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A Plan for Raising Church Funds

Ministers, Officers, Church Members, are you having difficulty in financing your church?

The problem is often a difficult one, especially in the rural districts, and The Guide has a plan which we believe will be welcome to a large number of congregations who are endeavoring to raise funds.

The Guide would like to hear from Pastor, Officers or Member of any such church. Ladies Aid Societies, Mission Circles and Young People's Leagues are also invited to write us. We believe our proposition will appeal to your members. It is thoroughly practical and is high class in every respect.

There is no reason why you cannot use this plan in helping finance your church. It is something in which all your members can take part and we believe it will bring good results.

If interested write The Guide, giving the name of your church and the amount of money you require. We will then send you full particulars. Address your inquiry to

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Grain Growers' Guide - Winnipeg

merging all the churches in an undenominational community church. This may sometimes be advisable, but it creates practically another denomination, and the church thus constituted has no affiliations and leads a lonesome life.

As a rule, I believe that it is better to unite on the basis of one of the existing denominations, letting the church in each community which is strongest and best fitted to serve the community survive, and merging the other churches in it. This should be by a sympathetic and friendly co-operation of the denominational leaders, who should arrange equitable exchanges as far as possible, so that denominational losses in some communities are balanced by gains in others.

Instances of these various combinations might easily be mentioned. In Aurora, Ohio, two weak churches, one of the Congregationalists and one of the Disciples of Christ, have united for work. Each keeps its ecclesiastical organization and contributes to its denominational charities, but the two churches have one minister, one Sunday congregation, one Sunday school; the people all worship and work together; the church has become a community church, to the great satisfaction of all concerned.

In Hampden, Massachusetts, a similar arrangement has been effected between the Congregational and Baptist churches.

In Benzonia, Michigan, by amicable exchanges, a considerable district is now under the direction of one central church, with several outlying branches, all of which are co-operating harmoniously.

In Dublin, Ohio, a village of three hundred inhabitants, three years ago there were three churches. There had been no resident pastor in the community for thirty years. All the churches were weak, holding infrequent services. Three years ago a providential cyclone removed the roofs of two of these church buildings. The people accepted the intimation and united as one church of another denomination. Within six months this church had more members than the three had before the cyclone; a resident minister was installed, a parsonage was purchased, and the spirit of community was notably strengthened.

Sin of Sectarianism

It must be well understood, however, that all this means for every denomination large sacrifices of denominational prestige and pride. It is the deadly sin of sectarianism that has plunged us into this pit, in which the rural churches are smothering and devouring one another; it ought to cost us suffering to pull ourselves out of it, and it will. Nothing will avail but heroic surgery, freely and fearlessly applied. That ought not to be questioned when the life of the church is in danger.

As I have intimated, an attempt is being made to deal practically with this great problem in the state of Ohio. Under the auspices of the Federal Council of the Church of America, a careful survey of the state is being made, which will graphically present, by means of maps, the exact condition of the rural churches of every county. A committee on inter-church co-operation has also been formed in the state, in which are bishops of the Methodist Episcopal and United Brethren churches and the Home Missionary and Church Extension leaders of all the principal denominations. As soon as the survey is near completion it is the purpose of this committee to grapple with the situation as thus presented, with the purpose of developing practical methods by which needless and obstructive churches may be eliminated, thru combinations and exchanges, so that the religious needs of every community may be rationally met, and the calamitous and ruinous competitions now prevailing may be averted.

It is a difficult task, but the men who have it in hand are the responsible leaders of the various denominations, and they seem to be undertaking it with courage and determination. They will need the sympathy and support of good men and women everywhere, and it may be that they can open a way to the renewal and replenishing of the life of the countryside.

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