A Search-Light

Theme on
The Covenanter Budget

1920-1921

Office of Forward Work
Reformed Presbyterian Church
1300 W. 7th Ave.
Topeka, Kan.

'He should be my first and last. Not ask my department is

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THE COVENANTER
BUDGET

The Synod of 1928 unanimously adopted the Budget System as a means of raising the church's income. The system is designed to make it clear how much money is needed and how it is to be used. The principle of the system is that each member of the church is responsible for his own support, and that the church is responsible for the support of its work.

DEFINITION
The Budget System is a plan whereby the people make their contributions weekly into a common treasury, out of which the contributions are divided among the church's departments according to the proportions designated by Synod. Each department presents its needs and plans for the coming year. Synod decides the amount each one should receive. These amounts, added together, make up the Synodical Budget. Instead of taking a collection for one scheme on one Sabbath, and for another scheme on another Sabbath, the collections every Sabbath are to be for the budget and each scheme will get its share of the contributions.

PRINCIPLE
The principle on which the budget rests is the Oneness of the Church. There ought to be no rivalry nor friction between the departments of the church's work, because I am connected with one department is no reason why I should be unsympathetic or unfriendly toward another. Nor should I for this reason think my department is the more important.

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The Church is the body of Christ. A living body is always a marvel of unity. I could, of course, get along without my little finger if I could without my arm, but the arm or the body never be complete with the little finger gone. I do not cut any muscle to feel the arm or any other one of my members, I try to feel the body and every member of flesh is distributed proportionately to all members of the body.

When I contribute my money to the Church it is not to help the Seminary member or the Wm. Wilson member or the Home Mission member, but it is to help the Church, the body of Christ. The proportion that flows out to the arm in greater than that to the finger, of course, but every member is equally member.

The following statement appeared in the Christian Nation of July 22, 1888:

"For the Church is not one denomination but many. If the Board of Church Elders shall say, because I am a member of the Board, I am not of the Church, is it therefore out of the Church? And if the President Board shall say, because I am not a College Board, I am not of the Church; is it therefore out of the Church? Then the Board of Church Elders of the Pennsylvania Synod, those members of the Church who are designated by their appointment to the Board of Church Elders, and the President Board on the other hand, are the Synod of Pennsylvania. If the church were the Synod, it were not necessary that the President Board, on the other hand, should be any Synod of the Church.

"But now let us consider the Synod of the Church, and that Synod which is designated by the Synod, but it does not include the Synod of the Church. And the Synod of the Church, and of the Synod of the Church, are..."
Those who do not designate their contributions or bequests, but turn them into the general budget will understand that their offerings are applied proportionately to those schemes that are in greatest need of funds.

Appointments

Literary Fund—This is used to print the literature of the Church, such as, the Missionary of Ypsilanti, Bulletin, Testimonials, etc. The appropriation for this cause is $2,000.

Aged Ministers—The salaries paid to ministers are insufficient for them to provide for the needs of declining years. The Government provides a pension for her disabled officers, Soldiers of the Cross as well as, widows of the flag are entitled to a comfortable support in their old age. Seven ministers last year received a small allowance from this fund. Total appropriated $2,000.

Widows and Orphans—Sometimes a minister dies, leaving his family with no means of support. When a man who has faithfully served the Church in the ministry on a meager salary passes away, will the Church see that his dependents do not suffer? Ten were helped from this fund last year. Among whom was divided $2,000. The appropriation this year is $2,000.

Student Aid—The Church is calling for young men to enter the Seminary. Some who might otherwise go are in need for early College education and have no means with which to get a theological training. They are aware that there will be little opportunity of paying back debt after they are in the ministry. To meet this situation, the Church is helping the Seminary students in a financial way. Last year four students received an average of $800.00 each. This is a wise investment. Total appropriated to this cause $2,000.

Aged Peoples' Home—This institution furnishes a home for many veterans in their old age. There are twenty-five inmates this year. This is a valuable property to preserve, both for its service to the aged and for its material worth. Its total assets are estimated at $82,775. Total appropriated $2,000.

Theological Seminary—We depend upon this institution to turn out our future ministers. The Seminary needs to be made attractive. There is a movement on foot to seek more modern and comfortable quarters. For the needs of this year Ypsilanti appropriated $4,000.

Jewish Mission—The Gospel reached us through the Jew. We are committed to give the Gospel back. There are 100,000 Jews in Philadelphia where our mission is located. We have a good building and two fully equipped workers who labor principally with the women and children. The workers made 812 personal visits and held 35 personal interviews with brokers at the mission last year. Many children come to the mission to read the Bible. Miss Roberts also gives instruction in English to those who wish to learn our language. The appropriation for this cause is $3,000.

Southern Missions—563 pupils were enrolled last year at Knox Academy, 117 at East Selma and 53 at Pleasant Grove, making a total of 737 under instruction. 608 girls were instructed in sewing and cooking and 43 boys were taught manual training. Two women are employed as city missionaries. Twenty workers are employed. Total appropriated $2,000.
stand building up of a native church. On January 1st, there were 365 communicants. 27 communica
tions were dispensed during the year. There are 12 chapels, 11 regular prayer meetings, 2 Bible classes and 2 Sabbath schools with an average att
endance of 261. This mission has a theological seminary and the return from our work there is one of the bright hopes of our Church work. The apportionment for these fields is $105,000.

This sums up the departures of the Church's work. All are necessary. No one can say to another, "I have need of you." All should sit perfectly into one body with all its parts working harmoniously together.

**DIVISION**

The total budget of the Church is $230,500.

This amount was divided by Synod among the presbyteries as follows:

- Central Canada: $230,500
- Illinois: $250,000
- Iowa: $174,000
- Kansas: $40,500
- New York: $25,000
- Ohio: $14,500
- Pacific Coast: $10,750
- Philadelphia: $25,000
- Pittsburgh: $20,000
- Rochester: $5,000

How many Presbyteries will be over the top with their share of the budget before next Synod?

Upon Synod's recommendation each presbytery appointed a committee to apportion the over-

This division is as follows:

"The Presbyteries apportion to the congregations their share, taking into account their past contributions, their

nearer, their future in God's service, and the amount of


tithes in each connection; the congregations having the

sadder interest of either being given a correspond-

ingly larger proportion of the income in the budget."  

These committees have done their work and

have sent in the congregational apportionments.  

Posters have been sent to each congregation stating

the same suggested by the presbyterial com-

mittee. The work is new. Mistakes have doubt-

less been made in the general distribution. Some

one's proportion may be too large, while the pro-

portion of another may be too small. But the

committee did the best they could. In another

year we will be able to learn of any inequalities

and make such distribution as will be equitable to

all.

**CONGREGATIONAL METHODS**

The important question for congregations now

is: Which is the best plan for raising our share of

the budget? We shall attempt to outline the sys-


tem which is nearest ideal. It consists of the fol-

lowing factors:

**Stewardship**

All we have belong to God. The dime we spend for candy and chewing gum is His as well

as the dime we give in the collection, and is no

less a trust. Every man is a steward and must

give an amount of all that is entrusted to him.

**The Title**

God's ownership and man's stewardship ought to

be acknowledged by setting apart for the exten-

sion of Christ's Kingdom a proportion to be set

less than the tenth of each net income. The

amount to be tithed is the total income minus

the cash outlay in producing it. In the ideal sys-


tem, the members of the congregation will be

tithers. If all were tithers our budget would be

over-estimated.

**A Single Budget**

When a congregation learns its share of the synodal budget, it will add the amount of its

congregational expenses and hold the single bud-

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the budget. This year it will be the latter part of October. This is an important part of the system. It not only impresses each member with his or her personal responsibility, but gives an opportunity for clearing away difficulties and for giving the people a better understanding of the work.

This is the system that is nearest ideal. Where congregations prefer to keep home expenses and Synod's scheme separate it can be done without doing violence to the system.

**CONGREGATIONAL YEAR**

The Synodical year is April 20 to April 19. Most congregations make their year correspond to that of Synod. Some follow the calendar year and complete their reports on the thirty-first of December. It is highly desirable that congregations shall now follow the Synodical year. The budget covers the year ending April 20. All of the year's reports are based upon this calculation. Where congregations desire to continue the calendar year they can do so, but are asked to make their reports to Synod on the basis of Synod's year.

**OBJECTIONS**

A few objections worthy of consideration arise to the budget system of giving. We give here the ones most frequently raised.

1. "The budget is too large. There is a danger of discouraging the people."

   However large it may seem, the fact remains that less than half of our membership gives to be paying the tithe. After the budget has been fully authorized there will doubtless yet be unpaid tithes. We think our budget is not too large for a healthy church.

2. "It is too big a jump all at once."

   Not as big as it seems. In 1917-18 we gave for all purposes $33.40 per member. In 1918-19, $50.55, or an increase of $17.15. In 1919-20 we gave $62.85, or an increase of $12.30. For 1920-21 we
ask $5000 per member, or an increase of $4,311, which is only one-third as large as the increase of last year.

3. A man should depend on the Holy Spirit to guide him as to where his contributions should go.

Is it not as probable that one hundred and fifty men meeting in council and prayer for eight days should have the guidance of the Spirit in planning how our contributions could be made most effective? If the Spirit guided the Church in making the plan, will He likely guide us as individuals in a conflicting case?

4. There are some schemes to which I will not contribute.

In that event, mark where you want your contribution to go, and the treasurer will see that it does not apply to the scheme to which you object. The plan safeguards every man's conscience in this.

5. But though I give to a special cause, all my money will be contributing to the cause behind, and my special cause will not have the extra amount in the end.

Still, your money goes to the place you choose. You have full control of your own money, but you have no control at all. You may give $2,000 to the Southern Mission. Then if I should have $2,000 to give, I have the right to contribute to those departments which have been helped the least. My right is also the right of hundreds or thousands who may wish to contribute according to the regulations of the budget.

6. When I make a contribution, every dollar of it must go to the cause designated. Synodal's plan leaves part of it to other purposes, such as advertising.

Time, money must always go as designated. If I contribute to Gamea College, I expect my money to go to Gamea College. But there are many ways of expending it. It may be used for salaries and fuel and legitimate advertising, etc. The only thing I demand is that it be judiciously expended in furthering the interests of the College.

If I designate that it be used for salaries and nothing else, it would be misappropriating my money to use it for advertising or any other purpose. Your money must go wherever you say.

7. This plan takes away the form of special appeals.

Special appeals for special objects do increase the gifts to those objects. But the treasury is for such appeals to throw our system of giving out of balance. Our contributions may be measured by the strength of the appeal rather than by the needs of the case. The cause that is fortunate enough to be presented by a moving appeal may get more than its due share of the Lord's tithe. I should contribute all of my gift to the Lord's work even if there were no appeals. The appeal has its value and should not be neglected, but to levy an giving balance it should be made for the whole budget of the Church.

8. The whole plan is popular. It is forced upon the congregations whether they want it or not.

Not at all. It is not forced upon any. The congregation who will not accept it can still go on contributing in the old way. The member who objects to it can still mark his contributions. But Synodal thought this a better plan for financing the Church and submits it to the congregations. Presbyterians, Inc., no pope, but it is a rule of majority. The large majority, both in Synodal and in our congregations seem to favor this plan.

The Synodical Church has been making progress in her contributions from year to year. This year's budget calls for a small advance over the contributions of last year. The amount asked for is the amount actually needed to sustain our work. The present Synodal plan is not perfect in its details. There are bound to be some imper-fec-
this the first year. Any weakness that may develop this year we hope may be eliminated by next year.

It is the earnest hope that pastors and congregations will give the same unselfish, unselfish effort this year, that they will honestly endeavor to make their own share of the budget, and that they will be ready next year to suggest the things that will perfect the plan.

Lord, Thou hast given Thine all
For me!
What will I give, Lord,
For Thee?

DELBUR E. ELLIOTT,
General Secretary of the Forward Movement.