

The Church and Denominational Projects

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In presenting this paper it is my desire to provoke discussion rather than any attempt at an exhaustive treatment of the Subject. And, since each of us here stands in a very real relationship to the Theme, it should not be difficult for any of you to express your views when opportunity is given. In developing the Subject I am following very closely the thought-pattern that registered in my mind when the Subject was first suggested to me by our Superintendent.

My first problem was to ascertain the relation which naturally exists between the local church and the Denomination. I thought of a wheel with its several spokes and hub. The spokes representing the local churches and the hub representing the Denomination into which the churches conjoin. These are principal factors in the making of a wheel, and if you will allow for our Constitution and Articles of Faith representing the felloe and rim, you have a fairly clear picture of the relationship we seek. While every physical example must be weak and limited here, I thought again of the human body and the relationship that exists between the head and the different members of the body. The Denomination is the controlling and determining power, and the churches should be subservient to this power as the members of the body are subservient to the mind or intellect. Where this relationship is recognized, there ought not to be too great difficulty in maintaining and sustaining a proper balance of unity and cooperation. I can still see a weakness in my illustrations, however, since the relationship we wish to understand is closer than either of these we have mentioned. In reality, the churches are the Denomination, and the Denomination is the churches living, breathing, and operating in a single unit. Hence, the relationship is not only very real but likewise, very integrated. I think it is important that we see and own this close and vital relation between the local church and the Denomination.

The second problem arising out of the Theme has to do with Denominational Projects. Now, a project is a design, scheme or plan, and it goes without saying, that a Denomination should have many of these in well defined shape and form. Also, several of these should always be in the process of development and realization. There ought to be some at least taken out of the embryo stage and rapidly developing toward completion. The most discouraging diet, possible, to feed our churches on is high-sounding brain-waves, with neither wheels nor motors attached, and seem never to come any nearer fruition. Our projects should first, be practical; second, urgent; and third, sizeable—sufficiently large that nothing short of the help of God could ever make them possible. When we are afraid to plan to the point where faith becomes imperative, then our plans have dissolved into too small an area. We must ever make room for, and live in the expectancy of the miraculous. This can only be when our plans make God indispensable.

Denominational plans are the united voice of our churches. Our churches make up our Alliance and it is at our Alliance Sessions that most of our plans are formulated or discarded. This being the case, we can quite reasonably say, that our churches are responsible for

our plans. We may further add that our churches are largely responsible for the realization of these plans. One thing is certain: if our pastors and churches do not entertain this attitude, then we will be compelled to make no plans, which condition would result in loss of place, loss of privilege, and loss of the favour of God. These things we cannot, we must not sacrifice.

Our present Denominational projects seem quite feasible. To maintain them is a man-sized job. Our present setup compares quite with any of the holiness groups—I mean in form rather than function. For projects, most of them have Foreign Missions, Home Missions, Schools, and what would come under the heading of General Fund. This fact lends considerable weight to our present program since it affords us the unspoken sanction of other bodies much larger than we. Most of them were small at one time but their present system, plus the blessing of God, have made them what they now are. I think this should be an encouragement to us as pastors and an incentive to carry on.

Again, may I point out, that many of the holiness bodies to which I have already referred, support their projects by the same methods that we have recently adopted—namely: the Budget System. This is surely the most sane method of supporting our program that we could possibly adopt. Personally, I don't believe that we could carry the load we are now carrying if we were to revert to our former method of financing our Denominational projects. At that time "the wheel that did the squeaking got the grease," whereas now, all our Boards can look for fair and reasonable consideration from all our churches. In most cases it has not been easy to raise our budgets in full, some have over-subscribed. I would not overlook the circumstances that have played a part in this difference, however, I am satisfied that the pastor is the key-man in this matter. Understand me please, I am not saying that he is always responsible if the full budget is not raised, nevertheless his attitude and effort go further than any one single factor in raising the budget. A locally minded church with a denominationally minded pastor will go further toward raising the whole church budget than will a denominationally minded church with a locally minded pastor.

Considering all the circumstances (and it would take too long even to mention them) I feel that we have made some remarkable strides during the last decade. If ever a people has carried with them the marks of Divine favor it has been our people. The unmistakable evidence of God's presence and Providence has graced every venture made; the people of our churches are back of us in practically every effort; the Maritimes are giving priority to our message and methods, and even heads of other denominations than our own, are seeing such notable signs of development and progress that they are becoming generous in their praise.

This is no time for slackening our effort; nothing is easy that opposes sin and Satan. But who wants to be in any other position? The successes of the past should inspire us to undertake new and greater things in the future, for the establishing of churches that

DO NOT FIGHT THE INEVITABLE

Oliver G. Wilson

Riding on a Pullman recently, I was endeavoring to get some sleep in a bed for which I had paid the sum of ten dollars. The road was rough, and the car swayed and jolted badly. In order to keep from rolling as the car swayed I held myself rigid, and tried to sleep. I did not roll, but neither did I sleep. Finally I relaxed and allowed myself to sway with the car and was soon asleep.

There are many men who are breaking themselves by fighting the inevitable. They are like the untamed colt that is annoyed with the harness straps and endeavors to escape them. Its foolishness is seen in that before many hours the colt succeeds only in wearing great sores on his shoulders and sides. He must ultimately submit to the harness. A wise colt will soon learn this lesson and adjust with the least amount of friction possible.

Things that cannot be remedied are to be accepted with a gracious yielding. Any amount of complaining will not grow hair on a bald head; fault-finding will not clear the leaden skies; pining for the yesterdays will not roll back the years of time or restore the opportunities that have fled.

Has loss come to you? Analyze the situation carefully, discover whether or not the loss may have been caused by your clumsiness or willfulness, then correct the situation.

Has disappointment, great and bitter, been yours? Ascertain the advantage to be gained by the bitter experience, and use the cinders of lost hopes to pave the way to greater accomplishments.

The apostle of the thorny road once wrote, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Contentment is a matter of adjustment to the inevitable. If the car sways, sway with it and get your sleep. If the battle is fierce and the enemy strong, keep your face to the foe and slog on. You may be unable to choose the place of battle, but you can determine when it will be over—when the victory is won.

Life is a race with skilled competition; a warfare against a relentless foe; a pilgrimage through a hostile country. To live righteously has never been easy, but it is a glorious adventure.

The pounding waves break themselves to foam on the granite shore, but they succeed only in adding beauty and smoothness to the rough exterior of the craggy coast.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."—Wesleyan Methodist.

Secret prayer is without doubt the secret of Christian endurance and spiritual enlargement. No other form or kind of prayer can take its place. Public prayer, family prayer, or prayer in a general sense as one goes about the duties of daily life, will not take the place of closet prayer, or being alone with God.—Heart and Life.

will feed our School, our Mission fields, and our Alliance with healthy, consecrated converts. Our projects are good, let's get behind them and see what can be done.

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