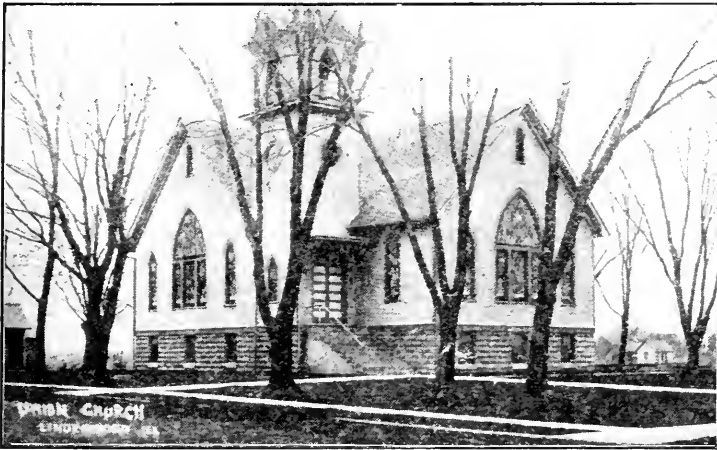
There are several practical ways for realizing the centralization or consolidation of Churches. A brief consideration of the most important methods may prove helpful to many rural communities that are looking for ways and means out of their distress. Until the various denominations do begin earnest, aggressive, and effective action for the relief of over-churched rural communities, these plans may prove suggestive.

1. Union under a Denomination

The Churches of different denominations in a community may, by the voluntary agreement of the people, be consolidated into one Church under one denomination. The denomination may be the same as one of the several Churches centralized, or a denomination different from any of them. This method has been recently (in 1913) effected in the union of the three Churches in the village of Dublin, Ohio. There were three Churches there—a Presbyterian, a Congregational, and a Christian. During the summer of 1912 a cyclone swept away the buildings of the first two Churches mentioned. The Disciples promptly offered their church edifice to the two organizations made homeless. The offer was accepted,

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but it soon became apparent that a union of all three congregations was highly advisable and desirable. After due consideration, a union was effected, and the new, consolidated Church became a member of the Congregational denomination, and is now using the former Christian Church building.



THE NEW UNION CHURCH AT LINDENWOOD, ILLINOIS

It was dedicated in 1909

2. Union under No Denomination

A union Church of no particular denomination may be formed. In 1868, at Lindenwood, Illinois, the six denominations of Wesleyan Methodists, Methodist Episcopal, Episcopal, Christian, Baptists, and Seventh Day Adventists formally united to form the Union Church of Lindenwood. "The organization consisted simply of the election of two deacons and a committee

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of three to engage a pastor or supply for the pulpit, and a written agreement to take the Holy Scriptures as the only rule of faith and practice, and Christian character the test of fellowship." This simple organization has stood the test for forty-five years, and is still used, although several other denominations have contributed toward the membership of this Church. Ministers have been drawn from various denominations, the last three being Congregationalists. The plan seems to be working admirably.

3. Federation of Denominations

Churches of different denominations may federate locally. At Chesterland, Ohio, the Baptists and Congregationalists, being unable to unite as one Church, have formed a very close local federation. One of the church buildings was repaired for the use of both congregations, and both united in calling a minister to serve both. It happened to be the Congregational Church building that was repaired, and a Baptist minister that was called. Both congregations worship in the same church building, and both are being served by the same pastor and attend the same services. Each organization assumed its fair share of the local Church support, the board of trustees of each being responsible for the finances of their respective organizations. Each organization supports the benevolences of its own denomination. New members are received into either organization according to their individual preference. The arrangement has been in operation for over a year, and seems

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to be working very satisfactorily. No friction has arisen, and the religious work of the community has been strengthened.

4. Interdenominational Church Trades

An exchange of churches located in different communities may be made among the various denominations. Dr. Taylor has fully explained this method on page 83. If the various denominations would heartily co-operate, much might be done to relieve the situation by this plan. If the powers "higher up" in the leading denominations would appoint an interdenominational rural church commission in each State to carry forward this work actively and energetically for a period of about five years, they would likely have enough to keep them busy, and no better service could be rendered the Christian people in rural communities.

The New Organizations Evil

In the meantime, the various denominational Church organizations, as well as the people themselves, should see to it that no new Church societies are organized in rural communities already adequately provided with Church privileges. In the past it has been a great deal easier for a young and over-energetic minister to organize a new congregation of his denomination in a rural community in the neighborhood of the congregations of other denominations than it has been for the people so organized decently to support the new organization. The great need of the Kingdom of Christ in rural communities to-day

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is the concentration of the wealth, the effort, the membership, and the worship of its citizenship.

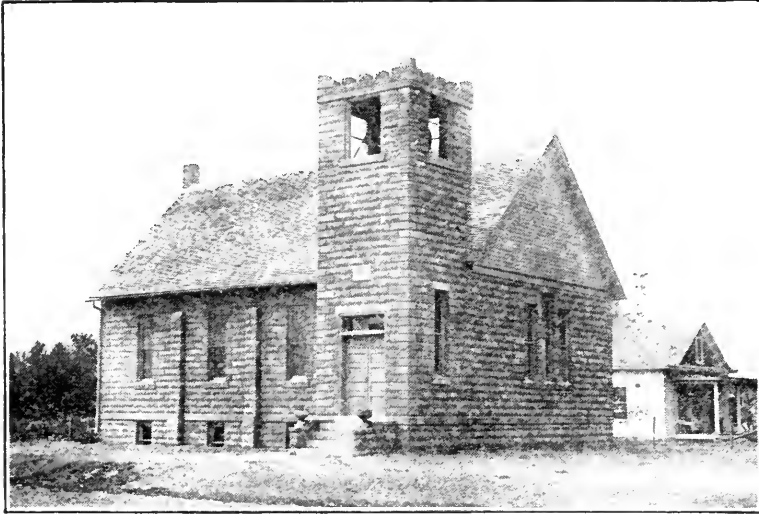
Caution

There is a strength in denominationalism—in the association of a large number of local societies into a great Christian organization for the purpose of cooperation in the formation and realization of definite religious policies, in the development of permanent and efficient leadership, and the distribution of opportunities and responsibilities for rendering Christian service. The inroads of evil are always made at the weakest point; and certainly no rural Church fortifies itself when it cuts loose from the strength that comes with comprehensive plans and well-organized efforts under the foremost Church leadership. Church leaders must be specialists in religion, not in agriculture. When the local spiritual and moral leader is forced to depend wholly upon the congregation he serves, financially and socially, and thereby forced to conform to its sentiments in moral, religious, and spiritual matters, we may well question the plan recommended under the second division above.

An example is cited at Ogden, Kansas. The sensible people of this village decided to unite for religious worship, and so built a union church. Everybody worked enthusiastically in building the edifice. The beautiful stone structure was finally dedicated—and then the weaknesses of the plan began to assert themselves. Who should be the minister? Should he be a Methodist, a Congregationalist, a Presby-

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terian, or a Baptist? Well, no agreement was reached, and the new church stands to-day unused, while men, women, and children are deprived of religious training and Church life. There can be no garden without a gardener. In an attempt to be undenominational,



This attractive and modern church building was erected by the Christian people living in the vicinity of the country village of Ogden, Kansas. Four different denominations participated at its dedication. Its ruling body is undenominational. The Christian service being rendered is nil.

this local Church society forfeited those elements so necessary to a vigorous and continuous religious activity.

References

For the benefit of those who may wish further to investigate this subject, we append the following ad-

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ditional instances of successful centralization of Church interests:

Greenwood Union Church, Greenwood, Mass.

Federated Church, Tyringham, Mass., Rev. Geo. Frederick Wells, Pastor.

Union Church, Concord Junction, Mass., Rev. S. N. Adams, Pastor.

Memorial Union Church, Springfield, Mass., Rev. E. P. Berry, Pastor.

Union Church, Ridgefield Park, N. J.

Union Church, Proctor, Vt., F. W. Raymond, Pastor.

Alma, Mo.

Bernardston, Mass.

Somerset, Mass.

CHAPTER V

Efficiency and Leadership

BY REV. N. W. STROUP, D. D.,

District Superintendent, Cleveland District, Methodist Episcopal Church, Cleveland.

1. The Nature of Leadership

LEADERSHIP is another word for genius. Efficiency stands for business in religion as well as religion in business. The few lead and the many follow. Men go astray like sheep, and come back very much in the same way, *i. e.*, they follow a leader. The descent of vice is easier and more rapid than the ascent of virtue. We may drift into disease and sin, but we must will and work our way back into moral health and rightness. The latter calls for personal conviction and conquest in



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preparing the way and walking therein. Emerson's "Representative Men" and Carlyle's "Heroes" have attracted the attention of the world, because they were pre-eminently the leaders of their era. The world has had its adventurers, its leaders in colonization, its philosophers, and its great generals; but this

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new century is to be the time of bloodless battles, and our leaders are to be moral and spiritual heroes. The Prince of Peace is to be our great Captain, and men are to catch His spirit of courage and self-denial. "The demand for a *few strong men*," says John R. Mott, "is even more imperative than *more men*." The times demand individuals who not only have the prophet's vision, but who possess the power to inspire and lead others to do the task.

The prophet of God is the moral general who commands the latent forces of his audience or community. His message is a call to ministry, and in that sense each leader may be a Grant or a Sherman in the war against sin. The response to the call will depend upon the authority of the messenger. It was said of Jesus that He spoke with authority, and not as the scribes and Pharisees. Luther received his commission direct from God, and then went forth to command the men of Germany to fight for religious freedom and personal purity. It could have been said of John Knox, as it was of Napoleon, that his presence was equal to ten thousand men on the field of battle. His word was a command to all Scotland, and it even compelled the attention of kings and queens. John Wesley, like John the Baptist, was sent to prepare the way of the Lord, and to call England out of her spiritual sleep and moral lethargy, to take up again the redemption of a race.

The leaders of the present hour are not only the watchmen on the walls of our modern Zions, but they are the divinely commissioned commanders of the

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economic, political, social, and moral forces of our twentieth century civilization. Then we should not forget that in the very forefront of the advancing armies must be found the spiritual leaders. It is our privilege to call men to battle for virtue and against vice, for knowledge and against ignorance, for temperance and against drunkenness, for faith and against doubt, and for love and against hate. "The word of command," says Mr. Roosevelt, "is useless in the fight unless a reasonable number of those to whom it is uttered not only listen but act upon it. Talk—mere oratory—is worse than useless if it has not a worthy object, and does not cause men to actually put in practice the message received."

The new patriotism must be interpreted in the terms of Christian conquest. The call for volunteers must be recognized as the call of the Christ. The Church, in city and country, will be the institution through which the modern patriot will find expression of the higher sacrifice of victorious conquest. "The moral substitute for war," that Professor James declared was the need of the hour, will be realized in the army of Christian soldiers to be found in every community. The number of private soldiers who fight in the ranks may vary from year to year, but there must ever be a sufficient number of valiant leaders to command the regiments and to organize new recruits.

2. Rural Leadership

The rural communities call for a special type of leadership. We need men who appreciate the great-

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ness of the field, and who will be able to discover and train those who are waiting for some one to command them. An institute lecturer recently declared that in a certain community where it was commonly thought that no young people remained, the right call brought forty young men, all ready for service, and only waiting for some one to redirect their restless energy. We must not fail to utilize this latent leadership, since, as Mr. Mott says, "The cities themselves need help, and can not be relied upon to furnish the Christian leaders of the future." It is a common statement in rural communities that "there are no leaders." Some explain by saying that the best young people have for many years been moving into the cities. Others assert that "the people in this section do not tolerate any boss." Democracy is made synonymous with individualism. They have a mistaken conception of leadership and an equally false notion of co-operation. Dr. Hale stated a few years ago that "*together* is the twentieth century word." This is one essential of efficient leadership. There must be more federation and less competition, more brotherhood and less hate. In the interest of economy, as well as comity, we must stand together. The strength of an army is accounted for, not by the character of the individual soldier, but by the united loyalty to the commander-in-chief.

The editor of a rural magazine, in a request for an article on "The Country Church," stated that while they were anxious to present to their readers things that had actually been accomplished, and were

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being done, in terms of real experience, they did not have any use for general discussions or speculative theories of what *must* or *must not* be done. The rural Churches have for many years been the victims of remarks and resolutions. They have been given "absent treatment," which may be very interesting for the practitioner, but apt to prove fatal for the patient. The rural ministers agree with the editor and say, "Let us have something real and practical that will supply our actual necessities and aid in the solution of our problems."

The writer was reared in the country, and saved at the altar of a village church, but two years ago was brought face to face with conditions that spoke of religious stagnation and disease, of discouragement and defeat, and of many problems and vital needs. The Churches were decreasing in membership and diminishing in efficiency. The pastors were inadequately and irregularly paid. The term of service was short, and there was a very evident lack of plan and purpose in the work of those who had been selected to lead. Buildings were out of date, and very deficient in their adaptation to modern conditions. There was no clear vision, and a sad lack of efficient leadership.

3. A Country Church Commission and Its Work

A brief consideration of the work of the Country Church Commission of the Cleveland District, East Ohio Conference, will not be amiss here.¹ The

¹For more complete information of the work of this commission and a list of its publications address the author of this chapter.

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pastors and leading laymen of the various charges were called together in group meetings, and rural conditions were freely discussed and thoughtfully studied. Each Church was considered with respect to its local environment, and its relation to the community of which it was a part. The organization of "The Country Church Commission" was a very logical outgrowth of the attempt to better conditions and encourage the discouraged leaders. The Commission is composed of five prominent laymen and three pastors, all of whom possess the spirit of the Country Life Movement. This action proved the beginning of many good things. Earnest thought and honest endeavor are the good soil out of which is certain to come wise means and methods of ministry. The work of the Commission had to do mainly with *better salaries* for the pastors, *better buildings* through which to do the work, *better methods* and means, and a *new vision* of social service and *community-building*. The work of the Commission was also to be *educational*, *inspirational*, and *supplemental*. The men in the field upon whom fell the heavier portion of the burden needed just this sort of assistance. It would tide the pastors over many hard places, and put new life into many languid laymen. Churches that had stood for two generations were to be rebuilt and re-adapted. The young people were to be provided with social rooms and suitable entertainment. The men and women outside of the Church were to be interested and enlisted in a campaign of community-building. The children of all the families must find

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in the Sunday school a center for training in the Christian principles of right living. This was to be done by well-trained teachers, using the latest approved methods of instruction.

4. Pastoral Leadership

In one charge, where a church had remained unaltered for almost three-quarters of a century, a new pastoral leader came. The auditorium was refinished, and attractive social rooms were arranged in the basement. With this new equipment, the young people were gathered together for social evenings to the number of one hundred. A Men's League of fifty members was organized, and they now have regular monthly suppers and socials. For years the dance-hall had held the young people, largely because the Church had failed to provide a place for them. A generation ago there was no place in the church for the boy and the girl.

Churches that had been closed on week nights were opened, and thus they helped fill empty churches on Sundays. Young people who are locked out of churches during six days each week are not apt to fill our churches on Sunday. One pastor secured the consent of his Official Board to use the basement for a boys' club-room. This was the first practical plan for saving the boys of that village. The pastor spent much time with the young men, and a point of contact was made with the un-churched portion of the community. Fathers who had never attended church occupied a pew on Sunday, and freely gave their

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money to aid the man who was ministering to their sons; so that the solution of the *boy problem* helped to solve the *man problem*. The Master Himself declared that "He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" and this wise pastor sought to put the emphasis where Jesus had placed it, and then trusted Him for results. The emphasis was transferred from *saving* the *Church* to that larger appeal of *saving* the *community*. The village church was no longer a one-day affair, where people sang about the "Sweet by and by." Religion became a natural part of the every-day life of the people, and honest business on Monday was made to square with an honest gospel on Sunday. Clean athletics were linked up with a clear conscience. The pastor demonstrated the fact that Christianity has to do with the whole man—mind, body, and spirit—and that in a very real sense these three are one.

The question of Sunday baseball was decided not by vote of the village council, but by the Christian conviction of the young men on the ball team, who for ten months had been attending the "Sky Pilot's" night school. The Sabbath desecrating element of the village awoke to find that the young preacher reaped a splendid harvest as a result of his faithful sowing. While the enemy slept, he had sown good seed and, in strict accord with divine law, reaped a good harvest.

Another pastor won back a lost community by the force of personal leadership. He became a "social engineer," and mapped out his program as carefully as Cecil Rhodes did his policy of continent recon-

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struction. He made it broad enough to appeal to the entire community, and sufficiently practical to enlist the best brains of the village. Realizing that to know the field was the first essential in any advance movement, a careful survey of two townships was made, and a house-to-house census taken. The study was made to include social, economic, and educational features, as well as the moral and religious. With this information secured, the next step was to inform the people of the facts, many of which were new and startling, even to the oldest inhabitants; and then to arouse them to action in seeking to meet the needs as they had been revealed.

The pastor considered himself a community-builder, and that has to do with schools and homes, as well as Churches. He found his program must include clean athletics, under Christian leadership; good roads, better sanitation, and economic co-operation in buying and selling. Team-work among the boys when playing baseball, and team-work among the farmers in their daily tasks and problems. The foreigner must be reached, and this added another item to his program. Community gatherings must be encouraged, and new community ideals must be kept before the minds of young and old. The Church, instead of being open one hour of one day a week, was now open several evenings each week; lectures, entertainments, and sociables were made contributory to the one supreme purpose of the Master, who came to seek and to save the lost.

The result was that the Church came to occupy

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its rightful place as a religious and social center. The old building was repaired and repainted. The yard was kept clean and neat. The horse-sheds were rebuilt, and everybody was happy over the miracle that had been wrought by an earnest application of common-sense methods. The few faithful saints who were trying to hold the fort had long feared that the end was near. They only dared to hope that it might not come during their day. The farms had changed owners, and many persons with a foreign accent were now living on the old homesteads, where for generations father and son had lived and labored and died. The new pastor took an inventory and came to the decision that the Christian thing to do was not to *retreat*, but to *retrench* and *reinforce*. Acting upon this conviction, he went out after the Bohemians, Finns, and Russians, and said, "We want you and your children to come to our church and Bible school." Out of two Greek Catholic families he added six new scholars to the Sunday school. These children are seldom absent, and always bring their offering for both services. Our churches are to serve the people—all the people—all the time. They are the community's servants, and not for any one class or nationality. We may adapt them to modern conditions, but we dare not allow them to be closed.

In line with the Forward Movement in rural Church work, one pastor led his people in the construction of a sidewalk from the electric railway station to the center of the village, and the placing of a few street-lamps to guide the travelers who often

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travel without lanterns and rubber boots. This caused the "unregenerate" to speak a good word instead of a bad one for the Methodists, when in the spring of the year they were able to walk on the top of the ground. The gravel on the sidewalk during week days helped to put "sand" into the sermon on the Sabbath.

The rural young people in some communities were unable to secure good books, owing to the fact that the village had no library. A little investigation opened a way by which the Church could aid in supplying this need. On invitation, the State organizer of libraries came and looked over the field, and replied that loan libraries of two hundred volumes would be furnished for the people, and the only expense would be the cost of transportation to and from the State Library. These books could be used from three to six months and then exchanged for others. This plan has already been put into operation in several villages and rural centers, and is proving to be one of many practical ways by which the pastor may be of real service as a community leader, supplementing the prescribed program of Church work.

5. The Greatest Need—Co-operation

The *pride* and at the same time the *peril* of the farmer is his independence. His environment and his occupation make co-operation all but impossible. While the nation is indebted to rural life for the production of moral stability and individual conviction, the farmer has not been able to cope commercially

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with city combines and municipal middlemen, who have robbed him of millions of dollars annually. The producers of the world's food must *get together*, and as a means to that end the country Church must be a sort of John the Baptist to prepare the way. *Rural co-operation* must be built on *rural confidence*, and the latter goes back to the bed-rock of Christian brotherhood. The Grange and other social agencies have done good work, but they *have not* and *can not* do the thing that is most needed without the assistance of the country Church, which holds the key to the solution of the problem, and must be one of the chief agencies in the Country Life Movement of America.

6. Three Great Rural Leaders

The results brought about in Denmark by the good Bishop Grundtvig in behalf of the rural people of his own nation constitute one of the most commendable examples of consecrated leadership in recent years. He brooded over the conditions until his whole being was stirred; then with "prophetic sense he saw that, if salvation was to come, it must be brought about from within, through the enlightenment of all the people, and that the individual must be educated to be more virtuous, more intelligent, more skillful, and more industrious, and to have a true patriotism for the reviving of the spiritual life of the masses." Though



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his work began with the economic and intellectual phases of life, it culminated in the moral and spiritual life.

Another noted leader worthy of our careful study was Charles Kingsley, who for thirty-three years was



CHARLES KINGSLEY

the pastor of the country parish of Eversley. He possessed a unique personality, and was a man of magnificent parts; the one among the many who was willing to trust God that his talents could be well invested in the work of a country village. He was as gentle as a woman, and yet heroic. He was sympathetic, and yet stalwart. He was poetic, and yet practical. He possessed humility without being either weak or passive. He was tender and sensitive to others' wrongs, but forgetful of himself and his own suffering. He was aggressive in action, and yet temperate in spirit. He was morally fearless, and spiritually heroic. Kingsley was a model pastor and a masterful preacher. He visited the people night and day, until he knew every man, woman, and child by name, and, better still, he knew their inmost needs. Without regard to class or culture, he "went about doing good." "If man or woman were suffering or dying, he would go to them five or six times a day—and night as well as day—for his own heart's sake, as well as for their soul's sake." "What is the use," he says, "of talking to a lot of hungry paupers about heaven?" He be-

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lieved that they must first be fed and made to feel some degree of satisfaction with their earthly lot. He was a believer in saving the whole man. Our present-day social theories were matters of every-day practice with him in his work at Eversley. He was a community-builder. He was, above all, a spiritual leader.

Every rural pastor and layman ought to study the life of John Frederick Oberlin, another great



JOHN FREDERICK
OBERLIN

leader who was more than a century in advance of his generation. The story is as inspiring as it is suggestive to the Christian leaders of this present century. He was the eighteenth century prophet of a new era in the country Church. What he taught, as well as the things he wrought out in deeds, give him high rank in the annals of missionary heroism.

The breadth of his program, the sanity of his preaching, and the courageous patience displayed in dealing with the inhabitants of a "wild, rough, and barren" country provides an adequate conception of a rural pastor who possessed both vision and valor. He belonged to those whom the apostle described as a peculiar people, zealous of good works. He was a scholar in the best sense of that term, without any taint of pedantry. He was a genius, with the practical adaptation of a business expert.

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Nothing human was foreign to this prophet of God in his work as a Christian minister. He always kept the spiritual welfare of his people supreme, while at the same time he labored to transform environment so as to enrich the social, industrial, and economic life of each family. Everything was done with a religious motive, and thus he sought to spiritualize the total life of the community. He has been one of our leaders for more than a century, but only within recent years have educational authorities seen the wisdom of making agriculture a part of the curriculum of our rural schools.

The village of Waldbach and its environs was to him a divinely selected parish. He felt commissioned of Christ to spend and be spent for this people. The call was not merely to evangelize, but to Christianize the people and the entire social order of which they were a vital part. He did not think it sufficient to merely preach to them on Sundays and leave them in ignorance. They must be educated, and as their chosen leader, he would supply that need. They were without knowledge as to farming, and consequently they were poor and unhappy. He would organize an agricultural society, and enlighten them as to soils, fertilizers, proper seeds, and have them use care in adaptation of vegetables and cereals to particular kinds of land. This necessitated sending to other countries for choice seeds and plants, and the replacing of their crude farm implements with modern ones, that he ordered from Strasburg. They were shut off from civilization and needed good roads, and

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this need he was able to supply as a part of his social program.

What a great work a large man can do in a small field, if he will but follow in the steps of "Him who went about doing good!" He never narrowed his work, and did not believe that the "human soul could be adequately considered apart from its food, its home, its work, and its wages." It has taken the Church a long time to appreciate the wisdom of such leadership, but we see the dawn of a new era in the work of the rural Church.

What was accomplished through the labors of these men is a splendid justification of our plea for trained leadership in behalf of the millions who live outside our great cities.

7. The Call of the Rural Church

The country Church is the one institution that *has done* and *can do* most to enrich individual character, make homes happier, and daily toil more attractive and gainful. Other societies may supplement, but none can replace the work of the Christian Church. As its steeple towers above every other building in hamlet and village, so its ideals, its inspiration, its message and ministry to men, its hopes and helps are pre-eminent. This presents a need, a duty, a call, and an opportunity rich in possibilities. The need is urgent and the call is commanding. We would pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth leaders who are as practical as they are pure, and as productive in ministry as they are progressive in method.

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GIVE US MEN.

“Give us men!
Men from every rank,
Fresh and free and frank;
Men of thought and reading,
Men of light and leading,
Men of loyal breeding,
Men of faith, and not of faction,
Give us men! I say again,
Give us men!

“Give us men!
Strong and stalwart ones;
Men whom highest hope inspires,
Men whom purest honor fires,
Men who trample self beneath them,
Men who make their country wreath them
As her noble sons,
Worthy of their sires!
Men who never shame their mothers,
Men who never fail their brothers,
True, however false are others.
Give us men! I say again,
Give us men!

“Give us men!
Men who, when the tempest gathers,
Grasp the standard of their fathers
In the thickest of the fight;
Men who strike for home and altar
(Let the coward cringe and falter),
God defend the right!
True as truth, though lorn and lonely,
Tender, as the brave are only;
Men who tread where saints have trod,
Men for country and for God.
Give us men! I say again, again,
Give us such men!”

—THE BISHOP OF EXETER.

CHAPTER VI

The Education of Ministers for Service in Rural Churches

BY GEORGE FREDERICK WELLS, B. S., B. D.,
*Pastor of the Federated Church of Tyringham, Mass., and Chair-
man of the Country Church Commission of the Methodist
Federation for Social Service.*

Introduction.—We hold in mind throughout this chapter a single definition of the term “rural.” It will mean the same as the term “country,” as applied to pastors, Churches, communities, and social problems. There are differences between the village churches and the cross-roads churches in the open country, but we can not descend to hair-splitting distinctions. We will talk about preparing ministers for work in all communities which are, in general, townships where two thousand or fewer people reside, and in which agricultural or agrarian life dominates. We take the same standard as that of the Country Church article of the “Cyclopedia of American Agriculture.”¹



REV. MR. WELLS

¹ Bailey, L. H.: “Cyclopedia of American Agriculture,” vol. IV, pp. 297-303. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1909.

EDUCATION OF MINISTERS FOR SERVICE

The reading of this chapter will not produce eighty thousand fully-equipped, efficient pastors for service in rural churches. Neither will it furnish the knowledge, vision, and moral incentive with which a corps of teachers, in a special university department, might train even a small number of country pastors. It has seemed better to state the outstanding characteristics of a well-trained rural minister than to tabulate in full detail the course of studies which should be pursued in gaining them. This chapter, therefore, expresses something of an ideal which has not been attained. So far as possible, however, the methods, as well as the ideal, are presented.

The importance of such a study as this can not be overestimated. There are, in this country alone, about eighty thousand rural pastors who need every available educational aid. But this is not all. In the Methodist Episcopal Church, for instance, there are five hundred district superintendents, nearly every one of whom is responsible for some manner of overhead leadership or general administration of rural parishes. There are fully two thousand more men in other denominations who have similar responsibilities, for which special instruction and training is urgently desired and demanded. The criticism of our colleges and theological seminaries for their failure at the point of rural-mindedness is not more intense than is the desire of all these schools to meet this great need.

The Scholastic Training of the Rural Minister in Outline.—By what training shall a minister be pre-

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pared for service in rural Churches? Whether his gifts incline him to the standards of scholarship or of practical efficiency, he should, in common with all ministers, have a high-school education, including Latin, one or two modern languages, Greek, the sciences, mathematics, history, and English; he should have a liberal education at college, including economics and sociology, philosophy, the natural sciences, history, literature, and the modern languages; and he should have a theological seminary education, including Hebrew and Greek; systematic, practical, and historical theology, pedagogy, and religious and social institutions, movements, and problems. This, in general, should represent the standard for the rural as well as for the urban minister. There is no reason why we should not have country ministers ranking with the great city ministers of our day as national leaders.

Any young man with a clear call to the ministry, and with ordinary gifts of personality, common-sense, and religious idealism, may supplement this native material in such a way as to be reasonably sure of success in the rural parish. This supplementary education may be described under the following heads:

1. A standard philosophy of rural improvement.
2. Catholicity of acquaintance with the rural movement.
3. Rural-mindedness.
4. An invincible purpose and enthusiasm for rural spiritualization.

EDUCATION OF MINISTERS FOR SERVICE

1. A Standard Philosophy of Rural Improvement

The first thing which ministers need to learn as a part of their preparation for service in rural Churches is a standard philosophy of country life improvement from the point of view of the Church. If possible, each man should know the ultimate philosophy of the question. No one has a perfect philosophy of human life in general; much less have we arrived at perfection in the discovery of a perfect philosophy of rural social improvement. Other things equal, however, a minister's success will be according to his mastery of the best possible philosophy of his work. The fearful limitations of the rural Churches of the South are largely due to their limited ideal and philosophy of work. Hardly more than one-seventh of the program, which the best philosophy of the subject demands, is now practiced.

The following dialogue exhibits the outlook of two country ministers with differing philosophies. It is given entire to show the practical value of a knowledge of the complete cycle of the social development of a Church in community life:

"Have you," I asked of one of two resident pastors in a small country community, "a program of constructive work for your Church and parish?"

"Just what do you mean by that question?"

"You are a pastor," I explained, "you are expected to fill your pulpit, lead your prayer-meetings, call upon your people, and bury your dead. Custom leads you in those things. But in what things do you

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lead? Have you not an ideal which you are working out? What is your constructive program?"

"O yes, I have my ideal," he replied. "I do n't believe in preaching higher criticism or science. I believe in the gospel and try to get other people to believe it. When they are ready to join the Church, I want them to join my Church. If they do n't choose my Church, I try to get them to join some other Church. That is the broader way. I believe in building up the Church. What is the minister for, if not to build up his Church?"

"That is good. But how would you build up your Church? The modern farmer knows that nitrogen, potash, phosphoric acid, and lime properly applied will build up his meadows to any desired fertility. The minister can build up his Church and parish by his own personal leadership, by evangelism of the right kinds, by Church co-operation, or federation, if he has a neighboring Church with which to work, and by social service. Social service is of two kinds. The Church may work through the Grange, the schools, and the Young Men's Christian Association, by co-operation; or by more direct institutional work with special social features in the country."

"But I do n't believe in institutional work. That 's what 's killing the other Church."

"Do you mean the Nature Club and the Knights of King Arthur?" I asked.

"That 's just what I mean, and the Young Men's Christian Association, too. None of the fellows in that boys' club go to church very much as I can see.

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They just go to the club for a good time, and that is the end of it.”

“Do the same boys go to church less than before the club began to interest them? Has the club harmed the boys?”

“I do n’t know as it has done any harm. There’s nothing religious about the whole thing. The boys’ club claims to be fair, but it has only two of our boys. The Nature Club elects only the persons they want for members. That County Young Men’s Christian Association won’t amount to anything. It’s all run by one or two. In fact, the other minister is run by one man.”

“Do you think so?” was my response. “I was talking with that very man about that matter. I said that as a minister I was not dictated to by my members, and he said that he would not be, either. Now, the pastor of the other Church,” I had to say, “is not ruled by any of his members. Instead, he has a program of work for the whole community. He could n’t be a worthy minister without having just that. You have leaders in your Church whom you might direct, if your ideal were big enough. The other minister is just as religious as you are, and he is something besides. He seeks to minister to the whole life of his people. The County Young Men’s Christian Association is nothing if it is not religious. You need to keep in touch with it. It is trying to do the things you leave undone. The same with the Knights of King Arthur and the Queens of Avalon. The Queens of Avalon are cer-

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tainly fair to you. The three leaders are one from each of the Churches."

"Yes, they are three Sunday school teachers."

"You see the other minister's program," I explained. "You should have your program. In your program you should not seek to do the things he can do better than you. There should be as many things you can do better than he. You should be friendly to talk over the needs of the whole field and to supply them, if you could. Do n't you need co-operation in your plans?"

"But you know I do n't believe in federation," he said. "I was talking this matter over with a brother at my out appointment. He said he did n't see how we could federate, because we had nothing to federate with. Most all the workers in prayer-meetings throughout the country, whatever Church they are in now, were converted at our altars. And I think he's about right. I do n't see as we have anything in this town to federate with."

Breadth of Vision and Training Needed.—There is not a country pastor in America who does not have a philosophy concerning his work. In most cases it is very inadequate and one-sided. There are but few specialists on rural improvement who have a philosophy and practical program which can "go on all-fours."

Not long ago, in a lecture at a country-life conference, a program for country Churches, which had been worked out as a product of experience, as well as by the aid of the scientific method, was presented.

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It gave in detail the seven group stages of the fully-matured country Church. After the lecture every one who shared in the open conference virtually said: "That program is theory. We care nothing about theory. What we want in solving the country Church problem is something practical. I have had experience. This is my experience as to how to get the thing done practically." He proceeded to state the things which he had done, or knew needed doing. In every case, without exception, these men who criticised the theory did nothing more nor less than to give small portions of theory that were identical with some section or portion of the program outlined, and that had been worked out by sociological methods on the basis of thousands of experiments and observations of actual instances. Their criticisms tended only to prove the truth of the program they sought to obliterate. It measured the limitations of their own ideas on the subject, and proved beyond question that the value of work is determined by the philosophy of it. It takes more than a single stone to make a mosaic.

It is not sufficient here to point out the need without showing a way to meet it. How may a minister secure a thorough knowledge of a standard philosophy of rural improvement? Some leaders would say that the theological seminaries should furnish this instruction. For instance, Dr. Warren H. Wilson has said:

"Behind the country Churches stand the theological seminaries; professional schools, founded and established for the training of ministers—originally, country ministers. At the present time these schools,

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with almost no exception, are rendering an entirely inadequate service. More than inadequate; it is misplaced, and has the effect of misdirection. For three years the student for the ministry is detained away from the study which he should pursue, and for a good part of that time he is diligently trained in studies that he ought never to follow. The country community, therefore, is a field, in the case of most ministers, for original investigation—untrained, amateur, and unsystematic investigation—in which he has no help from those appointed to be his helpers and his leaders. For the reconstruction of the theological seminary, the sociological analysis of the country community is of the greatest value. It should be a special topic to which for a long time to come almost unlimited hours should be devoted in the seminaries, because rural sociology is of initial concern to him who would understand the American population and minister to the need of the whole American people.”¹

But this does not fully answer the question. Theology in the equipment of the minister is more essential than sociology. Though it is not impossible for the seminaries to furnish the necessary technical and laboratory courses in rural sociology, there is a better way to meet the demand. Not only should sociology, both scientific and practical, be covered in one's college course, but rural sociology, both general and applied, should largely be covered as a part of the college curriculum. Full courses in rural economics

¹ American Journal of Sociology, March, 1911.

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and sociology should be as much a part of the training of every man—the lawyer, the physician, the teacher, the merchant, and the farmer—who is to live and serve within the field of rural America, as much as of the minister. The courses of sociology which may well serve in the education of rural leaders are such as President Kenyon L. Butterfield outlines in his article, “Rural Sociology as a College Discipline.”² For the country minister, this may be supplemented by a special theological seminary course in the philosophy of rural social improvement by the Church.

2. Catholicity of Acquaintance with the Rural Movement

The second great thing that ministers should get to prepare themselves for rural work is a catholicity of information and acquaintance concerning the needs, resources, and progress of the movement for rural improvement. As far as this is a matter of information, it can be secured largely from the literature of country life. It is very much to the credit of some of our religious periodicals that they present lists of the best reading matter on the subject of the country Church and country life. This work needs to go very much further and be kept up-to-date by some central agency. In fact, there is need at the present time for a comprehensive bibliography on the subject of the country Church and country life. The theological and public libraries have not done all that they might in providing country life book-shelves.

² *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, March, 1912, pp. 12-18, Philadelphia.

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This phase of social service needs to be carried forward speedily.

Our country life conferences ought very soon to include in their programs lectures on the literary side of the movement. We are beginning to urge the demand for at least one institution in the United States which shall have a special department of studies for the preparation of ministers for work in rural fields. One leading country pastor, for instance, has wisely said: "I am going to outline what seems to me to be indispensably necessary, lying ahead of the denominations in America that are at all prominent in the support of Churches in villages and country parishes. It is that interdenominational divinity schools be located and provided with faculties, curricula, and rural environment for study and specialization of different country life problems. We must have a rural ministry, dignified, modern, thoroughly trained, and fully abreast of the constructive, broad-minded agencies which are promoting more general phases of social service. Am I not right in thinking that our rural ministry to-day is in urgent need of vocational training, and that we should have seminaries of learning equipped with proper experiment station facilities for gospel work in the open country and in hamlets and villages? Where is the prominent divinity school in this land that so much as knows what the open country and our villages are starving for, or that is not located where the big city atmosphere so pervades the whole student body that its members are unfitted more than fitted for country work?"

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Such a department should include, as one of its courses, a course on country life bibliography. There are at the present time more than fifty books which, in a special way, belong to the literature of the country life movement. Some of these treat of the Church and religious phases of the question; a larger number, perhaps, concern themselves with the country school and the educational phases of the movement; many treat of economics and local government, while a few have the comprehensive social point of view. These books do not comprise by any means the best or the most important portion of rural literature. Many pamphlets, reports, and periodical articles are of great value. No country minister should be satisfied to consider himself prepared for his work until he has a familiarity with the best of this material.

The course on bibliography should be supplemented by a course on religious and social propaganda, which should take up comparative studies of rural religious movements, methods, and progress.

3. Rural-Mindedness

The third phase of the country minister's education consists of his getting the point of view of rural life. He must be rural-minded. This does not mean that he must have the odor of the farm dairy and use the language of uneducated lumbermen. It does mean that he shall know enough of American national life to distinguish between its urban and rural factors, tendencies, and ideals; and that he shall be able to appreciate and to promote all that is best in rural

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civilization. His conversations and attitudes should express the spirit and capacity of rural leadership.

It may be asked if any one born outside of the country should ever expect to consider himself qualified for work in rural pastorates. Some would say, Absolutely no. I would not thus answer the question.

It is true that under existing educational conditions the most available portion of the training of many men for rural pastorates is that received on farms previous to attending high-school. That eighty per cent of all the ministers in this country are born and reared outside of the cities, is strong evidence that rural environment means much in the making of ministers. But it does not mean everything.

The qualities of personal leadership, whatever the habitat, mean more in the equipment of a minister than any accident of boyhood surroundings. It would be as sensible to say that all city ministers shall be city-born as that all rural ministers shall be rural-born. The man who can not orient himself in rural life would not be worth while as a country minister, had his nativity been in the densest forest on the continent. It happens to-day that several of the most successful country pastors are graduates from city and town pulpits. No man is acceptably educated for the social ministries of the modern Church, either in city or country, who does not know American civilization as a whole. We learn some things by contrasts. John Frederic Oberlin was a city product. Rural-mindedness may be acquired.

This question is not so simple as it may appear.

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The great curse of the rural community to-day is the urban-mindedness of the individuals who comprise it. It is this condition that has created the rural problem. The average country minister's ideal of success is his graduation from rural into town and city pulpits. Such a spirit should not exist. The most strenuous and effective educational work possible is required to correct the evil. If this can be aided by birthright rural-mindedness on the part of our candidates for the rural ministry, so much the better. Our country ministers must work because they love and believe in their work as a contribution to the rural civilization, without which the nation as a whole must fail.

Shall Rural Ministers Receive Agricultural College Training?—The second question in this relation is as to whether the country minister should have a portion of his schooling in an agricultural college.

Ex-Governor Brewer, of Pennsylvania, expressed one view of the question when he said:

“The trouble with the country minister is that he does not know how to farm. The old-style preachers could farm and did farm. They taught their people how to farm the land. The theological seminaries should so train the minister that he would know how to bore a hole in the ground and see whether that spot would do for the planting of a Baldwin apple-tree.”

Doctor Warren H. Wilson, in the following statements, more than balances the Governor's notion:

“Modern life demands the service of specialists,

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but to specialize in agriculture does not prepare a man to serve in theology. If the minister can get no other specialty than agriculture, he had better serve the community as a scientific farmer, and be done with it. The modern minister is to serve not vegetables, but men. His specialty must be not the chemistry of soils nor animal husbandry, but he is to be a master of social science, because the ministry demanded of him is a social ministry to human beings. Unless one is willing to call country people vegetables, he should not think that scientific agriculture will be the preparation for serving them."

"It is not the province of the Church," says Doctor Wilbert L. Anderson, "to teach directly the new agriculture, but rather to awaken the mind of the farmer, and arouse in him the spirit of idealism so that he will seek the new agricultural knowledge. The Church will say to the farmer, Cultivate your farm in the better way to make the most of your opportunity, to find the highest zest in your occupation, and to glorify your calling. As country ministers, you will know less of farming in detail than your parishioners, but you should know more than they of the spirit of progress."

For service in rural Churches our ministers need, and should, as far as possible, avail themselves of the educational advantages of our best agricultural colleges. In no other way can they place themselves abreast of the best in the rural world which it is their business to idealize. Our agricultural colleges train men for rural leadership; not to be mere manipulators

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of vegetables, farm implements, animals, and markets. No colleges and no departments of our American universities come nearer to solving the problem of educating men for modern life than do the agricultural colleges. If they are not so well adapted for the particular task of training men for rural social and spiritual statesmanship as are some other schools, their spirit of progress is capable of speedily making them so. The era of co-operation between the theological seminaries and the agricultural colleges, we trust, will soon begin to render to the world of the farmer, which even now counts its wealth at forty billion dollars, its proper plan of moral leadership in our national life, which is both earned and deserved. The agricultural colleges of to-day are pre-eminently the educational nurseries and kindergartens of the rural civilization, and without their dominating spirit no minister can know the world which he is intended to serve. The farmers' school and the farmers' Church must co-operate.

4. An Invincible Purpose and Enthusiasm for Rural Spiritualization

It has been observed that one of the largest elements that enters into the experience of an agricultural college education for the country ministry is that of personal purpose. It may possibly be said that a person will gain success in spite of, rather than because of, his agricultural training. Such a conclusion can not be based upon the facts. One thing is sure: The average college and theological seminary

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of our day has the point of view of training for town and city work. They are schools located in large towns and cities, with professors who are drawn from successful city pastorates, and offering to graduates, as rewards, the better pulpits of town and city. It is unquestionably true that the young man who follows the conventional training for the ministry, but who aims for the rural pastorate, must have an overmastering purpose to enable him not to be harmed by the means used if he reaches the goal.

There is an ethical factor that must not be omitted from any man's preparation for the country ministry. It matters not how highly-developed and universally-valid may be one's philosophy of rural improvement, how catholic one's information and acquaintance with the large rural movement, or how intimate may be one's touch with the conditions of rural populations, if a person does not have a purpose adequate to make him do the work of the best possible rural pastor, his other equipments will go for naught so far as country life is concerned.

We face an educational problem. It is not a question alone of what the rural preacher ought to have in order to succeed in building up the rural community, but of how we can develop and inspire in him the requisite determination.

In his book, "Religious Life in America," Ernest Hamlin Abbott tells of a certain young minister who went directly from the theological seminary into a lumber town of New Hampshire. "There, under the auspices of the missionary society of his denomina-

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tion," says Mr. Abbott, "he organized a Church. Highly educated, he devoted his mental acquirements to the improvement of the town schools. Athletic, he used his physique in compelling the disorderly element in the population to respect, if not wholly to obey the laws. Bred in the lumber regions, he helped to cut the wood for the church building he succeeded in erecting. Broad in his sympathies and interests, he included in his church building a reading-room and gymnasium. Distrustful of traditionalism, he did not hesitate to make his preaching and teaching accord with modern knowledge. Strongly evangelical in temperament, he drew people into the Church by the earnestness with which he declared his faith in the power of his crucified and risen Master, Christ. At the end of a few years—perhaps some half-dozen—he had transformed that community. But he had given his life. From sheer exhaustion he died, broken down in health and mind, a vicarious sacrifice for the people he had served."

It will take more than the relating of such instances to produce the desired result. It is good, however, for us to note at least the direction in which the ideal lies. That one man had the purpose is better still. It shows us that the ideal is true.

Suggestions on the Solution of the Educational Problem.—There are two suggestions that may aid in gaining the desired educational end in far wider measure. It is true, as Dr. Henry Wallace has said, that we can have no organized country Church movement to-day, because we do not have a sufficient

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number of leaders. The task is to use the resources at hand in developing them; or, to create new agencies for the specific training of rural religious leaders in the denominational schools and theological seminaries.

Much is being written relative to social survey work in rural communities. We recognize that the best work along these lines can not be done until the theological seminaries or the agricultural colleges greatly increase what may be called laboratory facilities. The average country minister to-day is unable to make an adequate social survey of his field, even though he has placed in his hands a guide for such work. No country pastor can meet the demands for social engineering who can not diagnose the social situation with which he has to deal.

Departments of rural life should be established in connection with the best theological seminaries and denominational colleges, particularly those not located in large cities. In addition to courses in rural sociology, there should be courses in the science and art of general agriculture, rural home-making, rural economics, pedagogics in rural religious teaching, and rural Church administration.

Another suggestion is that larger attention be given to the formation of an inclusive and centrally-organized country-life movement in the United States.³ The Country Life Commission, appointed

³A very promising organization for carrying forward the great rural life movement in this country under the leadership of college men is the Collegiate Country Life Club of America. Copies of the constitution and by-laws for local chapters may be secured for ten cents from the *National Secretary, Prof. A. W. Nolan, Urbana, Ill.*

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by President Roosevelt, was a fair suggestion of what rural America needs. Sir Horace Plunkett's "The Rural Life Problem of the United States," is another contribution on this subject. Such an agency will be able to concentrate the forces of education for the training of a mighty class of rural ministers and leaders for the Churches on American soil, who shall lead, rather than follow, in the upward march of rural betterment.

CHAPTER VII

The Principles of Apperception and Association in Rural Religious Teaching

BY GARLAND A. BRICKER.

1. The Principle of Apperception

A FARMER looks over his billowing field of wheat with a source of great satisfaction, for to him it represents the reward of his labors—food for his family and money for his bank account. The grain dealer drives past the same field and is delighted with the prospect; to him it means a source of supply for his elevator. The sight of the waving grain puts hope and gladness into the heart of the community thrasher; he knows it will be a good job for him and his men. The botanist observes what perfect specimens of the wheat plant are in that field, and plucks a few clumps of the queen of grasses for his herbarium. The minister is touched with the wonderful sight and praises God, "For how great is His goodness, and how great His beauty! grain shall make the young men flourish." To him it represents infinite wisdom, great bounty, and tender care.

All five men beheld the same wheat-field, but each saw something different. Each received a new

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thought, a new inspiration, a new perception in terms of his past experience, or in accordance with his habit of life. Each man, then, apperceived the wheat-field according to his own personality. Apperception, as the term is used in psychology and in the science and art of teaching, is the perception of new things in relation to the ideas which we already possess.

The Application of the Principle.—A little girl of the city, who had an acquaintance with dogs, visited in the country and, for the first time in her life, saw a pig. She called it a fat puppy. The idea of closest similarity to the pig that the child possessed was that of a pup; and hence she apperceived accordingly.

Men come to think in terms of their habits of life. A business man thinks in terms of dollars and cents; a musician, in terms of harmonious tones; an artist, in terms of curves and colors; a preacher, in terms of the gospel he preaches; and, likewise, the farmer, in terms of his life in the country, his daily associations, and his environment. The farmer labors with the natural materials of the farm, field, and forest. The moods of Nature furnish the conditions in accordance with which he must labor and by which he is bound; the soil, the plants, and the animals are the crude materials with which he builds his fame; his weapons of warfare are the plow, the drill, the cultivator, the harvester, and similar implements and machines; and back of all these and over them all is his own might of physical force and the power of

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knowledge concerning his science and art. The farmer's habit of life is agricultural, and his thoughts are inseparably bound up with it. He sees new things through agricultural eyes, and apperceives new thoughts through his farm ideas.

The rural minister of the gospel has here a great opportunity and a plain duty. His parishioners are farmers; their thoughts, their habits, their lives are all formed in accord with the environing influences under which they serve mankind and their God. Business, recreation, and education, to succeed, must come to them in terms of rural life and agricultural experience. Why not religion? It must; and the religion that had its origin among the pastoral people may be preached with peculiar force to an agricultural population.

The minister of the country Church must teach his people Christian truths in terms of the farm. He will need a new stock of similes and metaphors. His illustrations should be drawn from the common experience of rural people. The message will not lose its efficacy when transmitted by means of grain, hay, cattle, milk, butter, separators, silos, incubators, chickens, eggs, wagons, horses, feed, plows, soil, mulch, fertilizers, insecticides, insects, plant diseases, fruits, farm insurance, failure of crops, etc. These are the natural, material things that form the point of contact between the farmer and the spiritual world. The rural minister that will compare a sinner to a sour soil, a backslider to a run-down orchard, and a revival to the renovation of such an orchard by

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pruning, spraying, and grafting, will not be misunderstood by his people.

Factors Influencing Teaching by Apperception.—The more ideas one has on any subject or department of knowledge, the more readily will he be able to learn new ideas, either in the same department or in a different sphere of similar ideas. For this reason new ideas make the slowest progress among ignorant



A BACKSLIDER

people. Those that have much may readily acquire more, but those who have little make acquisitions slowly, and are in danger of losing even that which they already possess. The principle is as true in the realm of ideas as in the physical and commercial worlds. The more a farmer knows about scientific agriculture, the more readily may he understand principles new to him. The more ideas he has about agricultural science and practice, the more readily

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will he grasp new religious ideas that have a similarity to his stock of agricultural ideas.

The greatest stock of ideas that rural people possess is concerned with rural life, particularly as found on the farm. The sum of these ideas forms the basis by which they grasp new ideas, and conditions their quickest and best thinking. Country people will grasp the significance of a religious idea more quickly and more easily if it is presented to them in terms of rural life. To present a new idea to a rural audience in terms of any other profession than farming, lessens the probability that it will be thoroughly grasped, because the basis of apperception of country people is made up very largely of farm ideas. On this account, the illustrations used in religious teaching in rural communities, whether in the Sunday school or the pulpit, should be distinctly rural.

In order that his parishioners may the more readily grasp the meaning of religious truths by enlarging the point of contact between agricultural ideas and religious ideas, the rural minister will find it desirable not only to encourage the study and teaching of agriculture among his people, but he may even find it necessary to incidentally teach facts of husbandry direct from his pulpit during religious services and in connection with his sermon. An enlargement of the agricultural knowledge of the people means an enlargement of opportunities to make conscious apperceptive teaching effective.

Men learn those things most easily in which they are most interested; but interest is conditioned upon

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the quality and the quantity of ideas already in the mind. Other things equal, the potentiality of ideas and their numerousness enhance interest. But on these conditions is also based the efficiency of apperception. So we see that interest and apperception function under similar conditions and along the same lines. Now, the farmer and his family are very intensely interested in agriculture, because out of this sphere of human activity the majority of their ideas and experiences have come. If the apperceptive factor is to be used most effectively by the country preacher, he must of necessity use the ideas, the facts, the principles, the laws, and the practices of agriculture.

It is assumed in this discussion that the rural minister possesses no mean training in agriculture. Indeed, he needs to know a little more about the science of agriculture and its application than does the average farmer of his congregation. In many communities the live and talented minister may possibly attain to this standard through reading and careful and frequent observation. Attendance at the farmers' short course, or the summer session of a college or university where agriculture is taught for the purpose of further acquainting himself with this science and art, should yield ample reward for the sacrifice. Indeed, the time has arrived when, as a condition of preaching in the rural church, the minister should be required to possess a certain amount of agricultural knowledge. The seminaries and denominational schools should awaken to their duty

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and opportunity of offering at least one course throughout one year in the elementary principles of general agriculture, as well as briefer courses in rural sociology and rural economics.

2. The Principle of Association

The association of ideas is another principle of psychology. It has reference to the power of representation—memory. One thought causes another to come into consciousness, because they have been associated in the mind. One thought suggests another. The association of ideas by the mind may be due to several distinct causes.

One of the most potential causes of the association of ideas is because of likeness and contrast. My mention of the idea, "cross," brings to the mind of one of my readers the idea, "Christ;" but to another, who has been recently studying the Moslem faith, the idea, "crescent." These ideas are associated by the *law of correlation*, as we call it; *i. e.*, by discerned likeness or contrast. The rural minister who compares the little, alluring sins of life to the attractive butterflies or moths, and then shows, by developing the life history of the insect, what great and ugly destroyers they may really become, establishes for me a similarity which I shall not soon forget. The comparison might well go on to show the best time for exterminating the insects and the sins, the results of carelessness, and the reward of watchfulness. A mention of the methods to be used in each case would probably not be amiss. Whenever I see a codling

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moth, I think of the little, enticing sins that my pastor has made him to represent. When I spray my apple-trees with arsenate-of-lead solution and thus lay the basis at exactly the right time for the destruction of this pest, I remember how my spiritual father has impressed me with the necessity of taking precaution at the right time against the pests of life.

Another law of association is that of *emotional preference*. Ideas of things are associated in our minds because they agree with our natural preferences; they either please or displease, attract or repel us. If I am especially interested in dairy cattle, and the preacher speaks of the best balanced ration for dairy cows for the purpose of making an illustration of how each Christian needs a balanced supply of religious teaching, in order to become most efficient as a Christian citizen, he receives my very closest attention and holds it. In the future, when I consider balanced rations for my cows, and whenever the idea is mentioned, by emotional preference, I will also think of the minister's idea of a balanced religious manna, and whether I am giving due consideration to my spiritual feeling.

The Principle of Association in Operation.—If two or more ideas are presented to us and so associated as to arouse our emotional preference, or, by pointing out likenesses or contrasts, we are apt to associate all the ideas the next time we think of any one of them. This process of associating the same ideas may occur so frequently as to become a mental habit. The good minister compares temptation with

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storms, and a human being with an oak tree. From a seedling to its majestic matured life, the storms have beaten against that tree; but with the passing of each storm the oak sent its roots deeper and deeper into the earth, securing a surer anchorage as time passed on. The tree never once yielded, and to-day he stands the monarch of the forest, majestic in his strength and purity. A failure to anchor securely upon a sure foundation year by year, day by day, would have brought destruction and death to the tree during some terrific storm. But there he stands ready to overcome any storm likely to sweep his native forest. The next day the good man's parish-



“AM I SURELY AND SECURELY
ANCHORED LIKE YON OAK?”

ioners go to their usual toil in the fields. There stands an oak. How majestic! No storm can lower him; he has taken sure anchorage. Ah, here stand I in the midst of the tempests of sin! Am I surely and securely anchored like yon oak? The association rings true—the message has been reawakened by the sight of the oak. Every time I behold an oak tree, the spiritual idea returns: the two are inseparably linked together, because of the association of

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ideas. They have re-occurred in my mind so often that the association of *oak tree* and *constancy in Christian living* has become a habit of thought. The sermon is re-preached each time an oak tree, standing or lowly laid, comes to sight or consciousness. The good minister taught me in terms of my experience, my apperceptive basis was such as to enable me to get the full force of the truth he taught and associate it in my mind with an idea perfectly familiar to me. The association has become fixed in my life as a habit of thought, and its power affords one of the chief anchors projected into the world of the Infinite.

The rural minister has a wonderful opportunity of co-operating with Nature to inculcate moral and Christian teaching. Every object in nature, and especially on the farm, should reflect or suggest the Creator or one or more of His attributes to the countryman. By linking agricultural facts and rural objects inseparably with religious truths, the preacher of the country Church may accomplish this thing. Every object in the farmer's environment will thus come to have a religious significance. Every member of the rural Church will come to see that

“Earth is crammed with Heaven.
And every bush afire with God.”

for

“The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.”

“And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in running brooks
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

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With these constant and powerful admonitions to righteous living, the farmer, among all men, should be the most religious.



LOST

A SUGGESTIVE SERMON OUTLINE

Subject: Resistance to Temptation.

Temptation to sin comes from two sources—ourselves and our fellows.

The two sources of temptation to sin may be compared with the two sources of plant destruction, viz., insect pests and plant diseases. Plant diseases are the temptations that arise from within; insect pests, the temptations coming from without.

To protect fruit trees, there must be constant and thorough spraying. Watchfulness and persistence are needed on the part of the farmer. So with tempta-

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tion to sin; the soul must ever be persistently watchful. No one knows when the germs, the insects, or the temptations may come. It behooves us to be ever ready.

There must be no playing with sin. It will not do to put off spraying; that must be done in its season. So with our fortification against sin.

There is a remedy for each plant disease or foe; likewise, a grace that makes us immune to every temptation.

By spraying, the farmer secures an abundance of superior fruit; one who keeps free from sin will also bear more and better fruit. Late spraying may save the tree, but lose the fruit; so with fortification against sin—it may come too late, and while the person may be saved, the good works that he might have done will be lost.

The whole tree must be sprayed; the whole life must be consecrated. One place unguarded leaves a vulnerable point.

But there is a difference in the analogy. In Christianity there is one remedy for all the diseases of sin; in agriculture there is no such universal remedy for plant disease and insect pests. Each disease or pest has, as a rule, its specific remedy.

This emphasizes the simplicity of Christianity—one remedy for all sin—Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

CHAPTER VIII

The Agricultural College and the Country Church

BY WILLIAM OXLEY THOMPSON, D. D., LL. D.,
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1. Primitive Condition

THE person whose memory goes back to the middle of the nineteenth century will recall a vivid picture of community life quite in contrast with anything he is now able to see. The residents of the rural communities in Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio at that period were either the original settlers, or their children who had cleared up the farms and laid the foundations for whatever community life existed. Many of these people, like my grandfather, had built their houses from the trees felled on their own farms. The building of a log house or a barn was, in great measure, a community enterprise in which the neighbors joined, led by a few skilled workmen who directed the activities. The extinct long shingle, or



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clapboard, and a little later the shorter shingle, were split and shaved out of the choicest oak trees found on the farm. This was an activity practically every farmer engaged in for himself. If he was not able to make his own shingles, he could, by exchange of service, secure them without much cash outlay.

The first and second generation of these people were compelled to co-operate in order to build their homes, their schools, their churches, and oftentimes to harvest their crops. We should not lose sight of the fact that these men were farmers before the days of rapid transit or of modern machinery. The writer has helped to tramp wheat on the barn floor and to clean it with the wind-mill before the days of the "bunty" machine, which was nothing more than a cylinder set with spikes to separate the wheat from the straw, as a substitute for tramping it out with horses. The community flour mill, operated by water power, was one of the primitive industries serving the needs of the people without competition and without any such an organization as may be found at present in great railway centers. The topography of the country lent itself readily to what may be termed community groups. Villages grew up as trading centers in these communities, and sometimes became the religious, commercial, and educational centers for considerable areas. These early communities were of necessity local in much of their life. The elementary school is always a local institution, and being at that time almost the only school, every community had its own local educational activities. In a large num-

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ber of these communities the settlements were made by people of similar antecedents—the Scotch-Irish, the Dutch, the Irish, the Germans—and hence readily lent themselves to the development of the local Church. Eastern Ohio had its Quaker centers and Presbyterian centers, and Pennsylvania just as distinctly had its Quaker communities, its Lutheran communities, its United Presbyterian centers, and a variety of others. In those days the means of transportation, for a large portion of the State, were confined to such roads as primitive communities could afford or provide, and therefore people were disposed to cluster about the same institutions. The singing-school and the party were community affairs. A wedding frequently brought a social event at the home of the bride, and the “in-fair” brought another at the home of the groom. There were no distinct lines of social cleavage, for the evident reason that the industries of the community included people of similar religious and social antecedents. In many of these segregated communities the religious and social life clustered about the Church more than about any other activity.

2. Agencies of Transformation

The conditions characteristic of a community in the early stages of these settlements and development could not long continue. The increase of wealth, the development of political life, the improvement of transportation, and the advent of the steam railroad steadily transformed the industrial activities and

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made the growth of centers of population inevitable. More than any other factor, it is probable that the improved means of transportation has brought the country to town and made the town the center of religious and educational life. Here it was that the stronger Churches were soon developed, and that schools reached their better organization. The district school, at first an institution of one or two rooms, steadily developed into a graded school crowned with the beginnings of the modern high-school. The old country academy, often attached to a Church and managed by the local pastor as its chief officer, served two generations of the people as the outlet of their desire for more extended education. In some places the organization of a college by a Church furnished both the academic and the college training, and became an institution to which other academies sent their selected students.

The country grist-mill steadily gave way to the village flouring mill. In modern days this has given way to the city milling company. The grandson of the farmer who hauled his wheat to the mill and brought back the flour, bran, and middlings, now sells his wheat to the elevator company, buys his flour from the village or city dealer, and his bran, if he uses it at all, in the general market.

The advent of the interurban railway has served to closely connect the parents in the country with the children in the town, and to centralize the markets for ordinary purposes in the village. It is a common sight now on Sunday mornings to see the interurban

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railway cars filled with young married people, taking their children to spend the day with parents and grandparents in the country, while the return visit to the children in the city is a less frequent occurrence. The village or city high-school educates the children accessible to these interurban railways, and thus brings a considerable percentage of the country under the direct influences of the city ideals and city practices. A majority of these children, through the natural law of association and education, look to the city as the place of future activity, rather than to the country.

Drift Westward.—In the midst of the life of this generation now under consideration, the cheaper and richer lands of the West were opened, and a steady migration took place. Parents in some cases sold their farms and went Westward to buy cheaper land and more of it, and to make provision on a larger scale for farming. The old methods of agriculture were steadily superseded by the newer methods, brought about by the development of agricultural machinery. The prairie countries started, after the popular fashion, in developing the district school, the country Church, and a somewhat similar life as will be seen by reading any book such as Eggleston's "Hoosier Schoolmaster," which gives a reasonably accurate picture of the primitive life of the early settlers in the prairie States. These communities have undergone much the same transformation that took place in the Eastern communities, modified more rapidly by the extension of railways and the location

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of Western towns almost entirely along these lines of transportation. In the Eastern States there still remain segregated communities not reached by railroads, but these are rapidly showing signs of decline and decay.

At the close of the Civil War the return of the soldiers found a new spirit in the people, and many of them made that period the occasion to migrate to the newer parts of the country. This took to the newer country the larger portion of the younger men and women, while the older country was filled with a new population. The better organization of coal-mining, the discovery and development of the oil industry, the development of manufacturing enterprises and the allied industries brought a foreign population into the older States quite different in character from the original settlers. This industrial revolution produced a rapid development in the population in many towns, and transformed some of them into vigorous and prosperous modern cities, oftentimes at the expense of the rural community life.

Agricultural Decline.—Two things were clearly observed in the middle years of the nineteenth century, namely, a decline in Eastern agriculture and the rapid development of production on the newer prairie farms, which tended to lower the profits and change the character of Eastern farming. We know that profitable agriculture in these older States is dependent on the intelligent application of the teachings of agricultural science. The first two generations of farmers were not awake to the fact that their profits

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were due to the accumulated fertility of the centuries, and that they made it impossible for the next generation to compete with the more fertile lands of the West. This continually decreasing margin of profit produced a certain discontent on the farm, for which there seemed to be no remedy. A badly-used, run-down farm of decreasing fertility was not in position to encourage the hope that the improvements of the original settlers could be replaced in such a way as to insure the farmer a comfortable living and a reasonable outlook for his family. A study of the statistics now reveals the fact that large areas of Eastern farms steadily declined in productive power. This fact, once recognized, became a source of dissatisfaction, and underlies the transformation which has occurred in many agricultural districts first settled.

Agricultural Colleges.—As early as the days of George Washington, we read warnings concerning the decline of soil fertility. This subject was repeatedly discussed in agricultural societies from Massachusetts westward to Illinois. As a result of this agitation, Mr. Justin S. Morrill, a member of Congress from Vermont, became the exponent of the idea of education that should develop institutions devoted to the teachings of the sciences related to agriculture and the mechanic arts. His bill was passed in 1857, but vetoed and subsequently passed, and became a law by the signature of President Lincoln in 1862. The impetus to this movement was found among the farmers of the country, who had become aroused to the necessity of a better agriculture. Men in the cities

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and men engaged in manufacturing enterprises were quick to see that the permanent prosperity of the country could not abide unless the progress of agriculture kept pace with the needs of the country. For twenty-five years these colleges, as established by Federal aid, addressed themselves to the teaching of a science yet in its infancy. These years developed the fact that no permanent improvement could be made in the teaching of a science which was not based upon carefully-verified experiment. As a result of this conviction, Mr. William Henry Hatch, member of Congress from Missouri, succeeded in securing the passage of the *Hatch Act*, granting Federal aid to the establishment of the agricultural experiment stations. For twenty-five years these stations, by carefully-selected experiment, have laid the foundation of a science upon which modern agriculture is being built.

The agricultural college is teaching what the experiment station has demonstrated. These institutions have covered the entire field of agriculture, from the basis of soil fertility and soil conservation to the production of the best types of live stock and the scientific management of farms. It was both natural and proper that the agricultural college should first devote its energy to the fundamental and economic questions related to agricultural production. Believing the soil to be the nation's endowment, the first problem was to preserve this endowment in its permanent productive power. Around this important fundamental issue has clustered all the interest and activities of agricultural institutions.

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Like every other institution, the agricultural college has had its days of primitive simplicity. It had to enter a new and untried field of education. There were no precedents established and no landmarks by which it could be guided. It was confronted not only with the necessity of developing the science of agriculture, but it had to develop competent teachers of the subject, who were sympathetic with, and enthusiastic in, the farmers' problems. It met with the inertia of unbelief and indifference. Farmers themselves in many instances did not believe in "book farming," nor did they believe that there was a science of agriculture which could be taught. Nature was originally so bountiful as to make men careless. The popular belief oftentimes amounted to a prejudice against the newer agricultural methods. The agricultural college was confronted with the necessity of demonstrating its own efficiency to an unwilling and often unheeding constituency. It was soon discovered, however, that agriculture, like civilization, develops its own diseases. An impoverished soil was a more fruitful source of plant disease than a rich soil; at any rate, diseases were more destructive. Plant pathology and the study of plant diseases and their prevention and cure was practically unknown to the generation before the Civil War. The agricultural college, therefore, has found itself compelled to face the problems of preserving and developing plant life, as well as preserving the productive power of the soil. In the realm of animal industry the same general statements are true. The college, therefore, has come

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to be regarded as an institution related to the fundamental, scientific, and economic problems of rural life.

New Conception of the Agricultural College.—Out of these early experiences of the agricultural college there has come further development of its mission in attacking the social problems of rural life. A profitable industry always develops wealth and leisure for the people. It opens the way to a larger participation in social and religious life. This new life develops its problems, and just here the agricultural college has found it important to introduce the study of rural economics and rural sociology. Political economy in earlier history was regarded as the dismal science, because it was presumed to deal almost exclusively with the questions of values and of wealth. Later development of political economy has shown it to be a social science as truly as the science of wealth production. In much the same way the field of rural economics has expanded into the larger fields of rural welfare. The student in the college of agriculture is not now regarded as completely educated unless he has an intelligent grasp of the problems of social life in the open country. He must have a fundamental training in political economy from the older and narrower point of view, supplemented by the broader view of society. These men, as they return to the farm or engage in agricultural activities of any sort, become the leaders in the agricultural idealism which sets the standard for farm life. It is inevitable in this study of social problems that the question of recreation, amusement, and religion, and all other

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community activities must have some adequate consideration.

The Church as an institution has not been prepared to make a study of this phase of rural life, nor has it felt the necessity of doing so. Leaders in the Church, including the ministers, have regarded the Church as being exclusively a religious agency, and have not felt the necessity of relating the industrial and social activity with the Church. Without offense, it may be said that Jesus, living among an agricultural people, brought the most of His classic illustrations from the field and the industries of the people. One can not avoid the feeling that there was the closest intelligence and sympathy on the part of the Master with the people whom He served. Following in His leadership, it is of vital importance now that all the institutions of modern society, including our teachers in the school and our teachers in the Church, should be able to use and apply the principles of religion to vitalize the motives of industry, and the experiences of our industries to illustrate the essential principles of our religion. As a matter of fact, in the development of our population the city has steadily gained ascendancy, and its ideas have obtained too much hold upon the rural population, thus tending to lower the appreciation of the dignity of country life.

3. The Educated Ministry

The ministers most naturally represent the leadership of the Church. They are the men best educated for leadership, and to them we look most naturally

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for the ideals as to what the Church should be. The education of these ministers in modern days is largely assigned to the theological seminary. These schools, following the established custom, have sought to make men efficient in a knowledge of the Scriptures, the problems of theology, the history of the Church, and in the preparation of the gospel message. They have assumed, with propriety, that the underlying education of the college should give a man the necessary foundation in liberal training, including economics and philosophy. Great problems of the Church in evangelization have not been overlooked. It may be said, however, without harshness, that neither the college nor the theological seminary has adequately comprehended the social conditions of modern society which have made the problems of the local Church more difficult.

The college was the first to discover the difficult social problems arising in the city out of the development of modern industries, and the consequent separation between the employer and the employee. It soon became evident that the social cleavages in the city were making difficult the problems of the city Church. The theological seminaries have awakened also to this fact, and, under the general theme of city evangelization and the city Church, have endeavored to train the young men preparing for the ministry in a practical application of their education to the solution of the social and religious problems of the city. The theological schools are to be commended in this regard with enthusiasm.

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It was but natural that the problems of rural population should be the last to receive attention. The tradition of the ideal life associated with the farm persisted in the minds of many men and women who had moved from the country to the city. In fact, the country was not awake to the stratification that was going on in country life. When we discovered that in the States having the most profitable agriculture there was a strong tendency toward absentee ownership and a development toward an itinerant renting class, the seriousness of the situation dawned. In many States practically fifty per cent of the farms are now owned by city residents, and are operated by renters with but frequently one year of tenure. This has introduced into every rural community an unstable class of citizens, who can not be relied upon to build schools, churches, or community life. Moreover, the easier methods of transportation make it possible now for a considerable percentage of the rural population to identify itself with the religious and social life in the town or city. When we also remember that in States like Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa the rural population has actually decreased for two decades, and that the city population has more rapidly increased than ever before, we are prepared to see why a considerable number of rural Churches have been abandoned and another percentage is struggling for existence. Happily, some of them are prosperous and growing in power. The problem, therefore, is so to adjust the Church to the new conditions in rural life as to enable it to ad-

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minister adequately to the spiritual needs of all the people. This has brought to the front the distinct need on the part of the ministry of a study of the rural religious and social problems. A few theological seminaries in the country, recognizing this need, have provided conferences on rural life (summer schools for rural ministers), and have introduced into the course of instruction some study in rural sociology. It is hardly to be expected that the colleges of the country will ever be able to meet this situation. Many young men complete their college course before determining to enter the ministry. Their previous study, therefore, may not have been the best suited as a foundation for theological study. The theological seminary is, therefore, confronted with the problem of equipping her students for efficient service in the Church. It is rather easy for the seminary to have the city point of view. What Dean Bailey has described as a city-minded man is more frequently found in the college graduates than the country-minded man. Service in the rural Church, to be most effective, should be rendered by the country-minded man. It is here that the agricultural college, with its knowledge of rural conditions, rural life, and the rural mind, might be able to make an important contribution to the preparation of the country minister. Is it too much to suggest that a close co-operation between the agricultural colleges and the theological seminaries might render a distinct service in this particular? There are men in our agricultural colleges quite as enthusiastic about the Christian and

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social problems of the country as they are about any economic problems of the farm. These men could profitably co-operate with the theological seminaries in the training of the ministry. Already, as intimated above, a start has been made. There are two ways by which it might be continued. First, nearly all the colleges of agriculture are giving short courses during the winter season, to which they invite matured farmers. These courses are intended to be more or less popular in the presentation of the practical problems concerning the farmer. A study of these problems would be helpful to the pastor in a rural community. Ministers who have attended them have attested the value of the instruction, as giving them a better understanding of the farmer's point of view. There is no good reason why these short courses should not introduce at least an elementary study of rural sociology. This would bring the farmer and his pastor on a common ground, and enable them to see the problems of their community in a new light. The second method might be to introduce an opportunity in the theological seminaries for competent men in the colleges of agriculture to give courses of lectures or instructions to theological students that would present the farmer's problems in such a way as to enable the minister of the gospel to enter upon his work better equipped than he now does. This method of co-operation has been fully attested in other fields. Every technical school in the country now seeks to familiarize the students before graduation with the practical workings of engineering and

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industrial enterprises. Colleges of agriculture put special emphasis upon the importance of their students making a study of the most successful farms and farm operations within a reasonable distance from the college. This is simply the laboratory method applied to technical education. Its purpose is manifestly to supplement the theoretical knowledge of the class-room with a practical acquaintance of every-day affairs. The minister of the gospel, above all other men, must deal with the practical affairs of the people in their every-day life. His success in organizing the religious forces of the rural communities will be measured largely by his ability to understand the conditions as they are. The agricultural college and the theological seminary are the two places where his theoretical acquaintance must be obtained. So earnest are the agricultural college people of the country in this question of rural betterment that they are prepared to go almost any distance to meet any agency in a co-operative service.

4. Immediate Service of the College to the Church

The long-standing argument for the denominational college has been that the college can render a distinct service to the Church. When one considers the annual output of the American colleges and stops to think that this multitude is almost immediately sent into our centers of population, and then realizes that the Church is inadequately organized to meet and greet these young people, he may well raise the question as to a closer connection between the college

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and the Church. Into our cities every year an increasing number of young men and young women, holding college degrees, go for the purpose of pursuing their careers and making a place for themselves in the world. These are young people of some ideals, some ambition, and of some power. They ought to be utilized, but it is doubtful whether the Church has ever been able to lay hold of this opportunity. Most of these young men and young women are poor in purse, many of them in debt, and all of them struggling for recognition and place in their professions or callings. They are not in position to bring any financial strength to the Church for some years, but they ought to be affiliated with the Church and brought into co-operation with the best men and women of the city in the work of good citizenship. The college can never do its complete work, nor can the Church until the two clasp hands in an intelligent effort to make the college-bred man or woman an effective force in our city life. In a parallel way, the man holding a degree from the college of agriculture or a man having pursued agricultural studies for a single year or more should, upon his return to agricultural life, be utilized as a factor in the uplift and betterment of rural life. Every such young man should return to his community with a keen appreciation of the fact that the rural Church is a means of a great social uplift and the guardian of the best interests of the community. It is not necessary for the college of agriculture to commit itself to an objectionable form of teaching religion in order to en-

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courage its students to devote themselves to the rural Church, or to instruct them in the value of the Church to the local community. This is by no means sectarianism. It is using the people's institution to instruct its young men in the social and religious value of another institution supported by the same people. Notwithstanding the objection that has persisted in the minds of many against the State having anything to do with religion, it may well be contended that the problems of the agricultural college have to do with the fitting of men for efficient rural living. In no spirit of narrowness or sectarianism, therefore, the college may urge the importance of the rural Church as an institution related to the happiness of the people. The college will not do its whole duty in teaching men how to grow more corn or to produce a better type of livestock, but must address itself to the whole round of rural problems. In rendering this kind of service the Church and college of agriculture should be in close accord. No man would be more welcome among a group of students than the pastor of the Church from the community in which he lives. Up to date the Church has neglected its opportunity of service in the college. The college has probably neglected its opportunity for service to the Church. The new awakening among the American people is rapidly developing the belief that a more generous attitude toward the institutions of the community, like the Church and the school, should be cultivated on every hand. The college of agriculture, founded and supported for the purpose of maintaining and

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developing a strong, virile manhood and womanhood upon the farms of the country, as much as for conserving our nation's material resources, will do no violence to American freedom by urging upon students and the public alike the importance of the rural Church as one of the best agencies for conserving rural life. The college can not make a complete survey of rural life and omit a consideration of the Church and its work. On the other hand, the Church at large, interested in the welfare of all the people, can ill afford to neglect the opportunities afforded in colleges of agriculture for maintaining and strengthening the spiritual forces of the rural Church

CHAPTER IX

An Adequate Salary for the Rural Pastor

BY REV. N. W. STROUP.

The Problem Stated

To frankly state that two of the most important elements that have to do with the human side of the advance of Christ's coming Kingdom are money and men, does not depreciate the pre-eminence of the spiritual. We need not worry about the divine element in Christianity if we meet the conditions. The call of Christ is for service, substance, and self. That is to say, the saving of men is helped or hindered by the obedience or disobedience of individuals. Do we obey? Do we serve? Do we give?

The Union army in the days of '61 to '65 demanded both money and men. The true patriot was of supreme importance, but his equipment and maintenance were also essential. Consecrated wealth in aid of truth has enabled many nations to win in the contests of the centuries that otherwise would have signally failed. The officers of the Lord's army, engaged in the greatest warfare of the centuries, must not be asked to maintain their own support. The

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conquest must not be delayed by the commissary department.

A Comparison of Salaries and Service.—It is stated on good authority that one-third of the ministers of the United States are receiving a salary of less than \$400 a year, notwithstanding the fact that the average family can not be properly supported on less than \$750 a year. The common hodcarrier in New York receives \$900 yearly wage. The union plumber receives \$1,200 for an eight-hour day's service. The average carpenter receives in excess of \$1,000 a year. In contrast to these trades that require little or no special training, the pastor must spend about \$2,000 on his education; he must educate his family, dress well, buy books and periodicals, as every other up-to-date professional man, pay his debts promptly, and be a self-respecting citizen; and do all this on half the salary of many day laborers. Excluding the large cities, the highest average shown by any denomination is only \$710, while one denomination pays an average salary as low as \$325.

Some one has wisely said, "The evil one has hit upon the device of starving the minister as a means of crippling the work of the Christian Church." The sin of the saints is a subtle selfishness that is suicidal to spiritual growth and Christian conquest. There is a low and a higher sacrifice, and many fail to distinguish between these two forms, which are alike in name, but wholly unlike in quality. The one is content to allow the pastor to practice self-denial in financial matters, the other demands *efficiency* in

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equipment and "a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God," yielding the maximum of service to men.

The Work of a Country Church Commission.—We would call attention to two examples of injustice calling for remedy, that may serve as an explanation for the action of the Country Church Commission of the Cleveland District of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

First. That of a pastor who was compelled to sell his life insurance policy to enable him to buy a horse and carriage, necessitated by a change of location. The brother died suddenly, and his widow was deprived of the insurance money to which she was rightfully entitled.

Second. A pastor, with a wife and family to support, served a charge faithfully for eleven months last year, and during that time received but \$248 from three Churches. He was required to buy a horse, carriage, and harness costing \$140, at the beginning of the year, and then wait until the close of the year for the balance of the \$600 promised.

On the Western frontier such treatment might be excusable, but on the Western Reserve¹ it is out of harmony with the principles of the gospel we preach.

On the principle that the strong ought to help the weak, the Commission decided to appoint a day in November that should be known as "Forward Move-

¹ When Connecticut ceded her Western lands to Congress in 1786, she expressly reserved a strip of land stretching westward from the eastern boundary of Ohio immediately south of Lake Erie. This strip of territory was known as the "Western Reserve," and is still referred to by this name with pride by the descendants of the pioneers who live in it.

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ment Day," and the members of each Church were requested to make an offering of a sum equal to their income for that day. The following Sabbath they brought their gifts to the Church, and offered praise to God for the influence and power of the village and rural Churches, which to the majority had been their spiritual birthplace. The plan was a new one, and had to win its way for a fair hearing in Churches already crowded with requests for special appeals. But wherever presented the response was cheerful, and the donors testified to being blessed in their giving. These struggling Churches near the old homesteads that had suffered so many departures were brought back to memory, and in that memory there was a message and a ministry.

The gifts of the Churches came in, and were supplemented by several personal subscriptions from friends who had caught the vision of the need and wanted to help. The Commission was glad to fulfill its promise to supplement the salaries that fell below the minimum of \$750 and house, and by paying the larger portion of it during the first three months of the year, the pastors have had a new spirit of devotion and zeal in their service. The time heretofore wasted in worry and trying to meet bills payable was invested in service to seek and save the lost.

The purpose of the plan is twofold:

First. *Better Service* through *better leadership*, attainable by the payment of a *living wage*.

Second. The lengthening of the pastorate term, a very necessary element in the great task of rural

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leadership and community-building. We have too few Charles Kingsleys and John Kebles, who are content to spend thirty years in one parish and redeem a community. One pastor, who may serve as proof of the above, was continued for an additional year, so that he might have time to reap the harvest of his sowing. This man experienced one of the greatest revivals known in that charge for a generation. The gift of \$150 in this instance was instrumental in helping to make possible one hundred conversions. Thus we see that money has a very vital relationship to the Kingdom.

The Right to Expect a Living Wage

That a young man should demand, and has a right to expect, a living wage in the work of the ministry is no reflection upon his consecration or call to Christian service. We are not speaking of frontier work or the foreign field, but of well-to-do communities, where the people live in good homes and have enough and to spare of this world's goods, and who would not be impoverished by the giving of a tenth of their income to Christ and His Church. It is no longer demanded of a minister to live a life of deprivation and extreme self-denial, in so far as the comfortable support of himself and family are concerned. He *ought to sacrifice* and he *must do strenuous service*, but for the members of the Church to be content to let their spiritual leader want for the bare necessities of life, while they live in comfort, is inconsistent with the teaching of the gospel we profess to practice.

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A splendid young man employed by a business firm at a salary of \$1,200 a year, and that paid monthly, felt called to the work of the Christian ministry, and would not be disobedient to the call, but he had a family to support and educate. The Church says we can pay you only \$600, and three-fourths of that will probably not be collected until the end of the year. They are able to pay more, and they could, by some effort, pay it regularly, but experience proves that they do not. The preacher, in this case, is called upon to make more than his full share of the sacrifice, when he has a reasonable right to expect that his Christian brethren share in this self-denial. The members of our Churches, as well as those outside the Church, must come to realize that God holds them responsible for their share of service and sacrifice no less than He does His other disciples who have heard the call to be leaders and generals in this battle against sin.

What Constitutes a Living Wage?

What is a living wage for a minister of the gospel in this twentieth century? Some one has stated that the "ideal standard of living demands the satisfaction of reasonable wants of both body and intellect, and includes an ambition to improve." Professor Albion W. Small, in a volume on "Charities and the Commons," asserts that the average family needs a thousand dollars. The New York Commission, after a scientific study of thousands of families, sets the minimum at the point where the average family

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ceased to run into debt at \$825. Carroll D. Wright in 1901 investigated the cost of living for 25,440 families living in thirty-three different States. The result of this study, confined to wage-earners, showed 4.38 as the average membership of each family, and the mean income of all was \$749.50. In 1908 statistics give the average income of the anthracite miners in Pennsylvania as \$693.34, and though these foreigners can live on less than one-half the amount required by the average American family, even they are not as well cared for as they deserve.

Engel's table of proportionate expenditures is as follows:

Food.....	50	%	\$375 00
Clothing.....	18	%	135 00
Rent and lodging.....	12	%	90 00
Education, religion, etc.....	5	%	37 50
Heat and light.....	5.5	%	41 25
Care of health.....	3	%	22 50
Comfort, recreation.....	3.5	%	26 25
Legal protection.....	3	%	22 50
Total.....	100	%	\$750 00

This list has no mention of life insurance, books, periodicals, benevolences, railroad fare, expense of keeping a horse, laundry, furniture, and a score of small expenses and demands that come to every minister during the year.

Another carefully prepared table of expenditures for the average family of four, which has in it no provision for death, protracted illness, or the edu-

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cation of children beyond the common school, is as follows:

Rent.....	\$167 00
Car fare.....	14 00
Fuel and light.....	39 00
Furniture.....	9 00
Insurance.....	19 00
Food.....	345 00
Meals away.....	22 00
Clothing.....	112 00
Health.....	18 00
Taxes and dues.....	11 00
Recreation.....	6 00
Education.....	5 00
Miscellaneous.....	40 00
Total.....	<hr/> \$807 00

The following plan, suggested by F. M. Barton, editor of *The Expositor*, is worthy of careful consideration, and ought to aid in the solution of a very serious problem, which faces all the denominations represented in the rural districts:

“The minimum salary for ministers shall be \$750 and house, and the maximum salary \$3,000. Any Church may pay more than \$3,000, provided the Church gives an amount equal to the excess of the \$3,000 to ministerial relief, to be used exclusively for insuring a salary of \$750, and for the support of ministers who have been honorably retired on account of age or disability. No Church shall receive any portion of this relief fund unless the members of said Church are giving for Church and ministerial support an amount equal to the amount of taxes paid on real and personal property by the combined membership.”

This, as has been stated, would be opposed by officials and pastors in large Churches, but it has the advan-

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tage of being Christian in spirit and brotherly in practice.

Rights of Pastor and of People

The country pastor has some very just rights that should be respected and complied with on the part of the membership of every Church.

First. That he shall receive a living wage commensurate with his needs and the efficiency of his ministry.

Second. That his salary shall be paid promptly and regularly each month or week. If this should be impossible in some few places, then a loan could be made at the beginning of the year, from which sums can be drawn to pay the salary as it falls due. The interest on \$200 for ten months would amount to only \$10, and that could be borne by a hundred people much easier than by one man, especially when that one is the pastor.

Third. That each pastor serving a circuit where a horse and carriage are essential, shall have this part of his equipment furnished by the Church, just as it now provides the parsonage. Officials give as an excuse that some preachers do not know how to care for a horse, and they might injure it. My answer to this objection may be briefly stated in these words:

“Any man who is fit to care for the souls of immortal beings surely ought to be capable of being entrusted with the care of a horse and buggy.”

Fourth. A pastor is deserving of the most brotherly consideration and co-operation in all the work

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he is commissioned of God to perform. The Church can not well refuse to organize a committee that will see to the business management of its finances.

The claims of the Church must not be ignored or lightly set aside. It has a right to expect faithful, conscientious, self-sacrificing service on the part of him who is to be its minister. His time and talents belong to the Church that supports him; not that it may dictate what he shall preach, but that he must give himself wholly to this one task. Should he, after preaching on Sundays, spend the greater part of the week either in loafing at home or lecturing for extra revenue away from home, the officials have a perfect right to object, on the ground that they are not receiving that for which they are asked to pay.

The Principle of Subsidizing Weak Rural Churches

Some few Churches have suffered so greatly by the removal of supporting members that they are unable to meet the salary standard. These must not be given inefficient, untrained leaders, which is certain to mean decline and death, but for a year or two they should have outside support to enable them to reinforce their waning membership roll. In this connection, we may state that it should not be our policy to continuously *subsidize* any Church so long as there is a possibility of stirring the local field to the plane of honorable self-support. To some charges we have sent either "amateurs" or superannuates, until the treatment has endangered the life of the patient. The need is not more money, but more man. Our rural

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Churches are often the victims of a faulty policy, and we must begin our solution higher up.

To insistently state that the farmers of a certain parish are abundantly able to pay a decent salary, and that we will do nothing for them unless they do their full duty, is not the part of wisdom, and has killed more Churches than it has helped. The same could be said of many city parishes where the Church has closed its doors. We forget that they must be enlisted in the message and ministry of the society before they can be counted on for financial support. While this is being done, a competent leader must be guaranteed a living for himself and family. The task, in some instances, may only require six months' time, while in others it may demand three years. But whatever the time or expense involved, *if the Church is needed*, we must be ready and willing to pay the price. The need is often greatest where the ability to support is very meager.

Money and Ministry

Money has a very vital relationship to ministry in this twentieth century. We are not condemning the ideals of our fathers when we insist they do not always apply to the present age which we are divinely called to serve. The spiritual man can not escape being affected by his physical condition, and no more can the minister of Jesus Christ escape the many exacting demands made upon him by this modern age in which he must live and labor. The people require that their spiritual leader be a man

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among men, self-respecting and self-supporting, and able to properly care for himself and family in so far as the common necessities of life are concerned.

The modern pastor must not be a mediæval ascetic or a recluse. John Wesley did not imitate John the Baptist either in diet or dress, and yet he was not unlike him in spiritual fervor and devotion. There is no force in the appeal to use the old "flint-lock" when we have the modern repeating rifle. Courage and patriotism are elements of character quite apart from the form of army equipment. Voluntary poverty is no longer the badge of saintliness. Consecration is not dependent upon self-denial in material things. While it may at times be a necessity, it is not an essential to pastoral fidelity.

We demand efficiency in Christian work, and whether that be wrought out in the foreign field or the home land, it requires money as well as men. It is no credit to a denomination to state that its pastors subsist on less than the standard wage of the average laboring man, who is quite generally underpaid. If the Church is to move forward "like a mighty army" to the conquest of this world for Christ, the generals, as well as the men in the ranks, must be well fed, comfortably clothed, as well as carefully disciplined. The times demand it, and the Master will not excuse our failure to measure up to the efficiency standards of twentieth-century life.

Pay for Trained Leadership

The rural pastorate is worth while, and the office should not be minified, but rather magnified. The

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country community has ever been the physical, moral, and spiritual recruiting ground for the city. The best of our educational and religious leaders are none too good for the work in hand, and the farmer can not afford to be satisfied with cheap and untrained pastors and religious teachers. "The city," as Professor L. H. Bailey expresses it, "sits like a parasite, running out its roots into the open country and draining it of its substance. The city takes everything to itself—materials, money, men—and gives back only what it does not want." We must not forget that the country problem is a personal one, and has to do fundamentally with the character of the individual, as well as with the question of increased crops and larger profits. That means leadership, and able leaders have a right to expect competent support.

A recent census of the prominent men of New York City, according to Newell Dwight Hillis, shows that "85 per cent of them were reared in the villages and rural districts. Seventeen of twenty-three Presidents came from the farm. A census of the colleges and seminaries in and about Chicago showed that the country communities are furnishing 80 per cent of our college students. The chances of success seem one hundred to one in favor of the country boy." This is more than a question of pure air and good health, and is far more moral than physical. The explanation is deeper than even a genius for hard work, essential as that quality may be. These facts emphasize the importance of trained leaders.

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Sacrifice has quality as well as quantity. The miser and the martyr both sacrifice. We must not confuse the different grades which may have certain features in common, but yet are almost wholly unlike in character. First, there is the sacrifice of love—the losing of life for Christ's sake—which results in permanent ministry to mankind. Second, there is the sacrifice of material things and of equipment for service, which have to do largely with the outward life, and results in efficiency and impotency. One has to do with courageous conquest, while the other has to do with our every-day living. One is spiritual, the other physical; one has to do with Christ's coming Kingdom, the other concerns the individual and his maintenance.

It is one thing to be a true patriot and quite another thing to be a volunteer pauper. It was no credit to the Union that her soldiers were crippled for lack of good food and proper clothing. Patriotism is not dependent on physical starvation; neither is spirituality dependent on financial stringency. The genuineness of a man's call to the ministry is not conditioned on small salaries. It is true that these still find a place in the religious creed of many good people, but they are irrational and un-Christian. We denounce the mediæval asceticism of the Roman Church, but our present-day treatment of many ministers is quite out of harmony with the spirit of the gospel.

Sacrifice in and of itself may have no special moral value. It may be blind asceticism or pure selfishness.

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There is a vast amount of sacrifice that is wholly commercial and in the interest of evil. The higher sacrifice is in aid of righteousness and truth, while the lower is usually the servant of self and substance. It is not difficult to find successors to the man who, praying for his pastor, said, "Lord, you keep him humble, and we'll keep him poor," thinking those two qualities as vital to pastoral piety. There are many "officious" members who imagine that it is not strictly religious to pay a pastor regularly and liberally. When the plea is made for an advance in salary, they express fear of what they term secularizing the ministry, as though a living wage would interfere with a man's spirituality. Officials are often very exacting as to a preacher's poverty, but quite indifferent to his inefficiency and lack of aggressiveness.

Sacrifice will always serve if it be of the right sort, and a proper financial support will always enhance that service. Why should we not have more sense and less sentiment regarding money and religion? We ought to be so anxious for the success of the work that we should rejoice in every possible reinforcement of the workers. Money in the possession of a consecrated pastor or layman is a power for good. The danger is not in the amount of salary received, but rather in the character of the individual receiving it. The genuineness of a man's call to the ministry can never be safeguarded by a limitation of income. It must be determined by some higher motive.

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The emphasis must be placed on strenuous service. The lazy pastor who is content to accept starvation wages lends no halo to the calling, and is small value to the kingdom. Our low standard of salary has a tendency to invite a class of men who are devoid of the ambition and aggressiveness that would command success in other professions. The work of the Christian ministry is no place for men who are content with mediocre attainment. Moral and spiritual leadership demands men of strong convictions and commanding courage. Men of this type will not consent to be treated as objects of charity.

The monks of the Middle Ages, who took vows of celibacy and poverty, are poor models of Christian consecration. They were deficient in the main attributes of New Testament Christianity, in that they neither served as salt nor leaven nor light. They were as useless to the Kingdom as they were poor, and as deficient in vital piety as they were superstitious. The mistaken policy that fosters such a practice is more pharisaic than Christian, and should find no favor in present-day thought.

The call is for a "living sacrifice, wholly and acceptable unto God, which is our spiritual service." That means something far more vital than poor clothing and poor food; something more reasonable than limited libraries and inadequate educational advantages. We can not be content with such a response to *the call*. The Church demands leadership and loyalty, and the campaign must have able generalship, amply reinforced for winning in the great

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warfare against spiritual wickedness in high places. We must have men who can command the army and win the battle. We need the pastoral patriotism of Paul, expressed in the words, "I die daily." He did not refer to starvation in monastic seclusion, but to that nobler Christian sacrifice of fellowship in the sufferings of Christ. "To leave all," and "to sell all," is only the preparatory part, enabling the individual carrying "excess baggage" to more successfully take up the cross and follow the Christ.

"Toiling up new Calvaries ever
With the Cross that turns not back."

The Master never expected that the disciples should sit and sing themselves away to everlasting bliss, nor idly wish "to be nothing." The Christianity of Jesus demands less of the negative sentiment expressed in the words,

"Nothing in my hand I bring,"

and more of the positive aggressiveness which exclaims,

"To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill;
O, may it all my powers engage
To do my Master's will."

CHAPTER X

The Spiritual Evangelization of the Rural Community Through Its Church

BY REV. OTIS MOORE,
*Pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church at
North Canton, Conn.*

1. The Supreme Aim

WHAT is the test of efficiency in the work of the Church in the rural community? Does it help to bring the Kingdom of Heaven into the hearts of the people? Does it help to make the community a part of the Kingdom of Heaven? This is the test. Whatever directly or indirectly ministers to this great aim is a legitimate activity of the Church; but if any activity fails in the long run to help toward the accomplishment of this high purpose, it is worse than useless. The spir-



REV. MR. MOORE

itual evangelization of the rural community is the supreme mission of the rural Church, the register of its real success, and, in the last analysis, the motive

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force which will realize lesser aims, if ever they are to be realized.

And the inspiring thing about trying to bring the Kingdom of Heaven into a rural community is that the Church, which utilizes all the spiritual forces available, which puts prayer and hard work into its every activity, may actually see results. The work of any one Church in a large center, be it ever so strong and efficient, can at best make only a small contribution toward the redemption of a great city. In the country the situation is different. Who has not seen a rural community actually transformed within the lifetime of one man—so transformed that it is easy for all who know the community to appreciate the contrast between what it was and what it is? Where a community was a center of shiftlessness, ignorance, and hopelessness—a community, perhaps, where people lived in almost utter disregard of all things high and noble, it has become a center of intelligence, of moral worth, of high-purposed Christian citizenship. Things like this have been done and can be done through the Church. Surely such a task is one to challenge the consecrated talents of any man.

But a great work of rural regeneration such as this is not wrought under God in a day, nor under the leadership of any pastor who is not appreciative of his opportunity and in love with his job.

2. The Sort of Leaders Needed

In this connection, it may be said that a lack of real sympathy on the part of the country minister

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with his people is back of the failure of many a country Church's work. Sometimes it is an old minister, buried in his books, a man whose sermons smell of the study-oil, perhaps a fine preacher for a scholarly audience, but having no deep sympathy with, or understanding of, the troubles, needs, and ambitions of his farmer people. Let no man speak disrespectfully of this man's ministry, but let it be said that such a ministry fails to grasp the full meaning of the country minister's opportunity. Sometimes it is a young man, who is just resting in a country parish until he can make arrangements to go to a better charge, or, to state the extreme case, until he can pull the wires or make splurge enough to get a city appointment. The ministry of such a man is an incalculable hurt to any rural community. Of all the perils of the country Church, probably none could be worse than the peril of a self-seeking ministry. A more common and less pernicious case is that of the young man who is really deeply devoted to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, has entered the ministry perhaps at a sacrifice, but who does not set himself seriously and definitely to the task of understanding the people with whom he works in the country. He may feel that he is not fitted for work in a rural community, that his training has not been in that direction at all. In a perfectly natural way, except for an occasional round of formal calls, and the routine of Sunday Church service and prayer-meeting, he puts in most of his time in studying his books, and very little time in studying the people and

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the situation with which he has to deal. He wants to be fitted for a bigger place when the call comes. His interest in his parish is at best temporary. His pastorate is short. Sometimes, too, a sort of disillusionment comes to a young man just entering the work, who is utterly devoid of any self-interest, who has indeed a very passion for unselfish service, because he finds that people in general—sometimes older ministers even—assume that he is anxious to get a “better appointment.” We have no quarrel with the ambitions of any man, and without doubt it is perfectly human and natural, and sometimes necessary, for some men to seek to fit themselves for the bigger, better-paid places; but the work of a country preacher in a poor rural community, through a glorious ministry, is a ministry of service and sacrifice. The man who would build himself into the life of a rural community, who would build himself into Christ’s Kingdom in the country, must give himself to it with the same passion and self-renunciation as a foreign missionary. And I believe many young men are eager to do it. The spiritual evangelization of the country communities depends on such men.

3. Hindrances to Spiritual Evangelization

The heart of rural life in the United States is sound. As a general thing, the country Churches have held, in some more or less distinctive way, a place in community leadership. On the other hand, because many of them have been too narrow in their field of leadership, they have not made conquest of

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their territory. Worse than that, there has been ground lost in the spiritual life of some country districts, which only "grace, grit, and gumption" can regain. Contrasting, for example, a certain very prosperous and progressive country community in Iowa with certain very backward, abandoned farm sections of New England, two essentially different conditions present themselves. In both cases an unprogressive Church is at fault. But in the one case a very progressive, prosperous community has left a lagging, unprogressive Church behind it, while in the other the community itself is dying, because a visionless Church has failed to give the people the spirit of co-operation for community betterment. The cases are typical, and I believe fairly represent two chief perils of country life. The big task of rural conservation, of rural betterment, is how to preserve the simplicity, purity, and naturalness of country life, while stimulating intelligent progressiveness. This is the task of the Church; for the country Church can not be considered apart from the community. Their interests are absolutely identical. A peril can not be a peril to the community unless it is also a peril to the Church.

(a) *The Progressive Community*.—In the case of the prosperous Iowa farming section of which I speak (and it might as well be a prosperous farming section of any other State), the community has been citified too rapidly; social distinctions are beginning to become prominent. In the old days the hired man was as good as anybody. Not infrequently the

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hired girl was some neighbor's daughter. Her father might be better off than the man who hired her, but if she was not needed at home, she felt no sense of inferiority whatever in working out. But the curse of artificial class distinction began to fasten itself on the country. In this community many of the farmers have automobiles. Others are madly struggling to get them; and some have them who have no business whatever to have them. In other ways, people are struggling wildly to get ahead of each other, to make a show of prosperity before their neighbors. The people do not go to church; they go visiting on Sundays, or speed off to the nearest pleasure resorts. Shrewdness is at a premium and settled principles are discounted. It is only among the chosen few that we find intellectual interests and high ideals. People live for the moment, or else they do not know what they live for. Bad as it is, it happens that in this particular Iowa community the social purity of the people has not been contaminated very much as yet. There are a good many empty-headed and flashy young people around, but there is still a standard of decency prevailing in general, mostly because the Church still lives, however feeble and despised. The harvest of this sort of thing will come in the next generation, when all connection with the Church has been broken, and already one can see that it will not be a desirable result to contemplate. This community needs old-fashioned religion, burning from the heart; it needs to have the old gospel of moral righteousness and sin-hating proclaimed to it by letter,

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by personal word, by sermon, and from every signpost. Somehow the community must be made to see its drift. The children need to be trained in the love of Christ and the Church and in the high interests of intellectual life. Somehow, at any cost to discarded formality, the Church must be made the social center of the community, that it may also be the spiritual center.

(b) *The Stagnant Church*.—In the case of the dying Church in the dying community the situation is altogether different. If it is going to die because there is another evangelical Church in the community, let it die. Who shall say that it is not in the Providence of God that many competing Churches in rural communities are being killed off. I think there is too much emphasis laid on the necessity for preserving competition among the Churches. To my mind, the devil furnishes competition enough for anybody. If there is only one Church in a country community, and it is dying because the community itself is dying, the chances are ninety-nine out of a hundred that if the Church as an institution helped to promote scientific farming in the community and did its full duty in uniting the people in co-operative endeavor, both the community and the Church would live in strength.

4. Helps to Constructive Evangelization

Now there are other spiritual perils in our country communities besides these two—stagnation on the one hand, and progressiveness gone riot on the other. But these are among the most common and

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most pernicious. How can they be met and counteracted? How can the spiritual regeneration of such communities be brought about? The answer surely must be: By making religion more a part of the every-day interests of the people. The Church should help to make better farmers, that it may make better men. The Church should lead in all things good, that it may lead the people to the best. It should lead in community betterment, that it may lead the community to God. There must be old-fashioned religion, but new-fashioned Church methods.

(a) *The Community Survey*.—It is a wonderful thing for a country community to get a clear vision of itself, and then a vision of what it may become. It is a forerunner of spiritual conquest; in fact, a notable triumph in itself, for a community to get an ideal clearly before it, however far away the realization may be. Every pastor and every Church should study the problem of the local community. Under the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, they should find out as near as possible just what the needs of the Church and of the community are. If the Church does not measure up to its opportunities, what are its weaknesses? Just where does it fall short of the ideal Church for the field in which it works? How about the community? If the community is drifting, morally and spiritually, can not some sort of compass observation be made to show this. If the country roads are in bad shape, if farming methods are behind the times, if there is no wholesome social life for the young people, if the farmers do not work together as

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they should, can not the trouble be clearly located? The Church should get before itself a definite ideal to work for, one which includes the entire community. It should be an ideal which will capture the imagination of the young people and stir the interest of all.

Furthermore, a definite program of specific things to be accomplished should be carefully worked out by all. Then a constructive program, covering a period of years, but amenable to change, should be adopted. Each organization connected with the Church should have its responsibility for its part of the program. Both ideal and program should be definitely outlined and posted in a conspicuous place. The pastor should preach at least once a year concerning "What ought this Church to do?" In every possible way there should be kept before the people the Church ideal and the community ideal, with a program of definite things to be done. It is absolutely fundamental in rural Church work to be headed somewhere definitely, no matter how small the Church or the community.

(b) *Community Brotherhood*.—Mark Twain once said that he wanted to belong to the Human Race Club. Because it aspires to be a part of the Kingdom of Heaven, the country Church ought to be a sort of local headquarters for the Human Race Club. Every member and every attendant of the Church should be made to feel his responsibility for making the Church a place where the real spirit of Christian brotherhood prevails, and for spreading that spirit

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in the community. This should be preached and practiced. Snobbishness should be scathingly condemned. Every possible effort should be made to make the atmosphere of the church attractive to everybody. The following letter was recently sent to the heads of the Jewish families in our community, and the appeal met with a hearty response:

“The object of this letter is to extend to you a very cordial invitation to come and worship with us at the North Canton Church. There is no synagogue in this place. I am sure that you must feel the loss of an opportunity to worship the true God with others. I do not propose to try to make proselytes of you or your children in any way. I know that there will be nothing in my sermons at which you can take offense. Of course, I do propose to preach the sweet, simple story of Jesus, with the hope that it will win you to accept Him, but I shall not make any special proselyting appeals to you. Your children need religious influences. You realize that as much as I do. Come and see if you do not like the fellowship of our Church. And, in any case, let us get together in every way we can for our mutual good, for the uplift of the community, and the betterment of all. Will you not think of me as your brother in the worship of Jehovah?”

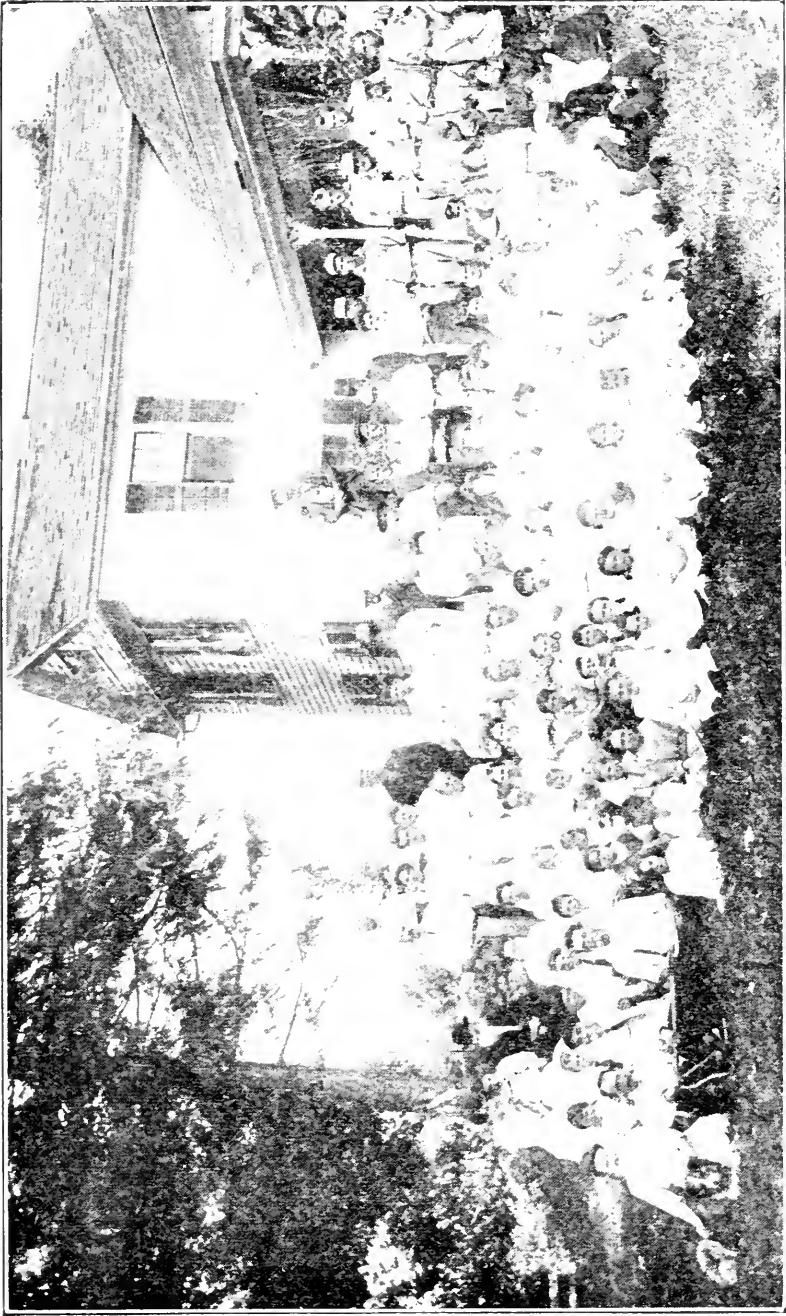
The Church should furnish a wholesome, happy center of social, intellectual, and spiritual interest for all. There should be something going on all the time; something in which social, intellectual, and religious elements can be helpfully combined. As a general rule, the social events in the country should include everybody, from the oldest to the youngest. Community picnics, farmers' institutes, Old-Home-Day celebrations, and local historical pageants are

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the sort of things which should draw out everybody. In our Church we have a "Game Room Night" every Tuesday evening, to which no one is urged to come, but everybody is invited; and "Full-Moon Socials" once a month, with "Nothing to eat and nothing to pay." We have mock trials, debates, home talent entertainments, declamatory contests, camp-fire evenings, corn-roasts, skating parties in the winter, old folks' nights, and a baseball team. In the Church services we celebrate all the days—Harvest Home, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Washington's Birthday, Lincoln's Birthday, Good Friday, Easter, Seed-Time, Mothers' Day, Memorial Day, Children's Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, and we make sure that everybody knows about these things. However slow the progress may be, the young people should be trained to have full charge of their social events, and to have a helping part in everything done for the Church. There are books of social plans available nowadays, and also many periodicals publish excellent suggestions.¹ The old lyceum, with its current events, question-box, debating society, travel studies, spelling-bee,² etc., is still a splendid institution. In so far as possible, the social events should be cultural and educative and spiritual; and the educational events, as

¹ Stern, Renee B.: "Neighborhood Entertainments," p..297. 1911. Sturgis and Walton Company, New York, \$1.

² "Agricultural Words and Spelling Contest Rules" is the title of a booklet containing an exhaustive list of words commonly used on the farm and in agricultural instruction, together with rules for conducting spelling contests. The booklet is especially designed to form the basis of spelling-bees in rural communities. Specimen copies may be secured for 10 cents each from the Country Classics Company, 1081 Fair Avenue, Columbus, Ohio.



Social events in the open country include everybody—from the oldest to the youngest resident. The elevated man in the rear marked (o) is the local Selectman (Conn). The ball player marked (x) is the local minister, Rev. Moore.

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farmers' lectures, elocutionary recitals, and general lectures, should also be social events. Religion should not be "dragged in" on social occasions, but every event and occasion should be permeated with the Christian spirit. Prayerfully and tactfully managed, these social events may easily furnish rare opportunities for religious suggestion and influence.

This wider community brotherhood, of which the Church is the center, should be economic, as well as social and religious. If a farmer is sick or disabled, the Church men should lead in organizing the neighbors for a helping-bee. They should lead in good-road agitation, and see that every dollar spent for road improvement does something. The Church should strive in every possible way to promote business co-operation and mutual helpfulness among farmers.

The movement for co-operation among farmers now sweeping over the country is one of the most significant economic changes of the time. It has already revolutionized farming conditions in certain sections of the West. The financial success of these co-operative enterprises is something marvelous. But that is the least of the benefits. Co-operation is educative. It is unifying. Not only has co-operation brought prosperity to many an otherwise doomed community, but the economic saving to society at large is tremendous, for it helps to bring to market immense quantities of food-stuffs which would otherwise go to waste. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the significance of the co-operative movement among farmers throughout the country.

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Co-operation is a matter of fundamental spiritual interest. It is based on the faith of a man in his neighbor, and that, in the last analysis, is based on a man's faith in God. Co-operation is impossible without the spirit of brotherhood; in other words, the spirit of Jesus. In the long run, co-operation can not live without a religious background, and with a religious background it can be made wonderfully helpful.

(c) *The Church's Responsibility for Community Intelligence.*—Souls grow by what they feed upon. There is no excuse for any rural community being without good library facilities; and it should be part of the business of the Church to see that its community does have such facilities. If the community itself can not maintain a growing library, outside aid can undoubtedly be secured. Almost all of the States now have State traveling libraries available at a nominal cost for transportation.

The Church should encourage, and even promote, knowledge of scientific farming, and strive to capture the imagination of the boys and girls for farming as a life-work, farming with the brains as well as with the hands. They should also be interested in the ideal of rural life as one with full-orbed possibilities for happiness and service. We have had a dozen of the best known experts on agricultural subjects in New England come to speak to us in our little church. Almost any country Church can do things of this kind by co-operating with the State Board of Agriculture and the agricultural college.

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It goes without saying that the Church and the school should work hand in hand in toning the intellectual ideals of the community. The pastor should know the schools in his parish thoroughly, and visit them now and then; perhaps speak to the children on some such subjects as "Courage," "Helpfulness," "Patriotism," and "Reverence."

The educative opportunity of the country minister is unlimited. In this connection, it may be worth noting that in our parish the pastor at the regular Sunday morning service reads a brief quotation of some kind just after the first hymn. The effort is to get something which, in its sheer literary quality, will lift us up toward God. It may be a paragraph from one of Phillips Brooks' sermons, a little bit from Tolstoi or Browning or Tennyson, or a contemporary poet like Edward Rowland Sill or Alfred Noyes. All such things surely help to fortify our community intellectually and spiritually, and lead the children and grown-ups toward God.

5. The Test.

After all, it is not by farmers' institutes or co-operative movements even, not by good roads nor libraries, but by the Spirit of God in the hearts of men that any rural community will be saved—and saved to do service. It is only as the lesser interests center in the heart-life of the people that they help at all. It must be admitted that when a Church is socialized there is always great danger of its being secularized. In carrying out a program of social

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activity and effort for community betterment, it is easy to get interested in the machinery and to forget the real end for which we are working. I would not give anything for a Church, no matter how characteristically a community center, no matter how much an intellectual center, if the religious basis upon which it is built does not show itself at every point. On the other hand, it surely must be true that where religion is blended with every other interest of the people, it becomes a much more vital thing than it can ever be in the one-day-in-the-week Church.

Certainly, these week-a-day interests open up countless avenues of approach to children and young people, and even the most indifferent and hardened non-church-goers. The final and most important aim must be to touch every individual life in the community in some helpful way. This is what pastor and people must pray and work for most. There must be intercessory prayer for the individual, and good straight-from-the-shoulder talks with men and women, boys and girls, about the deep things of life. If we pray enough the Holy Spirit will drive us to our work and will guide us in it, even in the most minute details. A real man of prayer can not be a lazy man, nor an inefficient worker. The harvest times will come. Sometimes there will be the great ingatherings, but most times the harvest will be hand-picked.

CHAPTER XI

The Rural Church as a Factor in the Social Life of the Country Community

BY REV. CHARLES E. TURLEY, B. L.,
Pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Shawnee, Ohio.

WE live in a great age in the world's history. It is an age of invention, an age of progress, and of development along all lines. This progress is not confined to the great centers of our population, but permeates the whole of our American life and reaches nearly every rural community.



REV. MR. TURLEY

The Life with Nature Is the Normal Life.—Life in contact with nature is the normal life. It is a fine thing to plow the fields, to sow the seed, garner the harvests, breathe the pure air, bathe in the sunshine, and look up at the stars.

Wordsworth, that great poet of nature, has very beautifully described the mountain shepherd who lived in close touch with nature. He says of him:

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"O then how beautiful, how bright, appeared
The written promise! Early had he learned
To reverence the volume that displays
The mystery, the life which can not die;
But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.
All things, responsive to the writing, there
Breathed immortality, revolving life,
And greatness still revolving; infinite:
There littleness was not; the least of things
Seemed infinite; and there his spirit shaped
Her prospects, nor did he believe,—he *saw*."

Are We Becoming a Nation of Cities?

A bulletin entitled, "Population of Cities," compiled by William C. Hunt, of the Department of Commerce and Labor, shows that in 1910 the urban population of this country was 42,623,383, an increase over 1900 of 38.4 per cent. The rural population was 49,348,883, an increase over 1900 of 11.2 per cent. The rate of increase of urban population over rural in the last ten years has been 27.2 per cent. In the States of Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, and Missouri there was a decrease in rural population from 1900 to 1910. It is very evident that something must be done to maintain our rural population.

There is, indeed, good cause for the alarm that is felt by many leaders that our country is fast becoming a nation of cities. The lure of the city has proved attractive to many, and this attractiveness is on the increase, rather than on the decrease, in its power. The irregularity of country work, the introduction of labor-saving machinery on the farm, the unequal distribution of the foreign immigrant, the larger social,

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industrial, educational, and religious advantages of the city have all had a tendency to increase the urban population at a greater rate than the rural. Notwithstanding this marvelous growth of our cities, there are still several millions of our citizens engaged in the occupation of agriculture. The value of the crops for 1910 reached the enormous sum of \$8,926,000,000. The value of the crops from 1899 to 1910, inclusive, amounted to \$79,000,000,000.

Serving Rural America is a Great Service

Thus agriculture is a very important factor in our American life. Whatever is done for the material, social, intellectual, and religious life of those so engaged is rendering a great service to our country.

When President Roosevelt appointed "The Country Life Commission," he said to the commissioners: "It is especially important that whatever will serve to prepare country children for life on the farm, and whatever will brighten home life in the country and make it richer and more attractive for the mothers and wives and daughters, should be done promptly and gladly. There is no more important person, measured in influence upon the life of the nation, than the farmer's wife; no more important home than the country home; and it is of national importance that we do the best we can for both."

The Rural Community Needs the Christian Church

One of the great centers of rural life, one that has a commanding influence in molding the highest type

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of community life, is the Church. Every rural community needs the presence of a strong, useful Church.

Indifference on the part of the citizens of a community to the Church and religion can bring only disastrous results. This indifference will open the door for almost every form of wickedness and vice. A letter recently appeared in *The Christian Work and Evangelist*, by one who spent four years in the Canadian Northwest. He says: "The nearest church was twenty-five miles away. There was practically no organized Christianity in the neighborhood. The industrial situation was almost ideal. Every settler owned his own farm. The prairies furnished the wild hay, free for all who wanted to cut it. Neighbors were so far apart that there was no excuse for line-fence quarrels. Every man's success depended upon nothing but his own industry and good management. There was no need of over-reaching, of dishonest practice between neighbor and neighbor. The air was pure, the skies bright, the soil rich, the climate wholesome and invigorating, and yet, in spite of this ideal industrial and social situation, it was not a fit place to bring up children. Drunkenness, profanity, and neighborhood quarreling abounded. Those neighborhoods need the *Church* more than anything else, and of all institutions in the world, there is but one that will save those people from drifting into barbarism, and that is the Christian Church. Where the Church is strong and prosperous, the community will always be characterized by righteousness, purity, and kindness of life."

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Prof. Joseph A. Leighton, of Hobart College, Geneva, in a recent address, said: "The Churches are, by inheritance and choice, the guardians and champions of the moral order in society. To-day they fight against heavy odds. It behooves them to get rid of unnecessary baggage, to make an end of irrelevant controversies, to bury dead issues, and combine their energies on the one aim of conserving and enforcing the Christian moral values of civilization.

"In the midst of social and moral chaos, a few choice spirits may find consolation and strength in philosophy; but for the many, vivid, passionate, and energetic religious conviction is the condition of moral health and vigor. No great civilization has ever outlasted the demise of its religious faith. If the moral bases of our culture are in imminent danger, the danger can be averted only by a new crusade on behalf of social righteousness and personal integrity, animated by a religious view of life, for which the human spirit transcends nature through kinship with absolute spirit."

Dr. Aked, of San Francisco, says: "The Churches are the incarnate conscience of the nation. They are a protest against materialism, a perpetual witness to the ideal."

Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, in his recent book, "The Building of a Church," says: "A congregation, devoutly engaged in worship, is doing something for the community which can not be done in any other way."

Many country communities are possessed with the

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materialistic spirit. Their joys and pleasures seem to be confined to the things of time and sense. They need the Church in their midst, in order that the claims of the higher and better life be presented to them with such force and power that visible results will be accomplished.

Dr. Strong has recorded the facts of the history of two townships on the Western Reserve in Ohio. "The southern township was founded by a devoted and far-sighted home missionary. He had become convinced that he could do more by establishing a Christian community on the Reserve than by many years of desultory labor as a home missionary. The settlers were carefully selected. None but professing Christians became land owners. A Church was organized under the roof of the first log cabin. Eight roads meet in the center of the township, and there the church was located, to represent the central place that religion should occupy in the life of the community. Soon followed the school and the library; and there, in the midst of the unconquered forest, only eight years after the first white settlement, the people planted an academy. At an early period benevolent societies were organized, and here was opened the first school for the deaf and dumb in Ohio. The northern township was settled by an infidel, who seems to have given to his community not only his name, but his character. He naturally attracted men of his own way of thinking. He hoped that there might never be a Christian church in the township, and there has been no evangelical Church

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there. Though one of the best colleges in the West was founded within five miles, it is not known that any young man has ever taken a college course anywhere. A few of them have entered professional life, none of them have gained a wide reputation. On the other hand, the southern township is widely known for its moral and religious character, its wealth and liberality, and for the exceptionally large number of youths it sends to colleges and seminaries. The assessed valuation of property in this township exceeds that of the northern by 56 per cent, though the latter has better soil. From this little village of a few hundred inhabitants have gone forth men to the State Legislature, to the pulpit, to college professorships east and west, to the Supreme bench of the State, and to Congress."¹

Phases of Social Activity for the Rural Church

The Church in the rural community ought to bring the people together on one common platform. A very illiterate man once said to me: "I tell you, we must meet as the apostles did in the days of old. They all met with one discord!" The fact of the case is, too many of our rural Churches meet in just that way. There are divergent elements in the community, the moral forces are divided and scattered, and a real coherent community life is impossible.

The country Church must do more than hold Sunday school on Sunday morning and have a preaching service once every two weeks. The church must

¹ Dr. E. S. Lewis in *Sunday School Journal*—M. E.

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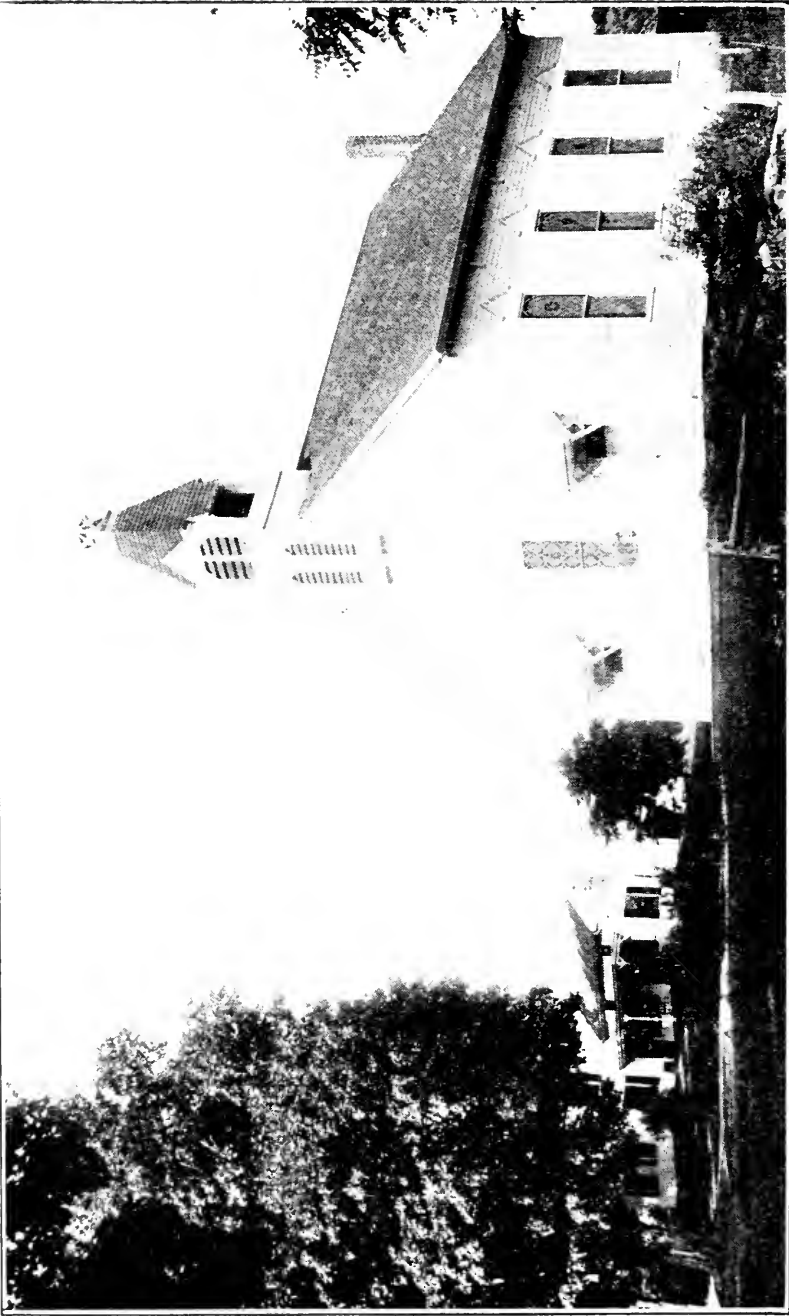
be made a real social center in the rural community. It should take the lead in work and recreation, and should ever strive for the practical betterment of the people in the community.

The Church, to win men, must be social, and must take an interest in them. There are poor people in nearly every community, who ought to be reached by the Church. The question ought not to be, "How much can they pay toward the expense fund?" but, "How much of help and inspiration can the Church bring to them?"

It is a fundamental fact of human existence that young people are going to associate together. Obeying the law of their being, the sun shines, the bird sings, the flower sheds its fragrance, the rain falls; and, obeying an inward law of their being, young people are going to meet together somewhere. If not in the church, then elsewhere, many times, perhaps, under questionable influences.

To many young people, country life is very dull and uninteresting. Their lives are one round of ceaseless toil. They have n't much to look forward to: and just so soon as they approach young manhood and womanhood they begin to cast longing eyes toward the city, where things are happening, and where they can find some amusement and pleasure to break the monotony of their daily toil. Thus every year many ambitious young people are lost to our country homes.

Governor Eberhart, of Minnesota, in an address before the General Conference of the Methodist



A COMMUNITY CENTER. RURAL CHURCH AND PARSONAGE

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Episcopal Church, in which he pleaded for the co-operation of the Church in the movement toward rural betterment, said: "The depopulation of our country's rural districts and small towns and the congestion of our large cities, that feed our criminal institutions, presents the serious question of whether or not the Church, as an institution, ought to take steps to make country life a little more attractive and city life a little more wholesome.

"The time has come when a religious body like this ought to take into consideration the fact that country life is too lonesome, and that the city gets every attraction. The glare and glitter and glimmer of the city is attracting thousands and tens of thousands of young men, women, and children from our rural districts, and they are congesting our cities. Here is a problem over all the problems that are to be solved here. Now, then, what is to be done? I would like to request this body of men and women to co-operate with the State in the establishment of *social centers in the country*, where we can bring to the people attractions and amusements that are clean and wholesome, and which will attract the young people and keep them from being drawn to the large cities."

If the rural Church is to hold its own and meet its larger opportunity, it must recognize its social mission.

Oftentimes there are, in rural communities, good Christian people who love the Church supremely, and who love God devoutly, who can not see the impor-

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tance of relating the social life of the young people with the life of the Church. Some argue that the Church was made for worship and for worship alone. They vigorously oppose any move made in the direction of social improvement, on the ground that the Church will become worldly: and every year many young people drift away and are forever lost to the Church, because of the failure of the Church to realize its social mission.

A Typical Example of the Status of the Church in Rural Communities

The writer recently spent a week in a township in one of the rich counties of Western Ohio, investigating country life conditions.

The value of land and buildings totaled \$1,302,110. The farms were well cared for, and the people were prosperous. The population of the township was 1,512. There were six church buildings and five active societies. In these five churches there was a membership of 550, leaving 968 who do not belong to any Church.

Farmers, school teachers, merchants, and ministers were interviewed, and all united in saying that the Churches were making no attempt to improve the social life of the young people. Some seemed to think the mission of the Church was distinctly religious, and young people ought to be satisfied with the Sunday school and the prayer-meeting. The result was there were but few young people who belonged to any of these Churches.

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The older people lamented the fact that "times were not as they used to be," and the Church not as strong as thirty years ago.

I asked the question, "Why is the Church not stronger than it is?" Various answers were given. I will record a few of them:

"Mediocre talent in the pulpit. When one goes to church, one wants to get something worth while."

"There are divisions in the Church over minor questions."

"Many have gotten out of the habit of church attendance. New people come into the community, and soon drift into the ways of the people."

"Too much Sunday visiting. Renters do not attend much, as they either go visiting or entertain company on Sunday."

"The Churches are making no attempt to improve the social life of the young people."

"Churches are selfish. Have their own crowd, and do not care a great deal about others." (This man was a professional man of the town, and said he had never been approached on the subject of the Christian life, except by ministers.)

"Older families moved into town, and those who came did not take their place."

"People are too selfish, in the mad rush for money. The younger generation is more concerned about the making of money than religious things."

"Not enough sociability in the Churches."

"A few in the Churches want to run things."

"Too long intervals between preaching services."

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These Churches have a great opportunity to render a social service to the people in their communities. The people were hungry for social life, and the Churches were not attempting to feed them. If the Church people of this community would arouse themselves, use some of their latent energy, and attempt for three months to make their Churches social centers of community life, there would be a revolution in the life of the whole people, and the Churches would increase numerically, financially, and spiritually.

The Church Should Encourage and Minister to All Good Community Activities

That Church is the most spiritual that is rendering the most practical, helpful service to all departments of community life.

With many rural Churches there is a great struggle for bare existence. "Oftentimes the main question seems to be, "How can we save the Church?" and not, "How can the Church save the people?" The Church is built by the people of a community. It stands, or should stand, to serve the people of that community. Open its doors to helpful lectures, to clean entertainments by the young people, and, if there is no other building in the community that can be used, have a social meeting in the church.

Once the writer was very much criticised by some of the over-pious members of his flock, because he brought the young people of the community together in the church for a literary program. Among other

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things on the program, we had a debate. It was in 1908, and the question debated was: "*Resolved*, That it is to the best interest of the country that Mr. Taft be elected President."

All of the debaters were beardless youths, and they debated with a frenzied enthusiasm. Several members of the Church would not attend, saying, "You are bringing politics into the Church, and the Church was made for worship." But a pleasant evening was put into the lives of the young people, and they went home feeling that the Church was interested in their best welfare.

When the Church will awaken to its social mission, folks will rally to its standards who have never been reached before; for they will see the Church means business, and stands for the development of the full-orbed, complete life.

A Few Suggestions from Practical Experience

I close the chapter with some practical suggestions which have been worked out and successfully applied in the writer's own experience.

After sufficient interest has been awakened in the social mission of the Church, it will not be difficult to raise funds to add a room to the church to be used for social purposes. Make it large enough to have a cloak-room, a good kitchen, furnished with shelves, dishes, stove, and cooking utensils. Then have a large room where, if they desire, boys can play basketball, where banquets can be served, where games can be played, and where a general good social time can

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be had. Let the people feel that it is their room, built to promote the social life of all the people of the community. Such a room can be built and equipped for \$800 to \$1,000. Give the people a chance to donate labor and money, and that will give them an interest that can be created in no other way. Such a room, 28 x 40 feet, was built in one of my pastorates, and has met a long-felt need in the lives of the people.

In our present pastorate the young women of the Sunday school have been organized into a Philathea class. They meet every two weeks, spend some time in Bible study, have a program with readings, essays, and music. Light refreshments are served. This gives the girls a pleasant evening together, and makes them more interested in the work of the Church. They recently gave a banquet to their mothers, which was a very enjoyable affair.²

Get the men of the community interested. Sometimes it will take a great deal of patience to get the men to feel that the Church is interested in them and can help them. In my present pastorate, we organized a men's Bible class. It started with an enrollment of seventeen, and has an average attendance of ten. When the organization was completed, the officers assumed the expense of serving refreshments, and a general invitation was given to the men of the town to be present. A literary program was rendered, with a debate on "The Woman Suffrage Question."

² Instructions as to how to organize such classes can be obtained from Baraca-Philathea Supply Co., of Syracuse, New York, or from the Sunday School Boards of the various denominations.

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Fifty-seven men were present. After the program, we retired to the Sunday school room and spent a social hour over hot hamburger sandwiches and coffee. That one meeting did more for that men's class than anything else. The attendance in this Sunday school class was quadrupled, while the total attendance of the whole school was doubled. We have these men's meetings once a month, and they are purely social. The distinctly religious work is done through the regular Church channels. Conditions here do not make it practical to organize a denominational brotherhood.

A Circulating Library

For ten years the writer was near a good university and a State library. On removing a distance from these, he discovered how much they were missed. We found young men and women, boys and girls, anxious to read. Many had read nearly everything that came to their hands.

In Ohio, the State Library has a circulating department. On receiving an application, signed by some of the responsible citizens of a community, this department will loan from fifty to two hundred volumes for eight months. There is very little expense—only paying the freight on the books to and from the library. By this means the Church may be made a center where the young people may meet and exchange ideas on the books they read. This also gives the pastor an opportunity to direct the reading of the young people.

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The Mission of the Rural Church

The rural Church has a greater mission to-day than ever before. She must keep abreast of the times; she must stand for progress and development; she must fulfill her social obligations to society; she must issue her perpetual protest against the life that creeps and crawls; she must continue to be a place where the young find the inspiration of high ideals, where the sorrow-stricken receive their message of comfort, and where the weary find rest.

CHAPTER XII

Boys' and Men's Clubs in the Country Church

BY REV. C. M. McCONNELL, A. B. (OHIO WESLEYAN), S. T. B. (BOSTON),

Pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Middlefield, Ohio.

1. The Problem

IT is necessary first to state the problem before us. We are concerned chiefly with the country Church



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and its relation to the community. The farmer demands a broader and more effective service from the Church. The Church, in turn, asks more loyal support and co-operation from the farmer. The ideal placed before the Church by its Founder is ministry to human needs. "I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister," are the words of Christ. Before the

Church can meet this ideal and render effective service, it must be ministered to. We must have strong Churches in the country before we can expect them to meet the ever-increasing needs of men. Many

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well-meaning farmers have neglected their duty to the Church. As a result, the women have too often had to support the Church and do the work of men. The problem before us is, then, twofold: First, the farmer and his son must help strengthen the Church by ministering to it; and second, the Church, in turn,



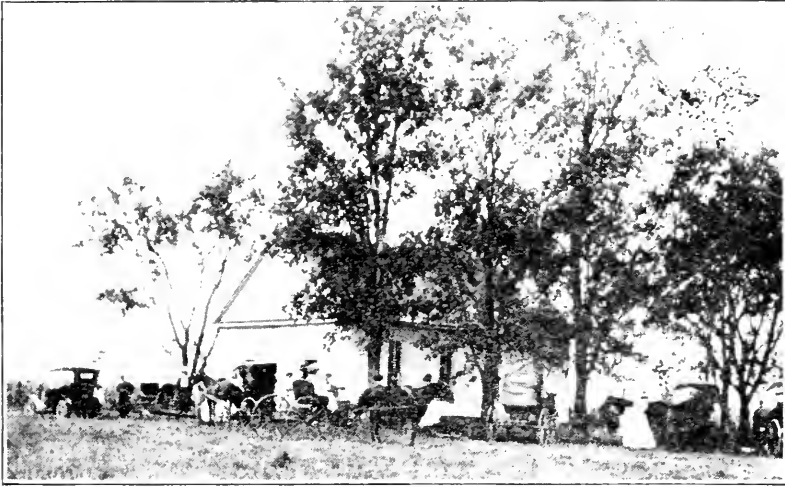
A RURAL FORUM

must more efficiently meet the needs of men and better serve the community.

Many rural Churches are solving this difficult problem by appealing to the social instincts of men and boys. A normal person craves companionship. There are some nature-lovers who find trees and rocks

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and babbling brooks more congenial than their fellow-beings; but, as a rule, the farmer prefers the fellowship of folks. In seeking a gratification of his social nature, the farmer is not unlike other men. The lodge and fraternal order exist in the country as well as in the city. In various ways the farmer reveals his social instinct. The country store is a social as



RURAL SOCIABILITY BEFORE AND AFTER CHURCH SERVICES

well as a commercial institution. The farmers gather at the store to discuss community affairs and politics. Often it is this opportunity for social intercourse that proves more attractive and valuable than the wares of the country store-keeper. Public sales are well attended in the country, and the farmers find the social value of the occasion greater than the commercial value. The country Church has been more or less of a social center for farmers. After the Church

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service the farmers visit and talk about their crops, while the women plan some enterprise or discuss their affairs. The club is founded on the social instinct common to men, and through it the country Church can better minister to this craving for fellowship.

The Loneliness of the Open Country.—The country offers too few opportunities for the gratification of the farmer's social instinct. The telephone, good roads, rural free delivery, and other modern conveniences have done much to socialize the country. The farm is still isolated, and modern conveniences have not wholly destroyed the isolation of the open country. The farmer uses the telephone for social as well as for commercial purposes, but the friendly visiting with friends and neighbors is done at long range. Modern farm machinery has replaced many farm hands, and thereby lessened the rural population. The corn-husking machine has been substituted for the husking-bee, and the grain binder has made harvesting the work of but a few men. As a result, the farmer depends less upon his neighbors and more upon machinery. The fellowship and social intercourse which accompanied the harvest time, the barn-raising, and other co-operative work, disappears with the coming of modern methods, and isolation remains. The farmer feels the loneliness of his condition, and the children feel it even more keenly. We find in this isolation and lack of social intercourse among farmers an open door for the country Church that aims to minister to human needs. The club may be

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used as an instrument of service through which the Church can meet the social needs of the farmer.

2. The Boys' Club

Boys are like grapes in their tendency to bunch. The "stem" is generally some boy of strong will or sinewy muscle, who has earned the right to lead. Around this boy, whether in the city or the open country, we find a "gang," or group of boys. The "gang" spirit is merely another name for the social instinct. It is; indeed, a rare specimen of boyhood that wanders off to the swimming-hole alone or fishes in solitude. Boys seldom raid orchards or do mischief alone. There is a time in the life of a boy when he shuns saints and girls, and seeks his kind. His chief interest is boys, and his loyalty to the "gang" is a part of his religion. The "gang" spirit has been a fruitful subject of study for the psychologist and an endless cause of worry to distracted mothers. Boys persist in being boys, and the "gang" spirit must be reckoned with. Like a boy's will, we should never break it, but direct it into proper channels. Upon this social instinct the boys' club is based. Instead of a "gang," with questionable leadership and mischievous purpose, it is possible to have a boys' club rightly led and under the direction of the Church.

If the social spirit of boys forms the foundation of a boys' club in the country, the isolation of farm life creates a demand for it. Homes in the country are often far apart. At best, the boys on the farms have few opportunities for association. At the dis-

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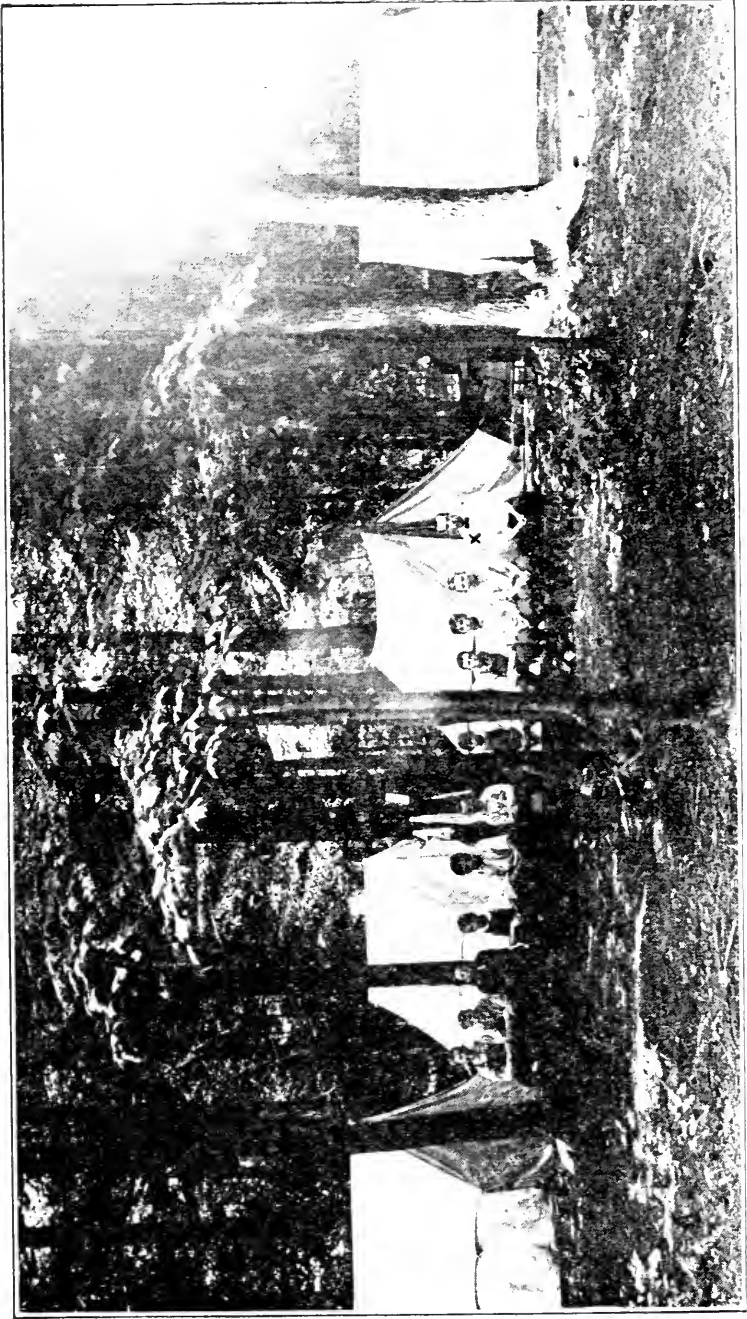
trict school, the boys find companionship with other boys, but the Church offers little along this line. He is not enthusiastic over prayer-meetings, and the Sunday school is not his chief delight. He does not often accompany his father to the store or public sale, and it is a rare day when he meets with other boys for play. The social instinct of country boys is too often neglected by the Church, and the club may be used to minister to this instinct and destroy the isolation of farm life.

The Question of Leadership.—With a basis and a demand for boys' clubs in the country, the question of leadership arises. The proper management and direction of the social or "gang" instinct of boys is of vital importance. The natural leader of the "gang" may have nothing more than fists or muscle. He may be unfit to lead in the right direction. The group of boys in the country may meet at the cross-roads and exchange vulgar stories, or in the country church and hear of the deeds of valor performed by the knights or heroes of old. They may either rob orchards or enter into a corn-growing contest. The boys may either read dime novels or Scott's tales. The country Church can direct the boys into the right activities and provide leadership. A club-room for boys in the country church is as necessary as an auditorium, and should be furnished according to the tastes of boys. If the natural leader of the boys is fit for moral leadership, he may be utilized as a leader. The leader may be the pastor, if he has the spirit of youth and the qualities of leadership. He will have

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Many ready-made organizations may yield valuable suggestions, but few can be used without changes to meet local conditions. The games and activities native to the soil and found in the country are most acceptable to country boys. Many of the rural games are more virile and red-blooded than the city sports. Country boys fish and swim and play baseball and camp; and the country offers an opportunity near at hand for these activities. Corn-growing contests and debates are of interest to country boys, and a reading circle is of value. Some of the old-time games and social activities might with profit be revived. The spelling-school and husking-bee had in them elements of worth that warrant their revival. Along these lines the leader of the boys' club may direct the country boys and develop in them a love for the open country and a loyalty to the Church that makes possible these activities.

The Church that ministers to the social life of boys will become attractive to them. The boys who depend upon the Church for social life are the ones most likely to depend on the Church for spiritual life. The ministry will be mutual, and boys will return the service rendered by the Church. From the boys' club will come most of the recruits for the Church and Sunday school. It is with no selfish purpose that the Church ministers to boys, yet the future of the country Church depends upon them, and to maintain itself, the youth must be won by the Church. The boys must be approached along the lines of their chief interests. It may be contrary to the desires of his



A RURAL MINISTER (MARKED X) AND HIS "GANG" OF BOYS IN CAMP

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spiritual advisers that the boy's chief concern is not his soul, but other things are more real to him. The score of the last ball game, the opening of the chestnut burrs, and the boy's chums are the things dear to the heart of a boy. The secondary motives may be utilized, and in due season the interest of the boy's soul will come to the front. The main thing is to bind the boys to the Church in their early years. The cords of companionship and the ministry to the life of boys are stronger than vows of membership or parental authority.

The Highest Aim of Boys' Club Work.—After the Church has done its best to win the boys to the Church through the club, there will remain many who do not attend Church or in any way strengthen it. "The field is the world," are the Master's words. The boy lives his life outside the walls of the church. In the Sunday school the Decalogue is taught, but it is either applied or disregarded on the athletic field, at home, and in the affairs of boy-life. As he mingles with other boys outside the Church, the boy who has learned the principles of right living can point the way of life to others. Character is contagious, and is caught as well as taught. The club teaches the boy the answer to the question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" He discovers that there are others in the world, and that the will of the majority is stronger than the will of one unruly boy. The aim of the Church, as it ministers to the boys through the club, is to call forth the noblest and best in the life of a boy, and direct his unfolding life into the proper channels

BOYS' AND MEN'S CLUBS

of activity. Anything short of this is unworthy of the Church and its ideal of ministry.

3. The Men's Club

Men are no less social than boys. The lodge and fraternal order are merely different names for "gangs." The need of social intercourse is as real in the life of a man as in the life of a boy. As we have before stated, the basis of the men's club is found in the social instinct common to men. The isolation of the farm, with its few opportunities of social intercourse, creates a demand for the social group. With this in mind, we pass to a further consideration of the club for men in the country Church.

In the country we find few leaders of men. Perhaps we had better say that we find few followers in the country. The farmer is naturally independent. Many look with suspicion upon one who attempts to lead. The personal element enters into the problem, and at close range the farmers can estimate the leader and call to mind his past record. This makes the selection of a leader for a club of men difficult and important. As in the selection of a leader for boys, a moral leader must be found who will lead in the right direction. The pastor may lead, but it is far better to place the leadership in the hands of a man who has freer intercourse with men. Men are apt to regard the pastor in a professional attitude and reject his leadership. A minister of tact and qualities of leadership can direct the work of the club along the proper lines and, if necessary, assume the actual leadership.

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The Various Fields of Service for Men's Clubs.—The field of service before a men's club is different from the opportunities before the boys' club. It is a real and lasting service to the men of any community to meet together and enjoy the fellowship a club affords. There is no better place for men to meet than in a club-room in a Christian Church equipped to meet the social needs of men. Any Church can well afford a club-room that will afford a meeting place for men, and too few country churches are equipped for such community service. The club cuts through all social distinctions and welcomes men of different faiths. Saint and sinner, rich and poor, workingman and employer may all meet and learn to know each other better in a Church that aims to minister to the social needs of men.

There is a field of educational work before a club of men. The country does not fully understand the city and its problems. Too often the city and country are antagonistic to each other. Men from the city can address the farmers on the problems and life of the city. The vital and close relation of city and country may be made clear, and a better understanding brought about. The great movements of human betterment and reform are apt to pass over the heads of the farmers. Leaders of great reform movements can be secured by the men's club to address the men on the work they represent. Lawyers, physicians, college presidents, and business men of prominence may make their work clear to the farmer. Topics of wide and varied interest may be discussed, and re-

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ligion related to the actual affairs of life. From this there comes a broader sympathy and wider horizon to those whose lot is cast in village and open country. Petty prejudices and narrow provincialism vanish before intelligent interest in the larger affairs of life and the world at large.

The local problems of the community should command the attention of a men's club. Practical and substantial aid may be given by the club in movements of human and community betterment. Good roads come only through intelligent and organized effort. The Church should concern itself about the roads on earth, as well as about the gold-paved streets of the world to come. The political ideals of many rural sections are not ideal. The political boss is not unheard of in the country. The men's club need not resort to the tricks of the professional political club, nor form a new party. At the same time the club may take its stand on the side of honest government and law enforcement. Local school conditions and oversight of play-grounds and sanitation are fields into which the club may enter and render a practical benefit to the community. In a word, the men's club is the hand of the Church, and aims to put into practical application the principles taught by the Church. In their efforts to better the community and promote the ideals of highest value, the men are welded together in a bond of fellowship that is lasting.

The Final Result.—Many men find their way into the Church through the men's club. To some it is an introduction into the Church, and serves as a re-

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cruiting agency for the Church. Members of the Church work hand in hand with men outside the Church for the betterment of the community, and come to know each other. The real aim and ideal of the Church are revealed and interpreted to men through the practical work of the men's club. Questions of doctrine and creed are settled by activity rather than argument, and the Kingdom of God comes on earth through better roads, better health, better citizenship, and righteous living, rather than through denominational rivalry and doctrinal disputes. If the men's club strengthens the country Church, it has justified its existence and proved its worth.

The Ultimate Aim.—The farmer is to-day face to face with serious and complex problems. Rural conditions are far from ideal, and the country Church can help in the solution of the farmer's problems and the building of better rural institutions. If the men's club aids in the solution of rural problems, it has rendered a lasting service to humanity. The final aim of the Church is the answer to the divine prayer, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." The Church that loses itself in service to the community in the answering of this prayer is the Church that will survive and warrant the support of the sons of toil who sow and reap in the open country. It is for this larger service and lasting good that the club seeks to fit the farmer.

CHAPTER XIII

Recreation and the Rural Church

BY REV. SILAS E. PERSONS,
Minister of the Presbyterian Church, Cazenovia, N. Y.

FUN and the Church! Is not this a pair that is unevenly yoked together? What could be further apart than a Calvinistic Church and a good time? Our New England fathers who whipped the cider-barrel for working on Sunday never saw it on this fashion. You say that religion was then a serious business. I admit that it was serious, but too serious to be "business." Noble as was the Church of our fathers, its mind and its conscience both pitched to a high key, it none the less failed to minister to the whole man; and no such Church, clinging however reverently to the traditions of the past, is grappling with the real and living problems of to-day.



REV. MR. PERSONS

The Recreational Responsibility of the Rural Church

It is a part of the holy mission of the Church to provide wholesome recreation for its youth. This is

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especially true in regard to the Church in the open country; for there the provisions for wholesome recreation are few. Young people in the country usually go away from home for their amusements, and that is always perilous, particularly if they go unaccompanied by their seniors or parents. As a rule, during the summer months such recreation is sought on Sunday. For young people to go away from home alone or in groups in search of pleasure or recreation on the Sabbath is to subject themselves to temptations against which mere human nature is not fortified. It is not necessary to enumerate the dangers incident to such a course. I think we all agree that any kind of recreation in one's own neighborhood, where the older people can be present, is far safer than these periodic migrations in search of a "good time." So every community is under most sacred obligations to evolve its own sufficient and wholesome recreations to interest its own young people and satisfy their reasonable cravings for innocent fun. If the Church, cheerfully recognizing that play is a part of life, takes the lead in providing recreation, the chances are that the quality of the recreation will be quite as good as it otherwise would be, and also that the Church will get a stronger hold upon the young people of the community. Neighborhood recreations of some sort are the imperative demand, and the local Church may well enlarge its ministry by furnishing them.

The rural Church should do this without apology, and with the assurance that it is working inside its

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own appointed mission; with the sure recognition of the truth that sports have ethical value, and that they are elements in the upbuilding of character. I like to teach a boy to have the four indispensable virtues of good sportsmanship—nerve, skill, courtesy, and fairness. That training ought to fit him to play fair in the bigger games of life, in the market, in the arena of politics, in the parliaments of men, never flinching, never losing temper or unbridling tongue, never playing false to a competitor, to State, or to God. The discipline of high-toned, manly sport constitutes one of the essential phases in the education of modern life. It is a means of grace, and helps to save the soul from flabbiness, from meanness, from dishonesty. It is worth while to teach a boy to have the nerve to be a good loser, to take defeat manfully, to show courtesy toward his opponent, to play with generous fairness as well as with winning skill. A part of the Church's relation to recreation is a teaching that involves the cultivation of manly sportsmanship that shall be educational, character-building, and redemptive.

An example. Each of the five Churches of our village formed a team for a tournament in bowling. The local newspaper offered a prize, a beautiful banner, to the winning team. It was a long contest, extending through three winter months. Long before its close excitement ran high. There was a tendency toward "rooting." In the heat of the battle, the five men of one team met and agreed that whatever the result and whatever others might do, theirs was to be

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a courteous, manly play, giving every player a chance to do his best, and then beating him if they could. To-day the banner is in the room of their Baraca class, and it is worth a good deal more to them and their fellows because it was won with honor. The Church serves the young people when it develops in them the spirit of high-toned, courteous sportsmanship.

The Forms of Recreation and Amusement

The kinds of play are pretty well determined by the young people themselves. It is to be hoped that they will never indulge in some of the osculatory games that their seniors once thought proper. It is well that the "fashion changeth." I have never suspected that it is my appointed task as a minister of the gospel to dictate to the present generation the kind of harmless recreation they shall enjoy. Play is play; and time, place, and company being proper, there is little choice in the kinds of it. Rolling wooden balls on the lawn and calling it croquet, and rolling ivory balls on a table and calling it pool or billiards, are both in themselves equally innocent amusements. But whether a rural Church should install a pool-table in its parlors depends on local conditions. You might be giving a young boy his first lesson in what would lead him to a pool-table in a saloon. On the other hand, it may be that all of those young fellows are playing pool in places where everything that is fine and clean about them will be polluted. I once had an experience with a class of young boys who were

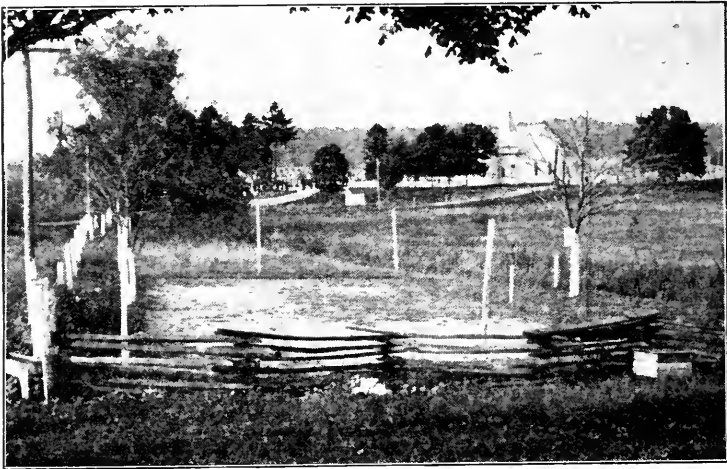
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in just that danger. We had experienced some difficulty in holding them in Sunday school, chiefly because we failed to secure the proper teacher for them. In desperation, I temporarily took the class. When they asked me to teach them permanently I agreed to do so on certain conditions, one of which was that they would come to the manse on Wednesday night and play pool, and bring their Bibles for a half hour of Bible study. I not only had no difficulty in holding the boys in the class, but I discovered that I did not need to teach them any new tricks about the game of pool. I discovered also that every one of them, save one, had learned pool in places where he ought not to have been. These were boys of the age of fourteen, an exceptionally fine lot of fellows, some of them already members of the Church. Either we, as Churches and Young Men's Christian Associations, will take the lead and furnish such righteous recreation as this generation elects as its amusement, or the saloons and gambling-halls will do this work for us. Local conditions, however, must determine the policy of each Church. Every man must be his own conscience.

In the purely open country among our farmers' boys the summer recreation is our national game of baseball. Very often there is no ground in the neighborhood where the boys can play. The result is that the boys are tempted to go away from the community for their sport, and, almost as a rule, they do so on Sunday. What could be worse? What could be more demoralizing? Every country neighborhood

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blessed with nine or more boys ought to provide itself with a ball-ground, and the Church and the whole community ought to take a lively interest in it, keep it in order, witness its games, and hurrah for its own boys. If the Church will also add a tennis court, so that the girls as well as the boys may play a game of refinement and of recreation, it will add to its religious efficiency.



A COMMUNITY TENNIS COURT AT A RURAL PARSONAGE

There is another and larger means of recreation which the Church in the village or open country may well foster. This is a kind of field-day for the whole countryside—a revival of the old Olympic games and festivities—a day of out-of-door sports: picnic, shooting-match, ball game, running match, and a popular address on some phase of agriculture or rural social life. Such a gathering insures that for one day in

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midsummer the whole countryside shall forget its cares, ignore its work, disdain even its sterner duties of life, as it unharnesses its youthful spirit, and out in God's fields takes a merry-making, a day of diversion and fellowship, of fun and laughter. It helps to create the community spirit, and may lead to more ambitious undertakings—a local fair or a course of lectures in the interests of agriculture and rural betterment.

The Monotony of Winter on the Farm

But the winter, the tedious winter on the farm! Its nights so long and cold and dark, so different from the light and airy gayeties, the theater-goings, the concerts, the dances of the city! What shall we do with them? How shall we at once banish their tediousness, fill them with joy and make them contribute to the mental and spiritual worth of boy and girl, of father and mother? The occasional card party and dance break the monotony of country life in the winter. Our young people, both of city and country, often engage in these questionable amusements, simply because nothing better is provided. Surely the Church can give to that same life something that is better worth while—a literary society, with social features; a current-topic club, meeting from house to house; a class in sociology, including the study of social conditions and needs of their own community, or a Bible-study class, which shall make its lessons effective in the life of to-day. Whatever form our recreational effort may take, we must see to it that

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our young people have a reasonably good time, and are genuinely interested in the local enterprise.

More efficient than any of these social gatherings is the men's meeting, held in the church or its parlors. There never need be a poor meeting, never an ordinary one; always a big one, full of good things, brimming over with richness. Put into it education and religion, laughter and fellowship, song and story. Let it feed the whole nature. If the educational features consist of instruction in subjects of vital local concern, especially in agriculture and the rural institutions and social activities, the interest of the men will be awakened at once. There is no topic of such absorbing interest at the present time as this of the farm. A lecture on the care and tillage of the soil, or how to make the old apple-orchard pay, or on the extermination of weeds, or on birds, will always draw a crowd of men and boys, especially if it is followed by a social repast and a merrymaking.

Such gatherings not only banish some of the monotony of the winter, they make our boys enthusiastic for farming. You know that the brightest boys and girls used to flee from the farm, because their minds and souls were starving there. There was little in farm or neighborhood to quicken their enthusiasm, to give them zest and zeal, little for the mind to study, little for the soul to love; no variety, no fascinations, no scientific experiments, few relaxations in the summer, and all relaxation in the winter, and almost no absorbing and joyous interests. It is the mission of the village and rural Church to make

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life in the rural districts worth living—rich in mental and spiritual stimulations. These are the Church's higher and larger duties toward recreation—to give to its community something that shall re-create the whole man, the soul no less than the muscles, enrich life on the farm, and make it, as it should be, a potential force in the social and spiritual guidance for its country boys and girls, who are to be the scientific and successful farmers and farmers' wives of the future.

CHAPTER XIV

The Work of Women's Organizations in the Rural Church

BY ANNA B. TAFT,

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the United States of America, New York.*

THE strongest element in a weak country Church is often its women's organization. It may not be that the organization as such is well constructed or established. Many times such a backbone as a constitution is a thing unknown. But it is true that this is a dependable group, standing the stress and strain and struggle, time and again saving the situation. Like woman herself, it is to be depended upon in an emergency and able to tide over a difficult or impossible situation.



MISS TAFT

The Ladies' Aid Society a Type

The woman's society of most vital concern in the country Church is that one frequently called "The Ladies' Aid Society." There are, to be sure, flourishing missionary organizations in country Churches of

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every denomination. In proportion to the wealth of members, the largest and most generous gifts come into the missionary treasuries from the rural Church: gifts that mean sacrifice and self-denial far in excess of the generous offerings from the larger Churches. It is not, however, the missionary societies that are our chief interest, because they have not the same significance in relation to community conditions as has "The Ladies' Aid Society," unless definite local work is done under their auspices. In some cases the missionary society is organized to carry on all the benevolent and social work of the Church, and has the three distinct divisions of home, foreign, and local work. When this is so, the "local work" division is that which corresponds to "The Ladies' Aid Society."

The same type of organization flourishes under many names. Sometimes it is "The Women's Benevolent Association;" again, "The Women's Society;" but most often it is simply "The Ladies' Aid." By whatever name it may be called, this is the band of women in the Church that does things. It is the organization that frequently raises the money to paint the church and repair the parsonage. Sometimes it comes to the rescue of a bewildered Church treasurer, and hands over what is lacking on the minister's pittance of a salary at the end of the year. In its quiet and unostentatious way it feeds the hungry and clothes the naked in the community. It is the truest exponent of practical social service that can be found in the country.

For example, in a certain small village having one

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Church, where the minister is paid a salary of \$600 a year, one-third of that amount is contributed annually by "The Ladies' Aid Society." This money is raised by a multitudinous array of suppers and fairs. These have a far larger value than merely the raising of the money. The suppers bring together all the people of the community, many of whom never enter the church; and the fairs, however one may question this method of Church support, at least bring together the women with their sewing for months preceding this small event in social assembly. In spite of this yearly drain upon their finances, this thrifty band of women keep a good balance on hand for emergencies. There have been no repairs made on church, chapel, or parsonage in the last ten years that have not been paid for by this women's organization. It has also a committee to look after the poor of the village, and there is no destitute family in that community, whatever the Church affiliations or lack of them, that it has not tended and cared for and tided over many a hard place in its history. This true and simple illustration is no great exception to the rule. With varying details, this society is duplicated again and again in the country Churches throughout the land.

I have in mind a union chapel that is ministered to by four pastors of different denominations, each taking one Sunday afternoon in the month. The only unifying force in that mixed chapel organization is its women's society. This conducts not only local benevolent work, but also what little social life there is in a destitute and unattractive village.

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To have so large a share in financing and carrying on the Church is not always a good thing. It suggests too much the woman as the supporter of the family. In many cases she is doing the men's job, and taking upon her shoulders a part of the Church responsibilities that should belong to the men. For this reason her self-sacrifice has not always a developing influence upon the Church. Yet the fact remains that in many places the Church would go out of existence were it not for this support.

It was found, in surveying rural Church conditions in three counties in Indiana, that of the Churches having a resident pastor, 84 per cent have a "Ladies' Aid Society." Such an organization is found in only 31 per cent of Churches without a resident pastor. Whether it is this women's organization that makes possible the supporting of a resident pastor, or whether it is merely an indication of a prosperous and efficient Church, it would be hard to say; but there is no question but that the reflex influence of the "Ladies' Aid Society" on the rural Church is very marked.

Because of the great importance of women's organizations in the country Church, it is a matter of earnest consideration how they may become more efficient and what is their best contribution in solving the country Church problem.

The Women's Organization a Community Enterprise

I would suggest, first of all and most important, that it become a community enterprise. The group making up "The Ladies' Aid Society" is too often a

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small club of the righteous. It is comprised of the saints, the thoroughly worthy, the fine Christian women within the fold of the Church. Although this ministry may reach out to the needy in the locality, it seldom does so in order to bring those women into the organization. Its service is merely to minister to a temporary affliction or necessity. Time after time I have found that where a village is surrounded by a farming population, only a very small proportion of the membership of the women's organization is drawn from the farmers' wives. Occasionally, where a mother has lived in this locality for years and is a member of the Church, she is in this group; but there is an exclusiveness that prevents the coming in of the poorer people who are living, perhaps, only temporarily as tenants on the farm. This is not so true where the incoming family purchases a home and expects to live there permanently. Because of this very distinction and the ignoring of the transient element, there has grown up in many localities a social caste which makes "The Ladies' Aid Society" as exclusive in rural sections as an aristocratic women's club in a town or city.

There is great possibility of democracy in women's clubs and societies. Common work and common interest makes it possible for all to mingle on terms of equality. This has been proved time and again in many organizations, more often in the larger towns than in the small hamlets and villages, where the social lines, though fewer, are more marked.

In the same Church before cited as an example,

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there was started a home department of the Sunday school to reach the outlying districts. This gained a membership of about thirty women, only one of whom ever attended a meeting of "The Ladies' Aid Society," or had any part in its work. There is nothing that brings a group of people more closely together with greater sympathy than common work; and one of the best things that the "Ladies' Aid Society" can do for the local Church is to get into its active membership women who have never before had a part in such an organization, and who have very little interest in community life. With the increase of tenant farming and the tendency that we are facing of a shifting population, every tie that can hold a family to a locality is important; and few things will help to keep a woman where she is better than to have her family sympathy enlarge itself to the bounds of a community.

The Enlargement of the Field of Service

My second suggestion is that the field of service of "The Ladies' Aid Society" should be greatly enlarged. To have suppers and fairs to raise money for the Church may be a good work; to help the needy in a locality in time of emergency is better; but there still exists a large field of community improvement rarely, if ever, touched by this social service organ of the local Church. In an efficient country Church—that of Rev. Matthew B. McNutt, at DuPage, Ill.—the women's organization is known as "The Woman's Missionary Society," and has in its care all of the

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activities of the women in the Church. Once a month this society discusses some practical problem of common interest to the home. Such topics as "The Care and Feeding of Children," "A Balanced Ration," "How to Get Rid of the House-fly," and similar ones are especially popular. Bulletins are secured from agricultural departments, and much help is given by the members in a free discussion of a common problem. This same organization has found it of particular value to hold all meetings at the homes rather than at the church. Living in a farming territory, with the houses at some distance, an all-day session is common, and the men are sometimes invited to the evening meal. Another interesting feature of this same society is what is called "cleaning-up day," when the women gather at the church and the spring house-cleaning for the church and chapel is done in the form of a "bee," with much jollification and a delightful lightening of a heavy task.

A women's organization in another Church has under its charge the question of village improvement, beautifying of streets, of cross-roads, and corners. By its energy, a small remote village secured street lights and housed a public library. Much of the work done in New England under the name of a Village Improvement Association was undertaken by this band of women as a direct part of their Church work.

There may well be fostered by "The Ladies' Aid Society" the study of such practical subjects as rural hygiene and sanitation. This is an important factor in the health of the country and needs especial atten-

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tion, because of the lack of adequate public boards to look after the health of the community, the question of the disposal of sewerage, proper ventilation of houses, and whatever public buildings the community boasts.

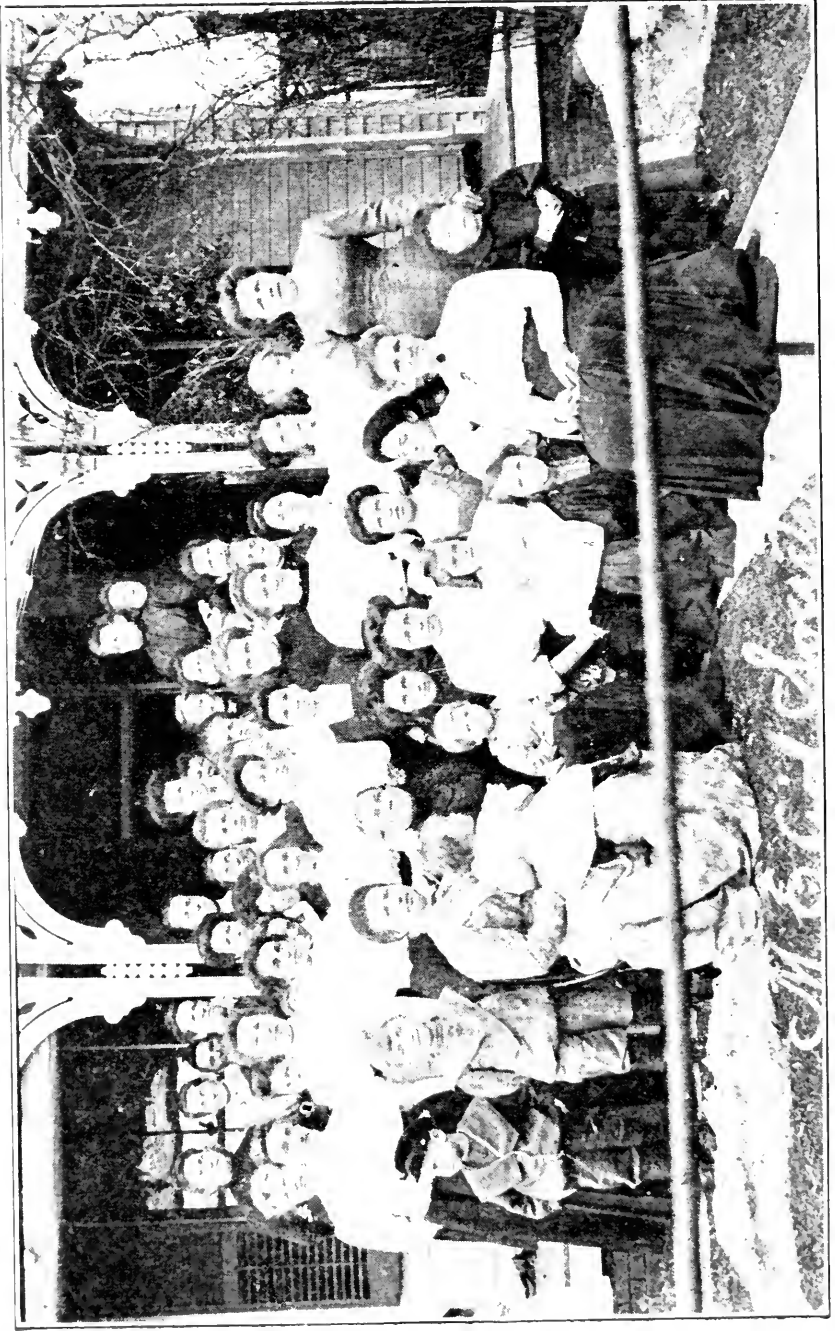
Another subject of vital interest to the women of the community is the question of the school and the social and recreational life of young people. Where there is no other organization promoting this, it would be well for this group of mothers and advisory maiden aunts to take up this important question as a part of its work. In this way the younger women of the community can be brought into the society and find a work much to their taste.

The Rural Problem a Unit

Increasingly, we are realizing that the problem of the Church and of the community is one, and if the women's organizations can be induced to emphasize the needs of the community as a whole and to grapple with this larger problem with the intensity and success with which they are swinging their part of the Church work, they will be a very large factor in the solving of the country Church problem.

A Typical Rural Ladies' Aid Society

The picture on the next page is that of one of the liveliest rural Ladies' Aid Societies in Ohio. Nearly all the women, both young and old, in the township are either active members or are incidentally associated with the organization. Its meetings are community



THE LADIES' AID SOCIETY. THE BAND OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH THAT DOES THINGS

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affairs, and its activities interest the whole countryside. While the membership of the society is composed mostly of the members of a particular Church, yet any woman wishing to help work for the Church is admitted.

This particular society has a very interesting round of regular activities. Regular "business" meetings are held each month. The "quarterly tea" occurs four times yearly, and is one of the really big events in the social life of the community. The society is divided into four groups, and one of these entertains the other members of the society at each of the quarterly meetings. A high-class literary program, which includes readings, speaking, and music, is always rendered. The literary program is followed with refreshments. To defray the expenses of these meetings, each member is assessed twenty-five cents a year.

Socials and bazaars are held "every now and then." Carpet-rags are donated to the society for making rugs and carpets; and out of old and odd pieces of cloth, comforts and quilts are made. Embroidered pillow-cases, aprons, and various other fancy and practical articles are given, all of which are manufactured in the homes of the community.

Very practical means are provided for the industrial education of the younger members of the society. The entire organization will go to any home in the community and sew for one afternoon for fifty cents, and those members who do not attend this sewing-bee are fined five cents each. The society conducts sewing-bees of its own to make quilts, which are sold

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at \$5 each, and other articles. It knots comforts for fifty cents each, or, if desired, will make the whole comfort.

The society maintains a birthday fund. Each member is expected to pay into this fund the sum of five cents on each of her birthdays. Surely this is a small sum to give as a thank-offering for life, health, and happiness. A flower fund is also maintained, for which each member is assessed one cent a month. The money is used to purchase flowers for the sick and the dead of the community.

The society pays yearly \$50 of the preacher's salary, pays the janitor of the church, aids in purchasing new Church and Sunday school equipment, and contributes toward paying for the insurance and incidental repairs.

Although the regular activities of the society are numerous, all of which are well adapted to the development of the social life of the community, many special functions are held as "side issues." Last summer the members formed a ladies' baseball team and played a team made up of women and girls from two neighboring communities. The occasion at which the game was played was a countryside picnic given by the three rural Churches interested in the chief amusement. Taffy-pullings are sometimes given during the winter. All persons who attend the pulling are expected to bring a pound of sugar. To these events the men folks are sometimes invited to share the pleasantries.

The president of the society says: "We once

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made a silk quilt, fan pattern. Each member was supposed to make a block out of silk or satin and solicit names to be put thereon at ten cents each. These blocks were then joined together and worked in fancy stitches. The quilt was afterwards sold at auction to the highest bidder, and brought over a hundred dollars."

CHAPTER XV

Rural Sunday School Efficiency

BY L. O. HARTMAN, PH. D.,

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THE welfare of the rural community depends not simply on material prosperity, but also upon those real yet indefinable idealistic elements represented by the home, the school, and the Church. Without these elements there can be no permanent upbuilding of country life and no real prosperity, even in terms of material success. We are told that the three most successful classes of farmers are the Mormons, the Pennsylvania Germans, and the Scotch Presbyterians; and in each



DR. HARTMAN

case the community life is built around the institution of the Church. On the other hand, many illustrations could be given showing the disastrous effect upon rural life brought on by the decadence of domestic and religious ideals. In these cases the element of permanency perishes with the loss of moral

RURAL SUNDAY SCHOOL EFFICIENCY

and spiritual inspirations, and we have on hand the temporary program of land speculations, renters, and tenants, all of which spells ultimate rural failure. So the Church appears to be vitally essential to the highest and best country life.

Back of the Church, and part of it, is another institution without which the Church itself would become weak and inefficient. That institution is the Sunday school. Its importance in this respect is made very evident when we contemplate some well-proved statistics: 95 per cent of the ministers came directly from the Sunday school; likewise, 90 per cent of the best Church-workers; while an analysis of Church membership shows unmistakably that at least 85 per cent of them come from this same source. The only denominations that have shown substantial increases in membership during the past decade have been those where the importance of the Sunday school has been strongly stressed. More and more thinking men are declaring that the future progress and success of the Church depends upon careful religious education; and this is especially true in the country, where opportunity presents itself on every hand for thorough religious education and practical social service.

1. Obstacles to the Progress of the Rural Sunday School

Certain obstacles, however, present themselves to prevent the highest efficiency in the rural Sunday school. Primarily, the country community is, of course, naturally conservative. Nowhere is this con-

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servatism better illustrated than in the conduct and management of the Sunday school. Old ideals of religious education, old methods of organization and instruction, old systems of lessons all prevail in the majority of our rural Sunday schools. The institution seems to be "stuck in a rut." "We have always done it so-and-so," is the stock argument against innovation of any kind; and until this unreasoning conservatism is broken down for the sake of better methods and higher efficiency, the rural Sunday school can not embrace its larger opportunity.

Another obstacle in the way of progress lies in the adoption of "penny" policies. Cheapness is the governing idea in too many cases where there is a strong call for the best in the way of lesson helps, of buildings adapted to proper instruction, and of the larger opportunity for community betterment.

This leads to the thought of another obstacle, the narrow view of the purpose of the Sunday school. For generations the prevalent idea of Sunday school work was embraced in the thought of a half or three-quarters of an hour of instruction on Sunday by the question-and-answer method. The Sunday school has been dominated in the past by the thought that it existed to indoctrinate the minds of its members. The larger notion of religious education, embracing not only the interests of the intellectual, but also those of the volitional, the emotional, the social, and even the physical lives of the people, has been, for the most part, a foreign one. We need to get rid of

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the narrow vein in favor of the larger one if the rural school is really to help the community.

Still another obstacle in the way of the country Sunday school is that of inefficient leadership.

2. Educational Efficiency

Turning now to the consideration of the opportunity lying before the country Sunday school for real helpfulness to the community, the first great demand appears to be that of a true educational efficiency. The public schools are quite generally prevented from doing the real work of religious education in any large or vital way. If it is to be done at all, the task must be undertaken by the Sunday school, and inasmuch as the principles of both secular and religious education are at bottom one, the Sunday school must be organized for its work as carefully as are the public schools for its task of daily instruction. To do this, the meaning of religious education ought to be well understood. It should have to do with the enlargement and betterment of all life. If we think of it narrowly, as simply related to the limited intellectual apprehension of abstract truth, then a Sunday school ruled by such a conception will fall far short of its opportunity; but if the school be dominated by the idea that religious education has to do with the careful training of all the many sides of life and with the preparation for real service to men here upon earth in the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God, then we shall have a truly efficient institution.

The first step to the end must be a trained teach-

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ing force. The unprepared "volunteer" teacher will not do. Nor can any amount of Christian good-intention or even extended "experience" make up for the lack of systematic training. The teacher ought to be a real Bible student, not simply an adept in the preparation of "next Sunday's lesson;" one who has mastered the spirit of the Bible, who knows the conditions under which it was written, and the larger purpose of the various writings. He should be an expert in the study of the developing minds under his care; he should know the best methods of teaching; he should be prepared to teach elsewhere than in the class-room, by the methods of play, recreation, etc., between Sundays. A training class for Sunday school teachers is a possibility in every rural school. In a little Indiana circuit there is, in one of the Sunday schools, a training class of four women. They had no one to teach the class, so they took turns in teaching themselves, and all this under the difficult circumstances of assembling regularly in spite of domestic duties and time crowded with the strenuous demands of farm life. The Methodist Episcopal Church provides a series of correspondence courses especially adapted to rural Sunday school teachers.¹ This plan has many obvious advantages. Each teacher may take his course directly, without dependence upon a class organization; he is not required to complete the work in any given time, but may use his spare moments in preparing the lessons. The whole course is

¹For literature on Correspondence Courses write The Board of Sunday Schools, 1018-1024 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill.

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conducted by mail, and a diploma is awarded upon the completion of the work. Thousands of rural teachers are to-day preparing for service through this correspondence system.

Lesson Systems.—It is also important, if the country Sunday school is to be a school in fact as well as in name, that the lesson system utilized should be one in harmony with the best educational principles. The prevalent system to-day is the one known as the "uniform" system. It was conceived and inaugurated for the purpose of systematic Bible study, and arranged so as to complete the entire Book in seven years. The whole school, irrespective of age or attainment, is supposed to study the same lesson on a given Sunday. "One lesson for all, everybody studying the same lesson," represents in substance the uniform lesson system. It had, and has yet, a strong appeal, but the idea is largely an abstract one. We seem to be more concerned, on this plan, to complete the study of the Bible according to system than we are about the religious education of the child. The beginner in the Sunday school has not the capacity to understand, nor any particular interest in, the passages intended to explain and expound the intricacies of the theological doctrine of the atonement, much as such a theme might perhaps interest an adult Bible class. So, while the uniform lessons have been largely used, and many things may be said in their favor, yet from the standpoint of the child's growing mind we find that they are not adapted to the purpose of efficient religious education. The new

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“graded” lessons, however, are based on the idea that the child’s mind grows, and that it grows by certain well-defined stages, which present particular characteristics. Therefore, by the graded plan we start with the child rather than with the Book, selecting and preparing lessons out of the Bible and from other sources, such as Church history, history of missions, nature study, etc., which shall be especially adapted to the capacity, interest, and stage of development of the child. Then we have not “one lesson for all,” but many different lessons for the different grades. Every rural school ought to be thus carefully graded, and some good system of graded lessons, such as the International, installed in the interest of real educational efficiency.

Organization.—It can be successfully demonstrated that the average Sunday school in the country is only reaching about half its constituency. There are literally hundreds of thousands of children in the United States untouched by Sunday school influence. For example, in New England alone there are 800,000 children outside the Sunday schools. Similar conditions prevail all over the country. So the Sunday school ought to enlist and influence a much larger constituency than it now does. If it is to do this, much attention ought to be given to organization, especially to those departments designed to reach those who are quite generally untouched by Sunday school influence. The cradle-roll, the home department, and the adult Bible class can be made more than to double the enrollment of the average rural

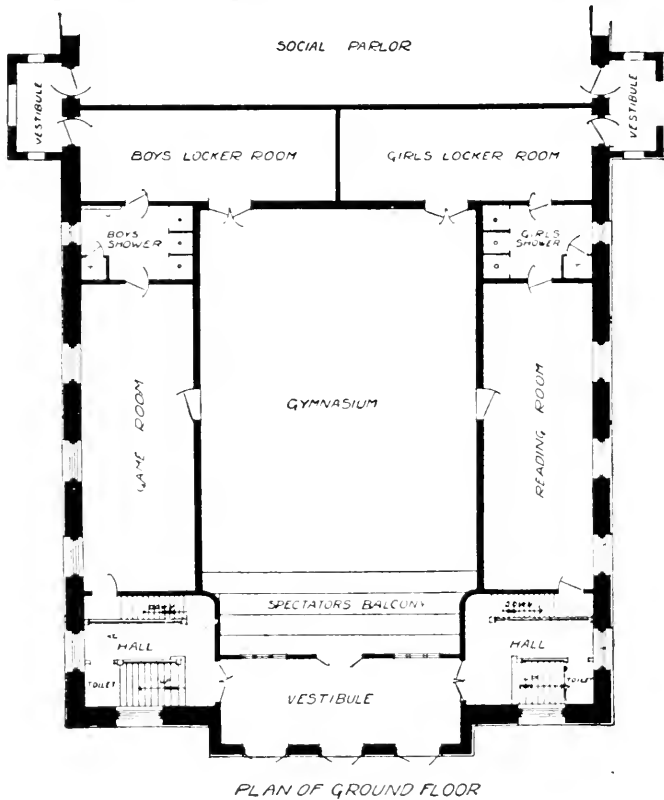
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school; and these departments will do more to project religious influence into the home and week-day life of the community than any amount of mere perfunctory visitation. Instance after instance could be cited where the little babe whose name appeared on a "cradle-roll" became the means of enlisting parents in Church attendance, which afterwards led to higher ideals in the home and larger, richer life. Likewise, the home department has linked many an indifferent and careless soul to the Church and has given him a larger conception of the meaning and purpose of life. Every one knows of the far-reaching results wrought, especially with men, through the adult Bible class department. The school proper should, of course, also be well organized by departments and grades, as indicated above. Likewise, classes of young people should be organized for social and recreative purposes, as will be indicated later in this chapter. Much also ought to be made of special days—such as Rally Day, Christmas, Easter, Children's Day, etc. For these occasions most careful preparation should be made. The community should be thoroughly enlisted, and an excellent program rendered. Parents and children can then be brought together in a social and religious atmosphere whose influence will be remembered and felt for months and even years throughout the entire neighborhood.

Architecture and Equipment.—The average rural school sorely lacks equipment. One room in the country church serves for the preaching service, the prayer-meeting service, the missionary meeting, and

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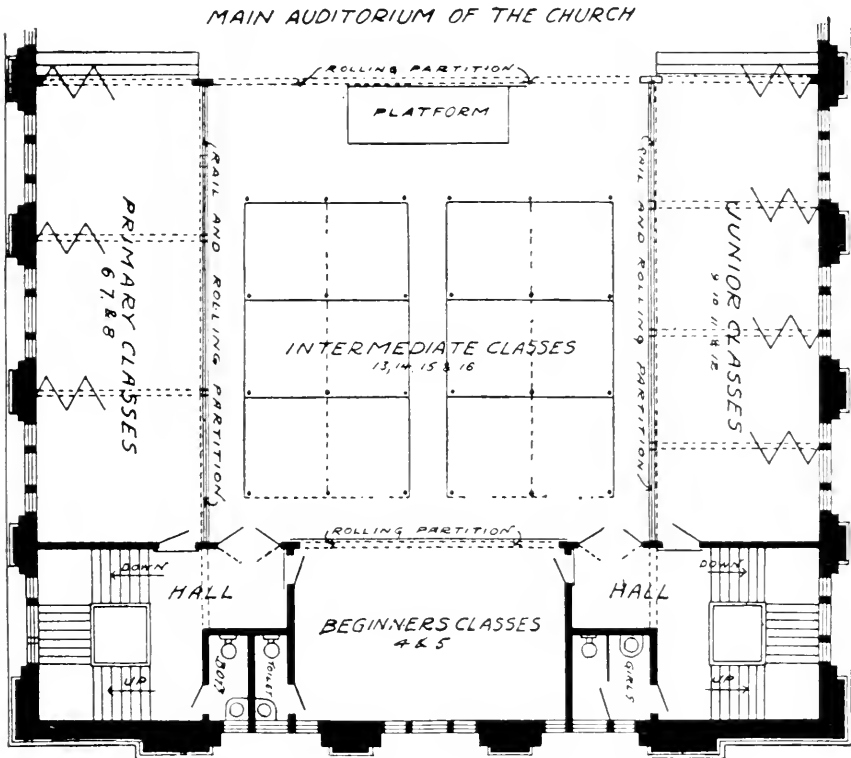
the social affairs. The Sunday school must also use this one room. This is a severe handicap to the best work. Separateness is essential to real teaching, especially if the school be a graded one, with the graded lessons in use. We present herewith an ideal arrangement for a Sunday school building of the modern type, especially adapted to the needs of our day:



Of course it is not always possible to secure an ideal Sunday school building, such as the one indicated in the sketches herewith shown, but with some modifi-

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cations, this idea can be carried out. Where such a building is not at all possible, a system of curtains and poles may be installed in the country church, and thus the necessary division made. This plan

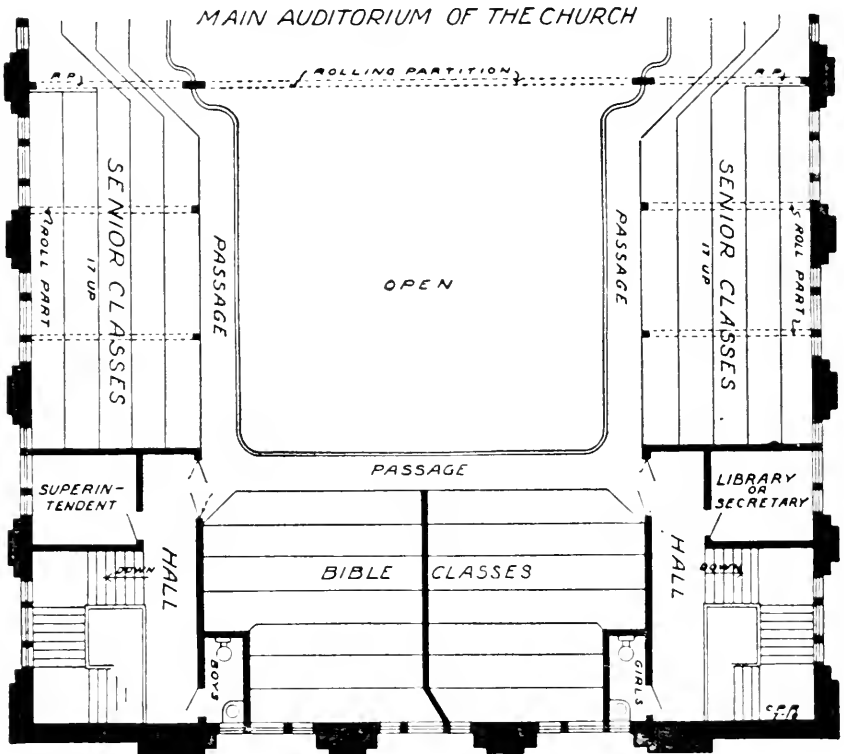


PLAN OF MAIN FLOOR

has been successfully carried out in many places, and the scheme has not interfered with other services, as the system can be so arranged that the parts may be easily adjusted and removed within a short space of

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time. Blackboards, tables, sand-maps, wall-maps, charts, and models will all add to the efficiency of religious education in these days when so much of the work is done through the eye and the hand. But



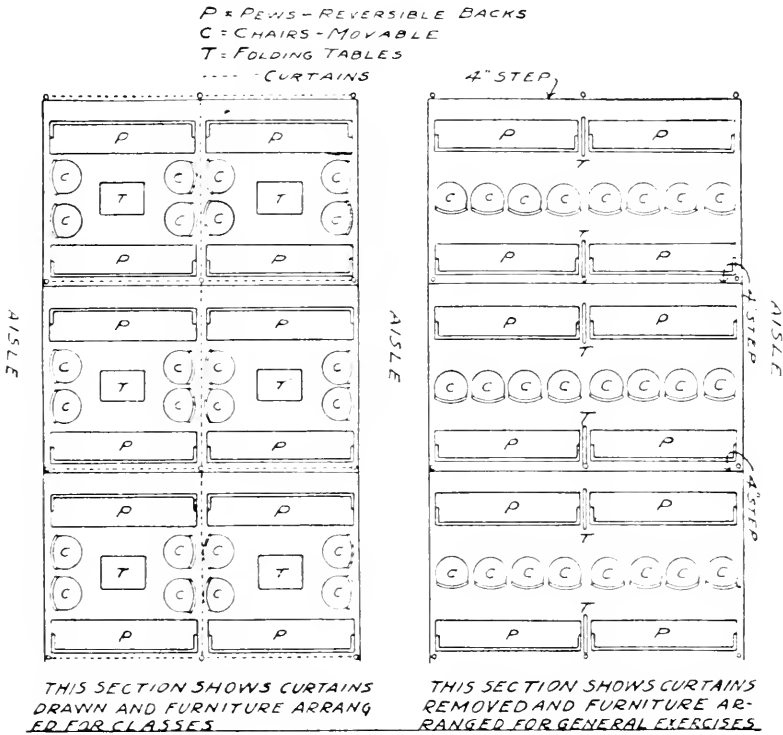
PLAN OF GALLERY

good equipment, even though it may require a larger expenditure than the school of the old days required, is certainly essential, if the Sunday school is to do its part for the larger welfare of the community.

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3. Social Efficiency

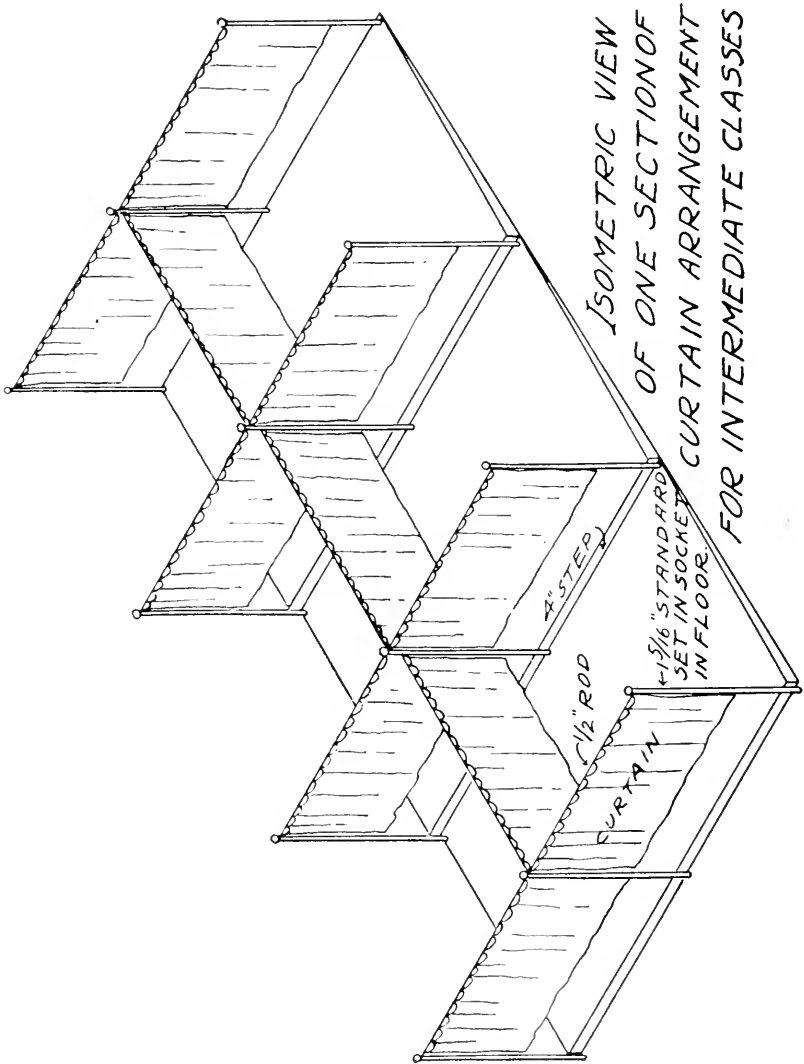
The first great responsibility of the rural Sunday school to the community is represented by this matter of careful organization and religious instruction; but



DETAIL OF ARRANGEMENT OF INTER-MEDIATE CLASSES

it should not be a religious instruction which is to end with the Sabbath day or the individual. It should have a larger outlook and purpose. Too long has the narrowly individualistic conception of religion dominated our thought. We have been greatly concerned

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with "the hereafter" and with the necessary preparation for this future state. Likewise we have thought much about our own personal salvation. Now while there is doubtless a world of truth in this old individualism, and while we ought never to lose sight of our own personal spiritual responsibility, yet the very progress of the world is forcing Christian people to the larger interpretation of the meaning of the religious life. We are seeing how interrelated are all the interests of mankind, and how everything we think or do has a bearing on the welfare of others. The larger practical responsibility of the Christian to the community demands the consideration of all who are earnestly striving to obey the Master. So the Sunday school has a responsibility larger than that of one day, larger also than the needs of just one side of life. It must become a real ministering agency, if it is to fulfill its true purpose. The modern tendency to class organization is one of the most hopeful indications of the realization of this social responsibility. The boys' and girls' clubs and the adult Bible class organizations indicate that the Sunday school is to become helpful in a larger sense than ever before. Some of the activities possible through such class organizations might be mentioned. These illustrations will serve to indicate general lines of service to the rural community, and will remind Sunday school leaders of some of the local possibilities in their own neighborhoods.

Larger Friendliness.—First ought to be mentioned the chance which presents itself to the Sunday school

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to contribute to the larger friendliness of the community. This opportunity was met to quite a large extent in the old days. Just now, because of the stern competition of business life, the multiplied attractions, and the growth of population, it has been somewhat lost to our vision. The old-fashioned "singing-school," "spelling-school," "the husking-bee," the "barn-raising"—all represented social gatherings of immense community value. Some of these or similar gatherings could be resurrected with profit. Who does not remember the debating club of the days gone by, and the long hours of argument, with its "Honorable Judges" and its "*Resolved*, that fire is more destructive than water?" On such occasions men and women came to know each other intimately, and the social instincts found wholesome expression. Unfortunately in our own day such gatherings are passing, and such expression is not so common as heretofore. And yet the instinct still remains, and nowhere so insistent as in adolescent boys and girls. So strong is this craving for social intercourse that it sometimes finds a way to realize itself in the low dance, or in the gatherings of the saloon or the street. Surely there is a high call for the Sunday school through its organization, especially of the intermediate department, to meet this God-given craving, and make the Sunday school a center for gatherings that will satisfy and promote the larger friendliness of the whole community. So can rural life be made more attractive, and the youth be induced to remain on the farm.

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Recreative Activities.—It is a ministry to the body as well as to the soul that confronts the rural Sunday school. Indeed, it is difficult to separate body and soul in these days, when we are learning how intimately the one is bound up with the other. The Sunday school should, therefore, have something to do in guiding the various activities that refresh and revive the body and give new life to the mind. It is remarkable how much even a poorly-equipped gymnasium will do to this end. In a certain Sunday school such a "gymnasium" was provided for a boys' club. It had just a punching-bag, and the room provided was only about 10 x 30 feet, and yet that little room with the punching-bag kept twenty boys interested and provided satisfying recreation for them for many months. There are the out-door activities, such as tennis, golf, hockey, baseball, swimming, hickory-nutting, and a hundred other kinds of play and recreation. It may seem a far cry from all this to the Sunday school, but we are learning how important it is that the child should learn to play—how important even for the spiritual side of his life and the larger development of a rounded character. Some State Legislatures even have taken up this matter of proper provision for the play-life of childhood, and have enacted laws pertaining to this matter.

The opportunity to guide young life into useful pursuits also presents itself, and these likewise may very well be classed as "recreative activities," for such work can be made so attractive as truly to inspire. Too frequently the farmer boy or girl has

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known only slavish drudgery; too seldom has he known the real joy of self-expression and accomplishment in work. The sewing-school, basket-making, corn-raising, garden-growing, etc., represent some of the possibilities. A Sunday school teacher can do real teaching as he instructs each boy and girl how to co-operate with God in growing the vegetables in his or her own particular plot of ground.

Community Improvements.—The Sunday school can become a most important factor in helping to mold public sentiment for needed improvements. The adult Bible class, through its organization and committees, is especially fitted to help express the will of God for humanity in such efforts as the construction of good roads, the erection of public library or hospital buildings, etc. The pastor and leading laymen of a rural Church in Ohio spent several years agitating the matter of better roads in their county, until at last the people have awakened to the need and begin to see what such improvement might mean. Recently provision was made for an expression of sentiment by ballot, and the improvement is now assured. No better service can be done than this of helping to make the country a pleasant, convenient, and healthful place in which to live.

Reform Movements.—Likewise the adult Bible class, representing the moral conscience of the people, ought to be found active in originating and carrying on much-needed reform movements. In a little rural town in Illinois the teacher of an adult Bible class, through his organization, was instrumental in starting

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an investigation of political corruption, which has been followed during the past few years with intense interest throughout the entire United States. In a small town in Ohio an adult Bible class of one hundred men changed the political aspect of an entire community, because the party which had been in power for a generation refused to throw off the influence of a corrupt bossism. In many another rural community the adult classes of men have fought victoriously against intemperance, gambling, etc.

Social Problems.—A prominent organized class in Northern Ohio has given itself for a number of months to the study and practical solution of the problems in its own neighborhood. This, too, is a high type of service. Let the Sunday school ascertain through its class organization what problems are affecting the community. To this end a careful social survey as to conditions of Church membership, child population, crime, poverty, etc., ought to be made, that a first-hand understanding of the local conditions may make clear what remedies are required. The social evil, for example, seems to permeate every neighborhood. It is present, not only in urban life, but in rural life as well. Lack of proper education in this matter is, to a large extent, responsible for its widespread prevalence. If the Sunday school would earnestly undertake to carry on a real campaign of education in this matter, through the parents and in the school itself, much might be done to overcome false modesty and criminal neglect in this respect, and at least a partial solution could be attained. The problem of poverty,

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too, needs to be studied—not merely with the idea of some temporary, immediate relief, but as to its deeper causes and the possibilities of permanent cure. Through the social survey the exact conditions as to poverty are to be ascertained. Then, through agitation, friendliness, advice, etc., let a real attempt be made to remove the causes and re-establish self-respect. In some communities the immigration problem is being solved by the Sunday school. One case is conspicuous. A Wisconsin pastor in a little village found upon his arrival a weak, struggling Church in the midst of a community of Swiss immigrants. He comprehended what was needed after a careful study of the situation, and at once began to enlist the immigrant children. With such success has he done this that not only the children, but also the older people, have been attracted to this Church. The result is that so far as that community is concerned, the immigration problem is being solved through the Sunday school. The children, and in large measure the adults, are being Americanized and Christianized. There are such opportunities as these, and many also of other kinds in every community, which are calling to-day to the Church and Sunday school.

The crux of the rural problem is with the young life. Educate, train, Christianize—that, and the great question is more than half solved. The Sunday school is the important and strategic institution for this work, but unless the task is undertaken earnestly, and the very best provision made and the most approved methods utilized, all efforts will fail.

CHAPTER XVI

The Work of the County Y. M. C. A. in Building Rural Manhood

By B. R. RYALL, A. B., M. SC.,

State Secretary of County Work, Ohio Y. M. C. A., Columbus.

THE maintenance of a strong, virile manhood in rural America is absolutely essential to the future welfare of our country. This manhood is threatened. The findings of the recent Ohio rural life survey have only added to previous evidence, and show rural conditions to be more serious than even those best informed have been willing to admit. Despite the assertions of some of our city friends to the contrary, the country boy has been, and will continue to be, the backbone of city



SECRETARY RYALL

life. It is not difficult to see, then, the need of a strong constructive program and agency to build up rural life. Such a program is needed, in the first place, for rural life in and of itself: in the second place, that the country boys who go to the city—and we must justly expect some to go—shall go with the

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right kind of moral and physical fiber to stand up under the terrific strain of modern city life.

1. The Field of the County Y. M. C. A.

It is in this important and interesting work that the rural or county Young Men's Christian Association is engaged. The field consists of more than 12,000,000 boys and young men who are living in the open country or in towns of 4,000 or less. It includes more than 60 per cent of the boys and young men of the nation. The Young Men's Christian Association seeks to unite these young men, for the purpose of improving their own conditions physically, socially, mentally, economically, and spiritually, and of giving expression to these improvements in community life.

In 1872, in DuPage Township, Will County, Illinois, Robert Weidensall, the pioneer and seer of Young Men's Christian Association work, organized the first rural Young Men's Christian Association. Soon after another was organized in Mason County, Illinois, under volunteer leadership. These organizations did not live long, but their experience gave Weidensall the foundation upon which to build future rural work. While this organization has since made a steady growth, it was not until 1906, however, that the International Young Men's Christian Association Committee recognized it as a regular department of Young Men's Christian Association work. Out of the trials and testings of a pioneer work there has come, after thirty-five years' experience, a now rapidly-growing organization, which enlists in sixty-

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one counties two thousand and more leaders and committeemen, and twenty-five thousand boys who are engaged in its activities. In a very humble way, the movement is glad to pass on to others, co-workers in this field, some of the experiences of these thirty-five years.

The unit of operation is the political county; hence the term, "County Work." The unit of organization is a group of business men called the county committee, who are responsible for the extension of the work throughout the county. These men are men of large influence in the county, capable either of financing the work themselves, or better, of commanding the financial support of others. They are men of such caliber that they can sit at one time as a county educational commission, at another as a county health commission, at another as a committee under whose leadership the various religious denominations may freely unite in community or county-wide movements; at other times they may be called on to act as a commission to consider the juvenile problems of the county.

2. The Organization and Methods of Work

A vital factor in the success of this work is the county secretary, an expert retained by the county committee to act as its executive agent on the field. This man must be one of large vision and broad training. He must be a man whose vision has not been seared by the glitter and glare of the city; a man who loves the country in and of itself. He must

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be one who is not afraid to break away, when necessary, from the conventional way of doing things, even though by so doing he arouses the conservatism and even bitter opposition of a certain class. He is, of necessity, not a leader of the masses, but a leader of leaders. In no other department of Young Men's Christian Association work—I might say of religious work—is there so large a proportion of college-trained men. Practically every man in county work to-day is a college graduate, many not coming directly into county work from college, but from other fields, where they have previously met with conspicuous success. The reason for the success of the county Young Men's Christian Association can, in a large measure, be found in the consecration of these men. Their hearts are in the work. They are not using it as a stepping-stone to a city field. Though they have received many tempting calls to enter other work, few care to leave.

Co-operation is the real program of the county Young Men's Christian Association. It does not desire to work for the strengthening of its own organization at the expense of others. The county committee receives its support from the people, and it regards itself primarily as a servant of the people. The secretaries on the field have endeavored in all ways possible to co-operate with the existing organizations. Sometimes the secretary has co-operated with the superintendent of schools in systematizing and developing the recreational and athletic life of the school, in some cases by working up a program of indoor and



The County Y. M. C. A. Secretary co-operating with the school superintendent in developing systematic recreational features for the recess periods

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outdoor games that the teacher can use to advantage during the recess periods. He has worked with the Granges and other agricultural societies in organizing short practical schools for the farmers. As the Sunday school superintendent's right-hand man, he finds teachers for boys' classes in the Sunday school. The county Sunday school secretary finds him a friendly advisor, too, in setting up the county Sunday school convention. Through his personal work many fathers and mothers have been brought into more intelligent relationship with their boys and girls. In doing these things, the secretary has been a servant of the people, and he has accomplished more than he could have accomplished had he confined himself to the narrow limits of an organization. Because of its intradenominational character, the county Young Men's Christian Association is peculiarly fitted to become a unifying factor in the county. It recognizes its opportunity and responsibility. Because of this characteristic, there are certain activities that the Young Men's Christian Association can undertake and carry to a successful issue, which, undertaken by any one denomination of the community, would be doomed to failure, because of sectarian opposition inevitably aroused.

3. Principles in Rural Work

Out of past experience, brief as it has been, the county Young Men's Christian Association has come to recognize certain established principles which must be considered in rural work.

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1. The redemptive forces of a community are the local forces. This brings us back directly to volunteer leadership. The problems of any individual community will never be solved until some local man volunteers to get under the burden. To discover and to inspire and help this man, by giving him the right kind of training and the right vision of his relation to God and to man, is the large task of the county secretary.

2. The country must be guarded from the enervating paternalism of the city.

3. We must have rural institutions to meet rural needs. A city library will not fit into rural conditions. We could not transfer a city play-ground into a rural community and expect it to be a success. But there must be developed, out of the peculiar recreational needs of the country, an institution to meet those peculiar needs.

4. Equipment is not essential, and is generally a serious stumbling-block to successful boys' work in the country. The personality of leadership is the all-important factor.

5. There should be a recognition of the value of country life in and for itself.

6. The county Young Men's Christian Association recognizes three primary social groupings in the country—the home, the school, and the Church. Never has the county Young Men's Christian Association thought of itself as a competitor of the Church, but rather as an auxiliary, whose primary function is to help build up the Church of Christ.

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7. This work will not be successful, save as those who enter, either as employed officers or as volunteers, consider the work essentially a Christian ministry.

8. Service, not privilege, is the basis of membership.

9. Determined effort to stem the cityward tide.

10. A redirected educational system which will adequately prepare for life in the country.

11. Better health and sanitation in farm homes and country communities.

12. Wholesome recreational activities are needed in all parts of the country.

13. A more scientific method of crop production and farm administration is essential to a greater satisfaction in farm life.

14. Co-operation, rather than competition.

15. A task for every man, and a man for every task.

4. The Group Method of Organization and Activities

The boys throughout the country are reached by means of local boys' groups, which are generally recognized as the Young Men's Christian Association. These groups are organized not only in larger towns and villages, where in many cases we may find several groups, but also at the country cross-roads community, or at any place which may be a natural community center. In this organization the first factor is the securing of a local leader who will be responsible for the work of that community. He must

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necessarily be a man of strong moral character, one who commands the respect of the community and of the boys, and who is fully in sympathy with boy-life. This man gathers around him a group of boys, twelve to twenty in number, who are drawn together by mutual likes and dislikes—in other words, a gang. The “gang spirit” will not be so marked among the country boys as among the boys of the city or large village, but it is there. As the county secretary works with leaders, so this local leader will hold his boys only as he holds the leader of the gang. This group generally meets once a week in some convenient place: it may be the schoolhouse, or the town hall, or the basement of the church—if there be but one church in the community—or often they meet at the home of one of the members of the group. At these meetings the boys engage in various social, athletic, educational, and religious activities.

Social Activities.—Lack of social life is recognized by all students of rural life as one of the most serious drawbacks of the country. A more normal development of social life is essential. The rural Young Men’s Christian Association in its organized counties has done much along this line. The boys’ groups, with their weekly meetings, furnish the means of social contact. In many places the boys have arranged community banquets; they have planned many special social evenings at the homes of the various members. The girls, as well as the boys, are reached by these social activities. Through the initiative of the Young Men’s Christian Association there

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has been a revival of the old-time "spelling-bee" and other community social gatherings. The various reading circles and study clubs have their social values.

The direct responsibility for these activities must not rest on the county secretary. The full value of this work can be realized only as the local people take up the enterprise, aided perhaps by the inspiration and suggestion of the secretary. I fear that too often many of our well-meaning pastors and teachers have worked injury where they have intended to help, because they have done the work themselves, thereby robbing the people of their birthrights—initiative and responsibility.

Recreational and Athletic Activities.—Our farm boys and girls work hard. They may not need physical exercises, but they do need play. Play is the inherited right of all young life, and child-life will not develop into normal manhood and womanhood without it. Farmers must learn to work together. Practically all recognize the truth of this, but they must also recognize that farmers will never work together until they and their children have learned to play together. The rural Young Men's Christian Association is meeting this need in its organized play-day festivals held in connection with the schools, Sunday school picnics, township picnics, or in connection with the county fair. In many places the county Young Men's Christian Association has been instrumental in cleaning up the objectionable features of the fair. Thousands of people, old and young, have joined in these county fair play festivals; they forget for a

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while the cares of the farm and become young again. The boys' groups furnish opportunity for many group games, calisthenics, and athletics. Practically every county has its annual track meet, with from eighty to three hundred boys participating in each county. Clean baseball is also promoted, putting emphasis on the Saturday afternoon games, thus eliminating to some extent the demand for the Sunday game. "Play baseball for sport, to win if you can, but play square and clean," is the slogan of the Young Men's Christian Association. All of the county organizations conduct summer camps, where from fifty to one hundred or more country boys spend ten days in the happiest fellowship of their lives. These days mean much in the formation of Christian character.

Educational Activities.—Our children need supplemental educational work. The schools have become more or less mechanical. They are often divorced from life; their method of study is not always nature's method. The boys in the groups join in debates, give reports of current topics and of books they have read. They listen to interesting talks on nature, such as "Nature's Methods for the Distribution of Seeds," "The Interesting Characteristics of Our Native Birds and Their Calls," etc. They engage in hundreds of different educational activities which interest and hold the boy, because they vitally connect him with life roundabout. There are other features of educational work more especially applicable to the community as a whole, such as practical, short-period schools for the farmer, educational campaigns along

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the lines of personal hygiene, reading courses and clubs, agricultural contests, in which the boys and girls compete with each other in the growing of corn, onions, potatoes, poultry, etc. In one county, with a population of only two thousand, there were three hundred and thirty-eight children engaged in agricultural contests during one season. Then again, there is the opportunity for boys to take part in the competitive judging of stock, corn and small grains, etc. All this work is intensely vital, and will have a large part in keeping the boy and the girl on the farm.

The county Young Men's Christian Association, in co-operation with the schools, has conducted very successful educational campaigns along the line of personal hygiene. The care of the body, the effects of alcoholic stimulants, and personal sex hygiene has been the line of subjects considered. These campaigns have met with the unanimous approval of the people. There have been other educational campaigns conducted along the lines of community sanitation, the beautifying of school grounds and of home grounds.

Let us reiterate the principle upon which this work is conducted. The county secretary does not attempt to do this work himself, but enlists the co-operation of other men of the community, or even sometimes outside of the community, who are qualified to do the special piece of work he has in mind. This is working out the very essential principle, "A task for every man, and a man for every task."



SOME OF THE PRIZE WINNERS AMONG THE 338 BOYS AND GIRLS ENGAGED IN AGRICULTURAL CONTESTS

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

Religious Work.—The religious work of the Young Men's Christian Association is the primary work. It regards the social, physical, and educational work as essential only as they create right conditions for the fullest development of the spiritual. Every one of the six hundred organized boys' groups is following definite courses of Bible study. Recruited from these groups are the young men who go back into the Sunday school as Bible class teachers. It is a virile type of Bible study, in which the leader projects himself in personal work. There are but few boys who, if approached with a boy's religion, will not accept it. Other features of the religious work are special Sunday afternoon meetings for men; and at other times special meetings for boys. Many men will attend these meetings who never come to any other. The county and State boys' conferences are great factors in giving the boys a new and higher conception of Christian manhood, and many have accepted the challenge of such a manhood. One of the largest factors in this, as in other fields of religious work, is the quiet, personal evangelism of the secretary and the volunteer workers. The co-operation of the county Young Men's Christian Association with the Sunday schools is also to be considered under religious work. In many counties the secretaries have been of vital help in adding to the efficiency of the Sunday school convention. One county secretary suggested, and successfully carried through, a men's banquet and evening program in connection with such a convention. More than one hundred and

THE WORK OF THE COUNTY Y. M. C. A.

fifty men were present. This was accomplished in the face of many discouragements. The secretary in many places has been of help in conducting training conferences for leaders of boys' classes.

The work of the various county organizations has the advantage of the co-operation and help of both the State and the international committees. These committees are of help to the county secretary in formulating his plans. They are free to come in and help the secretary whenever he requests. They are also of help to the county committee at the time of secretarial changes. The large task of the State and international committee, however, is the extension of work into unorganized counties and States.

The first step to be taken by those interested in organizing a movement of this character in their own community is to secure the interest and co-operation of the best men of the county. These men may constitute a temporary organization committee, and should have as their chairman the best man available. He should be a man of large influence, good business judgment, and of the right Christian character. Those undertaking this organization should get in touch with the county work department of the State Young Men's Christian Association Committee, that they may profit by its experience.

We have outlined a large program. While we have not gone into much detail as to the actual work of the rural Young Men's Christian Association, yet enough has been mentioned to give a general outline

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

of its scope and effectiveness. This work will succeed in any county where the people will give their co-operation. There must be the local man, who will give of his time because he loves boys, his community, and his God.

CHAPTER XVII

The Young Woman's Christian Association as a Builder of Rural Womanhood

BY MISS JESSIE FIELD,

National Secretary for Small Town and Country Work, National Board of the Y. W. C. A. of the U. S. A., New York City.

THE Young Women's Christian Association has as its ideal the development of all young women in spirit, mind, and body. So it is but natural that it should, in 1908, decide to reach out beyond the limits of the cities, the factories, and the college halls to the thousands of young women living in the small towns and the open country.



MISS FIELD

1. The Organization of the County Y. W. C. A.

The county is taken as the unit of organization, since it offers a natural civil and community division, and has a large enough area to make a basis for financial support. The executive head of the work is the county secretary, back of whom is the county Board of Direc-

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tors, made up of representative Christian women from different parts of the county. Wherever there is a community center of sufficient strength and local leadership to form an association of twenty-five young women, a branch organization is formed. This branch may be in a town or out in the open country.

The young woman in the country has many elements of great strength. She is blessed in having freedom, a wholesome and sane life, and a knowledge of happy work. Improved country life conditions have brought to her many splendid things from the outside world. The rural free delivery brings the daily paper and good magazines. Better roads, the automobile, and the interurban and trolley lines help her easily to reach the town and city, while modern conveniences and better prices for crops have made the old home a happy and profitable place to live.

2. Methods of Carrying on the Work

The country girl has wonderful possibilities for growing into the most complete and helpful womanhood. It is to help her in reaching these possibilities that the Young Women's Christian Association has organized its country and small town work. It is the purpose of this organization to work with and help strengthen and increase the results of every organization that has for its purpose the development of life in the open country. The Grange, the farmers' institute, the extension departments of the State colleges of agriculture, the United States Department of Agriculture, short-course organizations, domestic

THE Y. W. C. A.

science clubs, and, above all, the country Church, furnish the organizations through which and with which the Young Women's Christian Association works in uplifting and helping the young women of the country.

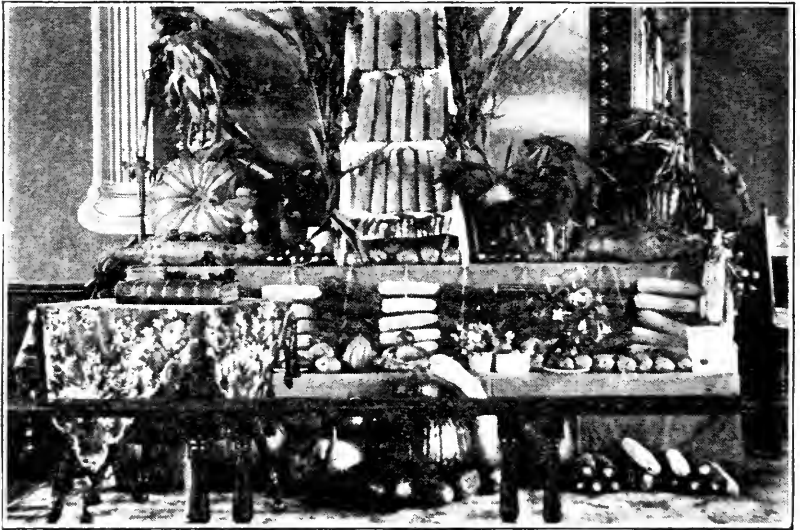
There are no association buildings, as in the city, for it has been found that the homes of the community and the schoolhouses and churches can well accommodate the meetings, and so there is an added usefulness given to these established parts of the community. There are many definite lines of work undertaken to add to the efficiency of the work of country girls, to the happiness of their play and social intercourse, to the strength and health of their bodies, and to the vital consecration of their lives to the service of Christ.

Working through the country schools, the county secretary helps the country teachers to plan for simple lessons in sewing and cooking and personal hygiene, which can be taught to the girls in her school or to a club of girls taking in all the girls of the school district. Many schools have planned, too, for serving simple warm lunches at noon, with soup or cocoa, and so the girls learn simple lessons in home-making, which will help them throughout life. In sewing they learn to patch and darn and do just the simple, homely tasks in the right way.

The idea of making the country school the social center of the community has been strengthened. Corn shows and exhibits of sewing and cooking of the girls of the neighborhood are made at the schools,

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

the parents being invited in and the girls serving refreshments, which they have prepared themselves. The program is planned to be of special interest to country people. In all this the county secretary is of help in giving suggestions and helping put the teacher in touch with efforts along these lines that are meeting with success in other places.



CORN SUNDAY

Exhibits of model kitchens, handy devices for lightening labor at home, cooking, and sewing are made at the farmers' institute or the county fair. Potato-growing contests are held. Butter and bread-making contests and the judging of these foods has been made a part of the county work. Often the girls doing the best work along these lines are sent to

THE Y. W. C. A.

the short course of home economics at the State College of Agriculture.

In co-operation with country Churches, "corn Sundays and Mondays" have been held, where the farmers and their wives and sons and daughters have brought in the best things they have grown or made. The exhibits are made in the church on Sunday. It is altogether befitting that the products of the farm should be displayed in the house of God, in gratitude for a bountiful harvest. No live minister will lose the opportunity to emphasize spiritual lessons at this occasion. The practice is at once a recognition of Divine Providence and a dedication of husbandry, which may lead to the consecration of the husbandman. On Monday teachers come from the extension department of the State College of Agriculture to judge the exhibits, and a basket-dinner and a general good social time are held, and some hours of definite instruction on things coming very close to country life efficiency are spent.

Summer camps have been organized and most successfully carried out for the young women of the country in connection with the county Chautauqua Associations. Bible study, practical talks on subjects of interest to girls, lessons in cooking and sewing, and first aid to the injured are a part of the camp work. The afternoons are devoted to having a good time with games of tennis, volley ball, basket ball, and informal visiting. The campers are allowed also to attend the lectures at the Chautauqua. This means not only learning more about how to do useful things,

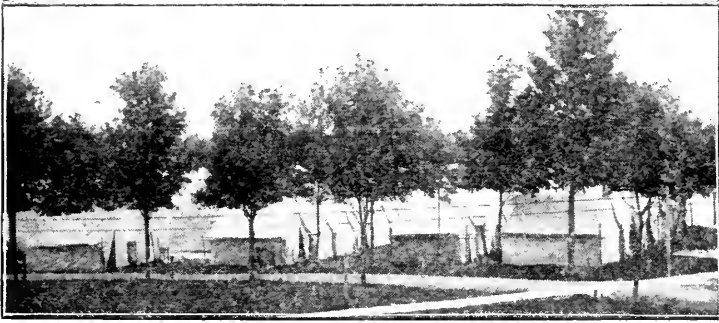
SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

but the creating of a spirit of fellowship and goodwill with girls from all over the county, that brings a broader vision of life to the country girl, whose life in many cases is isolated.

Bible study and mission study classes are organized, taking in all the young people of the community. Courses of study of special interest to the community are followed, and at the close of each lesson some short feature of interest to the young people of the country is given, and then a social time together is enjoyed.

Since the county is so large that the county secretary can not lead all the groups, there is constantly a direct demand for local leaders. This helps to develop one of the greatest needs of our rural communities—trained leadership. Many a country young woman has found that she could do things for others, because of the responsibility placed on her in the work of the Association. As these young women of all Church denominations come together in Bible study or in the right kind of a good time, the narrow boundaries that sometimes hedge around the lives of the young people in the country disappear, and a joy in the service of others takes its place.

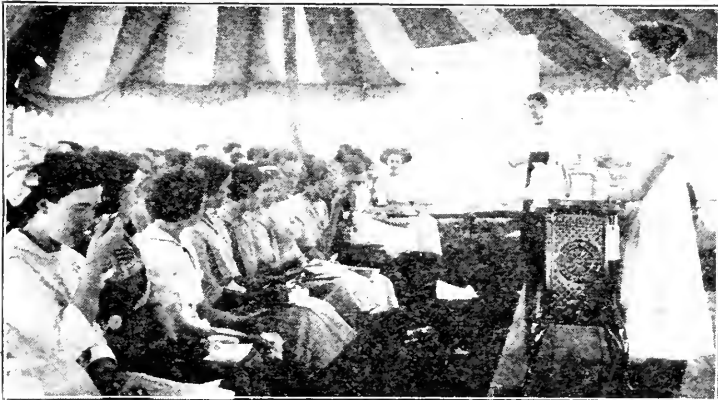
Through all the work of the Association the beauty and possibilities of the Christian home in the country, built on a modern plan, with all the latest conveniences for lightening labor, surrounded by a well-kept lawn with flowers and vines growing on it, is brought in a very real way to the girl. She learns to truly love the open country, and can help the young



COUNTRY GIRLS' SUMMER CAMP VILLAGE



COUNTRY CAMP GIRLS OUT ON A FROLIC



COUNTRY CAMP GIRLS RECEIVING INSTRUCTION IN DOMESTIC SCIENCE

SOLVING THE COUNTRY CHURCH PROBLEM

man who has learned to grow more corn and better stock to spend wisely the increased earnings from his farm, to the end that there may be better schools, homes, Churches, and communities in which boys and girls may grow up who will represent the highest type of American citizenship.

Appendix A

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY ON THE COUNTRY CHURCH

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APPENDIX

RURAL MAGAZINES

The following rural magazines are recommended to those who desire to keep in touch with the progress of the Rural Movement, including the Country Church:

THE RURAL EDUCATOR, a National Monthly Magazine, Devoted to the Promotion of Rural and Agricultural Education for Teachers, Preachers, Rural Leaders, and Progressive Farmers. Published from The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

RURAL MANHOOD, Devoted to the Country Work of the Young Men's Christian Association in Village, Town, and Country. Published by the Young Men's Christian Associations, 124 East Twenty-eighth Street, New York, N. Y.

Appendix B

HISTORICAL AND STATISTICAL REPORT OF THE LAWRENCE CIRCUIT FOR 1913

Compiled by REV. ALBERT Z. MANN, A. M.,
Pastor of the Lawrence (Ind.) Circuit.

Editor's Note.—The problem of every rural minister is to know his field—not in general terms, but specifically. To this end, a community survey is necessary. The data thus secured must then be systematized, tabulated, and correlated. Only then does it furnish a safe guide for future activities. Inability to use the data when once secured may prove to be a very serious misfortune to a community. In order to show the proper method of procedure in building up survey information as a guide to action, we herewith present, as Appendix B, a concrete example.



ALBERT Z. MANN

The conditions here presented may be accepted as a typical example of a rural community in the States of the Middle West.

Statistics of the Lawrence Charge

- I. TERRITORY COVERED.
 - 25 Square miles,
 - 16,000 Acres,
 - 75 Miles Road System.
- II. POPULATION.
 - 1,500 approximate population.
 - 450 families.
 - 3.33 average number per family.
 - 10.2 average acreage per individual.
 - 48 per cent own their homes.
 - 52 per cent are renters.

APPENDIX

III. CHURCHES REPRESENTED.

1. In the territory of the Circuit.

Lawrence: Bethel and Arlington Place Methodist Episcopal Churches; Lawrence Baptist, Highland Lutheran, and Bell's Chapel (Friends).

2. Churches near and having members living within the Circuit.

Oaklandon Christian and Universalist Churches; Cumberland Methodist Episcopal, Baptist, and German Churches; Irvington Methodist Episcopal Church, Indianapolis; East Tenth Methodist Episcopal and German Churches; Ebenezer Lutheran Church.

IV. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

1. Representative Denominations.

No.	Church.	Members.	Preference.
1.	Methodist Episcopal..	295	165
2.	Lutheran.....	63	10
3.	Baptist.....	47	18
4.	German.....	32	12
5.	Christian.....	27	11
6.	Catholic.....	21	7
7.	Pentecostal.....	17	..
8.	United Brethren.....	11	4
9.	Universalist.....	11	6
10.	Friends.....	10	6
11.	Presbyterian.....	6	2
12.	Congregational.....	5	4
13.	Church of Christ.....	5	2
14.	Christian Scientist...	5	..
15.	Episcopalian.....	4	..
16.	Adventist.....	2	..

2. Totals for Church Membership.

a. Total Church Membership.....	621
b. Total Church Preference.....	247
c. Total No Church Preference.....	635
Total Population.....	1,503

ROAD AND RESIDENCE MAP OF THE LAWRENCE CIRCUIT

INCLUDING
LAWRENCE, BETHEL, EARLINGTON PLACE, METHODIST, EPISCOPAL, CHURCHES
MARION COUNTY, INDIANA

COMPILED BY ALBERT Z. MANN, A.M. PASTOR
JULY 1, 1913

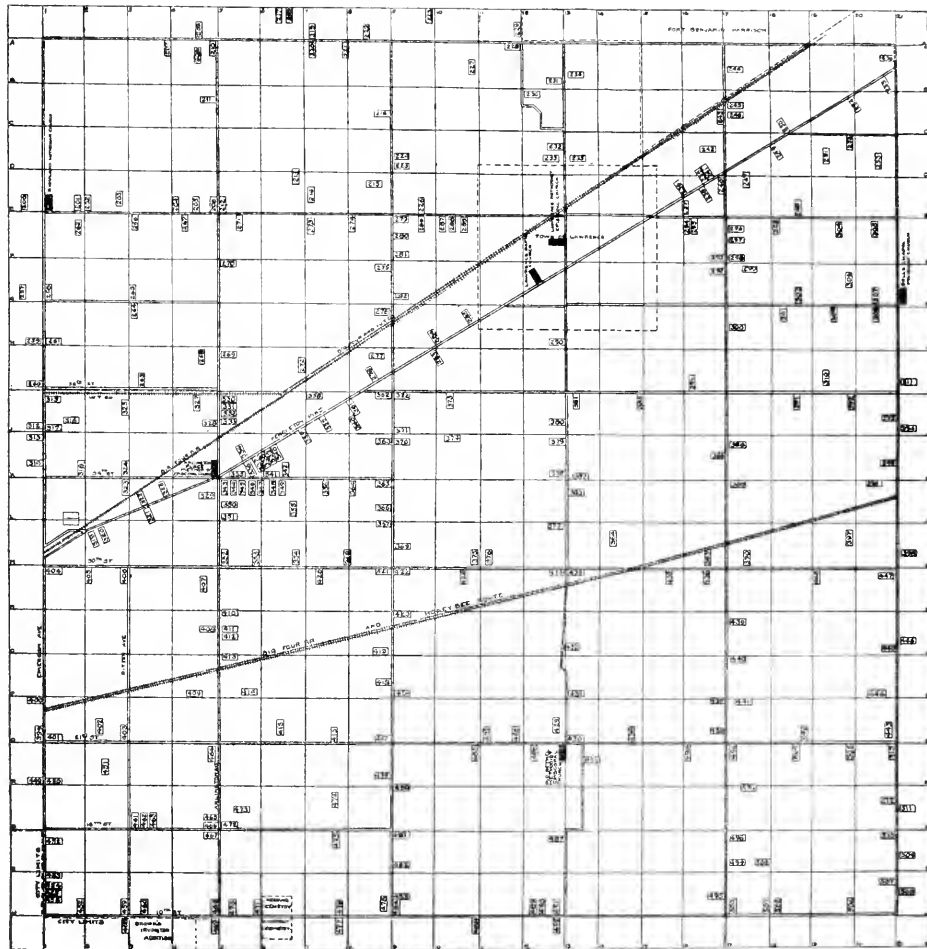
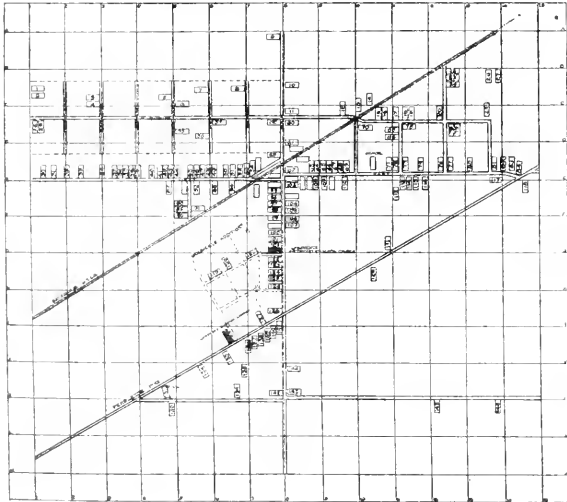
EXPLANATORY NOTE

THE NUMBERS IN SMALL SQUARES INDICATE RESIDENCES.
TO LOCATE USE NUMBERS & LETTERS ON BORDER LINES. FOR NUMBERS
1 TO 200 SEE MAP OF LAWRENCE. NUMBERS 200 UP SEE CIRCUIT MAP
EXAMPLE: TO LOCATE THE PERSONS IN SET A NEAR RESIDENCE 73
& PERPENDICULAR II, THESE LINES INTERSECT NEAR RESIDENCE 73
WHICH IS THE PERSONAGE FOLLOW SAME PROCESS FOR CIRCUIT MAP

SCALE OF MILES
CIRCUIT MAP 2 INCHES = 1 MILE
TOWN OF LAWRENCE 13 INCHES = 1 MILE

TERRITORY COVERED
23 SQUARE MILES = 14000 ACRES
75 MILES ROAD SYSTEM
TOTAL POPULATION 1000

MAP OF LAWRENCE



APPENDIX

V. STATISTICS FOR THE LOCAL METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCHES.

1. Members on field at beginning of Conference year, 1912.....	212
2. Members uniting with the Church to July 1, 1913.....	70
3. Persons desiring to unite with the Church at present.....	<u>13</u>
4. Total members now living within the bounds of the Circuit.....	295
5. Members now living outside of the bounds of the Circuit.....	<u>28</u>
6. Total membership of the three Churches of the Circuit.....	323

VI. OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH IN MEMBERSHIP.

1. Number moved into this charge without letter.	50
2. Number of residents preferring the Methodist Episcopal Church.....	165
3. Total preferring Methodist Episcopal Church.	<u>215</u>
4. Total number having no Church preference..	<u>635</u>
5. Total number open to the influence of the Methodist Episcopal Church.....	850

VII. AUXILIARY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE THREE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCHES.

1. Present Organizations.	
a. Three Sunday Schools, enrollment.....	350
Increase for the year.....	70
b. Three Epworth Leagues, enrollment....	85
Increase for the year.....	65
c. Three Ladies' Aid Societies, enrollment..	80
Increase for the year.....	20
2. Organizations needed.	
a. Three Men's Organized Classes or Methodist Brotherhoods. This would complete symmetrically the Church organizations.	

SAMPLES OF THE CARD INDEX SYSTEM USED WITH THE PARISH MAP

DATE ELECTED	OFFICIAL BOARD.
	Trustees,
	Stewards,
	Class Leaders,
	Sunday Schools,
	Epworth Leagues,
	Ladies' Aid Societies,
	Other Organizations.

The Official Board or members of the Quarterly Conference of each of the three Churches are tabulated, with their associate officers of the Church organizations. Dates of election, Post-office addresses, etc., appear on the cards with the names.

MEMBERSHIP RECORD CARD

Name											
	Date of Birth										
Residence	Date of Baptism										
Place of Business	Date of Marriage										
Occupation	Date Received										
No. in Family	How Received										
No. " " Identified with this Church	Came here from										
No. " " with no Church Connection											
Position in Sunday-School											
Lines of Church Activity	Died—Dismissed—Dropped										
Remarks											
Form 351	DATES OF PASTORAL CALLS.										
											Over for Remarks.

Each Church has an individual record system, alphabetically indexed and numbered to correspond with the numbers on the parish map. This makes it a simple matter for even a stranger to locate the members of the Churches. Cards for the probationers follow the membership record of each Church.

BIRTHDAY RECORD

Name	Birthday	
Address	Year of Birth	
Department	Class	
Remembrances Sent		
Remarks		
Form 353		

The Birthday Cards are the result of a Missionary Canvass of the three Sunday Schools, endeavoring to tabulate the birthday of every member of the Churches and Sunday Schools. A letter is sent to each and an offering given at each birthday. The cards are indexed by the calendar months.

Five Years of History of the Lawrence Circuit, Showing the Result of the Application of Modern Methods in the Past Two Years. The Record Closes with July 1, 1913

YEARS.	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	REMARKS.
MEMBERSHIP.....	220	256	298	317	240	323	Decrease in 1912, due to Revised Records. Gain 1913, 32%
LOCAL EXPENSES.....	\$1,400	\$1,120	\$1,440	\$1,430	\$1,795	\$1,850	Local Budget increases with increased Benevolence.
TOTAL BENEVOLENCES.....	\$120	\$118	\$116	\$112	\$195	\$250	Over 100% increase, Due to Every member Canvass, etc.
FOREIGN MISSIONS.....	\$40	\$29	\$30	\$24	\$65	\$100	300% increase, due to increased Missionary Education.
HOME CAUSES.....	\$65	\$56	\$78	\$72	\$120	\$150	100% increase in two years, due to Systematic Presentation.
CHILDREN'S DAY COLLECTION..	\$7	....	\$4	\$3	\$12	\$25	Due to emphasis placed on Children's day services of S. S.
SUNDAY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT.	180	200	260	210	290	350	Increase, 75% in two years, due to organized classes, etc.
EPWORTH LEAGUE ENROLLM'T.	28	None	20	None	30	85	Three new Epworth Leagues, due to interest of young people.
W. CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.....	....	....	6	4	7	50	Increase due to Dollar-Advocate and Every-member canvass.

In every case the report of 1913 breaks the record of the Circuit, so far as can be ascertained from past historical records. However, the problem before the Churches is still greater than the victory won; but the Churches now know their problem before them and can be prepared to meet it.

$$\begin{array}{r} 125 \\ \hline 94 \\ 1 \end{array}$$

