

Africo-American Presbyterian

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

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METHODS OF SECURING FUNDS FOR CHURCH SUPPORT AND BENEVOLENCES

By Rev. C. J. Baker, D. D.

(A paper read at the 24th Annual Workers' Conference, held at Johnson C. Smith University, March 7th to 11th.)

One needs make no apology, notwithstanding charges of money grabbing, for stressing the importance of providing necessary money for the support of Religion. The very first recorded act of worship consisted of material offerings by Cain and Abel.

The from whence and the to where of Melchizedek, the anti-type and prototype of Christ, remains a mystery, but we do know that Abraham gave him, in what is regarded as an act of worship, a tenth of all the possessions he had taken in his conquest of Chedorlaomar and other kings in rescuing Lot.

Always material substance has been essential in the support and promotion of religious worship; it is very essential today.

Our financial responsibilities are for the support of the missionary enterprises fostered by our general Church. We denominate them Current Expenses and Benevolences.

We are to consider Methods of Securing Funds for these necessary expenses—current and benevolent—in promoting and supporting the Christian religion which we profess and espouse.

First, we remark what seem to us outmoded or very unreliable methods.

1. The Rally Method

Though many churches resort to the Rally Method and perhaps for a long time to come this method will find favor with a goodly number of churches, we feel that as a dependable method of securing funds for operating our churches it is quite outmoded and lamentably unreliable. It is without definiteness or system and offers an easy way of escape for many who seek to dodge religious financial responsibilities.

In attempting, by the Rally Method, to equalize the obligation, often a hardship is worked upon some of the most faithful but least able, while some who are much more able are given an excellent opportunity to be very unfaithful to their membership trust. One is burdened and another is practically unencumbered.

As to results: frequently we succeed amazingly, but more frequently we fail alarmingly and almost disastrously.

Another discouraging effect or feature of the Rally practice is that many members cut down on their regular and normal church contributions during the Rally period but do not give as much in the Rally as they reasonably should give in that span of time. The educational value of regular church support is to a great degree lost.

The Rally effort does open the doors to the community friends of the church to share the financial responsibilities, and perhaps to a degree aids in selling the church to the community; if so, it serves a useful purpose. But in the process of doing this the soliciting members often shirk their financial duty almost to the pauperizing point.

2. Barter Methods

Raising money by Fairs, Dinners, Parties, Chattering or Pie Suppers, Festivals and other bartering methods has been resorted to and is still being done. Properly conducted, with high regard for moral and religious principles and strictly outlawing any questionable practices, these methods may prove very helpful in promoting desirable social relations and spiritual fellowship. However, as strictly money-raising methods we believe they are really outmoded and direfully unreliable and doubtful.

Too often the conduct of these affairs takes such a worldly turn as to suggest low standards of commerce and question-

able moral trends. Certainly true religion should not be dependent upon irreligious activities and methods for support. The spirit of less than "value received," and raffling or selling chances very frequently hold sway, causing unrighteous bartering to nullify high-notched, righteous preaching.

However, these methods properly controlled and religiously promoted may prove very helpful in social and religious culture and aid materially in securing necessary funds for Church support. We contend that they should always be held in a very subordinate rank.

3. Some churches resort to the Uniform Assessment Method. Every member is asked to pay the same stipulated amount each week or month. This may have many points of vantage and commendable elements, but it, too, has its drawbacks. Let me mention only one: The unfairness of requiring each member to contribute the same amount for the support of Religion. The incomes of members vary so materially that necessarily there is a distinct difference in ability to support the church's activities.

II. We believe there is a very praiseworthy and deservedly Uniform Method of Securing Funds for our Churches—Current and Benevolent. It is the Every Member, Personal System.

First, the church officials should appraise the church's needs for financing its local activities and its general Church benevolent or missionary enterprises and make up a complete Budget. This Budget should take into consideration every legitimate item of expense and reasonable financial obligation, including the church's responsibility toward the operating expenses of the Sunday or Bible school and other enterprises for building and developing the spiritual life of the Youth. This Budget should be adopted by the congregation.

This done, (2) The whole membership should be canvassed, very carefully and thoroughly canvassed, and invited, and, if need be, urged to subscribe this Budget. Every member should be reached, either at an inspirational worship service at the church, which service has been carefully and prayerfully planned and amply announced, or, and what is better, in the several homes in a house-to-house visitation campaign which should evolve out of or from a Sunday Worship Service that has been carefully planned to emphasize the spiritual values of giving in the service of the Lord.

A carefully and prayerfully selected team, composed of church officers, lay men and lay-women, should go out in an atmosphere of fervent prayer, which has been led by the minister, to make this canvass.

We believe the minister's influence should be strongly felt, but his hand should be withheld in the actual canvassing; that is, in the house-to-house canvass.

Every member should be led to make a pledge of financial support on the basis of his or her ability to give, with a very definite appreciation of his or her ability, to the financing of the Kingdom projects, of the actual soul benefits in properly discharging the financial obligations connected with Church membership and of the high and glorious privilege this form of service offers for actual fellowship with our Lord in reclaiming the world for Himself. He gives us the sword of the Spirit, the girdle of truth, the helmet, the shield, the supplication code of reinforcement; in fact the whole armor of God for the warfare against our

arch foe, the devil. He extends us the privilege of helping to supply the sinews of war by our giving. The youngest member of the church should be given a chance and urged to make a pledge, either on the Youth Budget Plan or in the regular Every Member Canvass.

The collection of these pledges is of vital importance. The follow-up is very essential and urgent. It becomes a very indispensable factor in the Method of Securing Church Funds.

Money pledged but unpaid will not run the church. Our members will have to be taught that paying is as much a part of worship as is praying.

A strict record of pledges and payments should be kept, and necessary follow-up contacts made to assure and procure regular and faithful pay-ups. If some folks were asked to pay only 1 cent per month they would get behind with their payments.

Some acceptable, as nearly as possible inoffensive, plan of going after the pledged money should be inaugurated and put into execution. I do not have the remedy, but I believe the faulty paying of Church obligations is a disease that we should seek to completely stamp out.

BIRMINGHAM PRESBYTERY

Birmingham Presbytery met with Bethel Presbyterian church, Memphis, Tenn., April 13, 7:30 P. M. The weather was ideal. The church was in trim for the meeting. The members, engineered by that old Scotia stalwart, Mrs. Julia S. Peterson, made the old church look new. On all sides were words of praise for the appearance of things. Even our old friend Dr. T. B. Hargrave, who stopped while passing through, couldn't recognize Bethel as the same church where he and the Holy Ghost had such sweet communion.

The pre-meeting at 2:30 P. M. April 13, manned by the dynamic Rev. L. R. Taylor, of Selma, Ala., was all that could have been hoped for. Talent in the church that we never knew came forth with striking and marvelous demonstration.

At 7:30 P. M., the retiring Moderator, the Rev. L. R. Taylor, brought a message worthy of commendation from Gen. 1:1. All seemed to have enjoyed his sermon.

Rev. C. J. Baker, D. D., pastor of Miller Memorial church, Birmingham, Ala., was elected Moderator and Rev. Vanhorn Murray, Temporary Clerk. Every minister was present save Rev. P. A. White, D. D., who was sick. There were more elders present at this time than I have seen at any previous meeting of Presbytery, and five of the number were women. The women elders were active and showed their worth to the Church as such.

Standing committees made good reports and their recommendations show their knowledge and study of the subjects. Only four churches failed to pay in full all assessments.

Our commissioners to the 1937 General Assembly gave good accounts of the work of the Assembly and were commended by Presbytery.

Rev. A. W. Rice, D. D., of Anniston, Ala., and Elder R. B. Robinson, of Arlington, Ala., were elected commissioners to the coming General Assembly.

The state of religion in our bounds showed that the evangelistic spirit is yet alive and souls are being gathered in. Rev. T. B. Bailey, who has been chairman of the Evangelistic Committee for more than 20 years, made his last report to this Presbytery. He joined Dr. Payne, Job Lawrence, Daniel Murray, T. R. McLin, Eli M. Clark, C. J. McLin, and W. H. Lamley in the Glory Land, April 17, two days after Presbytery adjourned.

The spirit among the brethren was all that could have been expected. The Christ Spirit was surely with us. Our Moderator never sounded the gavel once during the meeting. It was

among the finest meetings in our history.

The Presbyterial was a grand success. Mrs. E. F. Roberts, the President, was at her best. She is a good General.

Many congratulations to Rev. T. W. Sherard and his good people for the elaborate way in which they entertained the Presbyterial.

H. L. PETERSON,
Stated Clerk.
1286 McLemore Ave.,
Memphis, Tenn.

Le VERE PRESBYTERIAL

By Mrs. Thos. A. Jenkins,
Corresponding Secretary

The annual meeting of the LeVere Presbyterial was held on April 6 and 7, 1938, at the Shiloh Presbyterian church, Knoxville, Tenn., with Mrs. J. S. Dailey, the very efficient President, presiding.

Following the supper hour on the opening evening, a Pre-Presbyterial Prayer service was by Mrs. Thos. A. Jenkins, after which we adjourned to attend the opening of the LeVere Presbyterial.

On Thursday morning a very enthusiastic executive meeting was held preceding the opening for regular business. Mrs. Hattie McGhee, of the East Vine Avenue church, led the devotions, and then the President presented the theme, and made inspiring remarks. Next was the roll call of officers and the registration of delegates, which revealed one of the largest attendances of many years.

The minutes of the last regular meeting were read for information by Miss Pauline Donnell, Recording Secretary.

Temporary committees were appointed by the President.

Mrs. Florence Roper gave a report of the meeting of the Synodical that was held at the East Vine Avenue church.

Mrs. Thos. A. Jenkins, Corresponding Secretary, by use of a chart gave a report of the activities and growth of local societies. Miss Mary Wilson, Treasurer, made the Treasurer's report.

Delegates from local churches gave reports from their societies and all were interesting. The morning session was closed with a devotional service being led by Mrs. Fannie Wolfe, of the Shiloh church.

The afternoon session was preceded by committee meetings and an officers' conference. Mrs. Lula Fagg, of the Shiloh church, conducted the opening devotions.

Remarks and short addresses were then given by the following Secretaries: Stewardship, Miss W. G. Bradford; Membership, Miss S. H. Pittillo; Missionary Education, Mrs. Wm. Johnson; Young People, Mrs. J. B. Barber and Miss E. E. Goins; Over-Sea and Home Sewing, Mrs. W. L. Gamble; Literature, Mrs. H. M. Brazelton. There was an exchange of greetings with the Presbyterial and other visitors.

A Round Table discussion was led by Mrs. H. M. Brazelton on Literature.

Next the temporary committees reported and then the election of officers and a Synodical delegate took place. This concluded the regular sessions of the Presbyterial and it is impossible to describe the lovely and capable manner in which our President, Mrs. J. S. Dailey, presided. She presented an up-to-date program outlined in detailed and scheduled by the minute, and reflected great credit on the knowledge she has of the work.

Mrs. Agnes B. Snively was our guest during the entire meeting and her contributions to the sessions were profitable to all.

The popular meeting was held during the evening and consisted of an address on National Missions by Mrs. A. B. Snively and an address on Foreign Missions by Miss E. E. Goins. A Shiloh Trio sang, and Miss Pauline Donnell gave a solo. What was said to have been a very impressive pageant was "How Much Owest Thou

Thy Lord?" presented by a group of Shiloh young people, directed by Mrs. Thos. A. Jenkins.

The officers elected are: Mrs. J. S. Dailey, of Knoxville, President; Mrs. Thos. A. Jenkins, Knoxville, Corresponding Secretary; Miss Pauline Donnell, of New Market, Recording Secretary; Miss Mary Wilson, of Chattanooga, Treasurer; Mrs. H. M. Brazelton, Chattanooga, Secretary of Literature; Mrs. O. C. Wallace, Maryville, Secretary Missionary Education; Mrs. Wm. L. Gamble, Knoxville, Secretary Sewing; Mrs. Lillie Johnson, Knoxville, Membership; Mrs. W. D. Bradford, Dandridge, Stewardship, and Mrs. W. M. Hixon, Chattanooga, Secretary Spiritual Life, Mrs. J. B. Barber, Chattanooga, Secretary Young People.

The quota of the Presbyterial was met in full, and signs of the growth and effectiveness of the Presbyterial are more evident under the new leadership than ever before.

The writer was hostess and we prefer others telling of the entertainment in which the entire church and organizations cooperated very beautifully.

The next place of meeting will be decided at the Fall meeting of the Le Vere Presbyterial. May God bless the women of our Church who, with others, are giving unselfish and sacrificial service in the extension of the Kingdom.

"The LIGHTHOUSE ON THE HILL"

By The Watchman

The Shiloh Presbyterian church, located in Knoxville, Tennessee, is known to its members and friends by the above caption, and from here the Watchman writes this annual column.

All records of the church year 1937-1938 have been closed, and we only pause briefly to compare our blessings with those of past years. In summarizing the activities of the year we discover a few facts that give us faith for continued efforts to serve Him to whom we give all honor and praise forever.

Spiritually

Fourteen persons were added to the church during the year, giving a total of 91 additions under the present pastorate, making now the membership of the church 310. Both morning and evening services are well attended on Sundays, the evening services probably being the largest evening attendance experienced by the church over a period of many years. Approximately 30 persons attend the Mid-Week Prayer Service, regardless of the kind of weather.

The Young People's Sunday Evening Forum doubled this year in attendance and enthusiasm.

Financially

From the general church treasurer's books we find that the receipts for current expenses amount to \$2343.47. From treasurers of other organizations we find a total of \$425 has been raised in addition, for current purposes. The total benevolences for the year to the Boards, including all sources, amounted to \$190.

Organizations at Work

Circle No. 2 painted the exterior wood-work of the church at a cost of more than \$60. The Sunday School, Westminster Guild, and the Faithful Few, each sent a delegate to the Summer Conference at a cost of \$11.00 each. The Young Men's Club published the church's paper each quarter at a cost of \$17 per edition; the church choir financed the pastor's trip to the Workers' Conference; Circle No. 1 secured an outdoor bulletin board at a cost of \$50, and through the efforts of the Woman's Association, the kitchen was equipped and curtains were made for the Sunday school class-rooms.

Among personal gifts there was an Individual Communion Set for the use of the Session,

and a three-burner oil stove for the Pastor's Study.

Extra Attractions

During the year the following programs were presented: The Shiloh Male Quartet Recital, a Variety Musical Review and a Ministers' Solo Contest. In addition the following which are held annually: Reception for Graduates; School of Missions, Vacation Bible School, Mission and Stewardship Classes, Cottage Prayer Services, Church Socials and Children Parties. The church choir presented two cantatas, one at Christmas and one at Easter.

The church has entertained the Young People's League and the Pan-Hellenic Forum, and has opened its doors to the community for other cultural and educational purposes.

Visitors Seen Our Way

Mr. Fritz Cansler, Y. M. C. A. Secretary of Dallas, Texas; Dr. Horace Mann Bond, Dean of Dillard University, New Orleans, La.; Mrs. Reba Graham and Mrs. Agnes Snively, Dr. John M. Gaston, of Pittsburgh, Pa.; Dr. L. B. West, Dr. Chas. H. Shute, Dr. Thos. A. Long, Mr. R. P. Wyche and three Theological students of Smith University, Charlotte; Dr. W. L. Metz and wife and son, Edisto Island, S. C., and Mrs. Mary Muldrow Fuller of Chadburn, N. C., and Dr. Ambrose Caliver of Washington, D. C., exclusive of scores of local friends.

Conclusion

We count this year as one of the best in several years, yet we feel our efforts were feeble. It is our purpose to make the kingdom of God stronger and the influence of the church felt in this part of the vineyard. This has been written for benefit of our many friends whose prayers have been for us, and who so often inquire as to our welfare. May your prayers for us continue, so that we shall have forever the blessings of God. Our prayer is for you wherever the banner of Presbyterialism is flying, and for a greater Church universal.

THE WATCHMAN.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEAGUE OF McCLELLAND PRESBYTERY

On Saturday, April 23, 1938, ninety-six registered delegates and other visitors and friends from fourteen churches and two community Sunday schools gathered at Mattoon Presbyterian church, Greenville, S. C., for the Spring meeting of McClelland Presbyterial Young People's League. The weather was ideal. Miss Lois Brooks, V-President, presided throughout the day.

After registration, hearty greetings were extended by Mr. John Golikely, representing the church and community; Miss Annie Mae Austin, representing the Young People's organizations of Mattoon church; and Mr. Henry Lawton, of the M. E. church, representing the young people of the city. A large number of young people from various churches in the city were present to enjoy the program and to take part in the open discussions. Very fitting response to the greetings was made.

The devotional period, in charge of the young people of Mattoon church, was conducted by Mr. Thomas M. Jenkins. Routine business matters were duly dispatched. Miss Elizabeth V. Templeton was chosen representative to the Synodical Summer Conference to be held at Harbison Institute in August. The League accepted the very cordial invitation extended by Mr. John Ellis to hold its Summer meeting with the young people of Mt. Zion Presbyterian church, Due West, S. C., in July.

Three interesting topics were discussed during the Discussion Period. The first—"Why the Youth Budget Plan" was opened by a well-prepared paper by Miss Annie Mae Appling, Abbeville, S. C. In this paper and the discussion that followed

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