

#449

HOW ONE CHURCH FINANCES ITS WORK

H. W. CONNELLY

*Pastor, Melrose Baptist Church,
Roanoke, Virginia*



DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH
ADMINISTRATION
BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE
P. E. BURROUGHS, Secretary
CLAY I. HUDSON, Associate

DARGAN-CARVER LIBRARY

S. B. C. HISTORICAL COMMISSION

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE



How One Church Finances Its Work

H. W. CONNELLY

I have been asked to tell, in detail, how we handle the finances in our church. I wish to discuss it under the divisions of the **plan**, the **preparation** and the **pay**. For three years, we have been laboring under a heavy building program of both parsonage and church, involving an expenditure of approximately \$125,000 with no wealthy members from whom to draw large sums. I am happy to say, however, that we have put more money into our organized work during these three years than in any other similar period in the history of the church.

MEMBERS TAUGHT TO GIVE REGULARLY

THE PLAN—We agreed on two things before launching the building program; first, that we would not reduce our contributions to denominational objects, and second, that we would endeavor to raise the money in a way that would educate our people to give regularly and thereby enable the church to keep the stream of liberality flowing into the Lord's treasury after the buildings are paid for. We tactfully prepared the soil and converted the Ladies' Aid Society into the Missionary Society. We abandoned all methods of raising funds by sales, bazaars, et cetera, and entered upon the Bible plan of stewardship. Our unanimous testimony is that this is the easiest and best way to finance the Lord's work.

We have three budgets, including all of our needs for a year—a definite amount for all current ex-

penses, a definite amount for the Co-operative Program, and a definite amount for the building fund. We have one subscription card for the three budgets and each member is asked to subscribe a definite amount to each of the three objects. We have one carton of fifty-two duplex envelopes for current expenses and the Co-operative Program, and fifty-two envelopes of a different color for the building fund. We conduct one canvass a year, endeavoring to enlist every member of the church in supporting all these objects. We have three treasurers—one for current expenses, one for the Co-operative Program and one for the building fund. This is necessary in that it makes three people vitally interested in the finances of the church and prevents one object from robbing another. Every dollar goes to the definite object that the giver intended.

PREPARATION ESSENTIAL TO CANVASS

THE PREPARATION—The main thing in an every-member canvass is the preparation. Sixty days before our canvass, the finance committee very carefully worked out the three budgets and presented them to the board of deacons and then, on a blackboard, to the church. An entire service of the church was devoted to the discussion of them. The finance committee then prayerfully picked the names of the canvassers from the financial secretary's book and recommended them to the church for election. Three meetings were held with the workers, training them for their work. The Tithers' Band spread information and solicited new members. Four-minute speakers were used at every service. The territory was divided and workers were sent out, by twos, to visit all the homes in the interest of the church and to spread information. A school of missions was conducted for a week. Four classes, adapted to various ages, were held each night for an hour, followed by an address to the entire school by one of our missionaries. The finance committee mailed a letter to each member, explaining the budgets and percentages, in detail.

REVIVAL ALSO AIDS CANVASS

In addition, we held an annual revival meeting during this 60-day preparation, with special emphasis on stewardship. This enabled us to get information to a large number of indifferent members whom we could not otherwise reach. It did not hinder the spirit of the meeting, however. During this year we have had 146 additions to the church—over one hundred by baptism.

In preparation for the canvass each year, our Sunday school teachers, W.M.S. and B.Y.P.U. leaders, deacons and deaconesses, all talk 100 per cent enlistment to their respective groups. We especially stress four things: (1) Every member to subscribe; (2) Every member to subscribe to all three budgets; (3) Every member to subscribe on a weekly basis; (4) That the tithe be the minimum contributed. Streamers are put up in the building with stewardship mottoes on them. On the morning of the canvass, the pastor takes a blackboard into the pulpit with the detailed items of the three budgets on it and puts \$1.00 in the current expense end of the envelope and explains what per cent of it goes to each item in the budget. Then \$1.00 is put in the other side of the envelope and explanation given as to what per cent of that goes to the different objects of that budget, and likewise in the building fund envelope. The service is closed with a season of prayer for victory.

MEMBERS COME TO CHURCH AND SUBSCRIBE

Instead of going out and hunting up the members, they have been requested to come voluntarily to the church and register their subscriptions between the hours of 1:30 and 5 o'clock. At the close of the morning service, the workers are served a lunch and they assemble in the basement room for a season of prayer and are signed up and given final instructions for their work. The church roll has been copied on information cards that show how much each member subscribed last year, how much

he paid and how much is expected of him next year. This information is invaluable to the canvasser. If something like this is not done, many will put down the same amount that they gave ten or twenty years ago when eggs were 8 cents per dozen and butter was 20 cents per pound. These cards are divided alphabetically among ten tables and each table is marked by large initial letters indicating the names to be found there. For instance, A-B is at one table, C-D at another, and so on. Three workers are assigned to each table, one to sign up the members and the other two to help. As the members enter the room, ushers shake hands with them and conduct them to the proper tables. They are then taken to the envelope table and given their carton of envelopes with their name, and amount of their subscription to each budget written on the cartons.

This year, the rain poured in torrents all the Sunday afternoon that was designated for the enlistment, but 652 members came through the down-pour and subscribed approximately \$23,000 to all objects. They over-subscribed our quota to the Co-operative Program. We were so delighted with the plan that it was repeated on the following Sunday and the number of subscribers was increased to about 900. Those who did not come were visited by the finance committee. Three years ago only 250 of our members were contributing through the envelopes. Now, about 1,100 are signed up. Then the church was raising, for all purposes, \$10,500 a year. In 1926, we raised a total of about \$31,000. Our entire budget for 1927 was \$36,300.

MISSION MONEY SENT PROMPTLY

THE PAY—The financial secretary posts all envelopes and puts money in the bank for the three treasurers. All mission money is sent to the state treasurer at the first of the month. We try to be as accurate in our bookkeeping as a bank. Monthly statements are sent out to all members who are in arrears. Each quarter a visit is made to each one who is behind and he is urged to pay

up, if possible. April and October are "catch-up months," when we again use our four-minute speakers and endeavor to get all subscriptions paid up and all others to either subscribe or pay something. Near the end of the church year, a typewritten list of the membership is placed in the vestibule of the church and all who subscribed and paid up in full have gold stars placed by their names. All other contributors get a red star by their names. This list is preserved and when the Every-Member Canvass is put on, a silver star is also placed by the name of those who signed up. This causes a great deal of wholesome enthusiasm and it enables Sunday school teachers, W.M.S. and B.Y.P.U. leaders, deacons, and deaconesses, to know those on their respective groups who have not enlisted, and they can greatly help in getting them into the harness.

NEW MEMBERS ENLISTED PROMPTLY

As new members come into the church during the year, they are given a letter of welcome with a request to call at the church office before the next Sunday and enlist and get envelopes. If they do not come, the finance committee visits them. It is not difficult, as a rule, to enlist those as they join.

THIS AND OTHER TRACTS OFFERED FOR FREE DISTRIBUTION

The Sunday School Board through its Department of Church Administration offers a series of leaflets on **Stewardship, Tithing, Church Financing, Duties of Deacons** and similar subjects.

Besides these leaflets which are offered without charge, the Department also offers **Church Administration**, a monthly magazine for church officers (75c in clubs of five and over).

The Department provides a **Study Course in Church Administration**, comprising six books, leading to a beautiful lithographed diploma.

Correspondence is invited.

P. E. BURROUGHS, Secretary.
CLAY I. HUDSON, Associate.