

- Editorial -

STAY, MR. LAYMAN!

Louis McCurdy

Nearly every church has a member who in some way measures up to our ideal of a perfect layman. We shall endeavor to take the good qualities of these indispensable laymen and put them all into one character whom we shall call Mr. Right-hand Layman.

This layman is the pastor's ready assistant, always dependable and faithful to the extent that he really is our right-hand man. He is always ready, capable, and willing to help in any church project, yet he is never offended if anyone else does it. He is very capable, yet never boasts of his superior wisdom, or ability for any task, or position. In the first stages of our acquaintance with him, we did not realize that he was a man of leadership or influence. But we soon found that his spirit was so contagious that others in the church were following him in both spirit and example.

Among other virtues, he is a faithful tither, is regular in attendance at the services, and subscribes to the church periodicals. He is faithful in lay visitation, and fills his car with children on his way to Sunday school. He has won several boys to the church as a result of his week-day activities with them in his basement workshop.

Of course that church is a growing church. It couldn't well be otherwise. Its board meetings are a real inspiration, and a tonic to a pastor's faith. Any matter of business is given undivided attention. If a project is under discussion, and anyone mentions past failures of some similar project, one glance at the objector from the shining face of Br. Right-hand Layman usually brings silence and restores optimism. He is always daring to try some new church project with faith in God for results.

This layman was such a booster for his pastor that when conference time came, he had almost everyone convinced that their pastor was the best to be had anywhere. So, even though the pastor was young and inexperienced, the people voted him back for another year. They had helped him to pray through some difficult problems, they had helped him to strengthen some weak places in his ministry, and they wanted to help him to bet a better pastor in the future.

Mr. Layman's church is in a small town with not so much room for expansion, yet its influence has been widely felt. Mr. Right-hand Layman has influenced his associates, and they have made each one of their pastors into a better one. For four of these pastors it was their first church. One of them is now a district superintendent, another is in full-time evangelism, one is a seminary graduate, while the fourth pastors a growing church in a state capital. Truly this layman is like Joseph—a faithful branch whose influence runs over the wall into other churches.

Stay on, Mr. Layman. Your relatives may tempt you to move into some large city and retire, but God needs you where you are to be a blessing to those young pastors. They need your help and the inspiration of your faithfulness.

Good-bye, Mr. Right-hand Layman, I'm called to a larger field of service for which you have helped prepare me. I shall always cherish the memory of your cooperation, your optimistic spirit, and your faithfulness. Laymen like you have what it takes to make both your church and your pastor grow.

—The Free Methodist

A Horse, a Stag, and Liberty

Aesop said:

"A horse and a stag, feeding together in a rich meadow, began fighting over which should have the best grass. The stag with the sharp horns got the better of the horse. So the horse asked the help of man. And man agreed, but suggested that his help might be more effective if he were permitted to ride the horse and guide him as he thought best. So the horse permitted man to put a saddle on his back and a bridle on his head. Thus they drove the stag from the meadow. But when the horse asked man to remove the bridle and saddle and set him free, man answered: 'I never before knew what a useful drudge you are. And now that I have found what you are good for, you may rest assured that I will keep you to it.'"

SACRIFICE

People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Is that a sacrifice which brings its own blessed reward in healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious hereafter? Can that be called sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of a debt owing to God which can never be repaid? It is emphatically no sacrifice. It is a privilege. —David Livingstone.

SICK!

The church is sick at the core, and no readjustments of organization will suffice. It is sick because it thinks of its mission as being concerned primarily with making the good people of its membership better. The church is called not to be the light of an organization or a gathered congregation or a select few, but the light of the bruised, bleeding, hungry, lonely, fear-crazed world. Our mission is not within the church itself. The church's mission is in the world.

Bishop Richard C. Raines

DON'T EXPLAIN YOURSELF!

Someone has said, wisely I believe, that one should not try to explain his actions, because his friends do not expect it, and his enemies will not believe him.

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