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**The
Church Officer
and His Job.**

**An Outline of some of the Duties
of Parochial Lay Workers.**

By "ACCOUNTANT"

Price 1/-

A "Perparrec" Publication.

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The Church Officer and His Job.

(An outline of some of the duties, together with those of the Churchwardens, the Envelope (Weekly Offerings) Secretary and the Keeper of the official Parish Roll.)

NOTE WELL.

The term "Vestry" is used throughout to designate the Council or Committee appointed annually by the congregation to advise or assist the Vicar and the Wardens.

The recovery by the Church of God of its rightful place in the life of the community would be hastened were the interested laymen of our congregations to gather in occasional conference and examine, sometimes by themselves and sometimes with the clergy, the conditions under which the Church functions in society as it is organised today. One of the results of such an analysis would surely be to reveal the relative disregard of many factors to which "the world" pays much attention because it has realised that only so can its impact upon men attain its effect. "The world", for example, increasingly recognises that important results can only be efficiently achieved where those charged with the responsibility prepare themselves fully to understand the nature of their task and the best way of performing it.

This principle, that the job can only be done well by the man who has gone to some pains to master the factors involved, applies to every responsibility whether it be undertaken voluntarily or for money; our loss of grip upon the last few generations is partly due to our failure to recognise it in practice. There are many who claim that most of our clergy receive insufficient training by the Church, but what is true of stipendiary leaders is equally true of voluntary workers; indeed for some strange reason it is assumed that it is presumptuous to require efficiency from volunteers. Nevertheless, thoughtful persons will see that whereas none is compelled to undertake office, the Church cannot allow men or women to assume that second or third rate work is good enough for God. Such an attitude is rapidly going, with obvious improvement in our presentation of the Gospel, but the Church as a whole is not without blame if it is unready to assist would-be workers in their job. Sometimes a sense of duty and the absence of a man specially qualified for some particular task, leads another to offer himself for service.

Such men are many and should be held in the highest honour, but how much happier would they be in their work, and how much more effective, if the Church sought to instruct them in their duties where needed. Already this is being done for Sunday School teachers and lately for Youth Leaders. The same opportunities should be given to Secretaries and Treasurers; yes, and why not Church Wardens and Lay Readers? Surely here is a real job for, say, the C.E.M.S. where diocesan authorities find it difficult to handle.

This booklet is not intended to be a substitute for such a series of talks and discussions nor is it a handbook of duties to be undertaken. Its chief purpose is to bring under notice some of the matters which are frequently overlooked. The functions of the Vestry or Church Council are fixed by Church law. Too often (in practice) their main job is the spending of the moneys which *others* have worried to raise, but, apart from certain specific duties, the details of their activities will largely depend on various factors. The Vestry may sometimes consist of a dozen or more and be the only focusing point of the opinion and aspirations of the parish; on the other hand the existence of a Council representing the various organisations (see Booklet, "The Parish Council") may provide for this function. Again the Vestry may be small and advisory, meeting only occasionally, the executive being in the hands of the Vicar or Rector and the Church Wardens. No set of rules can be laid down, but there are certain principles which apply universally and these should be known by any competent Church Officer.

1. The Secretary.

LEGAL DUTIES.

Details of these should be looked up in the relevant Diocesan Act governing the parish. They normally require that after each appointment of new members a declaration should be signed. This could well occupy a page of the minute book and be signed annually by all; it is frequently forgotten by Secretaries. The fixing of a quorum, with day and frequency of meeting, should all be attended to immediately and the Diocese informed of any change of officials. The annual return required by the Diocese will include this, and certain features of this return might well be prepared by the Secretary instead of all being left to the parish priest. Well before the Annual Meeting all Societies should be asked to prepare their Annual Financial Statement (audited) and Report for presentation to the Vestry, i.e., the Church Committee or Council; the Vestry or Churchwardens are normally responsible for *all* financial matters and this duty should not be treated lightly; neglect of it has led occasionally to misappropriations which would otherwise have been checked for the good of all. Apart from the responsibility it is most encouraging to the organisations and a fitting recognition of

their leaders' work. If these statements cannot readily go out with the printed Parish Balance Sheet they should at least be on view at the Annual Meeting. Time may not permit each Society to make a brief verbal report then, but the Church Secretary or someone else appointed should give parishioners very briefly a statement of what the various bodies have done. Where a "Parish Council" (i.e., a Council representative of the Parish organisations) exists this body could most easily be asked to see to the collecting of this annual information for conveying to the Secretary.

Towards the close of the year provision is made for the revision of the roll of persons entitled to a vote. Some of the Diocesan Acts are vague on these issues but the task is frequently neglected and persons left on the roll who have long since forfeited any real right to be on. It is not unknown for men who seldom come to worship to appear at the Annual Meeting, perhaps in critical mood. It is not unknown too for the Chairman to have to rule out of order certain nominations (perhaps hurriedly and thoughtlessly made) because the nominee could not reasonably be considered eligible for office. This would be avoided if the congregation were fully informed of the conditions governing the electoral roll and then, after due legal notice, carefully given, the roll scrutinised every year to eliminate persons who clearly have forfeited their right and include all who should be enrolled. Care should be taken also to give full and proper notice of the Annual Meeting. Elections for "Vestrymen" are sometimes characterised by hasty ill-considered nominations and where the Act does not prevent it some parishes require nominations to be made in time for posting on the Church notice board by the preceding Sunday, while, for later nominations, some accept only signed nominations sent in before the opening of the meeting. The procedure has many advantages so long as every effort is made to advise the congregation of what is required — well beforehand and more than once.

THE AGENDA.

The smooth running Committee or Vestry meeting will partly depend on the preparations made by the Secretary. Care should be taken to see that the room is ready, clean and tidy; and why not a cloth on the table? (Is ugliness indispensable to parish gatherings?) Then an agenda should always be carefully prepared, after consultation, and placed before the Chairman: if possible a copy should be given to each member present at the meeting or even forwarded with a notice of meeting. Where a copy for each is the aim, it is possible to have a printed (or cyclostyled) agenda showing fixed items for each meeting and allowing space for special and changing items to be put in by hand. This has the merit of ensuring that items are not overlooked. The practice of having no agenda or of scribbling one out at the last minute on some scrap of paper is

unworthy of the duty the Vestry has to perform. The following is an example of a typical Agenda:—

VESTRY MEETING 6/6/1947.

Agenda.

1. Minutes of last Meeting.
2. Business arising from the Minutes.
3. Apologies.
4. Correspondence.
5. Secretary's Report.
6. Churchwarden's Report (if any).
7. Treasurer's Statement.
8. Accounts for payment.
9. Envelope Secretary's Report.
10. Parish Roll Secretary's Report.
11. Report of Grounds Committee.
12. Report of Committee re.....
- 13.
14. (Other items of various kinds)
15. General Business.

(Printed copies of this Agenda, with notice of meeting attached, are obtainable from the publishers, "Perparrec Roll Systems".)

Re Apologies. These should if possible be in writing, though this will depend on the standard set by the Vestry; it would check carelessness. Failure to send some apology for absence should be regarded as a discourtesy to the Rector and Vestry. The apologies, if acceptable, should be formally "received" by a proper motion.

Re 4 — Correspondence. This should all be read through first and then formally "received": such as is "received" will be discussed and dealt with in some appropriate way. Letters, accounts and documents generally should be brought in a light card folder, large enough to contain them **opened out**. A document is normally far more accessible kept in this way rather than in the envelope in which it arrived.

Re 5 — Secretary's Report. An alert Secretary with at least a month of parish life behind him may have several things which should be formally brought to the notice of the Vestry for their information and either commendation or correction. A special effort by the Choir might well be noted: some particular problem arising from the Football Club should not be allowed to drift until serious trouble arises.

Re 6 — Churchwardens' Report. This should be expected: it should indicate at least the condition of the parish buildings and bring under notice the need for certain repairs and painting before

they get out of hand. Especial attention should be given to the Rectory or Vicarage, which suffers serious neglect where the Rector mistakenly hesitates to bring its needs forward until finally a huge expenditure has to be contemplated. The wardens should insist as far as possible on a periodical examination of interior and exterior of the Rectory — at least annually before the Annual Meeting of parishioners.

Re 9 — The Weekly Offering Secretary's Report. How many Envelope systems simply drift into uselessness because no proper interest is shown by the Vestry itself? The Envelope Secretary should at each meeting present a statement showing at least —

1. Average weekly envelope total for month and compare it with last year's figure.
2. Total number of Envelope subscribers at beginning and at end of the month, with the corresponding figure for last year.

He should indicate any special difficulty and how others can assist. It should be the aim of every parish ultimately to finance all maintenance expenses from the offerings of members pledged to give weekly to their Church. Financial dependance on spasmodic attendance is unsound financially and spiritually.

Re 10 — Parish Roll Secretary's Report. This refers primarily to the fluctuating roll of all persons nominally "C of E."; not merely to the Roll of Communicants, or Electors. Such an official parish record, kept by a lay officer, is not made available by some parishes yet effective evangelism requires it. (See Section 5.)

Re 12-14. These items will be gleaned by reference to the previous minutes and from current events known to the Secretary.

THE MINUTES.

The official record of the meetings should be brief yet inclusive of all relevant facts. Generally discussions are less important for record than are decisions ultimately made. The style of writing up the minutes will depend on the individual, but it is not necessary to record mover and seconder of every formal motion. It matters little normally who moved that the Minutes be confirmed or the Correspondence received. On the other hand decisions which are the outcome of long discussions need a record of mover and seconder too, in case of later questioning. The amount of intermediate discussion, and whether lost motions should be recorded is a matter for individual decision and Vestry guidance, but Minutes can be overburdened with unimportant detail. One most important rule frequently overlooked is the use of the margin. This should be at least 1 in. wide on the left of the page and in it should be put headings, or some word which indicates what is being recorded in that portion of the page. The following, for example, might appear in the margin column as you glance down the page. **Minutes.**

Apologies. Correspondence. Reports. Re Tennis Club. Rule re Hall hours. Architect's Report. Complaint re noise.

The purpose is to assist any search of the minutes which has later to be made, perhaps in response to a question at a subsequent meeting.

2. The Treasurer.

The recognised function of a Treasurer is to keep a record of moneys — the Secretary normally handles the money but in most parishes the Treasurer often does both. It is not unknown for this to be left to Rector or Vicar — a serious dereliction of duty by the other Church Officers. It goes without saying that some form of receipt should be given for all moneys received by the Treasurer. The Vestry book should be initialled for offerings (see note) and separate receipts granted for other amounts. He in his turn should insist on receipts for all outgoings. He will usually supply the Secretary with a small sum, by cheque, for petty expenses, say, e.g., £3, and from time to time the Secretary will give an account of his petty expenses and be given a cheque for the total spent, thus restoring his fund to £3 again. The out of pocket expenses of the Rector or Vicar will be similarly provided for. In this way the Treasurer makes his bookkeeping simple, for everything he himself pays out is by cheque.

A CASH BOOK.

To keep his record, all the book needs is two columns, one on the left page for "Receipts" (let us call it column A); one on the right page for "Payments" made by him (call it column B).

Sometimes you see many more columns but always columns A and B will be there and you could rub out the others without affecting the bookkeeping. The others are there to give more detail and are extremely valuable though not essential. Supposing you receive money from important sources, say, Offerings (see note), Donations, Rent, and also in sundry small ways, then you *could* rule four other money columns alongside A and after entering the Sunday offerings in column A you would also put them in column 1. Donations go in column A and also in column 2. Rent in column A and then in column 3. Any other amounts in column A and column 4. At the end of the month you could add up column 1 and find quickly your total offerings for the month and so on. Not only so, you get a check on your addition because if the totals of column 1 (Offerings), 2 (Donations), 3 (Rent), and 4 (Sundries) are all added together, it should equal column A exactly. It's good to total it up each month as a check and then at the end of the year you have not only a record of your total receipts (in column A) but all the details are ready in the other columns, while one checks

up with the other. The same thing can be done on the "Payments" side: here when you are used to it, you might like more columns, but always there will be column B and always all the rest added together will equal column B. Try it out for yourself on a piece of paper. At the end of the year columns A and B (i.e., the important ones) will be "balanced". If A (Receipts) is the larger total then the amount required (i.e., the "balancing" amount) will be added to B to make them both equal and the same amount put in the "A" column of the next page, because this represents the amount of cash left over with which to start the new period. If the opposite is true (meaning you have been borrowing from the bank) the process is reversed. (You will realise that this "balance carried forward" must be allowed for in comparing the totals of columns 1, 2, 3 and 4 with column A, etc.)

There can be no doubt that Church books should, where possible, be kept on the rules of ordinary double entry. Where this is done Treasurers without the knowledge must seek the advice of a helpful Accountant; indeed, this would be a wise move even though the simpler method is followed — there are many who would gladly assist if your Diocese has not yet made provision for the instruction of Parish Treasurers.

Note re "offerings". The word Offertories is often wrongly used here. The offertory is the part of the Communion Service in which the offerings are collected and then, together with the bread and wine (also placed on the Holy Table at this point) all offered to God for His purposes and as tokens of the offering of ourselves.

THE MONTHLY STATEMENT.

This statement to the Vestry can be a very confusing mass of figures. If, as so often happens, it includes up to 20 headings, perhaps giving totals from the beginning of the year, and read out at the meeting, it will mean nothing to three-quarters of the Vestry at least; it is bad enough if all have a cyclostyled copy. The Vestry must first decide what method it wants. Here are several:—

Method 1. A statement showing the cash balance at the beginning of the month and a summary of the receipts on the right side with expenditure and balance of cash held at the close of the month on the left side (the balances would be on reversed sides if the account is overdrawn).

Method 2. A similar statement for the period from the beginning of the year to the end of the preceding month.

Method 3. This plan is easy for the average vestryman to follow and gives practically all that is needed.

STATEMENT AS AT 22nd SEPTEMBER, 1946.

Net Balance as at 25th August, 1946 £119 12 4

RECEIPTS.

Collections 46 12 4

Donations

Ground Improvements £6 0 0

Parish Paper 2 0 0

8 0 0

Rent of Hall 3 7 6

Missions

A.B.M. 10 15 1

H.M.F. 14 12 2

25 7 3

Trust Funds

Church Heating 11 0 6

Food for Britain 1 10 9

New Vestry 10 0 0

Debt Reduction Fund 5 12 0

C.E.M.S. 1 0 0

Choir Boys 1 0 0

Carter Memorial 3 0 0

Unexpended amounts b/fwd.

25th August 169 10 8

202 13 11

£405 13 4

EXPENDITURE.

Food for Britain £7 0 11

A.B.M. 10 15 1

H.M.F. 43 17 7

C.E.M.S. 1 0 0

Debt Reduction Fund 5 12 0

£68 5 7

Present Cash Balance £337 7 9

ACCOUNTS TO BE PASSED FOR PAYMENT.

Stipend £29 3 4

Trav. Expenses 2 3 4

Repairs 4 0 0

Organist 4 6 8

Cleaner 28/9/46 4 0 0

Church Heating 55 7 0

Dioc. B. Soc. 2 3 5

Parkinson &

Brooks 3 11 10

Gas 0 4 0

Postage (Sec.) 0 6 0

M.M.B.W. 4 19 2

Fraser & Morpet 4 17 6

£115 2 3

TRUST FUNDS IN HAND.

Food for Britain 2 14 0

Temple Day 51 6 1

Kerb 17 2 11

Ground Improve-

ments 13 3 0

Vicar's Lit. Fund 3 11 0

Choir Boys 1 10 6

Hall Rents 24 6 6

H.M.F. 9 3 8

Carter & Taylor

Mem. Fund 7 1 0

£129 18 8

£245 0 11

NET CREDIT BALANCE £92 6 10

Method 4. It is possible to present merely a brief summary along this line, e.g.,

Cash on hand at beginning of month £28

Add offerings, etc., received for month 46 (See Statement)

£74

Deduct expenditure for month 51 (See Statement)

£23

Cash Balance at end of month

Deduct Trust funds held

(i.e., Missions, etc.) £4

A/cs. due but unpaid 7

(See Statement)

Proportion of Interest,

Rates and other ac-

cruing liabilities to

date 16

£27

Add, Hall Hire due but not re-

ceived 2

25

True Balance of General Funds (Debit) £2

<i>Bank Reconciliation</i>	
Bank Balance	£29
Deduct Cheques drawn but not presented	£9
Add Donation not yet banked	3
	6
	£23

The item "True Balance" gives the information which is most desired by the ordinary Vestryman, namely, the relation of their cash position to the liabilities known and those to be anticipated. At the same time the Treasurer should always have at hand a fuller statement for reference in case any items of expenditure require closer examination; while in addition a comparison with the same period last year is always useful. This latter information is best given by a simple line graph, if the Treasurer or an assistant can compile one. Most Vestrymen soon come to understand them if they are limited to single ideas — too many lines on the one graph confuse.

NOTES. *This relates to all 4 methods.*

- Where a Budget has been previously prepared the actual figures could be accompanied by the corresponding "budget" figure aimed at.
- Certain moneys are "trust" moneys received to pass on to some other fund; these should be clearly indicated or shown in a separate part of the statement in whatever method is followed.
- Whichever method is used provision should be made to show how moneys not yet paid out and those due but not received affect the cash balance at the end of the period.
- A parallel column showing either the corresponding figure for last year or the relevant figure from the "budget" is sometimes useful.

BUDGETING FOR THE YEAR.

There can be no doubt as to the value of this approach to the parish finance.

The common procedure is to await the income offered, according to the weather Sunday by Sunday, and then as its insufficiency becomes apparent, make an appeal to the ladies to sell jam or pickles to help balance the accounts. We may bring ourselves up to date by substituting a Temple Day for the pickles, yet the improvement is more apparent than real as it still leaves us unable to do justice to

our full responsibilities and no "progress" can be expected in normal times by such lack of method. In practice it means that at the beginning of the year as we have no objective before us there is a minimum of "concern" about the income; as the year advances Vestrymen begin to worry, necessary repairs for example are postponed and we end the year struggling to meet (not the expenses and benefactions we should have made, but) the cut down items we grudgingly and fearfully passed for payment. No wonder the Church is often associated with the cheap and inadequate.

Under the Budget system the parish carefully reviews what ought to be done for parishioners, and what we ought to be pouring forth for outside efforts, and then right from the start obtains a weekly figure to be maintained; a figure known to the congregation, who should also be acquainted with the progress being made through the parish paper or notice board, and if necessary urged to face the need. No parish, it should be repeated, can do progressive work under hand-to-mouth catch-as-catch-can methods. Of course such a policy involves also a challenge to greater liberality on the part of parishioners, many of whom give splendidly, most of whom give thoughtlessly and in niggardly fashion. Who should give this challenge? The Parish Priest must do much for he has to help his people to see that true giving is an integral part of true religion: he must lead them firmly to see that the giving of our substance to the parish, to the Church at large and for deeds of charity wherever they arise is an integral part of the Christian life. The individual's giving must be planned and prayed about, and made a budgeted item like the Rent and the Interest on the house. Yes, he must do all these things, but what are the Treasurer, Wardens and Vestrymen for? The Clergy have their part in hammering home the *principle* of giving, but not so much in balancing this particular year's budget — that is primarily the laymen's job, yet how often it is shirked by the Vestry or Council! How often we men will not "talk about money"! as if there were something definitely immoral in recognising that L.S.D. and the Church had any connection with each other — or is it that we are not certain of our own liberality? Whatever the cause there is an important sphere in which Treasurer and all must play a stronger part.

THE PASSING OF ACCOUNTS.

The auditors (if they are carefully chosen primarily for their skill and fearlessness as auditors) will insist on all accounts being passed for payment, with the facts in detail being recorded in the minutes and the accounts initialled or signed by the Chairman. Statutory items previously fixed by the parish such as stipend and organist's salary need not be so passed; while missionary and other monies collected on behalf of extra-parochial work should be automatically passed on, there can be no moral justification for "hanging on" to such funds to save interest on overdrafts, etc.

SPECIAL APPEALS.

It is a principle of the utmost importance that normal maintenance expenses be met from regular weekly offerings, etc., while moneys raised from special appeals and certainly from bazaars and entertainments are reserved for special purposes. Where the occasion demands a definite appeal, the Treasurer will be at pains to ensure that this is thoroughly organised and not made a half-hearted hope for help. The character of the need will determine whether it must be a challenge to the worshippers or to parishioners generally: if it be to the larger field it is essential that the expense of good literature be incurred, and that thorough planning, preparation, issue and follow up be assured. Careful zoning, careful personal addressing, careful folding and careful follow up of 90% of the people will be essential, and if the cause is worthy results will be achieved.

STIPENDS, ETC.

It is claimed by Trade Union officials that rises in salaries and wages are due to their watchful activities. When one realises how occasionally trade unionists on vestries can go along oblivious to the fact that the real value of the stipends of organist, parish priest, etc., is steadily decreasing one can readily understand the claim. It is well for the Church that the clergy generally are so absorbed in their work: perhaps the real burden of parochial forgetfulness falls on their wives, but it undoubtedly robs the ministry of laymen unwilling to condemn their families to share that burden. The Treasurer and the Wardens especially need to be alert to this need.

Closely related is the growing burden of clerical (desk) work involved in a large town parish especially where an attempt is made to keep some sort of touch with all nominal Anglicans and not merely with the faithful. 1,000 and more families is very common under such circumstances: any professional or business man can understand what this involves, in time, and often in expense for postages, etc. Where the parish has this larger view of its mission full or part-time clerical assistance is not unreasonable if adequate voluntary workers are not available. The more progressive the parish priest, the greater the demands on time and expense involved; while the more the burden of stimulating giving is left to his initiative, the less likely he is to mention his own personal needs. It is not unknown for the Vicar to have to provide the payment for a "locum" during his holiday out of his own pocket. With alert office-bearers these things would be corrected.

3. The Churchwarden.

Much could be said about the Church Wardens, for most of the responsibility for the material things of the parish rests on them. The dignity of their office needs to be restored, perhaps the fuller use being made of the traditional Church Wardens staff is a step in the right direction. The chief purpose here is to remind holders of this office of their responsibility for maintenance of the fabric of the Church, Hall and Rectory. Often it is not until something falls or slips or complaints are made that damage is recognised; large expenditures are required when a "stitch in time" would have saved. It would possibly save many a worry if it were a statutory obligation, first, to advise the Annual Meeting (and the Diocesan Registrar) that in the preceding month a detailed examination of the interior and exterior of all parish property had been made, and secondly, to furnish a written report on each separate building involved. The present "general" requirement is not specific enough. It is unfair to the property, it is unfair to the wife of the parish priest, who will not beg for repairs to the Rectory, it is unfair to many a new incumbent whose first official task is to raise a couple of hundred to fix up the house. It is not sufficient to ensure that repairs and maintenances are undertaken, good Wardens will require that only the best work and materials are expended on the parish property. They are custodians acting on behalf of the whole Church, not merely for the local congregation or the present generation. Their influence can prevent the disfigurement of buildings by cheap memorials in windows or walls and, with the incumbent, provide a bulwark against ill-advised schemes sentimentally supported by people who forget that mere names on walls can mean nothing in later years. Where Wardens have made a study of the history of their parish they are in a better position to take a long range view of their responsibilities.

Mention has elsewhere been made of the necessity for subsidiary bodies providing an annual account of their affairs. The good name of the Church and the future reactions of young people are affected by the conditions under which the societies work; to ensure that their affairs are correctly ordered is a duty in which the Churchwardens have a share. It is not healthy to have organisations which work under the name of the parish acting in complete independence: their finances are subject to the Warden's scrutiny. Churchwardens should be at pains to make themselves acquainted with the provisions of the relevant Diocesan Act which governs their important work.

PARISH RECORDS.—No reference to the Wardens' responsibilities would be complete without mention of the duty for ensuring the safe and intact preservation of the various records of the parish life. In particular adequate provision should be made for the safe custody of the Registers, Preacher's Books, and Minute Books. It is difficult to over-estimate the value for students of

English History of such century-old documents maintained by their churches, but well maintained books have frequently a more immediate use. A suitable chest or strongroom should be secured for the purpose.

Similar care is required in retaining plans, legal documents, etc., for which a later generation of Wardens and people may have need. Wardens must insist that such be placed in a recognised safe place and not made subject to the idiosyncrasies of Secretaries and church officers for the time being. We are custodians for generations yet to be.

4. The Envelope Secretary.

Weekly envelope schemes can be very futile things, and yet they should be a most valuable way of stimulating regular and thoughtful giving. Like everything else, systems don't work themselves, much depends on the competence and earnestness of the secretary. There are several plans: perhaps the most satisfactory are those which require no promise regarding the amount given — merely a pledge each week to set aside something thoughtfully considered. The Church is not really concerned with the amount, no one but the individual is the judge of that; but the Church has a right to claim a weekly offering and to ask that each carefully review his means before giving. Much of the Envelope Secretary's original task will be directed towards showing that all must co-operate with him in his work. Having compiled his list of present members he will constantly seek to extend it. The Rector and Roll Secretary will help him compile a list of potential members: some he will contact himself but at each Vestry meeting he might well produce a number of cards each bearing two names and addresses (near each other) giving one card to each Vestryman, with the request that he call on each of the two during the month and report the result at the next meeting. New members of the congregation will also be discovered and visited by similar means. The Envelope Secretary's Report and work should occupy a prominent place on the Agenda. It should follow somewhat on the lines indicated earlier in this pamphlet. Once Vestrymen generally start avoiding all responsibility the system might well be ended as unlikely to play any part either in the task of training our people to regular giving or of contributing materially to the improvement of parish finance. Much too will depend upon proper contact with those tending to fall away. An indication of the regularity of the member's response is obtained if a careful record is made of each envelope received, though not necessarily of the "amount" in it: (Parishioners should be "trained" to return each one, e.g., a 10/- note intended to cover the last four weeks should be accompanied by the four envelopes.) They can (and normally should) be advised of any week missed by means of a carefully and nicely worded printed slip. This should

be done if possible monthly, and certainly quarterly, say, immediately after the second Sunday of the following month. To allow people to drift many weeks both helps to confirm the habit and makes it hard to catch up. Again each month should be treated separately; having reminded for January shortage take no subsequent notice if these still are unreturned, no further reference should be made to it in February's note (if one is also required for that month). Envelope Secretaries sometimes shrink from this task, but surely without sufficient reason. All who join should first have been made aware of the practice and the very basis of the scheme is the setting aside of something *each* week. Some will value the reminder; the young people at the beginning of the Christian life will often need it if their training in this habit is to be effective; none can justifiably take umbrage at receiving the customary reminder. There will be cases where the Secretary realises that no such note is required; while he will be alert to recognise that a miss of three or four Sundays may mean sickness and take steps to enquire if a visit from the Rector might not be more to the point. Indeed, consultation with the parish priest from time to time is important for it is futile to be sending notes to a defaulter who is spiritually sick or drifting. Often therefore a visit from a Vestryman might replace the note, he may then discover that the ministry of the clergy must temporarily replace concern for envelopes. In a word, we need planned machinery but must beware of becoming mechanical — cash is subsidiary to souls, yet let us not hesitate to seek the supply of material needs.

The issue of envelopes each quarter calls for planned common-sense, they should be available at least two Sundays prior to the new period, while any envelopes unclaimed by the first Sunday should be delivered or posted before the next. In this connection we must beware again of the "pennywise and pound foolish" principle and realise that certain expenses are inseparable from any serious work: to try doing everything on the cheap is the surest way to cheapen the Church. Nicely printed envelopes, with all literature of a good attractive type and paper will more than repay the slightly higher expenditure it may involve. All good business firms seek to avoid waste but cheapness in print is not one of their economies; they know its effect is bad. The office demands the best service from an alert Churchman anxious to forward the Kingdom of God; with vision too to see that the primary object of the envelope plan is to train Christians in the habit of regular thoughtful giving to God's work. That is why he will secure the membership of those already regular and thoughtful, for only so can he hope to rose in those who are neither. It needs the best that he can give but that is true of all Christian service, nothing less is required of any of us.

5. The Parish Roll and its Secretary.

It is here contended that a properly kept "Official" Parish-Roll supporting an adequate system of Household or District Visitors is essential to the task of keeping the Church in touch with the masses outside the regular congregation. It is an important service for an intelligent layman, and this booklet offers guidance to one new to such work.

The "parochial system", under which the Diocese is divided into smaller units, or "parishes", each under the direction of a "parish priest" has been a characteristic of the Church of England for well over 1,000 years. In 678 AD Archbishop Theodore divided the land into Dioceses, which in their turn became divided into parishes each with a church building for worship and a clergyman (usually a priest) to lead, to teach the Faith, to administer the Sacraments, and to minister to the needs of the people. There was, of course, only one Church so that all the people were "C. of E." every citizen was part of his responsibility; in those days too, there would often be less than 100 houses to look after (for centuries parishes of less than 200 families were common); the people seldom moved from house to house, much less from one parish to another; there weren't any Boys' or Girls' Societies, no Mothers' Union or Sunday School; in fact, the work of the parish priest was as different from these days as modern industry is from that of even 200 years ago.

The parish priest then knew all his people and their homes for it was easy to keep contact under such conditions. His parishioners in their turn knew him and because so few could read or write were dependent upon him for many a little thing. But today the duties are far more complex, people come and go, amidst the crowded streets of our towns, unknown to all but their nearest friends, and when they move in seldom do they make any effort to report their hidden presence to the busy parish priest responsible in the name of the Church for their spiritual oversight. So different, indeed so impossible is the task to one or even two pairs of hands that some have despaired of the system itself, though clearly there is nothing adequate to replace it. Yet the problem partly arises from the slowness with which the Church has adjusted itself to change: much more slowly than have our other activities, in which we have now evolved new ways of dealing with the new situation. The knowledge that fresh difficulties have been created should not blind us to the fact that those very difficulties are accompanied by additional facilities capable of being turned to the Church's service. For example, the increased and varied capabilities of town trained laymen, combined with the shorter working week, make available a source of spiritual energy which is scarcely being touched. Whereas we shall not fail to pray and work for a larger number of laymen to volunteer for the ordained Ministry, and certainly endeavour more sincerely to supply the moneys necessary for a more adequate train-

ing of ordinands, we shall seek to harness more effectively the abundant latent lay energy and train it for parochial service. Above all, an increase in the number of men and women seeking to contact the non-worshipper is necessary, together with a full understanding of this work. How are we otherwise to convince these people that the Church cares two straws about them? Nearly one-third of the houses in each parish will be "C. of E." and people come and go continually, yet undoubtedly we can keep the Church constantly in touch with these people if we systematise our work and devote to God even a portion of the thought and methods we take for granted in business enterprises. The key to the whole situation is the Parish-Roll Keeper or Secretary; a post which demands the services of one of the most alert of your parishioners desirous of serving his Lord.

That every good parish priest compiles a roll of parishioners known to him most laymen are aware: that it seldom includes anything like 30% of the houses in the area the parish priest is painfully conscious. He knows that with all this coming and going, and his own varied duties he cannot alone hope to discover all, and many go unfed; baptised, yes, and maybe confirmed members of the Church of England who for reasons beyond his control are year by year ignored. If he has organising ability he will plan some district visiting scheme and something more be achieved: if he is not so gifted, nought is done. If only the laity of the parish recognised their part this work would be independent of the special organising capacity of the Rector. The parish would keep a permanent Parish Household Roll (additional to the Rector's personal book) and with a trained alert layman responsible for its maintenance the difficult task of keeping it up to date would be accomplished.

Having sought out and finally found the Churchman ready to so serve he will be given such information as is available. He will compile a list of all the known "C. of E." families in each street and prepare a suitable system card for each household. "The Perparrec Roll Systems" now sell suitable street sheets and cards for this purpose. In conference with the parish priest a number of small areas will be mapped out and the whole parish set to work to find all the other "C. of E." people living in the parish: this information too, will be duly added to the records.

The real task then commences, namely, that of completing the household information as opportunity offers and keeping the roll up to date as a reliable record of every Church of England family despite the continued changes.

The Household Card. The household cards (one for each family), to be used to the best advantage should be arranged in a system box alphabetically according to surname. When completed they will give the names of each member of the family and where

possible the year of birth (to indicate whether a child, youth or adult is involved). It will at least show whether each is baptised and confirmed. It could show if any parochial office has been held but it should not be overloaded with detail of merely passing interest. The "Perparrec" card shows what is normally required and by being in two colours aids indexing. To obtain a full record for every card will normally prove next to impossible, yet this should be the continued objective. When the District Visitors use a report form similar to the Perparrec type much information can be gleaned from them, indeed that form specially contemplates the possibility of there being a Parish-Roll Secretary. Newcomers, removals, births, and much other detail will come in from alert visitors. Again, once a quarter the Registers of Baptism, Burials and Confirmation (Confirmees) should be examined. The Secretary will certainly ask for the loan of every Sunday School Roll, and the names of the various Society members, all of which can help him to discover particulars about the youth; but where the Sunday School keeps a proper record of new scholars he will also get this information for his records and may be able to pass on a new name to the clergy and the District, or Household Visitor. By close contact with all the organisations his records will steadily grow. In many parishes the richest source of information would be a rough "day book" in which the clergy jot down any new fact worth permanent record. The value of such a book is further enhanced if down one side of each page 4 or 5 narrow columns are ruled, on which can be indicated by the persons concerned that the relevant entry has been made in (a) The Vicar's pocket book; (b) the Parish's Street List; (c) the Household Card; (d) the District Visitors' Book and so on, where such is required. Obviously matters of a secret character could not be shown, though the parish priest might give the page of his personal remarks book on which any reference could be found by his successor.

News of the coming and going of families will also be gleaned from these sources, but in addition he may be fortunate in being able through some business channel to gain lists of new residents. Once a year he must secure the latest copy of the big Street Directory (e.g., Sands & McDougall's) and comparing it with that for the preceding year note down all changes with a view to making sure that no newcomer has been overlooked. The Visitors will probably be able to check up on this list, or parishioners generally may co-operate as an annual task, for in some parishes the changes may be very numerous.

By such methods, supplemented by whatever local aids are available, the parish has continually at its disposal a reasonably accurate record of all those for whom the Church is responsible in that place. It will be available for several purposes but most of all as a means of strengthening the ministry of Christ to the careless and the lapsed with whom it is so difficult to maintain contact in

these days of moving populations: indeed this very movement makes it easier for men in strange surroundings to fall away. So essential to the real purpose of the Church is such an activity that the post should rank as high as that of Secretary or Treasurer to the parish. It is not too much to hope that the responsibility may one day, with that of Missionary Secretary, rank as an official appointment required in every urban parish.

Until that day comes it will remain for the congregations which view seriously their responsibilities to non-worshipping parishioners to seek out a Churchman of zeal and ability, one able to create and maintain the records necessary for sustained contact with these people. This is the primary objective of the Roll Secretary's endeavours, as well as providing for the new incumbent and for the many purposes which arise a source of necessary information regarding the members of the Church. The work challenges the best that both the man and the parish can give.

6. Train Your Successor.

Church workers should never forget that one of the first duties of any leader is to find his successor so that when circumstances should compel handing over responsibility to another, one capable of following on and familiar with the task is available. Each office-bearer would do well so to work that others have some insight into what he is doing: it is far too common to find flourishing parish work fail because the successful leader or organiser has kept his work entirely to himself and has not been at pains to see that another is at hand to take up where he has left off.

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