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HOW  
TO MAKE A SUCCESS  
— OF —  
THE EVERY-MEMBER  
CANVASS

By  
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# HOW TO MAKE A SUCCESS — OF — THE EVERY-MEMBER CANVASS

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After years of testing, all denominations are agreed that the Every-Member Canvass is the best method ever devised for financing the work of the local church and of the current work of denominational agencies. Any one considering the purpose of the Every-Member Canvass can readily see why this judgment has been reached. The purpose is to secure a pledge from each and every member of a church to pay regularly, usually weekly, a definite amount for church expense and for denominational causes.

The great financial need of Southern Baptist causes is the putting on of a successful Every-Member Canvass by every church. Two pertinent questions arise: Can this be done? If so, how? The answer is: It can be done. Each church certainly can make an Every-Member Canvass, and it is the purpose of this tract to offer suggestions as to how it can be done. Each church can make a successful Every-Member Canvass if— If what? Two things: If it will determine to succeed, and if it will work at the task until success is achieved. There is nothing complicated, mysterious, intricate or difficult about the Every-Member Canvass. Unalterable determination and persistent effort will bring victory.

## GETTING READY FOR THE CANVASS

Before putting on the Every-Member Canvass, it is necessary to do some important preliminary work. Failure at this point will result in failure at every point. Adequate preparation for the canvass will go far toward assuring final success. The following work should be done:

**1. Make a Budget.** The budget should give an itemized statement of church expenses for the current year and should contain a definite and liberal amount for the Co-operative Program. For the reason that churches, because of their size and activities, vary in their necessary expenditures, no sample budget is here given. Budget-making is not difficult. A simple method is to list the various items of expenditure for the past year with the amount of each. Go over this list carefully determining whether any item can be eliminated from the budget for the current year; whether any new items must be included; whether amount for items remaining need to be raised or lowered. As an illustration of what is meant by eliminating or adding an item of expenditure to church expense, take the matter of painting. If the church was painted last year, it will not need to be painted this year. Eliminate that item. If the church must be painted this year, then add that item in the budget. So should other items be dealt with.

The amount included in the budget of a church for the Co-operative Program is in reality a goal for the church to reach in providing for every phase of denominational work. This goal or objective should be one worthy of the church. The church, if possible, should give as much for the Co-operative Program as for local expenses. Remember that the need of the causes—state and South-wide—is great and urgent.

**2. Appoint a Committee.** It is necessary that the church appoint a committee to make the Every-Member Canvass. This committee will be large or small, according to the size of the congregation. The committee appointed will have much to do with the result of the canvass—whether of success or failure. The members of the committee should have certain qualifications. They should be deeply

interested in the Lord's cause, both at home and in regions beyond. To successfully solicit pledges from others, they must, themselves, be liberal contributors—not necessarily large givers, but givers according to ability. They should be well informed about local needs and about denominational causes. To this end they should carefully study the local budget and the Co-operative Program. Tracts giving valuable information may be had, for the asking, from the State Mission Office. The committee should be energetic, willing to do hard work, and they should be tactful in dealing with others. Sympathy and interest are the chief elements in "tact."

**3. Prepare the Congregation.** The members of the congregation should be in a proper frame of mind to greet the canvassers upon their visit. They, of course, should be given notice in advance of the time of the visit and be requested to be at home. One or more Sundays before the canvass, the pastor should speak on subjects related to the Every-Member Canvass. He surely has a wide range of appropriate subjects to select from: Tithing, Stewardship, Christian Duty, Rewards, Missions, and so forth. Tracts dealing with the Co-operative Program should be furnished the members of the congregation. It will be well for the pastor or the deacons to send one or more well-worded letters to each member. This letter should both give the necessary facts and make an appeal. Information about the Lord's work will generate an interest among the Lord's people. Deep interest will make effective an earnest appeal.

### MAKING THE CANVASS

The securing of pledges may be done in various ways. The hour of the morning service may or may not be used to start the canvass. If it is so used, a brief explanation should be made of the budget and of the im-

portance of every member having a part in supporting both the church expenses and the Co-operative Program. Pledge cards should be put in the hands of each member. A supply of pencils should be on hand for those who need them. After an earnest prayer, let the members fill in and sign the pledge cards. The cards should then be taken up and turned over to the committee.

As soon after lunch as possible, the committee should meet at the church before starting out on the canvass. The names of all who pledged at the morning service, if such pledges were made, should be stricken from their lists. The canvassers should go out, two by two. Each group should carry pledge cards and cartons of envelopes. When a card is signed, a carton of envelopes should be given the signer and the number of the carton should be entered on the pledge card for the benefit of the treasurer. The committee should return to the church and make report at the night service of the work done. During the week, members of the committee should endeavor to secure pledges from those who were not seen on Sunday. The work of canvassing should, if possible, be completed on the following Sunday. However, if not completed by then, keep on until it is completed. In other words, make a real Every-Member Canvass. Overlook no one.

### FOLLOWING UP THE CANVASS

New members will doubtless be joining the church from time to time during the year. Some of them will join soon after the completion of the Every-Member Canvass. The financial plan of the church should be explained to new members and pledges should be secured from them. The best time to enlist new members in the activities of the church is soon after they unite with the church.

It is of vast importance that pledges be paid promptly when due. The expenses of the church and of denominational agencies call for payment with great regularity. These expenses should be met month by month. This can be done only when contributors keep their pledges paid up-to-date. Then, too, it is easier for most people to pay their pledges week by week than after they have been in arrears for some time. The church should, by letter or otherwise, keep before the membership the importance of the prompt payment of pledges.

Several times during the year, the pastor should preach on some phase of denominational life and work. This will help in various ways. It will go far toward securing the prompt payment of pledges. It will gladden the hearts of contributors to know that they have a part in such a glorious work. And it will make the Every-Member Canvass more successful the next year. Informing and inspiring sermons during the year will doubtless increase the gifts of regular contributors, and at the same time add new ones.

Let it be remembered that while we are considering a method of securing money, yet there is nothing mercenary or selfish about it. The funds are sought from Christ's people to be expended for Christ's glory. The questions of love, loyalty and obedience to Christ are involved in the giving of money. The Every-Member Canvass has a distinctly spiritual value, both in method and in results. We are more concerned in developing spiritual personalities than in opening material pocket-books. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. 9: 7.