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"AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH: AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE"—John viii, 32.

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## ESSENTIALS OF A STANDARD CHURCH

(A paper read at the Twelfth Annual Presbyterian Workers' Conference, held at Johnson C. Smith University, Jan. 25-28.)

By Rev. O. E. Sanders

This is a most important subject—one that calls for very careful consideration. What determines the standard or model church in this modern age of ours is a perplexing question.

Every age has had its keynote—a chief characteristic which may be summed up in a word or phrase. The watchword of the ancient world was conquest. During the period of Greek dominion the watchword was culture. The Roman period may well be characterized by the word power. The middle ages were dominated by ecclesiasticism. The watchword of the Reformation and succeeding period was liberty, succeeded by the early modern age of industrial democracy.

When we view in the large the present age, we shall doubtless agree that the one word which most nearly characterizes our modern age in all its complex relationships is efficiency. Efficiency means simply the getting of results, and in all walks of life this is a supreme concern. Production, distribution, transportation, communication, indeed all factors in the economic life of the world today have been revolutionized by the scientifically applied efforts of men to secure the greatest possible results with the least possible friction, waste or loss. This practical test of results has been extended to the realm of education, the arts and sciences, philosophy, sociology and politics.

The question at once arises: "May the principles of efficiency be properly applied in matters of religion?" The answer is, "They can." There is a Scriptural doctrine of efficiency. Jesus Himself makes affirmative answer in unmistakable language. "By their fruits ye shall know them" was His test of men and institutions, precisely the test of the modern efficiency expert.

Jesus recognized, as all successful leaders of men have done, that efficiency is primarily a matter of men, not of method, when He said to His disciples: "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide." His ministry, His training of the twelve, His plan of organization for His church, His program for world-conquest, all exhibit the perfection of efficiency.

The Acts of the Apostles is a manual of church efficiency. Never did men achieve such results as these early Christians in the face of tremendous obstacles. The Apostle Paul stands out as the world's greatest efficiency expert in religion, and in chapter after chapter of his inspired writings he deals with this practical and vital subject.

Much emphasis is being placed today upon standard institutions of learning. For instance, there is the standard or "A" class college, with a certain amount of endowment, splendid and well-equipped buildings, and a number of well-qualified and full-time professors and instructors, all of which mean an efficient institution of learning.

Following up this same analogy, the standard church is simply an efficient church. The gigantic task which Christ has given us of bringing in His Kingdom on earth demands the utmost efficiency of which human brain and skill are capable. So if the term efficient is used from time to time in endeavoring to set forth the essentials of the standard church you will understand why.

1. The standard church will be true to the original New Testament model.

The men upon whom Jesus left the indelible impress of His

purpose and mission began under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to carry out their Master's commission. These men knew well the mind of Christ, and were given infallible inspiration and divine guidance for what they said and did. They preached a gospel which can never be improved upon. They bore a witness which can never be surpassed. They organized churches whose principles and workings form our authoritative and final guide.

The original New Testament model was a soul-saving church. Christ's supreme mission was the saving of souls. "The Son of man is come to seek and save that which was lost." He came not "to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." The church of today must save souls; that is her great mission. Spiritual births are necessary to keep the church alive and growing as well as physical births are necessary to keep the race alive and increasing.

The early church believed in social purity. If there was more chastity today there would be more peaceful and happy homes, and divorces would be reduced to a minimum. The church has a wonderful challenge to preach pure living both by example and precept.

Then, too, this New Testament Church believed in prayer. It came into existence through prayer. Prayer was its vital breath, its native air. It wrought wonders through prayer. It was victorious through prayer. And the church that is successful and efficient today is one that lives close to the throne of God.

2. A standard church will be loyal to the truth revealed in the Scriptures.

It will test its doctrines and practices by the New Testament as sufficient, authoritative and final. It will accept the New Testament conception that the churches which Jesus authorized His disciples to organize are God's agency for the spread of His Kingdom unto the uttermost parts of the earth. To them are committed both the responsibility and privilege of carrying out the fourfold purpose of the great commission. This commission in its command to go into all the world, provides for missionary activities; in its command to make disciples, for preaching and evangelizing agencies; in its command to baptize, for church membership and fellowship, with all that this relationship entails; and in its command to teach, with all that religious education implies, for the teaching and training function. To likewise is committed the administration of the two ordinances—baptism and the Lord's Supper—which portray the very heart of the gospel.

Realizing this an efficient or standard church will strive to keep alive the consciousness of God among the people whom it touches; to maintain intelligent interest in and an understanding and appreciation of the Bible as the Word of God to men; to create and maintain a higher type of citizenship and neighborliness; to minister to the spiritual, mental and physical needs of men of every class and condition, so far as in it lies; and to propagate in its purity and fullness, unto the uttermost parts of the earth the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto every one that believeth.

3. The standard church today, no less than in the days of the Apostles, will place chief emphasis on spiritual values. The efficient means—methods and devices, the plans and agencies—employed in the achievement of results will be

kept in their places as means, and not magnified into ends in themselves.

We cannot win the lost world, build up the saved in Christian character, and project the influence of the church with passion and power by card indices, intricately organized societies and church clubs, well-equipped buildings, effective financial systems, attractive advertising, or any other such agency, apart from regenerated, spiritually-minded, warm-hearted, passionately earnest men and women, who have had a genuine experience of grace. These agencies may indeed be made to serve spiritual ends and the modern church should use them with intelligent discrimination, even enthusiasm; but let us not deceive ourselves by thinking that we can bring in Christ's Kingdom by management and device.

True efficiency means power, and through the ages men have been seeking to make their religious organizations more powerful. What is the source of power? Our primary, intuitive conception of God is that He is all-powerful. But when Jesus wanted to describe the all-powerful One, He said: "God is a spirit." The source of power is spirit. The most powerful church is the one made up of the most genuinely spiritually-minded people.

Saved men and women thus led by God's Spirit, walking worthily of their calling, will keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. In such a church there will be absence of division and strife, of selfishness and worldliness, of covetousness and neglect of duty, of spots and wrinkles upon the church that weaken and destroy its power. Such a church will consciously and unconsciously wield a mighty influence for righteousness at home and abroad. Possessed of this spirituality, the church may then infuse the breath of life into modern efficiency methods that will vastly multiply its power and influence and usefulness.

4. The standard church will seek the development of its every member into the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Nowhere in the Scripture is there the slightest warrant for proxy religion. The religion of Jesus Christ is spiritual and personal and comes into the soul by way of voluntary, conscious, personal faith in Christ as Saviour.

The other side of this familiar doctrine is that no saved individual is exempted from the active, effective service of Him who has been accepted as Saviour and Lord. "Unto each of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Not all possess the same talents and qualifications, wherefore "He gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers." For every saved individual there is, or ought to be, a place of usefulness in the church; and one of the church's highest functions is to discover its members' highest capabilities, and then lead each into "the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ."

It is worth while to notice that this Scriptural conception of seeking first the indoctrination, enlistment and development of the church's membership is the reverse of much of our latter day practice. The test of efficiency in the average church has often been the number of new members added to the roll rather than the nurture and growth of those already saved. We justly glory in our evangelistic zeal and success, but we need no less to strive for this other ideal of every member enlistment. To do so will not diminish but increase our evangelistic effectiveness; for instead of a comparatively small group of preachers as evangelists we shall develop soul-winning personal workers

in the ranks of the laity, who will make possible the apostolic ideal of adding unto the church day by day those that are saved.

5. A standard church is progressive.

We are living a complex age, which is destroying long standing traditions and tearing people away from age-long habits. The church in many sections of the country has found itself confronted with an open Sabbath with all kinds of recreation places pleading for support. The unprecedented wealth of the country has made automobiles common and good roads are plentiful. The multiplication of lodges, welfare associations and similar movements has given means of altruistic expression which in the more primitive days were found in the church alone. The church has frankly realized that it must use every resource to hold its own and to serve in a strange, yet fascinating age.

This age calls for a message and a method of the day. The laws of God are immutable. The principles of right living and service do not change. They have no geographical barrier, no chronological limits. But men change, their methods change, their opinions change, and the church must recognize these conditions and adapt itself to them. Departments of knowledge change. Our world has been many times re-created, its destinies ever and anon entrusted to new minds and spirits.

Therefore we cannot do our work by the same methods and principles of yesterday. The day calls for rehabilitation, for an adjustment, that we may find and appreciate the proper evaluations which the new day demands. The young people seem to be looked upon as the gravest problem with which we are grappling today. But should we think of them as a problem? Whatever else we are called we do not wish to be called a problem. That implies that others

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## RACE CURRENTS IN AFRICA

Today African news finds a place in those sources of public information dealing with commerce, politics, and education, as well as religion and the missionary enterprises which it promotes. She is now a part of the moving order of world affairs. Her products add annually increasing tonnage to the vessels which sail from her ports to the markets of the world, while her people are using an ever-increasing amount of the goods produced elsewhere.

As has been and is the case in America, there is a debit side to the contact of Europeans with Africa and Africans. This is supported by instances of ruthless military and economic aggression; periods of forced labor; in parts of Africa, particularly in the Eastern and Southern parts a questionable land policy; and in some parts of the Continent a policy of legislation which almost all native Africans and many white people denounce as fundamentally unjust.

On the other hand, there are undeniable benefits of the presence of European civilization in Africa: The suppression of slavery; the great prayer and effort of the great Livingstone; the introduction and spread of a religion which led and still leads Africans to a God of love; education; improved health conditions; small but growing African leadership,—all of these are unmistakable and fully appreciated assets. Besides, it is with encouragement that one notes the more liberal policies to which governments are giving utterance, and in some instances actually putting into practice as on the West Coast, for instance, and as has been the case in the Transkei in South Africa for a long time.—Max Yergan, in The Southern Workman

## EBENEZER CHURCH, NEW BERN, N. C.

### Death of Two of the Church's Most Dependable Members and Officers.

By Annie Mae Sutton

Twice in the last two weeks we have been visited by God's messenger and have been left sad by the untimely death of two of the church's most loyal members and officers, both of whom were deacons and trustees of Ebenezer.

Brother John Cordon departed this life Mch. 14, some time between night and morning. Mr. Cordon was for three years a staunch member of the church, and his death was so complete a shock that yet we cannot realize it. He was in apparently good health. He went as usual to the trustees' meeting Monday night and then went home in good spirits and to sleep, which proved to be his last sleep.

The funeral was held March 20, at Ebenezer, conducted by Dr. C. J. Baker, of Atlanta, Ga., for whose coming Brother Cordon was helping to arrange. Dr. Baker preached a beautiful, most wonderful and comforting sermon, reminding the bereaved wife and three sisters and hosts of relatives and friends that because their loved one had gone before them to his mansion prepared that they now had a greater claim on heaven. He spoke from the 23rd Psalm, taking as his text: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Brother Cordon will be missed; is missed already; his quiet, unassuming manner had won for him the respect, admiration, and love of both his church and community at large which was evident by the large crowd that gathered to pay their last tribute of respect to the deceased and by the floral offerings.

On Friday night, March 25, at 12:30 A. M., in St. Luke's Hospital, New Bern, God took the soul of another beloved brother, Deacon James William Mills, Sr.

It can be truthfully stated that Brother Mills was not only one of the most dependable and energetic members of Ebenezer, but the most thoroughly active. It has been said and found to be true that he awoke in the morning with a plan, idea or imagination of a way or means to help his church and by night it had become a reality. Bro. Mills was a life-long member of the church.

Bro. Mills' death and the way he went has stunned us. He met with an accident, a fall that paralyzed him, and in less than 24 hours he passed away.

He is survived by a widow, one daughter and three sons.

The funeral was preached by Dr. C. Dillard, of Goldsboro, Monday, March 28, at Ebenezer. Dr. Dillard is an old acquaintance of the Mills family, having known the widow before marriage.

His text, "He that believeth on me though he were dead yet shall he live," were comforting words to mourning friends and found harbor in many hearts. He pointed out to them that death is the emancipator of life, that life is in bondage till death sets it free; that life is a preparation for death and death is entrance to new, better, higher and holier life. Truly Brother Mills' place can never be filled in the church nor in the hearts of his fellow citizens.

A large crowd of admiring friends of both races followed him with flowers to his last resting place in Greenwood Cemetery.

The arrangements for both of these funerals were in charge of H. F. Sutton.

We are glad to announce to our friends that the Hon. R. W. Williamson is improving rapid-

ly. Mr. Williamson has been on the sick list for quite some time, but is able to be back at his office again and in his church.

We were glad to have Dr. C. J. Baker with us last Sunday. He preached for us at three services. The collection for the morning service was \$48.35—\$24.35 having been donated by the Stitch and Chatter club. Dr. Baker administered the Communion at that service. The weather was ideal and we were proud of such a large attendance.

Ebenezer is still trying. The way seems hard at times, but she sticks to her task and we—though still far behind—are nearer the goal.

With the convening of Presbytery we are hoping for a new minister. It has been hard at times without one—hard to keep our people interested and together. But all in all, we feel that we have a right to be proud.

The Stitch and Chatter club is alive and wide awake and enough cannot be said about the help it is to Ebenezer.

## BETHANY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NORFOLK, VA.

Sunday morning, March 27, our pastor preached a very excellent sermon from the text, "If the Son makes you free, you are free indeed." John 8:36.

The evening service being the close of the church year, our minister chose as his theme, "I have finished my course." The entire congregation was very much impressed with the discourse.

Our church is divided into clubs and each club is working with a deal of enthusiasm.

March 14th club No. 2 presented a solo contest at which the neat sum of \$20.00 was realized. Club No. 1 gave a child's diamond ring contest Monday, March 21, and realized \$122.

Sunday under the auspices of club No. 3 Woman's Day will be observed at Bethany. All services will be conducted by the women.

Mrs. Nance is rehearsing the choir for an Easter cantata which will be rendered April 18.

Our Synodical and Presbyterial missionaries, Rev. F. C. Shirley and Mr. S. L. Young, visited us this week and held an institute Wednesday and Thursday nights. We were very glad to have them and feel greatly benefited by their coming. We hope they will come again soon.

Mrs. Jessie S. Moore attended the Librarians' Conference at Hampton Institute last week.

The following persons will leave for the Presbytery of Southern Virginia, Randolph, Va., Tuesday, April 5: Dr. S. I. Moore, Rev. M. G. Hoskins, Mrs. Lomax and Rev. and Mrs. F. D. Nance.

## SPECIAL TRAIN TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Through Rev. Benjamin M. Gemmill, Ph. D., D. D., Stated Clerk of the Synod of Pennsylvania, a specially conducted General Assembly train will be operated to San Francisco. The special will leave Washington, D. C., 3:10 P. M., May 18, over Pennsylvania lines to Chicago, leaving Chicago for San Francisco May 19, at 10:30 A. M.

Dr. Gemmill urges that all Commissioners from Atlantic and Catawba Synods and others go to the Assembly on this special train. There are special advantages in doing so.

I shall be glad to send circulars of the proposed trip. These circulars will give full information as to Pullman reservations, dining car service, etc. If any one wishes to correspond with Dr. Gemmill his address is Hartsville, Pa.

We hope that everybody from this section will go on the special to San Francisco.

J. L. HOLLOWELL, Statesville, N. C.