

A RURAL SURVEY OF COMMUNITY

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A rural survey of community by Ralph A. Felton

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RALPH A. FELTON

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OF COMMUNITY**



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OF _____ COMMUNITY

PREPARED IN OUTLINE

BY

RALPH A. FELTON

And Completed By

New York
MISSIONARY EDUCATION MOVEMENT
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PREFACE

The country pastor is increasingly demanding a method by which he may study his parish. The writer has been engaged for three summers in rural survey work with the Presbyterian Department of Church and Country Life. The method here presented is the result of the guidance and inspiration received from Dr. Warren H. Wilson.

RALPH A. FELTON.

New York, N. Y.

January 7, 1915.

A METHOD FOR MAKING A SURVEY OF A RURAL PARISH

I. WHY MAKE A SURVEY

A guide must have courage, vision, and initiative. But more than this he must know the road. Courage may lead over a precipice. Vision will help in seeing only the mountaintops. Initiative may lead along the wrong way. In seeking a guide the demand is for one who "knows the road." The country minister is the guide for his community. The "divine right of leadership" more than ever is offered to a rural pastor, but he must "know the road." He must be a leader out of present specific difficulties. He must not lead his people in a circle or along an old trail used by a preceding generation for another purpose. He can learn to know this road by making a survey of his community.

II. WHAT IS A SURVEY?

A social survey is a diagnosis of social institutions such as the family, the school, and the church, to learn of their specific needs with a view to prescribing a cure. It is not new. Before building a railroad a survey is made. A quack doctor may use one remedy for all diseases or a superstitious medicine-man may rely on an incantation to his god, but a modern physician makes a careful diagnosis or survey of each case before prescribing a remedy. The modern social guide makes a diagnosis of social institutions and calls it a social survey.

To be successful a survey must determine a plan for improvement in addition to discovering facts. The plan presented here is designed to give a method for obtaining facts, and in addition a method for using them in bettering the social institutions in a rural community.

III. HOW TO MAKE A SURVEY

We are told that at the conclusion of an address on "The New Agriculture" Booker T. Washington was spoken to by an old Negro farmer as follows: "I knows what you say is true, Mr. Washington, and I want to do what you say, but I don't know what to do fust." It is not the present plan to convince any minister that he should make a survey of his parish, but rather to help him in the method of making such a survey, to show him "what to do fust." He will need to (1) seek the coöperation of ministers of other churches in the community; (2) announce publicly the proposed survey and its purpose; (3) make a map of the community; (4) visit each home in the community, filling out copies of the family blanks which are given in the second part of this book; (5) add up or tabulate this information; (6) summarize the significant results as directed on pages 8 and following; (7) make and carry out plans for the improving of conditions in accordance with the discoveries and improvements suggested by the survey.

1. COÖPERATION WITH OTHER MINISTERS. If there is another church in the community its pastor should be urged to coöperate in the

survey. This coöperation affords many advantages. It will prevent denominational prejudices which might arise where the minister of one church calls on families of another denomination. Also while making the house-to-house canvass one minister can keep up the conversation, getting the information desired, while the other is writing it down on the blank. This will prevent the embarrassing pauses which otherwise would be necessary. After calling at each home much will be gained by talking over with the other minister the needs of each family while these needs are still vivid. In this way the unified plan for new work will be made while driving from one house to the next. Two ministers may believe heartily in church federation, but churches never federate until they do so around common needs. Such needs are discovered in a survey of this kind.

2. PUBLICITY WORK. Before beginning the survey a statement should be made in the local newspaper explaining the purpose of such a survey. An announcement similar to the following might be used:

"We the pastors of the Methodist and Baptist Churches are making some new and interesting plans for the betterment of the _____ community through our churches. We have arranged to make a survey of the entire community. Within the next three weeks we will visit every house in this community to talk over ways for improving conditions. We will ask you for suggestions for improving the work of the church and the school, and also for making better homes and better farms. We hope that all will coöperate in this new and interesting work.

"(Signed)

Pastor of Methodist Church.

"(Signed)

Pastor of Baptist Church."

3. MAPPING THE COMMUNITY. Dr. Warren H. Wilson defines a country community as follows: "A community consists of the land, people, cattle, property, roads, households, and institutions within a team haul of a given center." A map of the community to be surveyed should be made before the house-to-house visiting is begun. A suggested outline map appears on page 38. A pastor, before making a survey of a parish, should make a wall map similar to this one, only much larger. It should be at least three by four feet, and should record the details yielded by the survey. When completed, it should be placed on the wall in one of the rooms of the church or in the parsonage. The Post Office Department, Washington, D. C., publishes county maps on the scale of one mile to the inch, where complete county rural service has been established, and copies can be furnished at 20 cents each. Most of the counties already having complete rural service are in the eastern and central states. Remittance for these maps should be made by postal money order to the Third Assistant Postmaster General, Division of Finance, Washington, D. C. A list of the county maps will be furnished upon request. The church or churches should be placed near the center of the map. The map should be ruled off in squares, each square representing one square mile. A parish should extend as far in each direction from the church as the responsibility of that church extends. Around the outside boundary of the parish should be drawn double lines. If the roads and houses follow section lines the boundary of the parish should follow half-section lines to prevent confusion

in determining the area of the parish. In other words, the boundary of the parish should fall between roads, not along them. On the map should be located the villages, the roads, the railroads and trolleys, and the school-houses. The name of each of the above should be written near its symbol. The houses could be represented by small circles and should be located while doing the visitation work. To make more vivid the future field for the work of the church it is suggested that the circles be filled according to the church-membership of the family. Only those fifteen years old and over should be considered when filling in these circles. Where none of the family fifteen years old and over belong to the church use an open circle, where some belong fill part of the circle, where all belong fill all of the circle. The map when complete will show clearly to the workers in the church wherein lies their field for future evangelization. As members are brought into the church, these workers will rejoice in seeing the circles filled. In filling in the map the following signs should be used:

—	Road	○	House where none of the family is years old and over belong to church.
□	Village	◐	House where part of family belong.
+	Church	●	House where all belong.
Ⓢ	School House		
≡≡≡	Railroads and Trolleys		

4. TIME FOR MAKING THE SURVEY. It is not necessary for a new pastor to wait to begin the survey until certain "regular calls" have been made or church officers have been seen about "the regular work." This "regular work" should be combined with the survey, and the survey should be begun at once. The plan which has met with the best success is the spending of continuous time rather than one or two afternoons per week. A minister by working all day for four days per week should survey his entire parish in at least two weeks.

5. THE BLANK USED IN THE SURVEY. The blank suggested in the second part of this book has been used much and revised many times. It is now recommended for general use. It takes account of every person in the community, while church rolls take account only of the "ninety and nine."

In filling out this blank visit each house. Put a check (✓) for "there is" or "yes," and a plus sign (+) for "there is not" or "no."

When making a survey alone, some have written in the answers to the questions after finishing each visit. They found that the people expressed themselves more freely when their statements were not being written down while they were talking.

In filling out the blank avoid generalities as "few," "many," "a dozen or so," "good," "occasionally," "as often as possible." Generalities cannot be added in a column.

Write on the blank only the names of those members of the family who live at home.

Use a separate sheet for male or female help, also for "in-laws."

While making the house-to-house visits, take complete notes of interesting incidents or of plans for future work in the community.

Before making these house-to-house visits certain information can be written on each blank. For example (1) Write in the name of the com-