

Progress has dealt the rural church a stunning blow. Progress---better roads, consolidated schools, more convenient transportation, radio, daily newspaper delivery--- has left many rural churches gasping for life.

Nobody would wish to diminish the progress, any more than he would think of trading the family car for a surrey with fringe on top. The church must join the parade of progress if it is to regain its rightful place of first importance in the rural community and individual lives.

The world still needs the true-to-the-Bible preaching that attracted most farm families to the old-fashioned brush arbor, but brush arbor/<sup>today</sup> accomodations wont cause the world/to turn to the thing it needs most---the gospel of Christ.

Peop e are hungry for the old-time religion, but they want to get it in modern, attractive and comfortable surroundings.

The delapidated, rundown, unpainted church with a stove that wont heat is a poor indication to non-Christsians of what Christianity has to offer. Even Christians find it less attractive than a dozen or so competing activities.

The old-fashioned religion is just as good today as it ever was (and is needed just as much), but to assume that facilities that were good enough for grandfather are good enough for today is horse-and-buggy thinking. Grandfather wanted the best he could get for his church, and today's man and woman and boy and girl ~~man~~ demand the best that today has to offer.

Rural people are more prosperous than ever before. The argument that neat, comfortable churches can't be afforded is a subterfuge and evasion. Total cash receipts from farm marketings of crops, livestock and livestock products for Oklahoma for 1946 is repoted by the United States Department of Agriculture at \$498,909,000. From that figure your own estimate of what the rural churches should receive.

Many rural communities have no church services, or only occasional services, because contributions are too small to support a trained pastor living in the field. A pastor cannot support ~~himself~~ himself and family and maintain the necessary automobile on \$50 or \$100 a month. If you think he can, try it yourself.

Finances are not a legitimate excuse, though. Few rural communities could not afford a full-time adequately supported pastor if the Christian people living ~~in~~ there really wanted a strong church program.

Rural churches must interest their young people if they are to grow. Young people demand action. If they don't get ~~enough~~ interesting, inspirational programs in their ~~own~~ home communities, they are no longer bound to stay within their communities. They are easily attracted to nearby towns, with their ~~theaters~~, honkytonks and other questionable entertainments.

Church members who sit at home clutching their dollars and cherishing their memories are driving <sup>rural</sup> ~~the~~ young people to the towns and to <sup>the</sup> devil.

Active church leaders who recognize the needs of young people and supply the friendly fellowship and wholesome enjoyment that can be found in church activities are developing new leadership to help carry on the work of the church today and tomorrow.

As the young people develop, they should be given a voice in church government and added responsibility in the democratic New Testament church. They cannot be expected to put up with overbearing ~~man~~ domination and outdated attitudes by Deacon Pursestring, even though he may be the largest contributor and the most regular attendant.

Consolidated schools mean better educational opportunities for rural pupils. They ride farther, walk less and learn more. Perhaps the trend should be toward some sort of church consolidation. One strong church is better than two or three weak ones.

Most farm families can travel 15 miles in less time today than they could travel two miles 25 years ago. The rural church today must serve a larger area if it is to attract a sufficient number of members to support an active program, and to develop enough trained leadership to keep it moving.

The church must reach out farther, but the unchurched people are still there,

waiting for the gospel. Baptists can make their churches in rural communities what they ought to be, if they will simply wake up and act!

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# SOME STATISTICS CONCERNING OKLAHOMA'S RURAL AREAS

From the Bureau of the Census, United States Department of Commerce

	1945	1935	1925
Number of farms . . . . .	164,790	213,325	197,218
Approximate land area. . . . .	44,341,120	44,341,120	44,341,120
Proportion in farms. . . . .	81.6%	79.6%	69.5%
Acres of land in farms. . . . .	36,161,822	35,334,870	30,868,965
Average size farms in acres. . . . .	219.4	165.6	156.5
Value of land and buildings. . . . .	\$1,106,153,826	\$784,394,241	\$102,190,308
Average value per farm . . . . .	\$6,713	\$3,677	\$5,318
Value of livestock on farms. . . . .	\$206,952,141	\$85,002,988	\$102,190,308
Farm Population. . . . .	639,948	1,015,562	925,690
Average persons per occupied dwelling on farms. . . . .	3.67	4.43	not given

The following statistics are from the 1945  
Census of Agriculture only

## NUMBER OF PEOPLE LIVING ON FARMS

Boys under 14 years old, <del>maximum</del>	109,667
Girls under 14 years old, <del>maximum</del>	106,183
Men and boys over 14 years old, <del>maximum</del>	211,445
Women and girls over 14 years old, <del>maximum</del>	212,653

## ~~Maximum Reporting~~

### NUMBER OF FARMS REPORTING:

Running water. . . . .	27,914
No running water. . . . .	133,467
Electricity . . . . .	47,104
No electricity . . . . .	114,270
Radio . . . . .	122,448
Telephone. . . . .	41,101

### NUMBER OF FARMS REPORTING:

Tractor on farm . . . . .	60,945
Motor truck on farm . . . . .	40,910
Truck with no automobile. . . . .	19,183
Automobile on farm . . . . .	95,225
1.0 to 1.9 mi. to nearest all-weather road. . . . .	27,049
2.0 to 4.9 mi. to nearest all-weather road. . . . .	37,594