



ANYTHING ON WHEELS was in the running for first prize at the Bible School parade held Monday morning at Church of the Nazarene. Looking doubtful at the entries are Jimmy and Jerry Hooper, Pat Coker and Pamela Gray.

Country Churches Left Are Making Lively Come-Back

BY GEORGE W. CORNELL
NEW YORK (AP)—Country churches—what's left of them—today are making a lively comeback.
"They were dying off pretty fast for a while," said Dr. Thomas Alfred Tripp, head of the Congregational Christian Churches, Department of Town and Country. "But they're picking up strength now."
For two decades, up to World War II, rural churches in America were closing at the rate of about 1,000 a year. Hundreds continued to fall by the wayside up to 1950. Many still are in shaky condition.
"But I don't think many more will be lost," said Don F. Pietsick, head of the Town-Country Department of the National Council of Churches. "What we lose one place, we now are gaining somewhere else."
"I see quite an encouraging day ahead, with new programs and a new type rural minister. Rural America is going to be better served by its churches during the next 10 years than ever before."
A big factor in curbing the casualty toll has been the development by nearly all major denominations of intensive, national programs to pump new life into the faltering rural churches.
"We've become more conscious of the importance of rural people," said Msgr. Luigi G. Ligutti of Des Moines, head of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference.
"As a result, our rural churches are much better off than they were five years ago. There has been a tremendous improvement in the outlook."
All kinds of techniques, plans and strategies have been put into action for waking up the sleepy little church at the crossroads.
Social researchers have canvassed the countryside. Seminars are channeling students into the rural ministry, not just as a training ground, but to make a profession of it.
Financial aid has flowed out from city headquarters. Rural church federations have popped up all over. Conferences and seminars to guide country preachers have

become about as numerous as weeks in the year.
A series of stunning blows combined to kill off more than 20,000 rural churches since the 1920s.
Mechanized farming swank rural population. So did the depression and "Dust Bowl" migrations. Cars and good roads made the nearby church less essential. Defense industries also sapped farm life. Population movement to the cities still is going on.
Other influences, authorities said, also hurt the rural church. Poor preaching. Lack of money. Too little planning or leadership, and a resulting indifference and weak church morale.
Many little churches were left vacant to rot—lonely, steeped derelicts along the section lines. Some were converted to homes, granaries or livestock barns.
To save and invigorate the estimated 70,000 rural churches which have weathered the storms, denominations have gone to work.
Take, for example, the Methodist Church. Its National Missions Division gives financial aid to 1,700 rural pastors, and loans to many others. It keeps scores of trained personnel in the field working on rural church projects.
In many areas it has organized the "group ministry" or "larger parish plan"—as in Pennington County, Mo., where four ministers, each a specialist, serve 11 churches giving them all a team program for youth, recreation and worship.
Methodist "mobile units" are constantly on the go, bolstering one weak church community after another. Seminars send students to rural churches on weekends. Four conference offices have full-time agricultural-religious experts, who supply services, somewhat like "county agents."
Other denominations do similar jobs. American Baptists have a rural church center at Greenlake, Wis., which runs free schools for rural pastors. The Episcopalians have a similar center at Roan Ridge near Parkville, Mo.
Catholics recently have begun holding numerous farm retreats,

and more rural religious vacation schools. In 1950, the Vatican, at the request of American bishops, made March 22 a feast day honoring St. Isidore, patron saint of farming. A shrine to St. Isidore was set up at Des Moines.
Dr. Tripp listed these key means for giving a poor rural church stability:
A good building; systematic financing; a list of prospective members in the community; an all-around program for all age groups; lay officials to run the church, rather than the minister alone; a sound parish organization often in conjunction with other churches; good community relations; and a theologically well-grounded pastor.
Pietsick said the biggest trouble now is among rural churches in the Southeastern United States, where changes in the farm scene slower mechanization of cotton.
"This is still the great testing period for rural churches in the Southeast," he said.

PROTEST
GENEVA, Switzerland (AP)—Mari Cassetta of Los Angeles, a GI bill of rights student, and his wife, Ana, protested Thursday, against the seizure of their passports by the U.S. consulate here on the grounds they were "furthering the activities of the Communist Party."

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Sen. Neely, 78, Complains of Too Much Talk

WASHINGTON (AP)—Sen. Neely (D-WV) drew a howl of laughter from his weary colleagues early today by protesting against "the cruel and inhuman punishment of being talked to death."
Neely, at 78 the second oldest senator, observed that the Senate had been in continuous session for 15 hours and 21 minutes and, he said, had spent 50 minutes on action and more than 14 hours on talk.
He called it unconstitutional and, in support of his point, he read the 8th Amendment which says in part that "cruel and inhuman punishments (shall not be) inflicted."

LAST BITE
SPOLETO, Italy (AP)—Marlo Marchetti, 34, opened his mouth to take a bit of bread and then fell down dead. Doctors said a bee flew into his mouth and stung his throat, causing suffocation.

US Approaching First Major H-Bomb Materials Production

WASHINGTON (AP)—The United States announced today it is approaching "first major production" of materials for hydrogen bombs, and said that in the first half of 1953 development of atomic weapons has "substantially advanced."
It said more fissionable material, the stuff which produces the explosive power of A-bombs, was produced than in any previous half-year.
The government announced also that it is working toward development of a super-speed atomic-powered submarine even before test have been run on two A-bombs now nearing completion and rated potentially faster than ordinary undersea craft.
The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), which runs the nation's atomic program, said in its semi-annual report to Congress that last spring's weapons tests in Nevada disclosed such valuable information that it will not be necessary to hold full-scale tests there this fall, as originally planned.
The AEC also told Congress that:
1. Both foreign and domestic production and exploration for uranium ore for the United States was stepped up during the last six months.
2. Production of fissionable materials for bombs and other uses

"considerably exceeded" that of any previous period—and at the lower costs in AEC's history "despite increases in wages and material prices."
3. New facilities entered the production stream. These included a new plant at Fernald, Ohio, for processing uranium ore; portions of new plants at Oak Ridge, Tenn. and Paducah, Ky., for separating bomb-useful uranium from uranium as it occurs in nature; and supporting facilities for the plant at Savannah River, S. C., where materials for either A-bombs or H-bombs will be made.
Regarding the latter plant, the AEC said that "some of the supporting facilities at Savannah River are already in operation, preparing materials for start-up of the first major production units at that site."

25 US Teenagers Touring Canada

EDMONTON, Alta. (AP)—Twenty-five American teenagers, cadets of the U. S. Civil Air Patrol, tour Edmonton's industrial district today. Making a 22-day trip through Canada, they arrived last night by Royal Canadian Air Force plane.
The group leaves Friday for Vancouver. Their tour is part of an air cadet exchange program launched in 1947 by Canada, Britain and the United States.

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