

THE CONTINENT

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Mortality of Organizations

"HOW'S YOUR ORGANIZATION GETTING ALONG?"
"NOT GETTING ANYWHERE; PRETTY NEAR DEAD."

Would anybody familiar with church life care to guess how often that conversation is repeated among American church people in the course of a year? It wouldn't be safe to guess much under a million times, would it?

Of course, there are lots of organizations in interdenominational work, in the philanthropic sphere, in denominational relations and in local church life which are accomplishing what they were meant for—a very large number in the aggregate.

But what a small proportion these efficient organizations amount to when put in comparison with the multitude that are not efficient.

If of the latter the dead should be arranged in array with the feebly living, it would make a host that no man could number—a dismaying and overwhelming mobilization of failure.

What's the matter? Why are so many auspiciously begun societies, committees, commissions and movements like "the grass that in the morning flourisheth and groweth up and in the evening is cut down and withereth"?



"Too many organizations" is the easy answer. But that doesn't answer much. The whole point is in finding out, if possible, how many are too many and then why many can't live and do good.

It is better to look for causes of decay in the circumstances that attend the birth of organizations rather than in conditions surrounding them afterward. And here is something which can be verified by studying the life history of brotherhoods and Bible classes and missionary unions and young people's societies and clubs and boards and what not.

Organizations that have failed were nearly all formed under the influence of that strange American obsession that if a thing ought to be done the infallible way to do it is to organize something.

This delusion is about the strangest self-hypnotism that any branch of the human race ever got itself into, yet the American people are nearly helpless slaves of it.

If you go anywhere tomorrow to consult with anybody or group of bodies about how a new responsibility is to be met, the very first suggestion uttered will be, "Let's organize," and everybody will say, "Yes, that's the thing to do."

And any time from ten days to ten years later, the survivors will recover possession of their rational minds and grimly remark to one another, "That organization wasn't worth the trouble." At least, that's the ending of nine cases out of ten. Or is the exact ratio nearer to ninety-nine out of a hundred?



Now, all this confusion and waste endeavor comes from getting two elements of the efficiency problem crisscross and end for end.

To get any piece of work done, there must be some men interested and then they must work together. The ordinary idea therefore is that an organization must be first formed to get men interested. But that's exactly wrong end to.

The right idea is that the men must be interested first and then the organization should be formed to enable them to work together.

Here in particular is the mischief that has caused a staggering death rate among men's brotherhoods in American churches.

What is the genesis of the average church brotherhood? The pastor of a typical congregation calls together his half dozen dependable laymen and he says to them:

"It is terribly discouraging to see how few men care anything for this church, even of those who attend it. We must do something to get them interested. Let us organize a club or brotherhood."

Well, barring some special providential manifestation of the Lord's favor in that particular parish, you can tell what the future course of a brotherhood thus formed is going to be. It is going to try to "interest men" until all the interest is drained out of it and everybody quits.

The only hope of salvation meanwhile for the organization is the sending of some gracious breeze from some quarter outside which will bring into it some real interest in some real job.

In doing that the brotherhood will find itself not engaged in interesting and being interested but engaged in deeds and actions.

And deeds will save the life of an organization any day; they are an organization's meat and drink, and gymnasium exercise besides.



The time to start an organization is not when somebody sees that a thing ought to be done or somebody else wishes that a thing might be done or some third body believes that a thing can be done, but the time to organize is when all three bodies (and if possible a few more besides) get their spunk up and determine it shall be done and they are the folks who are going to do it.

That's the time to organize, but be careful not to get into the organization—at the outset, anyhow—any but the determined ones.

As long as the case is in the stage not of doing the thing but of getting ready to do it—"interesting folks in it," as the common saying goes—organization is not what's demanded.

For organization is a means of distributing responsibility—a process of setting off certain tasks to certain people and lightening labor by dividing duty.

But this matter of "interesting folks in the proposition" is a spontaneous, spirit-moved activity, in which whole people are needed to meet whole people—no division or allotment about it—just soul-to-soul persuasion and persistent but not too systematic "talking it up."

Also it requires a vast deal of praying in private about it.

This way there won't be any missionary society until a goodly group of women are on fire to do something for missions.

There won't be any young people's society until a dozen or so of young folks are eager to improve their own Christian lives and obtain the conversion of their companions.

There won't be any men's brotherhood until there is a fair nucleus of men who want to be brotherly for the sake of the souls of men.

There won't even be any Bible class until somebody is intensely eager to teach or learn the gospel.



The big failures in organization are those that come in religious and moral movements of national scope. The explanation is the same.

These movements are undertaken to produce evangelistic spirit, to work up social service zeal, to create missionary interest and the like.

In contrast; the successful movement is the movement which out of long-brooded-over purpose suddenly springs forth not to propose and argue and plead but to do.

FIELD OF CHRISTIAN EFFORT PARK COLLEGE

CHURCH EFFICIENCY AT WINONA

An effort to increase efficiency along all lines of church work through consideration of modern ecclesiastical methods is the purpose of the church efficiency congress to be held at Winona Lake, Ind., Aug. 9-13. Rev. A. F. McGarrah will conduct the congress and will discuss such topics as "The Efficient Modern Church," "Efficiency in Business Management," "Efficiency Along Educational and Social Lines." The leader will have the assistance of Doctors P. E. Zartmann, W. E. Biederwolf, M. H. Lyon and M. B. Williams, who by addresses and conferences will emphasize the place and power of evangelism in the program of the church. Among other speakers will be Dr. Lemuel C. Barnes of the Baptist Home Missionary Society.

THE BEST ITEM OF THE WEEK

Several unusual features have added decided interest to prayer meetings recently held by First church, Stamford, N. Y. During a period of several weeks each society of the church was made responsible for one service, which was led by the president of the organization. The men's club introduced a gramophone in its service, and the choir made one meeting notable by giving a history of the hymns sung as a part of the evening's exercises, which took the form of a song service. The Sunday school avoided necessity for the usual adjournment during the summer by organizing one general Bible class led by summer guests whose assistance was obtained by a special committee. Rev. Alfred J. Sadler is pastor.

THROUGHS HEAR COAST EVANGELISTS

Over 6,000 persons crowded into the union tabernacle at San Francisco July 25, and many thousand more were outside, unable to obtain admittance, the occasion being an address by William Jennings Bryan as a part of the exposition union evangelistic services. Christians from all parts of America have been revived in the services led by Dr. John McNeill, and numbers of persons are being converted. "Billy" Sunday became leader of the meeting Aug. 1. Dr. B. Fay Mills will begin his work Aug. 12.

FEDERAL COUNCIL INCORPORATES

The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America has been incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia. The incorporators have elected trustees, among these being Doctors Wallace Radcliffe, Charles L. Thompson, Josiah Strong, Robert E. Speer, William H. Roberts, Frank Mason North, John R. Mott, Dean Shailer Mathews, Charles S. Macfarland and Gifford Pinchot. The exhibit of the council at the Panama-Pacific exposition won for it a gold medal.

DR. C. E. BRADT ON TOUR

During August Dr. Charles E. Bradt of Chicago is traveling throughout the western states giving missionary lectures illustrated by motion pictures. After three days in Nebraska he was at Hot Springs, S. D., Aug. 4; from Aug. 6 to 20 he will be traveling in Wyoming and Montana; he will visit Fort Collins, Greeley and Denver, Colo., Aug. 22-25, and be at Hastings and Fairbury, Neb., Aug. 26-27. This itinerary follows a similar series of lectures in the central west.

WOULD UNIFY WORK FOR IMMIGRANTS

Plans are being made by Dr. Joseph E. Perry and his coworkers at New York for unifying the labors of all denominational forces engaged in work for immigrants at the ports of entry. Especial emphasis is being laid upon following up and protecting the newcomer after he is admitted by the national government and until he has become

fully established in his home in the new world. The federated effort is being made by the immigrant work committee of the Home Missions Council, representing thirteen denominations, and the committee on home mission interests among immigrants of the Council of Women for Home Missions, representing seventeen boards and societies.

WOMEN OF THE CHURCH

Pastor's Wife in the National Capital

The teacher of the largest Bible class for young women in the District of Columbia is Mrs. Jessie Walker Radcliffe, wife of Dr.



MRS. W. RADCLIFFE

Wallace Radcliffe, pastor of New York Avenue church, Washington city. The Mary Lattimore class enrolls seventy-five members, yet it represents but one of the activities among young people in which Mrs. Radcliffe is engaged; she also conducts a young woman's guild and a guild of girls. Moreover, she is a devoted member of the Y. W. C. A., and in 1910 she was chairman of the jubilee committee of one hundred persons.

Foreign missions have a mortgage on much of Mrs. Radcliffe's time. Not only is she chairman for foreign missions in the woman's auxiliary, vice president of the synodical society of Baltimore and president of the woman's foreign missionary society of the presbytery of Washington city; she finds time, also, to act as a vice president of the Philadelphia Board of Foreign Missions and to serve on the editorial council of a leading missionary monthly.

Nor are her activities confined to denominational lines. She is a member of the Mc-All mission and the Waldensian Society; maintains an interest in the Florence Crittenton work and in agitation for public gardens and playgrounds, belongs to the civic welfare society; is a member of the executive committee of the Audubon Society, of which she was for fourteen years treasurer; serves on the juvenile court committee and on the citizens' committee of one hundred, and at the same time gives time to the interests of the Alliance Francaise and does service as a governor of the Washington club.

This busy mistress of the manse in the national capital was born in Detroit, where her father, Edward C. Wheeler, during forty years was an elder in the historic Fort Street church.

CLERGY AND LAITY

Under the ministry of Rev. L. C. Stumpf at Highland, Kan., prior to his removal to Henryetta, Okla., a handsome church edifice was erected.

O. H. Campbell, elder in the church at Litchfield, Minn., who during twelve years has been chairman of the committee on home missions of St. Cloud Presbytery, has retired from the position, but has retained membership on the committee.

Popular lectures have recently been given by Rev. J. Dyke, pastor of the church at East Moriches, N. Y., for the benefit of the manse fund. His addresses included such subjects as "St. Patrick"; "War and Rum"; "Welt-Politik" and "Votes for Women."

ALUMNI—Missionaries, 1 out of 8—131; Ministers, about one man of every 2—205; Teachers—240. Graduates—943.

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