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The tendencies in American secular education in the rural communities and their significance for the educational work of the rural church

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICE

Thesis

THE TENDENCIES IN AMERICAN SECULAR EDUCATION
IN RURAL COMMUNITIES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE
FOR THE EDUCATIONAL WORK OF THE RURAL CHURCH

Submitted by

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and their Significance for the Educational Work of the Rural Church

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INTRODUCTION

I THE RURAL COMMUNITY

The rural community is becoming conscious of itself. It is rousing itself to look about and compare itself not simply with the city, but with the rural community which it might be. It is aware that it has advantages for human happiness and prosperity and that many of these advantages are being overlooked through ignorance or neglected through indifference. The alert members of the rural community are eager for better roads, better homes, better sanitation, better marketing arrangements, better schools, better social opportunities, and better churches, and for the organization and equipment which here-to-fore have been altogether lacking. Many movements have developed to satisfy these desires and before attempting the discussion of the rural school and rural church, it is worth while to recognize some of the other factors in the rural life of the present which are affecting the life and progress of rural people both as individuals and as communities.

The term "rural" is applied in the Government statistics to open country and to villages having a population of 2500 or less. The Inter-church Survey has included villages of 5000 inhabitants in its rural classification. Except where the Inter-church Survey is quoted, rural is here used in the Federal Government's sense of the term.

While agriculture including animal husbandry is the characteristic vocation of rural people, other occupations are to be found among this population. In farming communities, the villages have their commercial and professional men. Many villages, particularly in New England, early developed industrially because of the water power which invited manufacturing. While the rural population includes, therefore, an element which does not make its living di-

rectly from the soil, this is a comparatively small proportion. In the study of rural conditions "rural" and "agricultural" are almost synonymous terms. The occupations of those who are not farmers are so closely related to and so dependent upon farmers ~~ers~~ that their interests are one.

Rural life has passed through three stages; the pioneer, the house-holder and the exploiter periods, and now is in the period where conditions are most advanced. Generally speaking agricultural life is now of the fourth type although instances of arrested development are to be found holding over from the earlier periods.

The factors which are growing in their potency for influencing country life, besides the school and the church, are worthy of more attention than can be given them here. The fact that they are active and have capacities for good is to be assumed. Here there is place for little beyond mere enumeration of some of the most prominent.

Nothing is more fundamental in its influence on rural life than that which relates directly to the soil and its products. New methods of agriculture are foremost among the important features which characterize country life. Methods of cultivation have changed. Increase in production and profitable farming are dependent more and more upon the acceptance and application of improvement in method and the use of modern equipment. It is probably safe to say that up-to-date farm machinery has revolutionized agriculture in as great a measure as machines for manufacturing have revolutionized industry. The farmers' work, while heavy still, is made easier and more extensive by the use of power.

The farm home likewise is benefited by modern facilities for housework. Where there is power for outside machinery there is power to be applied to indoor work. Electric lights, vacuum cleaners, running water in the house with plumbing and with the

conveniences which may be used in any home anywhere, ~~are~~ reducing the drudgery of housework on the farm.

Relief for the isolation of the farmer and his family is coming through better roads, trolleys and motor vehicles, mail routes, and the telephone. Instead of being apart from the world, the farmer may now feel himself a part of the world. The daily paper is delivered at his door. His neighbors are within the reach of his voice. Good roads which may be readily traveled the year round are the standard which each year brings nearer to attainment.

The government itself has been most active in the progress of country life. Research work and demonstrations at experiment stations and the extensive distribution of readable leaflets on all phases of agriculture and farm life have secured the confidence and respect of the farmers who have found the tested knowledge placed at their disposal worthy of application in the management of their own farms.

Another agency offering advantages to the farmer and rural village inhabitant is the library. It is not even necessary to go to town for the privilege of getting a book, for library commissions send deposits of books to rural schools, and city libraries make arrangements whereby the borrower may secure and return his books by parcel post.

Many schools are going farther than to provide an education for the children of the farmer. With the well developed consolidated school, which is to be described later, there are numerous opportunities for the farmer. By co-operation with federal and state agents he may hear lectures and discussions of approved farming methods, and he may witness the demonstrations at the school farm.

The advantage supplied by the school and other rural agencies are far from being connected, *exclusively* with the working side of life. One

of the drawbacks to country life has been that it was all work and no play. It has been, in fact, more monotonous than necessary because people have not known how to play. Active participation in play is difficult to secure and comes slowly. Beginnings have been made however in some communities with Field Days which have been wonderfully successful and have created a taste for more.

The rural community center, often developed with the school as the nucleus, is supplying recreation through many kinds of amusement and entertainment for old and young. It is meeting the sorest lack of rural people and giving them a place for meeting one another. *rural community center is many fold. The need for recreation in the* The value of the city is met with commercialized amusements, if in no other way. In the country, the early social use of the school house has died out and for too long a time the need for recreation has been stifled by the absence of anything to meet it.

The farmer has discovered his own needs for social expression and has developed the Grange and other organizations having a similar purpose. Parent-teacher associations connected with the schools are natural units of organization which are meeting community needs effectively.

The County Y.M.&Y.W.C.A.'s. are meeting the needs of rural young people for fuller mental, physical, and moral development. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and Campfire Girls have spread to the country where they are being welcomed in many communities.

So numerous are now the institutions for the up-building of rural people and rural communities that the church must in many cases make a strenuous effort to regain its place among them. What its place should be and how it shall find it again are questions to be dealt with later.

The school ~~itself~~ has failed in the past to assume the duties

thrust upon it.

Education is passing through a transition period. The war has occasioned questions as to purposes and methods. Educators have paused to take stock of national assets in educational theories and their products, and have asked whether, after all, our boasted educational system is worthy of our pride, whether as a great governmental institution it is accomplishing the end for which with such persistent effort, it was established. Is it to satisfy the nation of the future? It is not standing still. Changes have marked the last two decades which have significance as the indications of what education will become. Theories and procedure do not remain static. What then is the direction which they take? What is the education of the future to be different from the education of the present?

This paper is concerned with the general educational tendencies of today so far as they affect rural schools and the special tendencies which affect only rural schools. The first division of the paper will describe these tendencies and show their influence and importance in rural secular education. The second part will be a statement of the present status of the rural church and its tendencies. In the third part, the significance of the current secular tendencies for the educational work of the rural church will be shown and an attempt will be made to outline the educational work which the rural church must establish and maintain if rural America is to continue to produce men and women of strong faith who shall illumine her with "freedom's holy light."

PART I
THE SCHOOL⁴

II ORGANIZATION

Perhaps the most frequent word in the current discussions of rural education is "consolidation." As we realize the reasons for consolidation and the value of it, it is not ~~be~~ surprising that this is so. Before considering the distinctive features and the advantages of consolidation some brief definitions may be useful.

George Knorr defines two types of consolidated School.* First there is "the Typical Consolidated School--Four or five rooms and teachers; a seven or eight year elementary course with a two, three, or four years' high school course. The School must have at least two school wagons for carrying pupils living remotely." The second type is "the Consolidated Graded School--Two, three, or four rooms, a regular seven or eight year primary or elementary course, but no high school, and has at least one wagon for conveying pupils."

Population has decreased in many of the older rural areas. The district schools have felt the effects in their enrollment. Where originally thirty or more pupils had constituted a school, as few as nine or ten have been attending the school.

The consolidated school in itself is not a very recent development. The principle back of it has been recognized since 1869 when Massachusetts passed a law permitting the transportation of children to school in order that one school might serve several districts. The noticeable feature of consolidation at the present time is the rapid adoption of the plan. The number of consolidations affected in the five year period from 1909 to 1914 equal those of the preceding forty years--1869-1909.

The report of the Commissioner of Education for the year ending June 30, 1920 gives the number of consolidated schools as about 12,000 which is an increase of 1,500 since 1918. Professor Hart predicted in 1910 that "Ultimately about 250,000 small rural schools

in the open country will yield to the pressure of new social and economic conditions and go into consolidation in groups of six to ten, forming about 25,000 country life institutions known as consolidated schools or country life schools."

The type of schools defined above has passed the experimental stage. As experiments they succeeded so well that nowhere where a thorough consolidation has been made have the earlier district schools been re-established. The plan has proved itself to be more than a fad. It has been the application of good common sense to changed conditions.

Mr. Knorr writing in 1914 considered the superiority of the consolidated school over the old small rural school to be then too well recognized to need discussion. For the sake of use later in the development of this paper, however, a brief description of the distinctive features of a consolidated school and the advantages furnished in order here.

When one building replaces smaller structures, better buildings are possible. Architects have designed buildings to suit the needs of rural communities in different parts of the country. Not only are there more rooms in the consolidated school building, but the rooms are planned to serve varied purposes. There are rooms for study and recitation and in addition there are the particular kinds of laboratories and work rooms required by the modern rural school curriculum. It is possible to have sanitary school houses in the open country--and the need for them is as great as anywhere. Country children have the conveniences at school which the modern farm home may have.

The teaching equipment does not stop with that provided indoors. The school grounds are a real working laboratory for school gardens, experiment plots, poultry houses are as essential to the rural school as the indoor classrooms. Recess and recreation time

are provided for both indoors and out, with boys' and girls' play-rooms in the basements and with separate outdoor play grounds which have suitable equipment.

The consolidated school with its superior equipment is equally accessible to all its pupils. The district schools were built within walking distance of the homes of the pupils. When some of these schools were closed it meant that many of the pupils were too far from school to walk, and a means of transportation has become a distinguishing characteristic in the new type of school. At first many problems were involved in providing adequate transportation. Experience has found solutions for these problems. Styles of wagons are now being built especially to carry school children. Drivers can be found who are reliable. Routes can be arranged to pass the homes of every pupil without necessitating waiting at cross roads. Schedules can be established and maintained so that the children are called for and returned at definite times. The wagons are constructed to afford protection from rain and snow, with provision for ventilation. Perfectly safe means of heating these wagons are available.

The consolidated school offers the pupils better instruction than the old type of school can give. The number of pupils is greater and can be more thoroughly graded. With a teacher who has two or three grades to teach instead of six or eight the classes receive more time and better instruction for the length of each recitation is greater and more time can be devoted to each individual in each subject. The consolidated school can secure and give its pupils teachers who have specialized in the subjects they teach. Special teachers of manual arts, agriculture, etc., can be provided. Not only is it possible to get better teachers but consolidated schools can keep them longer. Teachers can do more satisfactory work when

they have fewer classes, as more time can be put into the preparation for each one and the recitations can be longer.

The consolidated school often has a house or houses on the school grounds for the teachers. Where there is more than one teacher there is not the isolation which often accounts for the short term of service of the rural teacher. Teachers in consolidated schools have better salaries, better teaching equipment, better supervision, better living conditions and more congenial associations than the teacher of the lonely one-room school. Better teachers are the natural accompaniment of such conditions for they are attracted and held.

Economy is often urged as an advantage of consolidation. It is not the strongest or most conclusive reason for favoring consolidation but it is influential in securing its adoption. It is in the long run that it pays to consolidate. On the surface figures quite regularly favor the old system.

The relative cost of the two systems is an interesting study. When the data for the best one room schools of Alabama, W. Va., Ohio, Ind., Minn., Ill., Idaho, and Wash. was rearranged parallel to similar data from the best consolidated schools of the same states in 1914, it showed the annual cost per pupil to be \$44 in the one-room school as against \$51 in the consolidated school or an excess of \$7 annually for each pupil attending the consolidated school. Sometimes it is found that the daily cost per pupil is actually as little or less in the consolidated school, partly from the fact that attendance is more regular. It is when value received is estimated and compared that the expenditures for the consolidated school become more economical than for the one-room school.

Careful consideration of the organization of rural education reveals limitations to the progress of consolidation. Some one-room schools will unquestionably remain where the distribution of population, topography or other uncontrollable features prevail. Though

the movement of consolidating schools has progressed rapidly in the last decade there are sections of the country which will be much slower to adopt it. In spite of these circumstances, however, the spread of the consolidation movement is one of the most active and important tendencies in rural education.

A review of the progress of consolidation reports that consolidation has gone as far there as it can in a certain state. The obstacles to its further application in the state under discussion are tradition and conservatism rather than geographical or other physical conditions. The need of improved schools is as great as in states where they have been secured. Indeed, conditions are worse than where poor schools exist, for there are children living beyond the reach of open school houses who are receiving no public instruction. Before consolidation can be discarded as impractical or inapplicable to given conditions, those conditions must be investigated and studied by some one who thoroughly understands the process of securing it. If such conditions prevail in one state, it is not improbable that other states are in corresponding circumstances, and that the movement has more room for growth than has been assumed.

School patrons are appreciating and demanding the improved accommodations, increased teaching efficiency and broader and deeper country life afforded by the consolidated school.

III THE CURRICULUM

The primitive rural school taught "reading, 'riting and "rith-metic." It was an elementary school in every sense. The needs of the people who established it were simple. A simple curriculum was all that was required to meet their needs satisfactorilly. To be able to read, write and cipher was enough for them and this ability the early rural school gave them.

The curriculum of the elementary school broadened and then for a long period remained static. It became more formal than in the previous stage. It consisted of a body of knowledge drilled into the pupil. Development of the child was not considered.

This expansion of the curriculum included geography, history and physiology, in addition to spelling, reading, penmanship and arithmetic. Music and drawing also had places.

For some time now vocational subjects have been finding their place even in the elementary schools. A prevalent tendency in the high schools has been the commercial course. More recently the vocational and pre-vocational subjects have been revolutionizing the curriculum in the higher grammer grades. The desirability of this trend in the curriculum may be open to discussion but such discussion is out of place here. Here it is proposed to state the tendencies as present conditions reveal them.

What is true in the high schools is true likewise in the colleges, that there has begun a development of vocational education within the old type of college. It has been fought and much more combat remains for the problem is a live one.

The vocational school of college grade has also developed and at the head of the list is the graduate professional school.

These general tendencies in education are noticeable every-

where, both in the city and in the country. The city schools have felt them first, to be sure, but the village and country schools are growing conscious of them. At the present time the movement is toward the application of the principles of reorganizing the curriculum to an ever increasing number of schools. Foght briefly summarizes the principles of reorganizing the rural curriculum as follows: "We must eliminate all materials no longer serving a useful purpose; we must freely introduce new materials required to meet the conception of modern rural education; we must readjust whatever is retained of the traditional subject material to meet the new demands."

The addition of new material is made more readily than the elimination of the old. These conditions, as had been said, are found everywhere both city and country. In the country the new material is slower to get into the curriculum and the useless old material is slower and more difficult to get out. That there are movements of this type there is no question, however. Once the new subject matter is properly taught it proves its worth and is there to stay.

In the rural school agriculture and domestic arts and sciences are the natural and desirable subjects for inclusion in the curriculum. Rapid recognition is being granted of its worth in the education of country boys and girls. It is of double value. In the first place it is the backbone of rural life and has to be taught to acquaint pupils with their own environment. In the second place is its value in fitting youth for the future. The natural and most to be desired ^{class}~~type~~ of country men and women of the future is comprised of those who have grown up in the country. The rural school has the opportunity to equip them for agricultural occupations.

The teaching of agriculture thus becomes both background and

tool for the pupils of an agricultural community.

It will be serviceable to outline the curriculum that has been prevalent, and the one that is being gradually established in its place. These two stages of curricula will show the tendency of rural education in subject matter and treatment.

The traditional curriculum of the last generation has come to mean arithmetic, grammar, spelling, penmanship, geography, history, physiology, nature study, drawing and music. These subjects were taught as ends in themselves.

The new curriculum still includes the material of the old, but with a difference. In the old curriculum the subject matter was an end in itself. In the new, the former subject matter becomes like the new which the present curriculum includes, a means toward an end. The whole body of knowledge is presented as tools to be used, and it is not regarded as a possession of intrinsic value. The old subjects are reorganized and taught with new purpose. The reorganization of each subject reduces the formal element to a minimum and correlates much of the remaining matter.

The new curriculum also contains material which the old did not. Agriculture and the domestic, arts and sciences are distinctive in the reorganized curriculum of the rural school.

The method of teaching relates the subject matter to the everyday life of the pupils. Then the correlation between the new material and the old unifies the knowledge which the pupil is acquiring. It is taught for its present value and usefulness as well as for the purpose of developing the normal mental life of the pupil.

The new curriculum aims to develop ideals of country life and teaches how those ideals may be attained. There is a danger, it must be admitted, that the materialistic aspect of this type of education may be over emphasized. The immediate application of knowledge to daily affairs, however, need not lead into materialism,

if worthy ideals accompany the tools with which redirected education equips country children.

The new curriculum places upon the rural teacher demands not made by the old. There are new subjects to be taught, there are different ways of teaching the old subjects and above all there is a new and different attitude toward rural teaching than has obtained in the past. The rural teacher is the next factor in rural education to be considered.

IV THE TEACHER

There are limitations to individual ability and accomplishment but the fact remains that in a given situation a person with training and vision can usually make it an opportunity for far-reaching, even dominating influence. Perhaps under such circumstances no one may rise to the occasion. Nothing has happened, nothing is expected to happen. Yet something might happen if only some one with vision, with knowledge, with persistence, with all the other elements which make the leader, would appear. Where the leader appears something does happen, not all at once, but gradually and quietly. The leader sees the opportunity and out of the opportunity come plans, actions and achievement.

"Like teacher, like school," contains a truth that suggests one of the tendencies in education of the pupils in his care is limited. There are problems of equipment of curricula and of administration beyond his jurisdiction. Yet the amount which the teacher may do depends upon the teacher. The teacher, although not the only factor of importance, is a factor with immense possibilities.

"The Brown Mouse" is an instance. Such teachers appearing here and there are accomplishing worthwhile results and showing what others may do. More teachers of this kind are needed. While it is true that isolated teachers who revolutionize their own schools cannot get far in the re-organization of rural education without favorable equipment and administration cannot produce or maintain a re-organized school system. The teacher is an indispensable factor. The quality of the teacher is one of the foundation stones in the structure of an adequate educational institution.

Recognition of this truth is demonstrated by recent developments in some of the most progressive normal schools. Heretofore the same preparation has been given to all normal students regard-

less of their ultimate location. These prospective teachers have looked forward, most of them to positions in city schools. Teaching in the country has been a step at the bottom of the professional ladder. The height sought has been in a different environment and teachers have given little thought to the local conditions and needs of their earlier schools. Then there has also been that class of persons who have taught country schools without any preparation whatever for teaching. So low have been the standards, so insufficient has been the supply of teachers, that anybody has been accepted and even with such concessions an appalling number of schools remain closed for lack of teachers.

Consciousness of the real task of rural education is at last creating in some normal schools departments of rural education. At last rural education begins to have a place of its own. There is a profession of rural teaching just as distinct from teaching in general as selling insurance is from general salesmanship.

This profession of rural education seeks as recruits men and women who choose to teach in the country. Technical preparation is but part of the necessary attributes of the rural teacher. With the rural teacher in mind, has come the paraphrase, "Though I have all preparation, and have not the spirit, it profiteth nothing." "Personality counts for more in the country school than in the city school." The country teacher must be resourceful and self-reliant. The average country school teacher must do her work without supervision and without contact with other teachers.

There are teachers who have these capacities and who have dedicated themselves to the service of rural America for the purpose of giving boys and girls the education which actually meets their needs and qualifies them for intelligent enjoyment of and participation in rural life. Not all rural teachers by any means belong to this class. The country recognizes its need of such teachers

and is calling for them. Dr. Foght pleads for "teachers of good academic and professional preparation and broad teaching experience" as one of the essentials for adequate rural education. The Rural Conference on Rural Education and Country Life, at its 1919 meeting stressed the urgent need of better trained teachers. Three means of securing more highly trained teachers were recommended: (1) The establishment of more normal schools (2) The provision of training for those already teaching and (3) A living wage.

At the present time progress suffers not only from a lack of trained teachers but from a lack of teachers of any sort for many rural schools. Recently ten states* reported the employment of 39,420 substandard teachers and at the same time the total lack of teachers for 18,279 schools which had to be closed. Here, again, is an argument for consolidation. The schools closed are those, usually with the smallest enrolment and the most remote from town. Were these to be consolidated with the nearest schools, trained teachers would be attracted. At the present time, however, children are receiving no schooling or are being taught by untrained and inexperienced persons who hold "temporary" or special certificates.

In some state normal schools provisions are being made to remedy this situation. A study of the catalogues of some of these schools shows that they are equipping themselves to supply the sort of teachers needed in rural schools. The expansion of the normal curriculum to include a department of rural teaching is an encouraging tendency for the needy country schools. It is one which has plenty of room for growth. The training schools which realize the special opportunity of the country teacher and prepare their students to go forth qualified for constructive service should become more

* Report of the Commissioner of Education for Year Ending June 30, 1920.

numerous than they are. Graduates of the rural education departments are appreciated if one accepts the positive evidence of higher wages and the definitely increasing demand for them reported by seventy per cent. of the principals of the seventy-seven normal schools having such departments in 1917.

I believe that the tendency for normal schools to offer courses in rural sociology will develop parallel to the awakening of the rural community to its need of specially qualified teachers. While the demand of city schools annually absorbs the out put of the normal schools fail to offer sufficient inducements to secure efficient teachers, there will be little demand for rural departments in the normal schools. As rural America asserts its demand for teachers who are fitted for rural teaching, normal schools will make provision for meeting it. Such demands are coming from country school patrons.

*The needs of rural teachers, stated in general terms, are:

1. Power of scholarly leadership
2. Scholarship and training equal to that of the teacher in a good elementary school anywhere
3. Training specifically adapted to prepare them for their distinctive task
4. A whole hearted belief that they are working at the fountain head of national well being--an opportunity which they must surrender but from which they can never be promoted to a greater task because there is no greater task.

*From the annual catalogue for 1918 of the Kearney (Nebraska) State Normal School.

PART II
THE CHURCH

THE STATUS OF THE CHURCH IN RURAL AMERICA

The task of the church is unique, it is the only organization for the spiritualization of the people. No other institution stands for the purpose of interpreting God to men, other institutions exist for the purpose of socializing mankind. This function the church shares with them, but is not excused from performing because of the existence of other socializing institutions. Wherever it finds itself the church seeks or should seek both to socialize and to spiritualize the people.

The past ten years have made the country church almost conspicuous among American institutions. Attention has been turned toward it to discover just where it is standing today. Many questions have been raised regarding it and answers are being earnestly sought. Is the country church progressing? Is it declining? Why is it moving in the direction it is now taking? What are its needs at the present time and in the near future?

An exhaustive study of the subject is yet to be completed. The survey planned and undertaken by the Interchurch World Movement is the most thoroughly conceived attempt so far. Its interruption has left us with only a fraction of the facts. Where the survey was organized and carried through, the material secured is invaluable. The country is so large however, and has such a variety of physical characteristics that types of rural life vary in different sections enough to require more extensive study of rural church life.

The Country Life Commission in its report in 1939 recognized the rural church as an important feature in rural life. The report stimulated further investigations. The most direct and earliest outgrowth of the Commission's work pertaining to the rural church was that of Gifford Pinchot, one of the members of the Commission,

who, with Charles Otis Gill, a successful country church pastor, made thorough studies of the country church in two counties. Such studies had never been made previous to 1909 when the Country Life Commission issued its report.

This study was based upon thorough and careful investigations in Windsor County, Vermont, and Tompkins County, New York. For the purposes of the investigation the city of Ithaca in Tompkins County was omitted.

The method of this survey was a comparison of the membership, attendance and expenditures for two periods twenty years apart. As the data for any particular year might be subject to unusual influences peculiar to that year, and therefore not representative of normal conditions, periods of five consecutive years were taken and the average used.

The church membership figures alone were discovered to be very misleading as an index to church life. Membership figures were found to be subject to inaccuracies and were considered by the investigators to be far from satisfactory evidence of the interest of the community in the church.

The survey in Windsor and Tompkins Counties disclosed membership gains which were very minute. The relative statistics pertaining to attendance and finances, however, when taken into consideration with the statistics for membership, on the whole reveal lessening efficiency on the part of the church.

In considering the expenditures for the two periods, statements are made in dollars and in purchasing power, for the difference in the value of the dollar for the two periods makes any comparison on the dollar basis misleading. The purchasing power was therefore estimated for the later period and added to make the amounts comparable,

Applying this method, expenditures increased in dollars but decreased in value. In Windsor county the decrease in expenditures was 2% (purchasing power), and in Tompkins County 9%. The report called attention to the more serious significance of these decreases when the increase of expenditures in other things is contrasted with it. Ministers salaries are low and are decreasing in purchasing power. The only encouragement for the continued vitality of the country church to be found in the comparisons of church finances is the fact that there is an increase in the contributions for benevolences. Such an increase has occurred in the Tompkins County churches.

Church attendance was judged to be the most reliable index to the position held by the church in the life of the people. After allowance had been made for the loss in the Protestant population, the decline in church attendance was found to be more than 29% in Windsor County, and more than 19% in Tompkins County. The decline in population is responsible in part for a decline in attendance, but the decline in attendance relative to the decline in population is out of proportion. When the open country communities are distinguished from the towns and villages, the decrease in church attendance in the churches of the open country is much larger than in the village churches. The fall in church attendance beyond that due to the fall in population, is an indication of the country church's failure to hold the interest and the allegiance of country people.

The most prosperous of the village churches are in villages having but one church, according to Mr. Pinchot and Mr. Gill. One village studied had three churches. After twenty years the three churches together had less strength than any one possessed during the earlier period. The effect of denominational competition had

been suicidal to all.

Inadequate preparation of country ministers is another condition which characterizes the country church. Tompkins County had five ministers, out of 31, who had complete college and seminary equipment for the ministry. This county had a total of 54 ministers but no data was obtained regarding the education of the other three. In Windsor County where there were 187 ~~ministers~~, 12, of the 18 regarding whom information was secured, had had complete seminary and college training. Lack of training is a handicap which reduces and even eliminates chances of success. With a leadership unequal to its task, the country church itself has failed in situations which required capable pastors.

That the country church has been losing, but that it also has possibilities of winning again a position of spiritual and social leadership is the conclusion of this early study denoted in its title, The Country Church: The Decline of its Influence and the Remedy. More recently the Interchurch Survey has presented conclusions which largely co-incide with those of the more limited investigations.

Overchurching is very serious in many villages and also in some sections of the open country. For example, the survey found seven churches in a town of eight hundred people, and six churches in a village of one hundred and fifty people. The towns and villages are not the only sufferers from overchurching. In the open country as well churches have been so grouped together that ten or twenty families now form the constituency of a church.

At the other extreme are the communities which are underchurched. The Interchurch World Movement Survey disclosed a village of four hundred inhabitants which had never seen a minister, previous to the survey, in its whole history of fifteen years. Of course this is

the rule rather than the exception. The fact is, However, that there is a large number of places where a minister is an infrequent sight. Outside of the towns where churches are located there are areas of open country where the people are without churches. Whole counties in states in the central and distant western parts of the country are churchless.

The non-resident pastor is the rule rather than the exception in the open country. Services once a week is the extent of their regular ministrations. Country ministers not only live at a distance from their churches, but commonly have more than one church in their care. As many as eight and ten churches are sometimes ministered to by one man. Of course, with such arrangements, services cannot be held in every church every week. Only a few churches were found in the survey having a pastor giving full time to one church. The majority of country ministers serve more than one church. One denomination reports that three-fourths of its churches have services only as often as once a month. Three churches were found whose pastors lived at distances of 85, 90, and 92 miles.

The rural church, both in the village and in the open country, suffers from lack of suitable equipment. The one-cell type of building is most common. Many of these have added a room, but still have not the facilities which worship, religious education, and Christian recreation require.

In conclusion of this statement of the status of the rural church, it is found that the present condition of the country church is filled with difficulties. Some communities have no church, others are overchurched. Buildings are inadequate. Finances are insufficient. Attendance is small. Membership is small. Business organization is inefficient. Resident pastors are scarce in the open country and even in some villages and towns, Most serious of all

these elements in the situation of the rural church, too many country ministers lack the vision and the preparation for rural religious leadership.

VII PRESENT DAY TENDENCIES OF THE CHURCH IN RURAL AMERICA

Mere study of the statistics of church attendance, membership, and expenditures might easily lead one to the conclusion that the rural church is gradually disappearing, but these statistics do not disclose all the elements in the rural situation. Further observation and study give grounds for more hopeful conclusions. Some churches have gone out of existence, some are stagnant or declining, but others are progressing in their task. While the really active ones offer most occasion for optimism, the others present opportunities for renewed life and usefulness. The decline presented in the preceding section is by no means the final word in the history of the rural church.

The feature of the rural church problem which first commands attention is its prominence as a rural problem. The very fact that it is recognized as a problem is evidence of the tendency to seek its solution. Since the appointment of the Country Life Commission the religious phase of country life has received more attention than any other phase of life in rural America. On the basis of the facts already set forth (Section V) it is fair to say that the church in the country has needed all the attention it has received and will require further study and then intelligent and patient treatment to enable it to fill its natural and needed place in rural life.

Before stating the tendencies of the rural church, I wish to enumerate five evidences of this interest in the rural church problem which are noted in the report of the Interchurch Survey:

1. The organization of separate departments for country church work by Home Mission Boards.
2. The preparation of education literature especially for the rural ministry.

3. The establishment of chairs of rural sociology in some theological seminaries.
4. The establishment of summersschools by the denominations for training in rural leadership.
5. The increase in co-operation between the agricultural colleges, government agencies, welfare organizations, and the churches.

While some of these provisions are indicative of expediency rather than of permanently constructive policy, they offer encouragement to those who are interested in the rural church problem, for at the very least they recognize the problem and its need of solution.

The opportunity of the country church to assume the leadership in the revitalizing and re-organizing of country life is felt by leaders both in the church and outside. That there are possibilities within the church is unquestioned. The question is whether or not they will be developed.

In the Tompkins County investigation, the increased contributions for benevolence indicate that the churches are still alive in spite of the facts that point to decline. Where the interest in foreign missions grows there is hope for the continued life and growth of the church; Dr. Vogt makes missions the test of the life of the church.

The opportunity facing the country church requires first of all a ministry dedicated to and educated for country life and leadership. The provisions now becoming prominent for producing country ministers shows that there is at the present time a tendency towards a specialized rural ministry. The ministers in the

country for the most part have been inadequately educated or have been serving country churches for a few years until the opportunity to go to a larger place came to them. They have been too poorly prepared to too itinerant to be real leaders of country people.

Another tendency noticeable both in the city and in the country is the growth of co-operation between religious denominations. In the country it has particular significance because there denominational friction has been more acute than in cities. The rivalry rivalry and competition has absorbed the vitality and energy of small churches in country towns and villages. The overlapping of parishes tends to diminish as co-operation between denominations increases. Churches are agreeing upon responsibility districts and are endeavoring to provide religious facilities for every family. The war brought communities together on a common basis for common purposes. In one community two churches which worshipped together to save fuel remained united when the material necessity ceased. Many community churches have been formed taking in the membership of the several little churches previously existing. The movement towards organic union is less significant, however, than the spirit of harmonious action which may be dominant in a community whether one church or three minister to its people.

Still another tendency is towards more adequate church buildings. The bare one-room structures are insufficient for the work of an active church. The publication of a volume recently on the country church building shows that there is both need and demand for something better.

The question may be asked, "Where will the country church of the future be? Will it be in towns and villages or in the open country?" The answer may be found in the tendency of the churches of the open country to die out, while those which thrive best are

in towns and villages. The country church of the future in all probability will usually be found in the town or village. The church of the open country is not going to disappear at once or altogether. Just as in some communities the open country school has been maintained, so the church along the road will still stand and serve. It is probable that where the modern country school educates the children in the open country, the church ministering to the same families will likewise stand in the open country.

Although there are many country churches which show only passive unconcern for the needs of their people, there are others whose places are in the front ranks of those ~~constructive~~ forces which are making the country a good place in which to live.

PART III
THE FUTURE CHURCH SCHOOL

VII ORGANIZATION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The present day tendencies in secular education in rural America indicate the growth of a system of schools characterized by the consolidated school with all it stands for. The consolidated school provides for the country child an education as adequate as the best city school provides for the city child. It is true that the curricula will vary and that methods will vary to meet local needs. There must be a common basis for the curriculum, a common aim and a common school-room atmosphere that will all work together to grow citizens for one great democracy. Both city and country belong to one nation. Boys and girls of the city and boys and girls of the country are being educated for their places as intelligent members of their local communities and of the larger state. Their education must enable them to understand one another. Part of this purpose the public school can accomplish but it must be reinforced by the teaching of the church. We arrive now at the question: How is the church in rural America to be affected by the tendencies in secular education now current?

The need for more adequate religious instruction is being felt all over America, not simply in the cities. The crime waves are calling forth first explanations and then remedies for their causes. Moral and religious instruction are indispensable if improvement is to be permanent. More time than our church schools are now giving to religious teaching will be demanded. The one hour a week Sunday School is inadequate for the religious instruction of boys and girls in the country just as it is everywhere else.

The country must make additional provision for the religious training of its children and youth. New adjustments in organization are necessary to meet new needs. At the present time few country churches have the equipment either in material or personnel

to provide really adequate religious instruction and training.

Men and women in country communities are conservative and slow and it takes more time to effect the re-adjustments and to secure new activities, but such changes must be made sooner or later to maintain a fair balance between the opportunities of city and country children.

There are communities which have not reached the ideal of a community church, and where such organization may not be wise or desirable, but which can unite in their religious instruction. Many country villages have their churches within stone's throw of one another. Any single building is inadequate for advantageous grading. A single school using the adjacent buildings can accommodate more departments and would be possible for community purposes.

For too long a time religious educators have waited for secular educators to develop theories and apply methods. Then they have seized upon these theories and methods as "just the thing" for religious education and have so devoted their energy to adopting them that they have been blind to the fact that secular educators were advancing to better things. It behooves religious educators to be on the alert for the sound and tested theories as fast as they are available. Nor should they stop there, content to accept the work of others whose purpose differs in varying degrees. They themselves should be studying and experimenting to discover first hand principles and methods second to none in pedagogical and psychological value and suited primarily to the religious instruction and training. Religious education is advancing on its own feet, building upon that which is common to all education and developing from experience and experiment that which must be peculiar to itself.

In the rural field its own basis for organization is very limited as far as it rests upon its own past experience. As it feels

the need for growth and strives to fulfil its place, will it copy the city Sunday and week day schools of religion, or will it follow the precedent of rural secular schools? The probable correct answer is; It will do both. So far as city schools have been literally copied in secular education dissatisfaction and at least partial failure have resulted. The best type of city Sunday School transplanted to the country is qualified to succeed no better than the day school so treated. Suppose the week day school of religious education is established in the country along the lines, it has followed in the city, can it prove effective? Such questions cannot be favorably answered, and therefore it is desirable and urgent that a plan for religious education for rural communities should be developed and operated which recognizes rural characteristics and needs and solves rural problems.

The significance of the tendencies in secular education for the educational work of the rural church resolves itself into the question: How may these tendencies be used in the religious education of rural communities? Any answer to such a question is hypothetical.

Consider now the organization of rural religious education. The tendency to consolidate has already been found to be applicable to churches. Sometimes this takes the form of community churches. Some communities are developing church federations. Both these types of church organization can be found, but both together have not spread ~~as~~^{so} extensively as the consolidated school. The rural church which serves the whole community has the greatest opportunity with the greatest assets and facilities for realizing its opportunity. It not only draws all the pupils but it has the possibility of drawing all those with teaching ability into its school. "Not enough good teachers" is the cry of church schools everywhere.

The rural village or open country church feels this handicap even more keenly, and the relatively small number of pupils aggravates the problem of a wide range of ages in most of the classes.

The country needs not only the church school meeting on Sunday, but the week day school of religion which many cities and towns are providing.

When rural people understand the purpose and the possibilities of this new kind of school, many communities will inaugurate it more readily than cities are doing. For instance it will probably be less difficult to obtain the consent of local boards of education to allow the children to spend certain hours each week at the religious day school.

Local councils of religious education will be formed consisting of the most intelligent and informed members of the churches. Such councils will have their board of directors and board of education which will be responsible the one for property and the other for the program and the faculty.

Every child will have the advantage of regular, definite, graded instruction in religion given by teachers trained for their task and employed by the Board of the Community Council of Religious Education. Such graded instruction will be offered to all the children throughout their school and college life, parallel to the instruction of the public schools. For those who do not continue in school alternative courses will be available suited to the attainments of the students.

The school will be held in the church or its parish house which is nearest the school in case there is more than one in the community. The problem of attendance and transportation is solved as the children are excused from the public school to attend the school of religion during regular school hours, returning afterwards to the public school.

The fact that the children of several districts attend a single public school will make it seem a matter of course to attend a centralized school of religion. There under trained teachers country boys and girls will receive religious knowledge, the development of right emotions, and expression through service which will supplement the work of the public schools and produce citizens of sound Christian character.

VIII CURRICULUM

The rural church school and the rural day school of religion must each develop a curriculum of its own.

In secular education the general tendency, already noted, to bring the school and real life closer together has altered the curriculum of the public school.

The curriculum which has consequently developed in the city schools has failed when transplanted to country schools. It has not been satisfactory there because it has not educated rural boys and girls for their natural life.

If the modern church school and the week-day school of religion are transplanted to the country as were the public schools they will likewise prove misfits, for it would be presumptuous to expect any better results in the religious than in the secular field.

The tendency to connect the school curriculum with real life is significant and applies directly to the problem of providing a curriculum for the rural religious school. The curriculum must be constructed for rural pupils.

The curriculum of the truly successful rural public school today is a curriculum which has been planned especially for country boys and girls living and expecting to live in the country. It is taught in the consolidated school which most nearly realizes the ideal, and in the one-room school where redirection and revitalization are in progress.

The tendency to adopt and adapt is unescapable, for there is nothing wholly new. The criterion for measuring the worth of curriculum material must be: Does it serve the purpose for which it is intended? Because it met the needs in city schools is no reason that it will meet the needs of rural schools. More probably it is a strong reason why it will not.

Thus the secular school curriculum has developed as the means

for the adequate education of the boys and girls of rural communities.

The curricula of the Sunday and Week-day religious schools will develop in the same way. They must satisfy a purpose. The curricula already available and of proven worth in well organized city schools will be the experimental material for the rural schools until special courses are prepared particularly for these schools.

But as religious education picks up the matter used in secular instruction and re-interprets and idealizes it, the curriculum of the school of religion must first take into consideration what the public schools are teaching.

The rural school has an asset in the teaching of Hebrew life and history and the life and period of Jesus in that rural life is already familiar to the pupils, and emphasis upon it can make the subject matter very realistic and doubly impressive. City teachers and schools can well envy their country colleagues this natural advantage.

Teachers, organizers, and writers, who are concerned with the problem of the curriculum must keep constantly in mind the purpose of their work and re-test the contents of their lessons before using them in the country.

To those who first attempt the week-day instruction of country boys and girls in religion will belong the task of making over and of building a new course of lessons suited to the needs of their pupils.

IX THE TEACHER

The problem of Sunday School teaching has developed in intensity as the public school teaching has increased in quality. The city Sunday Schools have long been conscious of the difference in the quality of instruction given by untrained men and women on Sunday and that given in the public school on week days by normal school graduates. In the country the tendency toward better trained teachers in the public schools will accentuate the same condition. Country Sunday School teachers may go on teaching by the very same methods they have always used, but they will be recognized as inferior by contrast with the better teachers, which the public schools are demanding and securing.

A strategic point for the promulgation of the rural education program is the seat of our agricultural colleges. There let the promoters of religious education set up schools or at least classes in the existing church schools where the young men and women who are to be the leading citizens in rural America may gain a sense of the problem of religious education and the principles and methods.

The teacher in the rural secular school has already been discussed. On the basis of that discussion rest these statements pertaining to the religious teacher in the country. The religious teacher may be studied in comparison with the secular teacher in the country, and again in comparison with the religious teacher in the city.

Progressive rural schools are no longer satisfied with immature, untrained teachers. The pupils who attend them need as expert and as careful instruction as the boys and girls in any school. These same boys and girls are the pupils of the Church School on Sundays--and on week days also when rural schools of religion become established. Their religious teaching must be as ex-

pert and as painstaking as their secular education if it is to have its rightful influence in their lives.

While much depends on the establishment of a system of religious schools with proper equipment and organization, and upon curricula designed for the particular task of the adequate religious training of rural boys and girls, the ability of the teacher to take the curriculum, the equipment and the organization and use them to realize their purpose is the determining factor in the whole situation.

The school of the church must have trained teachers even as the schools of the nation have them; but in addition to being trained in the technique of teaching, the teachers of the church must be trained in the technique of teaching religion. The religious teacher must know child psychology as the public school teacher knows it, and in addition must know the child's aesthetic, emotional and spiritual nature to a degree beyond that required in day school teaching. Like the day school teacher, the religious teacher must know thoroughly the subject matter of the school, but the religious teacher must be familiar not only with the subject matter he teaches; but also with the subject matter of the secular schools. This familiarity is necessary, because one of the methods of religious education is to take the subject matter assimilated by the public school child and to interpret it for him in terms of the great spiritual and moral ideals of mankind. One thing more the religious teacher must have who succeeds in a rural school, and this quality is a possession of any successful country teacher. The capacity for seeing life from the rural view point is as essential as knowledge or training. Unless the teacher believes in rural life in itself and sympathizes with country people as one of the community his presence as a teacher falls short of exerting the forceful creative influence which the community has

a right to expect.

Thus the rural religious teacher must know much that the day school teacher knows and much that the city religious teacher knows, and to these things must be added the knowledge of the spiritual side of the country child and the curriculum which is suited to the rural religious school. One problem arises, startlingly conspicuous, at the thought of extending an adequate program of religious education to the country: How are teachers to be secured?

Training classes for Sunday School teachers are now to be found in the country. These will become more general than they now are. One of the chief difficulties now is to get teachers to train teachers. This condition has its remedy but it will take time to apply it. Both on account of trained public school teachers and the religious day school with its trained teachers the Sunday School teachers must be trained.

The teachers to do this and to conduct the week day schools of religion must come from the outside at first. They must come as the public school teacher and the minister come, qualified for leadership in the country. They must be rurally minded with a belief in the country and in country people. Individuals who are unhappy over living in the country and are constantly longing to return to the city have no place in the training of country boys and girls or their leaders.

The religious needs of the boys and girls of the country must be met if the nation is to preserve not only itself but to maintain the ideal of democracy in the world. As the rural educational system in the secular field requires a high order of insight and leadership, the educational program of the rural church calls as clearly for vision and guidance.

X CONCLUSION

A few brief statements will sum up the foregoing discussion and conclude this study.

I

The open country and the villages of rural America have their own peculiar problems arising from a civilization based upon agricultural life, and these problems are either receiving the attention more or less adequate of numerous agencies which have grown up in response to various demands or else they are remaining unsolved through the neglect due to ignorance, indifference, lack of leadership and lack of co-operation.

II

The tendencies in secular education in rural communities which have significance for the educational work of the rural church may be grouped in three divisions, according as they relate to the organization, the curriculum, or the teacher.

1. The organization of the progressive rural school and the school of the future is of the type known as the consolidated school which becomes a center for re-vitalized education and community welfare and growth.

2. The rural school must offer and has already begun to offer a curriculum which is abreast of the rapid development of agricultural life, and reaches beyond the boys and girls into the daily work and interests of the community.

3. To give to the country this specialized curriculum a distinct professional group of rural teachers is rising which looks upon country teaching as a life work worthy of the best preparation and ability.

III

No more important aspect of the whole rural problem is found, nor one linked to greater possibilities, than the problem of the rural church. Its present ~~status~~ and its tendencies are the groundwork upon which rural religious education must build.

1. The rural church has suffered and has lost from the exodus to the city, but it has failed beyond justification to supply its remaining constituency with a living faith sufficient to secure individual religious growth and the spiritual and moral welfare of the community.

2. New visions are coming to the churches of rural America and they are realizing their potentialities in proportion as they recognize that they have a social function which is the team-mate of the salvation of the individual.

IV

Finally, what is the bearing of these tendencies upon the educational work of the rural church ?

1. Rural religious education is to be a community enterprise. Even as the consolidation of district schools into a single well-designed and well-equipped school is solving the problems of secular education, so community organization or federation is to make possible adequate religious instruction for the country.

2. Rural schools of religious education must have a curriculum built for country boys and girls. It must preserve what is universal, but it must interpret and present it in terms which have meaning for the children of rural America.

3. Thorough knowledge of the purpose and materials of religious education must be coupled with the qualifications possessed by the best secular teachers in the rural schools to produce men and women equal to the task of religious education.

The church must first understand its educational task and then partly from without its rural constituency but chiefly from within will come competent leadership. Adequate equipment and teaching material are within the reach of the rural community which is conscious of its responsibilities in religious education and truly desirous of providing for all-round growth and ~~development~~ of its children and youth and of maintaining the Christian Church to illumine a democratic nation.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

PROGRAM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ADOPTED BY WALLACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, WALLACE, TEXAS

OUR AIM:

To give our children, young people and adults instruction and training, so graded and adapted that each pupil may increasingly effect a Christian adjustment to the particular conditions and problems of his own developing life, in all the relations of the home, the community and the Kingdom of God.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM:

In the Pulpit: Sermons presenting not merely emotional exhortation, but material of permanent educational value.

In the Home: A Committee on Religion in the Home, organizing and directing the "Presbyterian Home Circle," and seeking to establish in our homes, not only Family Worship, but also conscientious and systematic religious training, including the use of good religious literature, especially the Assembly Herald, the Presbyterian Advance and the literature published by our various Boards.

In the Sunday School:

Goal: To become the best country Sunday School in Texas, by increasing efficiency according to the modern ideal of Religious Education.

In May, 1916, we received the pennant awarded to Sunday Schools which have attained the "Ten Point Interdominational Standard"..... We are now working toward the "Presbyterian Advanced Standard" A Council of Religious Education, Adequate Building and Equipment, Catechetical Instruction, Missionary Work, Vocational Guidance and Instruction, Officers and Teachers Trained, Systematic Giving, Bible Reading and Church Attendance, Parents' Meeting and Religious Training in the Home, Community Extension Work).

Graded Training in Worship;

Graded Social Service adapted to our situation;

Evangelism.

Our first concern in the Sunday School is the Christian culture of our own children, who according to the Presbyterian idea are members of the church, and are to be so brought up and trained. Our next responsibility is to those of all ages who have no church home: these we must seek out, and offer to them the same privileges and opportunities that we give our own members. Thirdly, we extend a cordial welcome to all those of any other church who care to avail themselves of the advantages of our Sunday School.

In the Young People's Society: Training in worship and service; Study classes on methods of Christian work, missions, etc. Evangelism.

Church Night: Special study classes connected with the mid-week meeting.

Pastor's Instruction Class: A class conducted by the pastor

and meeting during the week, e. g. after school Friday afternoons, for such part of the school year as may prove advisable. Instruction in the fundamental principles of religion, in preparation for church membership and intelligent participation in the life and work of the church.

Special Conferences, Institutes, etc.: Occasional brief seasons of special study along specific lines, with well qualified visiting speakers and leaders.

A Council of Religious Education: A central body, constituted according to the plan recommended by our denominational Department of Religious Education, directing all these varied agencies and coordinating them into an efficient, unified system of Religious Education; receiving reports from the different organizations, departments and committees, and reporting regularly to the Session.

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W.A.