

MACEDONIAN CALL

"Come Over Into Macedonia and Help Us." (Acts 16: 9.)

INDIANAPOLIS, IND., JANUARY, 1928.

ARE SOME WRITERS IN THE REVIEW "SLIPPING"?

Most of us have seen the recent report of the Protestant denominations that they are losing members at the appalling rate of 500,000 a year. In their summary of how to overcome this leak, their leaders say, "The remedy urged is to give each member something to do in and for the Church. Make every church a busy church; not a cold, lazy, lifeless form." I believe that their diagnosis of this matter is about right. Through their pastor system, they have taken away much work from their members, and now they see they must give them something to do. The work of visiting physical and spiritual sick can and should be done by all members instead of some one hired to do that. God ordained that the work of edifying the body of Christ should be done by the elders and other members, and they should stand behind the preacher as he heeds the Macedonian call to new and weak fields. Let us establish the divine system and we shall have practically all the members at work, either publicly or privately.

Martin Luther had the idea that every Christian should tell the story of Jesus. A few years ago the Lutherans in Indianapolis (and I think all over the country) celebrated the beginning of the Reformation. One of their most prominent preachers said, "But not only was Luther an evangelist announcing anew the gospel of Christ, but he preached the reformation idea that EVERY Christian should be an evangelist. THE BIGGEST LESSON WHICH THE CHURCHES OF TODAY MUST LEARN FROM LUTHER IS THAT EVERY CHRISTIAN IS TO BE AN EVANGELIST. That was the New Testament idea and the idea of the reformation. If America is ever brought to Christ it must be done through laymen."

The Protestant denominations in their despair look for a solution of their falling away, and decide that they must change their methods and put every one to work. The Lutherans try to resurrect Luther's dominant idea of the reformation that every Christian should be an evangelist. Isn't that the idea that a few among us have been talking about for many years, and for which some have even called us heretics and hobbyists? This work should be done in both private and public. The marvel is that just when the denominations are seeing their mistake in not putting people into the work better, many in the Church of Christ are falling into the ineffective sectarian one-man system, the very system which has wrought such havoc among the sects.

It is saddening to see that not only the far western paper but even some writers in the Review are "slipping" toward this stagnating method of the denominations. In the Review of Sept. 6, 1927, under the heading Peace, we have the following from Bro. J. A. Collins: "In one congregation a part of the members wanted preaching all the time; another wanted mutual edification meetings. Inasmuch as the Bible does not say how often a congregation shall have preaching or how often it shall have mutual edification meetings, but both preaching and mutual edification meetings are in harmony with the Scriptures, it was only a matter of judgment as to how much of either one the congregation should have. Where the result was division there could and should have been peace."

This brother shows that he endorses "preaching all the time", and the indication is that he would endorse preaching at one place all the time by one man. The preacher then becomes the pastor, feeder, of the flock (privately as well as publicly), and all the history of the past shows that he soon becomes the RULER. It is marvelous that men who have been writing for the Review for years make such statements. The doctrine is not only contrary to the things for which the paper has contended for half a century, but it is contrary to the New Testament. It destroys the "feeding of the flock" by elders, as the apostles command, and the edifying by one another, and the mutual teaching mentioned in 1 Cor. 14: 26. Is a prominent writer of the Review "slipping" or

NOT, when he advocates that it is all right for a church to have "preaching all the time". I let you who have been reading the paper for years decide that. There is enough error in these statements to start another Christian Church, or even a Roman Catholic Church, for it destroys the God-given eldership and the feeding of the flock by such, and both of these apostasies were founded by this method.

In the Review of Sept. 6, 1927, under the serial heading, "Keeping the Wells Clean", Bro. J. G. Roady says, "About this time the water was disturbed again by 'the pastor system' and many disciples went off after it. They demanded 'pastors' to do the work of elders, and on account of this demand the peace and harmony that the Lord intended to be in the Church were taken from it. This was more of Rome's teaching and had to be met by faithful men. And it was shown at that time that it was not part of the Water of Life. But, lest I leave a wrong impression on the mind of the reader about 'the pastor system', I had better make this explanation: 'a pastor' is one that takes the oversight of a church; in other words, takes the rulership out of the hands of Elders and takes it in his own hands. To my mind this subject has been abused by some writers. Just because a man preaches at a place on Lord's days is no reason that he is 'a pastor'. If preaching one Lord's day out of each month makes a man a 'one-fourth pastor' what kind of 'a pastor' is the man that just drops in once in a while? I can't see any more harm in a 'one-fourth pastor' than in 'a drop-in pastor'. Any man that goes into a congregation and takes the Elders' place and tries to rule is out of his place! That spirit came from Rome and was one thing that helped to divide the disciples of Christ. I want to impress this one point: that Elders are the ones to rule (Acts 14: 23; 1 Peter 5: 1-4; 1 Tim. 5: 17.) They are to take the oversight. (1 Peter 5: 2.) [Why didn't this writer also say elders are to 'feed the flock' and quote Acts 20: 28 and 1 Peter 5: 2? It would have spoiled the reasoning in part] But let us not be guilty of calling a man 'a pastor' just because he preaches on Lord's days."

As I do not know of any other brother who has used ~~the~~ expression like "one-fourth pastor" except myself, every one can see that the brother refers to me. My writings and words are open for criticism, and if I can not prove what I say I shall give them up. But in the first place I deny, when you consider the connection in which I have used the expression, that I have said that a man that preaches once a month at a place is a one-fourth pastor. Here is what I say in my tract on Mutual Edification, page 18: "Remember that I am not talking about regularly visiting a place to preach to the world and to commit what one has learned to faithful men who shall be able to tell on others, but about mere preaching to the church. . . If we would develop a church as we should when we visit it once a month, at the end of two or three years, at the most, it ought to be able to do its own edifying, and this money spent on the monthly preaching could be used to support him in new fields. . . It should be the aim of the preacher to work his way out of the service of the church instead of into it. If, at the end of my year's labor with a church once or twice a month, it needs me as much as it did at the beginning, it is evident that I am doing the work of a pastor and not that of an evangelist." Again, I have said that when a man visits a place once a month year after year, going on the last train on Saturday and leaving on the first train on Monday, and thus merely preaches to the church, and does not develop them to take care of themselves, he is a monthly pastor, feeder; and there is much room for the statement. He is not doing the work of an evangelist but that of a shepherd, pastor, feeder. I wish brethren would quote me correctly.

Bro. Roady says that a pastor is a "ruler". But the lexicon gives the first meanings as "herdsman", "shepherd". The ancient shepherds fed the flocks and led them where they could feed themselves. Of course, they would naturally guide the flocks. But when preachers do all the public and private feeding of the flocks, they are surely pastors, shepherds; and while the rulership ~~may~~ in part may be denied him for a while, yet all past history shows that all-time feeders soon become rulers as well.

"Just because a man preaches at a place on Lord's days"--Notice he does not say "places" but "place". It seems that he means to preach ~~at~~ every Lord's day at one place. He seems to endorse that practice, for he has endorsed (or eulogized) in the Review the work

of an Indiana preacher who preaches every Sunday at one place, except when he holds a meeting about once a year or preaches a funeral somewhere else.

When this brother reads Acts 20: 7, he will find that Paul "dropped in" at Troas and preached for the brethren. But where does he or any ~~man~~ one else find that any of the early preachers preached year after year at one place, and when he left the brethren had to get another preacher to take his place? Paul was at Ephesus three years, teaching the young church and making new converts, but when he passed by on his way to Jerusalem he told the elders to "feed the church", not some preachers they were to import for that purpose. In his statement above the brother professes to give the work of elders, saying that they are to rule and oversee, and gives the scriptures; but why did he not also mention that the Scriptures say also that elders are to "feed the flock"? (Acts 20: 28; 1 Peter 5: 2.) It would not have harmonized with what he was teaching.

In the Review of Feb. 22, 1927, the writer of Office Notes said this: "We've allowed ourselves to become so mad at the 'pastor system' of the Christian Church that we've gone to the other extreme and done ourselves and the community in which we live a wrong so great that we ought to repent of it in sackcloth and ashes. Each church of Christ should support a preacher to work, having the church that supports him a center from which to work. Not to build a strong church to rule the little congregations which may be established, but to make believers and worshipers. The preacher does not have to preach for the church that has undertaken to support him regularly. But if he scouts around the community, and stirs up an interest to such an extent that numbers are present every Lord's day and every week-day meeting at his invitation to hear the Word, who's going to say that some young man, or old man for that matter, who is not able to rightly divide the Word, ought to take the place of that preacher? Of course, such an occasion as this rarely exists, but--why doesn't it exist? Just because we've allowed ourselves to become so mad at the 'pastor system' that we condemn the good features of it as well as the bad."

The inability to rightly divide the Word, mentioned here, is a variable quantity, and may be interpreted according to the desire of the interpreter. If this quotation means anything, it means that if a preacher "scouts around" and stirs people to come to the meetings, it is all right for him to preach "every Lord's day". This is what the writer means, for he has more than once publicly eulogized in the meetings of his home church the work of a church in a certain city where they have a preacher discourse "every Lord's day", except about once a year when he holds a meeting, or preaches a funeral. The fact, also, that whenever he touches mutual edification he ridicules it, shows that he doesn't think much of it. But this teaching is directly contrary to the teaching of the Review through the past. In the Octographic Review of Sept. 25, 1900, A. M. Morris, one of the editors then, said this:

"Bro. A. J. Nance has noted his visit to this place [Colorado Springs, Colo.] It was a rare pleasure to me to listen to his sermons. Sel-dom have I been permitted in recent years, to listen to a series of discourses delivered by a loyal gospel preacher. It seemed to me that it was delightful [bold face is Morris'] to sit unmolested throughout the entire service. I could see one reason why the pastor has such an easy time supplanting the church members by readings, expounding, praying, preaching and making announcements. Our work in the Lord, however, can not be delegated to others. . . . No clerk can take our place in praying, visiting the sick, caring for the widows and orphans, or any other religious duty. Too many people are trying to hire a clerk to do what the Lord tells them to do. Clerks are abundant. Bro. D. J. Poynter, of Albion, Neb., spent one afternoon with me. I appreciated his visit very much. He believes in developing the talents of the church."

But compare these statements of Bro. Morris, 27 years ago, with a recent statement of his in defense of "preaching Every Lord's day"-- "This is no attempt to say that all churches have to have regular preaching all his time, three-fourths, half or one-fourth. That question is not determined in the Scriptures. Each congregation must decide that for itself; but in no case for others. If we are clerks

to the needs of Zion, we will use the GIFTED ones who are BEST able to instruct us, WHENEVER we can do so." Notice the change--"No clerk can take our place", "use the gifted ones who are best able to instruct us, whenever we can do so." Bro. Morris, editor of the Octographic Review then, has not changed, then I do not understand language. And does not the writer of Office Notes take practically the same position that Bro. Morris does now? If Office Notes are the policy of the Review, then has not the Review "slipped"--all the borings of the publisher to the contrary notwithstanding. D. A. Somner stands where Morris and the Review stood 27 years ago. Who stands with him?

Says the writer of Office Notes, "We've allowed ourselves to become so mad at the 'pastor system' of the Christian Church that we've gone to the other extreme and done ourselves and the community in which we live a wrong so great that we ought to repent of it in sackcloth and ashes." This shows that the writer proposed a great change from what the brotherhood has practised--which shows again that if his policy is the policy of the Review, the paper has "slipped". And according to C. W., Morris was "mad" when he said 27 years ago that "our work in the Lord can not be delegated to others!"

A certain sister was trying to lead an outsider to Christ. She taught the non-member about the Church of Christ, showing among other things what the Bible teaches on church government and the pastor system. To help her toward the truth, she donated the Review to her. But after that outsider read the clipping above in Office Notes, she anxiously awaited the coming of this sister to say to her, "I see that you folks have made a mistake on the preaching system, and are now in favor of having preaching all the time." That sister has not been able to get out of that outsider's mind the idea that she got from Office Notes--that the Church of Christ has changed. If she got that idea, would others get that idea, too? And wouldn't they get the idea that we believe in having preach^{ing} every Lord's day?

To further this all-time preaching, the writer of Office Notes said also in the Review of Dec. 6, 1927: "Lord's day, Nov. 27, one of the Elders of the North Indianapolis congregation was absent because of sickness. The other Elder 'fed the flock' by having two members take up the time, the Elder selecting the two. Next Lord's day, if perchance there be a preacher present, the Elders will 'feed the flock' through him. If there be a preacher present a number of Lord's days following, right in succession though they be, the Elders will 'feed the flock' through them, and help them on their way. Granted, of course, that they be tried men. As occasion arises, and they deem that they are not appearing too often, they take upon themselves the task of 'feeding the flock' their own selves. Any one who denies the Elders are 'feeding the flock' through this selection of preachers will have also to deny that the Elders are 'feeding the flock' when they select home talent to perform, and thus 'mutual Edification' falls before the term 'feeding the flock'; and, in order to fulfill that much abused term, the Elders will have to fill the pulpit always."

Those indifferent elders who wish to hire some one to do work which the Lord ordained them to do, find much comfort in this and other Office Notes. But let us see the false reasoning in it. Elders are commanded to feed and watch the flock. They are also commanded to "oversee", which, it seems, is a general term and includes feeding and watching. It also includes ruling. If the elders oversee the church, they will also develop the flock so that there will be elders when they themselves are gone, and that would include the development of the two members ~~and~~ (and others) mentioned above. The commandment elsewhere for the brethren to edify one another; the reference to women praying and prophesying (evidently in the public assembly); the general teaching in 1 Cor. 12-14 chapters, especially 14: 26; and the commandment for elders to oversee the flock (which includes developing for the future)--show that quite a number took part in the public worship of the apostolic Church. The edification on the part of the elders is found in the ~~express~~ command for them to "feed the flock", but the edification by other members is found in the other scriptures. So this "feeding the flock" by elders through two other members is a man of straw, which the writer of Office Notes puts up and knocks down.

So the writer of Office Notes believes that elders are "feeding the flock" through preachers. "If there be a preacher present a number of Lord's days, right in succession though they be, the Elders will 'feed the flock' through them." And if preachers are there all the time, then of course the elders are still feeding the flock through the preachers, or preacher. And if, as this writer suggests, a church supports a preacher to work in its community, and the preacher "rousts around" and gets a good hearing, who would say Nay to his preaching "every Lord's day"? The elders would be "feeding the flock", as well as preaching the Word to the world, through this preacher who was preaching every Lord's day. Those elders and other members who wish preaching all the time want nothing more consoling than this teaching from the publisher of the Apostolic Review. The Review never taught anything like this before. Twenty-seven years ago, Bro. Morris, one of its editors, said, "Our work in the Lord can not be delegated to others." Has the Review "slipped" or not?

If elders have the authority to do their work of "feeding the flock" through a preacher or preachers, then they can also do their private work of looking after the flock "through" the same preacher which a church has "rousting around", for he has more time than the elders. But why stop? Elders can also get rid of their watching and even ruling! Why not? And if the elders have this exalted privilege, so have the other members. The command for us to sing may be delegated to one good singer, for can't such a one do that much better than the rest of us? And so we shall have a soloist do the singing. And who consistently can stop us? We could hire some one to go to church for us. After a while we might have indulgences and have some one do right for us, while we do as we please! I tell you, brethren, there are some most dangerous principles being advocated. Some one wrote in the Review that Bro. Chester couldn't see any farther than his nose. I stand with the A. M. Morris, editor of the Octographic Review who spoke of this very question of the pastor system twenty-seven years ago in the Review and said, "Our work in the Lord can not be delegated to others." It is because I have believed wholeheartedly in this principle of Bro. Morris that I have talked and written so much about Bible drills (I have always held them for the grown people) and mutual edification. The purpose of that whole talk has been to try to get every one to do his duty, and not to try to delegate it to others.

Brethren need to learn that it is one thing to write nice little touching Notes and thus work on the feelings of the people, and quite another thing to hold to the principles for which the Review has been contending these many years and which have been the principles of the New Testament. I believe that such reasoning as I have been noticing in Office Notes, is paving the way for another Christian Church.

To the elders I wish to say in the words of a popular advertisement--"Don't fool yourself". It has been written in the Review, "Let the preachers preach and the elders rule." That is a nice-sounding phrase, but it is only a decoy leading you on to destruction. When you hire a preacher to do all your feeding, and all your visiting of the members, you will soon find that all the sheep will turn to the preacher for guidance, for he is indeed their guide. Big crowds may be attracted for a while, but if a difference comes up between you and the preacher, as to how the church shall be run, you will find that the preacher, like Absalom, has "stole the hearts of the people", and that you are simply a figure-head. All church history, (which the writer of Office Notes seems to disdain in his writings) proves that when the preacher preaches all the time, he will also rule. Only recently I was in Topeka, Kans.; and among the Bible college brethren (who have a preacher all the time) was a preacher who divided them to carry out his own will. The elders were thrown aside nearly altogether. And only a few days ago I held a meeting in Kansas City, Mo., where the same thing happened among another group of college brethren. They had a "minister" all the time. Recently he pushed them to buy a bigger house, involving them in debt \$12,000, riding over the head of at least one elder. That elder saw clearly where the whole system was going, and attended my meeting every night. So I say again to elders, "Don't fool yourself."

It is evident that the writer of Office Notes is not only not helping build up an eldership that can "feed the flock", for his writings discourage it very much; but he is lending his influence to the one-man system. It seems that it will be like the ~~bobbed hair~~ question of bobbed hair among grown women. Brethren have conscientiously opposed the practice of Christian women catering to this unscriptural and worldly practice, but Office Notes have made light of them. All over the country the sentiment has been that the Review is for bobbed hair. If C. W. had permitted a discussion and then kept out of it, it would have been different. In one day three elders in as many different congregations protested to me against the position of the Review, but I told them to write to Office Notes. (This time it was an elder, not a preacher, riding over elders!) Along with the bobbed hair goes the short skirts and painted faces, and those brethren who have tried to stay this worldliness have been confronted with the excuse that the Review favors it. When I expressed my surprise that an old sister 75 years old bobbed her hair, the leader in the church said to me, "How can you expect anything else when the Review takes the stand it does?" There is an article in the Review office on the same subject I am discussing in this No. of Macedonian Call. But after three months it is unpublished but another Office Note is written which practically teaches that elders can delegate all their "feeding the flock" to preachers. Two articles recently appeared in the Review against bobbed hair, but these had been in the office nearly a year. Was this an effort to revive old workers for the sub drive?

I am making a fight for you elders and hope you appreciate it by helping us put out the Macedonian Call. This all-time preaching will soon bring us to that stagnated condition of the denominations who are losing half a million members each year. As Luther and the Lutherans of today say, We should make every Christian an evangelist; and as the ~~denominational~~ denominational leaders say, We should give each member something to do personally in and for the Church" (to stop the leak). This is human experience which is supported by Scripture. When we follow it for a while, we shall be in better shape to heed the Macedonian Call to go out and preach the gospel. If you stand for this doctrine of development will you help us arouse the brethren to greater things through the Macedonian Call.

-----00000-----

RELIGIOUS DOPE.--We are enclosing you a tract on this subject, which ought to help arouse the people a little. Men must not forget that God is a God of wrath as well as a God of love. We are borrowing fifty dollars to put it out. Why not send for \$1 worth and circulate? Many church members need something to stir them. Notice that it also gives in brief what the Church of Christ stands for. One value of tracts is that they are to the point, and the reader does not have to wade through much matter that is off the subject. You often have a man preach for you and give him \$20 or \$30, and have practically no outsiders out. Why not spend a little for this tract and take it to every home in your community? It would not take that much money. If people won't come to hear, we must take it to them somehow. The spoken word, however, is the best. Would you be interested in having other tracts printed like this one on Dope, with the article on the Church of Christ in each, with such headings as these: Evolution, A Cause of the World War and of Much of the Crime in America--What Will the Next Generation in America Be Like?--The Downfall of America--When "Good" is Bad.

PROTRACTED MEETING SONG-BOOK.--Bro. W. E. Ballenger says of this book, "I like it fine, and all I heard speak of it like it fine." It has more than a hundred of the old songs that every one sings--just the songs for a protracted meeting. Besides, with each invitation song there is a full page of scriptures bearing on the song, from which the leader can make a good exhortation with the printed scriptures staring them sinner in the face. Also, it has two full pages on the subject, "The Church Which Christ Built". It makes a good tract to send to friends. They will preserve it for the old songs, and will be continually faced with the Word of God when they open it. They are twenty cents each, in any quantity. Order of D. A. Souler, 918 Congress Ave., Indianapolis, Ind. I thank the brethren for their many letters of appreciation of the work I am doing. "Watch thou in all things".