

TOO MANY CHURCES

Oregonian Intelligently Discusses Duplication and Waste in Church Work.

Letter to our lively contemporary Corvallis Gazette-Times, on the "Church Problem in War Time" contains the following paragraph:

When I last counted we had twelve churches in Corvallis. If the average of the establishments is \$3000, annual charge for church operations is \$36,000. Now \$10,000 would run a first class church plant, gymnasium, shower baths, rest rooms for men and women, and all that, a real honest-to-godness seven day church, and there would be \$26,000 for real Christian work.

The financial calculation might be a little away—we think it is; but the question that there should be a community church, suitable to the religious, social and educational needs of the smaller towns is being thoughtfully discussed by clergy and laity, and it is certain to bear fruit.

There is no economic justification for twelve churches in a place which adequately support, say, not more than four or five. The churches do so far as we know, assert that there is a place for all of them. But it would seem, thinks that the other ought to give way. The church has long since passed, however, in any denomination has dared to assert that it is the sole voice and organ of truth, and all or most of them agree that the others are finding way to the eternal kingdom; but the justification for existence has to do with the variety of religious needs and, therefore, there is a corresponding variety of religious needs and organizations. It is not the purpose to assert that a single church, or a single designated group of churches, is enough, but to say that the old rule of survival of the fittest will solve the problem if the churches themselves do not take hold vigorously, disinterestedly and consecratedly, and find a way out.

A year or two ago there was a survey of a single county of Oregon by a group of far-seeing clergy men under the auspices of the interdenominational conference of ministers of Oregon. The investigation was made painstakingly and thoughtfully, with a view to ascertain the facts and to face them and to state them. Lane County, seat of the State University, with its typical American population and characteristic distribution of town and country life, was chosen. The results were startling and not at all reassuring. It may be well to recapitulate them, with the explanation that the survey had to do with the territory outside of Eugene, the largest town.

Majority of churches were established and located by guesswork, with no actual knowledge of the community needs. Gain in church membership during the year was good, but with comparatively small churches. Only 13.1 per cent of the population (outside of Eugene) were church members.

Little country church dying out; big city church growing. "Competitive religion" in small communities little better than proselyting. Churches generally have failed to comprehend the "missionary statesmanship" necessary to lay out their work adequately.

Professional revivalist is, on the whole, not helpful. Churches negative attitude toward amusement problem is outstanding reason for its small social influence. Absentee pastor is a prevailing evil. Only twenty-two out of ninety-four rural churches have regular services. Most flourishing institution in county is rural dancehall.

Community church believed to be one of vital needs. Let it not be overlooked that these findings were the product of the study and investigation of clergymen from five denominations—Christian, Congregational, Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian. Their predictions and prejudices, if they had any, naturally would have led them to favor the present institution; but they could not conscientious men, anxious to know and to be of service, get away from the facts.

It is a commonplace observation that the unwillingness of the church to recognize and attempt to solve rationally the amusement problem is one great reason of its failure to grow and to be in accord with the spirit of the times. On the contrary, it has thought that its mission was not worldly but purely spiritual, and that its work was ended when its message was delivered. Is that so? Or is that all? Probably it will be found that many men who have heard the call to become preachers have no adaptability for social work or service, and decline to fail on that account to leave the old ways or modify the old formulas.

It is true, too, that many of them have a deep conviction that most modern amusements and many modern occupations are frivolous and unwholesome, and they feel that they have no science no alternative but to make war on such things. Let us not say that they are right or wrong; but it will not be disputed that there are useful occupations and harmless amusements which the church has learned that it cannot and should not prohibit and which it would do well to take under its protection.

This is only one aspect of the problem. The situation at Corvallis, which

called for the observations of the lay critic, was chiefly that there was needless duplication of religious endeavor by a dozen churches occupying a field where there was room for fewer. How did that come about? It arose mainly from the belief that creed was all important and must find expression the form of substantial works. But now it seems less important to both laity and clergy. Some churches languish and all are hurt by duplication and competition.

The problem may be, in part at least, solved when churches are not located, in town or country, by guesswork or by a preacher-solicitor anxious about his job, but only after an actual determination by competent authority of its need. The authority might well be furnished by an interdenominational organization, which would decline to give its sanction to construction or maintenance of a church in a community otherwise adequately provided. It is not an impractical suggestion; it could be made entirely practicable if such a solution were to be approached in the spirit which led to the informative survey made by the combined denominations in Lane County.

In another editorial on the same subject, the Oregonian concludes, as follows:

Doubtless some of our doubting friends will be interested in the testimony of a preacher, Dr. Charles B. Taylor, of McArthur, Ohio, who has, as he says, been "ministering for forty years to the needs of various groups of country churches among the hills of Southwestern Ohio." Dr. Taylor offers this pointed assertion:

"The first thing to do is to get the church at large awake to the need of centralization of 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 the country community and a hindrance to the upbuilding of the kingdom of God in the souls of men. Whenever the church is ready awake to these truths, we will find a way to centralize."

A way is being found. The Oregonian is told that the interdenominational committee in Oregon is making decided headway. A part of the plan is to agree that competition shall be eliminated when there is room for one and not for two. In some cases, one denomination will give way, in other cases another. So, in this way, there will be a better chance for the denominations as a whole to prosper, and the communities to be well served. A live church anywhere is better than no church, or two churches dying or nearly dead.

Information for Registered Men

Except to fill vacancies in calls already made, no more men will be drafted from Oregon or other states before February 15. As all questionnaires will be completed before that date, this will give men taken hereafter, except such few as may be needed prior to February 15 to fill vacancies, the advantage of the new classification system.

Very few men would have been taken from Oregon in any event prior to the next draft, which it is now announced will not be earlier than February 15. This is one of only 10 states that have already filled their quotas in the first draft, barring a few vacancies caused by rejections at the training camps.

Future draft quotas are to be filled first from Class 1, comprising men without dependents. They will be drafted from deferred classifications only when Class 1 is exhausted, thus making it necessary to go to the next class for enough men to fill up the quota.

An exception to this will be made in the case of experts and men highly skilled in agricultural or industries. It is announced that the government will soon call for a large number of men of this special class. They will be taken as needed for such special work from whatever classification they may have been granted.

A limited number of officers not now in active service, and retired officers of the Oregon National Guard, who are physically fit and between the ages of 23 and 47, are eligible for enlistment as privates first class for attendance at the next Officers' Training Camps, which begin January 15. Official word to this effect has just been received by John M. Williams, Acting Adjutant General, from the Chief of the Bureau of Militia Affairs at Washington, with the request that it be given publicity.

Applications for the camps by such officers must be approved by the Bureau. Those qualifying at the camps, which will be held in Southern California and the Southern States, will receive commissions.

Draft Information

Is an alien of draft age (not an alien enemy) subject to draft? Is a man of draft age who has taken out only his first papers subject to draft?

These questions have been asked of local exemption boards time and again since the sending out of questionnaires began. The answer to the first question is "No." The answer to the second question is "Yes."

An alien of draft age who has not declared his intention to become a citizen of the United States may waive exemption on the ground of his alienage, but if he does not want to waive his exemption, the local board has no choice but to put him in class V. However, he must answer his questionnaire and return it within the seven day limit to his local exemption board, just as a citizen must do, or he will endanger his right to be placed in class V.

On the other hand, an alien of draft

CLASS ONE LISTINGS ONLY TEMPORARY

District Board Will Make Final Disposition of All Classifications.

Registrants of Multnomah County and, presumably, many in outside counties, who have based their sole claim of deferred classification on industrial or agricultural grounds, are much perturbed on receiving notification from their division exemption board that they have been assigned to division A of class 1. Several who have failed to note that this classification is but temporary have become particularly excited over the discovery that they are in class one.

This is no occasion for perturbation over this temporary classification, once the registrant acquaints himself with the procedure which must be followed by his division exemption board. This explanation by one of the chairman should allay all undue alarm on the part of the man seeking deferred classification on industrial grounds.

"Under our working rules we exemption board members have absolutely nothing to do with the claims for deferred classification based solely on industrial or agricultural status of the registrant, except that we may make a recommendation.

Case Goes to District Board. "Where an unmarried man presents only a claim that he is a skilled worker in a necessary war enterprise, or is the directing head of a necessary agricultural enterprise, in asking deferred classification his case rests in the hands of the district draft board.

"We are bound by the rules to notify men of this status that they are temporarily listed in Class 1, final decision as to where they shall be classed being entirely out of our hands. If the man's claims seem to justify it we may, in the proper space on the questionnaire, note a recommendation that he be placed in class 2 or class 4. It is seldom, however, that we do this.

"I cannot emphasize too strongly the fact that the district draft board must pass on all claims of men who think themselves skilled laborers or managing or engaged in a necessary industrial or agricultural industry. The draft board, not the exemption boards, classifies all such registrants and, while the higher board is probing into their status these men are temporarily placed in class one."

Keeping it Out of The Paper.

Where is the editor who has not been importuned with tears to keep the name of some offender against the law out of his paper? Many there are who can also remember the threats of dire vengeance if the request to "kill" a certain story was not complied with. The average publisher does not take pleasure in parading the misfortune of some men of women in the columns of his newspaper, but as a purveyor of the news of the day he is often called upon to print things he would much prefer not to.

Here is a reply of John L. Sullivan, editor of the Evening Leader, St. Mary, O., to those who try to prevail upon him to overlook certain matters of news:

"Life would be much more pleasant to the average newspaper publisher if everyone would walk in the straight and narrow way. One of the real painful duties of the publisher is to print the news concerning people's wrongdoings. That may appear almost incredible to the reading public, but it is a fact, just the same. It is the good that men and women do that we like to publish, and not the evil they do. Although the evil doings make more spicy reading matter and are received with more apparent relish by those who delight in the sensational side of human life, we always try to put ourselves in the other fellow's place.

"There are very few households but that have their family skeleton, but few homes were misfortunes of some kind or other have not caused heartaches and humiliation. It is not becoming, therefore, for one person to gloat over the misfortunes of another person, or laugh in derision when the shadow of scandal hangs like a pall over the other fellows home. It would be pleasing to us if there were a law prohibiting the details of scandal of any sort whatsoever from appearing in the public prints. But it would seem that the welfare of society demands that such things should be published, and we cannot have our way as long as such is the case.

"There are very few days of the week when some one does not call up and request that this, that and the other thing shall be kept out of the paper. Reference is had, of course, to matters affecting the morals of people and there is only one answer that we can give, which is: 'We cannot make fish of the one and flesh of the other.' That is to signify that if we keep one offenders name out of the paper, we must keep the other offender's name out of the paper, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we kept all of their names out of the paper, the whole community would be 'on our back,' figuratively speaking, because the community is not so charitable as may seem upon the surface.

"Now, there is only one way by which you can keep the names of offenders against the laws of the commonwealth out of the newspapers, and that is to turn their footsteps into the paths which lead to righteousness and not to the police court. Whenever a man or a woman is so unfortunate as to get his or her name into the police court blotter, the news paper's duty to the public is to publish the facts, no matter whether the offender be high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned. So it is a waste of time and energy to give the editor curtain lectures over the 'phone simply because he has performed a duty that is everything but pleasant to him.

age who has taken out his first papers declaring his intention to become a citizen of the United States, is subject to draft. It makes no difference how long or how short a time ago he may have taken out his first papers.

Rare Field Seeds to Be Distributed

Representative W. C. Hawley has just been advised by the Department of Agriculture that there have been allotted to him for distribution in his district a limited number of packages of new and rare field seeds. Those available for testing this year are Kansas alfalfa, Kaiser field peas, Bangalia field peas and white sweet clover. Each package contains enough seed for making a careful test and cultural directions accompany the seed. The department would prefer that a farmer experiment with but one kind of seed at a time, as the supply is so small that the demand for it is never supplied and as general a distribution as is possible to secure is desired. Mr. Hawley will gladly supply a package of such seed to such of his constituents as may write him for it so long as the seed may be available. It is suggested that an order of preference be made when writing for the seed, so that if a certain variety is no longer available another desirable kind may be substituted. He expects his quota to be exhausted by the demand before the first of February.

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