

**THE  
CHRISTIAN MISSION  
IN RELATION TO  
RURAL PROBLEMS**

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# PRELIMINARY PAPERS

## CHRISTIANITY AND RURAL CIVILIZATION

NOTES ON THE RURAL PROBLEM FROM THE  
POINT OF VIEW OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

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‘Thoroughly to christianize human life is a process partly geographical, but also intellectual, social, industrial, national and international. It can be accomplished only with mutual appreciation, co-operation and progress. The Orient and the Occident must work together for the stupendous ideal. The foremost problem and inspiring task of Christianity at the present time is to appreciate and apply the full Christian gospel of God.’—DR ROBERT E. HUME.

### I. INTRODUCTION

**D**R HUME has here phrased almost authoritatively the purpose, the scope and the method of modern missions, as indeed of modern Christianity. The purpose is to christianize human life; the scope is to reach the whole of life—industry, social affairs, government; the method is the co-operation of all peoples. We are called to appreciate, and to apply in practical working fashion, the spirit and attitude of Jesus toward the personal and collective labour and life of all mankind.

Doubtless there will be to the end of time differences of emphasis as between the inner, personal,

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Godward side of religion and the outward, social, collective, neighbourly side ; but there seems to be no escape from the fundamental need of for ever stressing the unity of the two. The abundant life for each individual soul both as end and as means is central ; learning to live together in this crowded world is equally central. Whether we turn to the two great commandments of the old dispensation, verified and vitalized by the new, or whether we call upon modern sociology to bear witness—the testimony is the same. In the practical applications of our religion, the abundant life for the individual depends in large measure upon his opportunity to grow as a person ; but his growth is conditioned by society and by his functions as an active servant of that society.

There is one consideration not sufficiently stressed or even duly recognized in our conventional religious thinking. A deed done, a word said that conforms to the spirit of Christ is Christian. Medical missions, educational missions, agricultural missions are in themselves Christian—Christ-like—quite apart from any advantage they may bring to the missionary enterprise or to the Church as a whole with respect to personal allegiance or institutional prestige. Furthermore, they are in themselves Christian if they are really helpful, even if we are not certain that they spring from religious impulses. We must root out the fatal ‘heresy of labels,’ the all-too-prevalent insistence that only those things are Christian that are done under the auspices of a Christian institution, that only those people can do Christ-like things who carry Christ’s banner, that only those deeds are Christian which are so advertised.

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In our Christian enterprise, therefore, the social application of Christ's spirit will have the main emphasis in practice, while we continue to realize that the individual inner life is to be conserved both as an end in itself and as a means of social development.

Now the query arises : Are the needs of rural people such as to require particular study or effort in comparison with urban or general needs, when we are planning and attempting the christianizing of human life ? If this query be answered in the negative, it is a waste of time to discuss it further. But it seems to an increasing number of students of social progress that the rural needs of the world require special consideration and even institutions specially adapted to rural work.

### II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RURAL AFFAIRS

So we are now concerned with the question, Why do rural people need special attention in a Christian programme for the world ? The answer lies partly at least in such considerations as follow :

The rural people are significantly numerous. It is probable that two-thirds of the world's population, or roughly 1,000,000,000 people, live on the land and make their living primarily from the land. All the great mission fields are from 75 per cent to 85 per cent rural. When we consider a Christian programme for the whole world, we find that Russia is 85 per cent rural, that the Balkans are rural, and that even industrial countries, such as Germany and France, are one-half rural. The United States is still half rural socially and a third rural industrially. It may be said that numbers of themselves do not

signify. True in a measure ; but it is obvious that when an approach is made to a population of which four out of five or even three out of five are farmers, this quantitative fact in itself has deep meaning for the enterprise in mind.

There is an essential and vital importance inhering in the work of the farmers, for they supply food and all other soil-grown products. Human civilization has its roots in the materials and forces of the earth. But the greatest material resource of all is the soil. Of more value to the sons of men than all gold and silver and precious stones, all coal and iron and oil, is the plant food in the upper few feet of the earth's surface. It provides food for man, feed for domestic animals, fibres for clothing and a host of other uses, and wood for many vegetable oils, as well as all the flowers of the field. There is at present no substitute for the soil and there is none in sight. So far as we can now see, all future generations of men will be completely dependent upon the perpetual conservation of these soil powers. Other physical resources will be exhausted ; the soil is inexhaustible when properly handled. The relation of population to food supply will be significant so long as population continues to increase. Urban civilization, increasingly based on industry, is increasingly dependent upon the soil, at least for its food. The utilization and the conservation of soil resources are in the hands of the farmers. Their skill, their intelligence, their sense of responsibility are all vital to mankind. Therefore, a programme that attempts to christianize the work of men cannot neglect the soil and the soil-tiller. His task is the primal one of subduing the earth to man's basic needs.

There exists a peculiarly intimate relationship between work and life on the farm, especially between the vocation and home life, and between the economic and social phases of rural activity. It is often said that agriculture is not only a means of making a living but also a mode of life. In its simpler forms, the farm family produces its own food and many other necessities and sells very little. Even in commercial agriculture, the whole family participate to some extent in production, or at least are intimately acquainted with the problems and activities of production. The home is on or near the farm. Often women work on the land, children almost always at an early age. And then there are intimate individual and social inter-relations. There is a close correlation between income and life, between the standard of living and the standard of life. In a peculiar way the intellectual development and the social advance of the rural folk are tied up with effective agricultural practice, with skilled production and efficient distribution. The significance of scientific farming, the uncertainty of the weather, a score of factors peculiar to agriculture and affecting the life as well as the living of the people, constitute a need for specific attention.

As a class farmers in general live apart. Even in the United States, where transportation has revolutionized country life, the farm family lives considerably by and to itself. The rural villages and hamlets of the world, hundreds of thousands of them, perhaps millions of them, are distinctly isolated from the great centres of population. It is not possible to make an approach to these groupings except in terms of this apartness. There is perhaps some distinction to be made between those farm families

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that are relatively isolated units and those that live in villages ; but it is doubtful if the distinction is of great significance. The setting is still rural, and the work, the interests, the talk, the problems are of the soil.

The rural village or local community as a social unit is of first-rate significance. Rural civilization will become economically efficient and socially Christian only as these natural local groupings or units of people do their work efficiently and live their lives in a Christian spirit. Rural progress cannot be achieved *en masse*. It lies in the steady growth of the social units that compose it. Neither can we christianize a country merely by persuading a few individuals here and there to be Christian, or even by placing a church in a community, unless that church seeks to make the life of the entire community a Christian life. Whether we seek better farming practice, more efficient and more profitable marketing and better credit facilities, or whether we endeavour to make the religious motive dominant in human relations, we must influence people as they work and live together. The local community boundaries are the horizon for most of the interests of the group. Social institutions, like church and school, are effective only as they are serving the community. The individual application of Christian principles is made, if made at all, in terms of living with others of the local group. Consciousness of community is vital psychologically, educationally, sociologically, religiously.

Unquestionably, habits of work, modes of thinking, reactions to leadership and to great movements have among rural people certain distinct characteristics. Just as the physician, the teacher, the hand-worker,



the business man each has his characteristic psychology, so has the farmer. It is due partly to occupation, partly to geography. It is not true that rural folk are fundamentally different from other people, but their channels of self-expression, their handling of ideas, their ways of thinking about problems, are profoundly influenced by their social apartness, their lack of constant contact with other interests, their relative freedom from noise and pressure. Doubtless a generalization of this sort is not equally applicable to both extremes of rural life—the illiterate and superstitious farmer of a backward civilization, and the wonderfully alert farmer of a highly organized and educated country. But it is valid as a broad principle, and it will continue to be valid, no matter what happens to the village and hamlet or the separate farm home, no matter what quick transportation and communication may evolve, so long as broad acres survive, and so long as the procession of the seasons, the open sky, the climate and weather, the human contacts with soil and plant and animal continue.

The rural people have been neglected in movements for economic and social reform. This fact need not be overstressed, for quite naturally the problems that have arisen out of the factory system and out of the crowding of people into the cities have called for activities designed to ameliorate economic and social conditions in these cities. The huge numbers involved in rural life, the segregated groupings, the less obvious exigencies, have made the rural problem difficult and have caused a relative neglect of the rural population. Even in missionary areas not yet industrialized, where reform movements are not so obviously at the front, the political,

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economic and educational interests of the cities are given first and major attention, the urban and industrial problems press for solution, and there is this same tendency to neglect rural interests.

In all industrial countries there has been a measure of exploitation of the countryside and of the rural people. The power of organization has much more easily developed in industry and cities, and the many difficulties of organizing farmers have tended to work to their disadvantage. Agriculture itself has many elements of risk due to varying conditions of soil and weather and to the perishable character of many of its products. Wealth accumulates in the city and social institutions are more efficient in the city. Leadership concentrates in the city. The whole movement for a hundred years has been not only to strengthen the city relatively but even to weaken the country. This fact has a vital bearing upon the spirit and development of Christianity in rural fields.

We are coming into a régime of urban and industrial dominance the world over. The challenge of organized industry and urban leadership is upon us. Yet we still have these 1,000,000,000 people on the land. The land still has its significance for human welfare. The very success and power of industry and urban life call for special attention to rural people. This observation is pertinent, because nothing can stop industrialization: it is a slow but sure process. Agriculture, however, will remain so long as soil-grown products are needed, no matter what the extent of industrialization. This important observation is illustrated in the case of England which, after more than a century of apparently deliberate neglect

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of agriculture, at last finds itself facing a serious agricultural situation.

The farms are supplying a constant stream of human migration to the cities. The growth of industry is calling for more workers. Other forms of occupation, even the professions, will enlist the rural-born in any society that permits fairly free movements among its social groups. Farm youth will go to the city. Shall we adequately prepare them to go? Shall we permit the sources of urban rehabilitation to be contaminated? Or shall we seek to make the soil the breeding-ground for a superior quality of folk, for both country and city service?

There is involved a fundamental moral and spiritual question, difficult to define and yet of real importance, namely, the relation between life on the land and the development of character. The farmer works with nature at first hand, and the religious aspect of this intimate contact is of great significance. No worker in the world is more completely under the law of nature than the farmer, or so immediately the beneficiary or the victim of nature. Whether the farmer shall be a pagan fatalist or the possessor of a lively religious faith is an issue that will always emerge from his daily work. Moreover, we should preserve what the Danes call 'the joy of the soil': the romance, the beauty, the poetry, the spiritual significance of intelligent manipulation of soil and plant and animal. The constant revelations of beauty in the rural environment are essentially religious.

In the long look ahead, the success of the world-wide quest for democracy will be profoundly affected by the farmer's place and influence in society. A

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successful democracy is dependent upon intelligence and education, upon occupational skill based upon science, upon the organizing power of its various groups, upon interest in a co-operating world. This is a Christian problem. Are these rural masses to be included in the democratic movement, encouraged to adopt or maintain democratic ideals? Are they to participate in the solution of the problems of a free society?

The rural folk should be mobilized on behalf of world progress. This is the constructive side of the question just asked. It is absurd to think of a world-development formula that omits the rural people from its scope. They now have a great contribution to make. If for any reason they are not making the contribution they should, so much the more reason for paying attention to these potential reserves in the campaign for a better world. Probably for the remainder of this century at least, half the world's population will be rural folk. Are they or are they not to make their full contribution to the christianizing of the world? Are they to get the habit of international co-operation?

The restlessness of rural populations, as indicated in modern agrarian movements, is indicative of the presence of problems that should be worked out from the Christian point of view. In the United States and Canada, in Eastern Europe, in China, in India, there are clear indications that the rural people are determined to play a larger part than heretofore in the settling of at least those affairs that have to do with their own welfare.

### III. THE STATESMANSHIP OF RURAL AFFAIRS, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

With this background of reasons for special consideration of the rural aspect of the Christian programme the world over, our query now is: What is to be done?

First of all, we must make clear what is actually involved in the effort to christianize the life of the world. In the process of reconstructing the machinery, the programme, the detailed work of the Church in the light of the strategy involved in christianizing the world, we must find working principles applicable both to urban and to non-urban areas. In harmony with the best efforts of the modern Church at large, there is a distinct trend toward revising the missionary programme in such fashion that Christians the world over will seek new forms of co-operation in the attempt to transfuse the individual and collective life of mankind with the spirit of Jesus. The 'new missions' are a co-operative effort to christianize the whole of human society, an effort in which the groups with greater wealth and experience will give aid to those groups with less wealth and experience, provided aid is needed and desired. This principle applies to the United States as well as to China or elsewhere. In this world programme, the West can aid the East, and the East can aid the West. For example, on the scientific side of agricultural development there is little question but that the West can be of remarkable service to the East. On the other hand, the wonderful individual skill of a hundred generations of Chinese farmers is significant to the world at large.

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We find, then, that the revision of mission work is in keeping with a world-wide programme that attempts to embody the ideals of Jesus in human affairs. For the effort to carry through the application of Jesus' principles and spirit to all the activities of mankind, and to bring to bear upon human life His unique power, is a matter of concern the world around. This objective must be put in such fashion that it will be recognized both within the Church and without it. Applied Christianity is sound doctrine even for those individuals and social groups motivated not primarily by religious considerations.

### IV. GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CHRISTIAN PROGRAMME

We come, then, to the need of specifying a programme in accord with Jesus' teachings. All that can be done here is to indicate certain large ends that will probably receive pretty general agreement as goals of Christian endeavour. They may be stated somewhat as follows :

1. Recognition of the intrinsic worth of the individual as such.
2. The largest possible opportunity for each individual to develop his full intellectual and moral capacity.
3. The co-operation of individuals, particularly in the local group, for the common welfare of the group and the benefit of society.
4. The creation of a unity of personal and social life ; of the idea that moral and spiritual and even mental growth and development are gained only in part through meditation and reflection, and must also be developed through the activities of the daily work

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and life. The secular must be spiritualized. Spiritual energies must have channels through which they can operate, and these channels are found both in occupation and in the social contacts of family and community.

5. Emphasis upon the vital need of eliminating prejudices arising out of differences of race, class, human capacity and exaggerated nationalism.

These ideas have been put with considerable force in a statement made by one of our American denominations as follows :

‘We believe in making the social and spiritual ideals of Jesus our test for community as well as for individual life ; in strengthening and deepening the inner personal relationship of the individual with God, and recognizing his obligation and duty to society. This is crystallized in the two commandments of Jesus : “ Love thy God ” and “ Love thy neighbour.” We believe this pattern ideal for a Christian social order involves the recognition of the sacredness of life, the supreme worth of each single personality and our common membership in one another—the brotherhood of all. In short, it means creative activity in co-operation with our fellow human beings and with God, in the everyday life of society and in the development of a new and better world social order.’

### V. THE PLACE OF THIS IDEAL IN AGRICULTURE

The same ‘ social creed ’ or statement goes on to indicate the application of these general ideals to the rural problem. It means :

1. That the farmer shall have access to the land he works, on such terms as will ensure him personal

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freedom and economic encouragement, while society is amply protected by efficient production and conservation of fertility.

2. That the cost of market distribution from farmer to consumer shall be cut to the lowest possible terms, both farmers and consumers sharing in these economies.

3. That there shall be every encouragement to the organization of farmers for economic ends, particularly for co-operative sales and purchases.

4. That there shall be available an efficient system of both vocational and general education of youths and adults living on farms.

5. That special efforts shall be made to ensure the farmer adequate social institutions, including the church, the school, the library, means of recreation, good local government and particularly the best possible farm home.

6. That there shall be a widespread development of organized rural communities, thoroughly democratic, completely co-operative and possessed with the spirit of the common welfare.

7. That there shall be the fullest measure of friendly reciprocal co-operation between the rural and city workers.

### VI. WAYS AND MEANS

No effort will be made in this paper to give detailed and practical suggestions for a concrete working programme to forward such ends as have been indicated. As a matter of fact, many programmes will be needed, for it must be remembered that each community is a problem within itself. The main purpose of the present discussion is to indicate certain general principles which it is believed are



necessary for all the agencies involved in the problem to recognize and utilize. At the outset, there must be the hearty commitment of the mission boards, the foreign missionaries and leaders of the indigenous churches to whatever programme is agreed to.

The farm has for decades been used in many mission fields as a part of the equipment and teaching, and the promotion of better farming is by no means a modern aspect of missionary endeavour. It is only within the last twenty years, however, that there has been an agricultural missionary group solidly at work on a large scale. It must be remembered that there are a hundred agricultural missionaries now in service in various parts of the mission fields, and that there is among them great wisdom growing out of their service that should be utilized to the full in new developments.

1. First of all, it is desirable to have an interchange of specialists and of expert leaders. The scientist, the agriculturist, the leader of farmers' organizations, the economist, the sociologist, the welfare worker—these should be exchanged between countries as freely, as frequently and as regularly as possible, and the machinery for carrying out this plan should be developed under all auspices that can by any means make a contribution. No one agency will suffice. Undoubtedly agricultural missionaries who are scientists can be of real service in many countries and should be sent out. But the general principle is that of common interchange of trained men and women in order that all the available skill of the world shall be brought to bear upon all the rural problems of the world.

2. The number of rural missionaries should be increased. It is probable that the definition of

function to be rendered by rural missionaries should be enlarged beyond the concept indicated in the term 'agricultural missionaries.' Rural missionaries will do work which lies distinctly in what are commonly recognized as rural areas, whereas agricultural missionaries deal more specifically with technical problems of production and distribution. There are perhaps four groups of rural missionaries to be recognized :

(a) Trained scientists who are ready to give their service as research workers and teachers to those countries that are in need of such contributions but are as yet unable through local resources to supply a sufficient number of trained men of their own nationalities. Students of plant and animal diseases are especially needed in nearly all mission fields.

(b) Agricultural specialists who will be able to take the scientific information and apply it to the practical problems of the working farmer. An illustration of this service is in the field of improved seeds and improved methods of culture.

(c) Social engineers—persons trained in the social sciences and capable of utilizing the best we have in this field for the development of economic and social life in the villages and hamlets. This term might be given a definition broad enough to be inclusive of any type of service that will improve the social conditions of rural folk, such as that rendered by teachers and preachers.

(d) A special group devoted to the training of teachers and preachers for rural work. One of the great needs is the training of a relatively large number of native workers who understand the rural field and who are willing to give their lives to that field. Not only are rural teachers and rural preachers needed

but combination workers, that is, preachers who can help the farmers in their practical problems, teachers who can do the same or who can preach. These types of village workers must be versatile rather than too highly specialized. The service of these preacher-teachers, teacher-preachers, preacher-farmers, teacher-farmers does not by any means eliminate the regular teacher and preacher as such.

3. The local community or rural village should be taken as the unit of endeavour in rural missionary work. This aim is vital to the adequate building of a rural civilization everywhere. It is in these local groups that rural people make or mar their lives. Here they have their contacts, here they get their living. If they can be Christian here, they are Christian. If they cannot be Christian here, they are not Christian. The development of the individual farmer in his local group and on behalf of his group is the only sure way to a Christian civilization. We need then a common programme and a common approach to the development of the rural village.

It is interesting to note that the newly organized International Country Life Commission, with headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, at its conference in that city in 1926, and again at its conference at Michigan State College in 1927, accepted the idea that there should be developed in the near future some sort of rural community formula that can be utilized the world around as a framework for an adequate rural programme. The outlines of such a formula were discussed at both meetings, but it is thought best not to incorporate such an outline in this text. Rather it is hoped that the rural missionary forces themselves, utilizing Dr Thomas Jesse Jones's keen analysis of community life, together

with such other material as may be available, may participate, together with the International Country Life Commission and other agencies, in developing such a formula.

Two or three resolutions of the International Country Life Commission are pertinent to this discussion :

‘Fundamentally the emphasis should be placed upon the maintenance and development of the quality of people on the land in respect to their standards of life and the level of their attainment, their intelligence, their moral and character training and their participation in community and civilization building.

‘As the major objective in promoting a more satisfying country life it is suggested that there be specific concentration upon the problem of maximum development of local rural groups.

‘Country life of the future will develop in a direction which will correspond with the mentality of farm youth. Therefore, it is necessary to consider diligently the trend of thought of farm youth and to get the young people of the farm experienced in and attracted to the farming occupation while they are still of school age, in a way which will show the good side of farm life and make possible earning an income within the circle of the farm family.’

It must not be forgotten that the community idea and a community programme do not imply community isolation. It is not sufficient for a community to be highly developed, but communities must be interrelated both for their own best development and for the contribution of their peculiar gifts to a nation or to the world. Community consciousness is not community egotism.

4. Obviously, as a part of this development of the rural community, there must be efficient local social institutions. The forms which these institutions will take vary in different countries and in different periods of time. What will answer to-day may not suffice for the next generation or even for the next decade. But there seem to be certain types of social institutions that we have reason to regard as fundamental and that must play their full part in each local community.

*a.* First of all, of course, is the family in whatever form it may exist. It still is the most significant social group. The family group is characteristic of all countries and is an essential social agent in rural work and life. The family interest and activity need correlating with the interests and activities of other families in terms of community consciousness and effort. The ideal community is a family of families where common interests are pooled and diverse interests are reconciled.

A consideration of the family involves the question of the place of woman, her needs, and her contribution to the task of civilization building. Does not the answer lie in a function that is twofold, that of the home-maker who finds home-making a career, but who translates the task not only into the rearing of a family in adequate fashion, but into the projection of the home into the life of the community? In some respects, the supreme service of Christianity has been the revolution of attitude in the minds of men toward the womanhood of the world. What a Christian programme can do for women, and what Christian women can do for civilization, are vital elements in co-operative Christian work.

It is usually assumed that all the efforts for rural

advancement imply quite as much attention to the women as to the men, to the girls as to the boys ; yet there can be no doubt that in actual practice not only may insufficient attention be given to the problems that have to be approached from the women's point of view, but that there may even be neglect of the very philosophy of women's potential development and influence. It is peculiarly important, for example, to realize the place of the home as a school and the place of the home-maker as a teacher. There is a world of meaning in any programme that endeavours to assist the mother of the family wisely to teach and to influence her children with respect to all the larger issues of life. Probably this aspect of woman's work is more important in rural communities than in urban communities, because the family retains longer in the country than in the city its unity of activities and the co-operation of its members.

(b) The school, or means of education, is another important social institution. This agency is so fundamental that little needs to be said about it except to mention it. We have yet to discover, however, the most effective type of rural school. We have not yet sufficiently standardized the need in this respect. There should be a large measure of agreement on the part of our missionary educators on this point.

Adult or continuing education is one of the literally huge problems of rural development the world around, in the mission fields as elsewhere. The ideal is, of course, that there shall be both opportunity and incentive for every person, the day that school days are over, to continue somewhat systematic study until life's days are over, with respect both to occupa-

tional and to personal and social problems of development. The mass education of China, for example, is a capital instance of the importance and possibilities of this aspect of educational endeavour.

(c) Voluntary farmers' associations organized for purposes of economic efficiency, for health, for recreation, for sociability are another vital factor. Every encouragement should be given to rural people to get the habit of collective action. Lack of adequate organization is one of the intrinsic weaknesses of farmers. Organizations over wide areas, even in agrarian movements, are to be developed, but the training ground for organization is in the local community and there is where it has its largest influence.

(d) The institutions of religion—the Church and its allies—constitute, of course, a vital type of social agency. Here again, it will not do at all to transfer the experiences of the city church into the rural village. The very programme of the Church, especially its organization and certain of its activities, must be studied in the light of the peculiar needs of the village and the village people. No effort is made in this paper to enlarge upon the specific activities of the Church. Some example of what the churches and missions are already doing in rural areas are given in the paper by Mr McKee. It is assumed that the Church is central in all efforts to christianize the world.

5. We must not permit the economic question to dominate the situation, important as it is. There is a culture belonging to country life. In older civilizations there is much in the past that can be preserved both of the artistic and of the ethical content. There are traditions that need to be conserved, especially if they can be enlarged and transfused, but the

Christian teaching must be added rather than eliminated. In most mission lands there is a great past to build on in this matter of rural culture. The tendency of western-trained missionaries is to sacrifice this culture of the past for the efficiency of the present.

Quite likely one of the most difficult problems facing rural and agricultural missionaries is the prevalence of the idea, unfortunately not confined to mission countries exclusively, that hand labour is degrading. The dignity and value of manual work from every point of view, physical, educational, spiritual, needs to be both preached and demonstrated by the missionary. It is fundamental to progress. It must begin with the young and it must produce such a spirit of pride in the adult that he will not yield to the notion of accepting for himself an inferior status merely because he is a manual worker.

6. The education of native personal leadership is another important factor. Eventually governments will have to train most of the rural leadership in the country. But much assistance can be rendered by the churches. Perhaps the most vital contribution which can be made is to initiate the training of agricultural specialists, rural teachers, teacher-farmers, preacher-farmers, teacher-preachers and so on. We need a host of men and women who have caught a vision of the rural field, who are willing to dedicate their lives to the service and who can receive a training adequate to the task so that efficiency shall be linked with high purpose.

7. The development of training schools is imperative, both in the mission fields and in the home country, for the purpose of giving as adequate preparation as possible for service in the rural areas. It is impossible even to outline in this paper the problem of



adequate training for agricultural and rural missionaries. Several years ago a committee in the United States made a report on the subject. Perhaps, however, the whole question in its breadth and scope can best be indicated by a few extracts from recent reports and addresses by Dr E. W. Capen, Dean of the Kennedy School of Missions, Hartford, Connecticut. Dr Capen has caught the vision of the larger problem as well as realized the character of the training needed by the average missionary who seeks, or finds himself in, the rural field.

‘A vast majority of all the people in the mission lands are of the farmer class. Those can best help them who have the rural viewpoint. . . . Most general missionaries are either located themselves among rural and village people who are mainly farmers or they supervise work among rural people. . . . Mission boards and missionaries have made too little of the fact that the great bulk of people on the mission fields are living in rural communities. It is these who must be reached if the nations are to be christianized, and they can be reached most effectively only by workers, foreign or native, who understand the practical problems of their daily life. . . . While the solution of this problem lies mainly with the training schools on the field, yet it is important that those sent out of America or Europe to supervise this work should themselves be rural-minded. This is one reason why some missionary leaders are looking to the agricultural colleges for recruits. Such graduates, after a theological course, would be admirably fitted for this type of service. . . . The call is for a community programme. . . . The school should help the students and the community from which they come to live a normal, healthy life. . . .

There are types of co-operation and social service which can be developed around the schools as a centre and which will help to improve the life of the community as a whole.'

8. The problem of financial support is still another important question. There is no aspect of foreign missions work more puzzling or more important than this. Any such programme as has been indicated would be a costly one. For example, any effort to reach the rural people of China, scattered among 100,000 villages and 1,000,000 hamlets, is a stupendous thing. Obviously, the whole field cannot be covered at the outset. What is the strategy of the campaign? Centres doubtless must be established illustrative of the work to be done. But even this would call for large funds. What is true in China is certainly true in India and to a lesser extent in all other mission fields. It may be suggested that there are at least two essentials for securing financial support for so large a task :

(a) A rural missions programme worked out by those on the field and those in the home country most competent to advise.

(b) The presentation of this programme both in the home country and in the field itself as an object of support. There must be united effort to enlist the interests not only of churches generally, but of particular persons or groups who subscribe to the need of special attention to the rural field.

9. The International Association of Agricultural Missions, which has been organized in North America, and similar associations in other lands, should be given every possible encouragement to aid the movement to enlarge the scope of Christian work in rural communities in mission lands.

10. An important consideration in a rural missions programme is the relation of mission institutions to the government of the country in which the missions exist. This is by no means a new problem, but it may have specific applications in the rural field, which is unique and varied. May it not be taken as a valid principle that missions shall not permanently perform functions that the government can carry on or, indeed, initiate work that should be a government function except in so far as it is clear that help may be rendered through demonstration, leadership and co-operation ?

In connexion with this matter of relation to government, it is worth while to put in a sentence or two (because the theme cannot be developed in this paper) one of the most important services which rural missions can render : namely, assistance in mapping an adequate programme of agriculture and country life for countries and provinces, as well as for small sub-divisions. Both the problems of rural organization and of rural education must not only be welded, but they must be developed in harmony with the most statesmanlike views and through a long term programme based on adequate policies, economic and social.

11. It is high time that we had an International Country Life Foundation—partly for research, partly for interpretation, partly for creating public opinion—a foundation which would apply itself to country-life problems the world around.

### VII. SOME DYNAMIC ILLUSTRATIONS

Volumes could be written and indeed have been written to exemplify the ongoing tide of rural

reorganization and the philosophy and achievement of outstanding leaders. But a few paragraphs must be inserted in this statement calling attention to men and movements that illustrate the thesis upon which this appeal for attention to the rural aspect of missions is based.

First of all, we have the work of the hundred agricultural missionaries themselves. These men, serving in practically all the mission fields, have worked along lines fully approved in the countries of the western world, but have adapted themselves to the new conditions and to the peculiar needs of the people with whom they have served. The story of the achievements of these men as told in this report is a glorious chapter in mission work. It is not a minor aspect of mission service. Indeed, it embodies and demonstrates the whole philosophy of christianizing the world's rural people.

The oldest and in some respects the most significant and successful rural reform that the world has seen has taken place in Denmark. Nearly 100 years ago Bishop Grundtvig, 'the prophet of the North,' developed and announced the belief in the significance of what are now the People's High Schools, which should exemplify the theory of 'the civilization of the countryside as dramatized in the co-operative individualist, the independent farmer and now these practices of folk schools themselves.' He set forth 'his ideal and his idea of a new education, a folk education, and popular enlightenment as contrasted with schools of learning.' He did not become a crusader against the latter type of schools of education; both, he said, are necessary. It is interesting to recall that both his philosophy and his work were rooted distinctly in the religious motive.

Somewhat later, about the middle of the last century, Father Raffeissen became the originator of the little rural co-operative credit societies which have been planted the world over and are now found by the tens of thousands. Here again, a religious leader, conscious of dire economic need and social injustice to his people, evolved a plan by which their most pressing difficulties could be remedied by themselves chiefly in the spirit and by the method of co-operation—an essentially Christian doctrine. There stands to-day in the village of Neuwied, on the east bank of the Rhine, a statue to Raffeissen symbolizing not merely a great movement for better business among farmers but essentially a vision of applying religion to the affairs of the humblest and poorest workers on the land.

Rural Ireland has had its prophets. More than forty years ago, Sir Horace Plunkett coined this slogan for a better rural Ireland, 'Better farming, better business and better living.' It is interesting to note that at the recent International Country Life Conference in the United States that phrase was used repeatedly, and finally by one speaker who gave an addendum to the effect that 'the greatest of these is better living,' a sentiment which Sir Horace unquestionably approves. We have then still another exemplification of the all-roundness of the rural problem and the place which the highest ideals of the human race have had even in the working out of the practical questions which the farmers have to face from day to day.

To-day in England we find at least two significant movements, both of large proportions, dealing with many of the essential questions which we have been discussing. The women's institutes, thousands of

them, with hundreds of thousands of members, are reaching the village women of England, Scotland and Wales, and constitute one of the major developments of rural progress at the present time. More recently rural community councils, designed to correlate and to unify all the agencies and forces of the local community and of rural counties, have developed a leadership, a technique and an enthusiasm as well as a wisdom, that promise great things for the sadly beset agriculture of England.

In the United States, the country life movement is gaining tremendous headway, and this country possesses without question the most far-reaching system of adult education for rural people that has yet been devised, a system supported largely at public expense, with funds from federal, State and county treasuries, supplemented to a slight extent by private funds. In this system of 'co-operative agricultural extension work in agriculture and home economics,' there are to-day 5000 paid workers, 250,000 voluntary workers and 20,000,000 people a year at least touched by the educational influences of this service. A fundamental aspect of this extension work is the actual 'demonstration.' The credit for this idea belongs to another rural prophet, Dr Seaman A. Knapp. Nearly twenty years ago in an address Dr Knapp told his 'demonstrators' that 'I want you to feel to-day that you have hold of one of the greatest lines of social uplift and development and greatness that exist. . . . You are beginning at the bottom to influence the masses of mankind and ultimately those masses always control the destinies of a country. . . . If we begin at the bottom and plant human action upon the rock of high purpose with right cultivation of the land, right living for the

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common people and comforts everywhere, and make wealth and prosperity all through the rural districts, the people will lend their support and all civilization will rise higher and higher. . . . I do not glory in the wealth of a few but rejoice in the general distribution of wealth and prosperity for the common people.'

And then, finally, we must not fail to mention that prince and prophet of the closing years of the eighteenth century, John Frederick Oberlin, a man of high gifts, of ample opportunities for service in the centres of population and culture, who gave himself to one poor little rural community, and by the end of his life had made it prosperous economically, satisfactory educationally and inspired in all its activities and achievements by the loving pastor of a church of Jesus Christ.