

A PROPOSAL FOR EXPANDING THE PROGRAM OF DUKE MEMORIAL METHODIST CHURCH  
TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A GROWING MEMBERSHIP

MARCH, 1965

BACKGROUND: After careful and prayerful work by many of the members of our congregation, by the Official Board of the church, by the Commissions of the church, by special study groups, and under the leadership of several of our ministers, Duke Memorial Methodist Church has been able to expand its physical facilities tremendously without being handicapped by a large and burdensome debt. We now have physical facilities unexcelled by any other church in our community and perhaps by no other church in our conference. We are aware, however, that physical facilities alone do not make a church.

Planning for expansion of the physical facilities of the church was originally begun in order that the program of the church could continue to develop. Plans were drawn and contracts were let not solely for a new plant but in order that God's work could be expanded. One of the strengths of our present physical plant is that it was planned with our needs for an expanding program in mind.

For many years our church staff consisted of a single minister assisted by a full time clerk-secretary and occasionally a student assistant. Approximately twenty years ago it became clear that we had need of a full time Director of Christian Education and a part time Church Visitor. We were fortunate to have had the services of some very capable people. Approximately nine years ago, after a series of short term appointments in this position, it became apparent that it would be desirable to have a full time Minister of Education. It was also recognized that the responsibilities of Senior minister for pastoral care was growing at a rate at which it was desirable to think in terms of an Associate Minister. The resignation of our Minister of Education approximately four years ago, and the expanding demands upon our minister made it desirable to combine the responsibilities of Minister of Education with that of Associate Minister. This was recognized at the time both by the Commission on Education and by the appropriate committees of the Official Board of the church to be a stop-gap measure.

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It seems to the membership of the Commission on Education that the time has come to add to our professional staff the third full time person, preferably a man in the position of Minister of Christian Education. Though the responsibility of the Commission on Education is primarily in the area of Christian Education it is most difficult to consider one part of the church's work without looking at the total program. We recognize that the expanding program in Christian Education has continued to use an increasing portion of the Associate Pastor's time and energies. The work related to Christian Education that he is doing is essential to the program of the church, but it prevents him from giving full service to those other programs generally considered to be more closely related to the responsibilities of an Associate Pastor.

With a large membership in a down town church, such as ours, the visitation responsibilities of the ministers are extremely great. Just to visit in every home represented by our membership once a year would require two home visits or more each day in the year. It normally requires five or six visits by laymen and the ministers for each new member family received into our church. The comfort and joy that, in times of sickness and sadness, have been brought to the hearts of our fellow members and friends by the visits of our ministers is surely God's work. No opportunity for such comfort to those in need should ever be lost because of other demands on the time of our ministers.

Counseling help for both old and young is an increasing need for a downtown church. Additional membership training classes for old as well as young are not now possible because of the demands that we place on our ministers. The success of any church is dependent upon the attention that can be given to the members of the church and through the leadership of our ministers we must keep in close contact with all our members and prospective members.

Above all, our ministers must have time to replenish themselves, spiritually, mentally, and physically and it seems clear to the Commission on Education that the only way that this can be done is by having on our staff a full time Associate

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Above all, our ministers must have time to replenish themselves, spiritually, mentally, and physically and it seems clear to the Commission on Education that the only way that this can be done is by having on our staff a full time Associate

Pastor. Therefore, we recommend that our Associate Pastor be relieved of the duties of a Minister of Education, and that a Minister of Education be secured to assume those duties.

It also seems clear that there are additional paths of service in the area of Christian Education that our church should undertake as we work through it to help bring God's Kingdom to earth. Even with the recognition of this and with the continuing conscientious efforts on the part of the lay workers of the church, only through professionally trained leadership and with God's help can these efforts be channelled to accomplish the greatest good.

I. WHAT WOULD A FULL TIME MINISTER OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DO?

In addition to giving leadership to the present programs in Christian Education, a full time Minister of Christian Education would be expected to give greater attention than is now possible, to the following five aspects of our program.

- a. Training of leadership.
- b. Development of new avenues of Christian Education with every age group of the church.
- c. Wiser use of time during Sunday morning - particularly for pre-school age group.
- d. Close contact with family groups of the Church School.
- e. Expansion of contact with all age groups during the week.

One of the principal needs which we see at the present time is for a much larger commitment of professional staff time to the recruitment and training of teachers and workers. Many fine prospective teachers for our Church School feel that they are not adequately prepared to undertake this assignment. Many of those who do undertake this responsibility indicate that they need more help! Leadership training classes need to be organized to provide training for as much as a year prior to assumption of full responsibility. We need to develop a pool of well trained and prepared men and women to permit our teachers to devote time periodically to renewal of their interests and skills.

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A second important area of concern is the development of new avenues of contact with all age groups of our church. As an example, the church has for some time been involved in the operation of weekday nursery and kindergarten classes. These should, if continued, be carefully integrated into the program of the church. They should involve opportunities for the religious and moral development of the children for whom we are responsible. The presence of a professionally trained Minister of Education should make the coordination of this program a more vital part of the program of the church.

A third concern has been for wiser use of the period of time on Sunday mornings when children were being cared for during the church hour. For several years there has been consideration of the possibility of development of an extended session in which the full period on Sunday morning could be used as a part of the educational program of the church. The development of such a program including the preparation of the necessary pool of teachers to staff such a program, the planning of what such a program would appropriately include, the encouragement of the congregation to accept such a program seems to require the attention of a professional well prepared for such work.

A fourth concern has been work with the parents of children in helping them to understand how they may live up to the responsibilities which they as church members assume for the religious and moral nurture of children in a rapidly changing society. An expanded program of Christian study for family groups is essential. Such work is time consuming and requires special preparation.

A fifth concern has been the expansion of the contact which our church has with its congregation both young and old throughout the week. Facilities such as ours should not sit idle, but more important is the fact that our people need the church all week. One of our leaders has said that if the church is going to compete with other social forces, through the use of Sunday alone, it may well be fighting a losing battle. We have many opportunities in such areas as after school

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recreation, church membership classes, discussion groups, special interest programs for older members of the church, work with boy scouts, girl scouts, and many others, but a key to all of these is coordination with the program of the church by one well prepared for this work and relieved of other time commitments which might restrict his activity.

II. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERSON WHO MIGHT FILL SUCH A POSITION?

It is important that the person who assumes the responsibility of helping our teachers develop more skill in teaching have a sufficient command of the skills involved in teaching to be of help. It is important that he know and be committed to the program of the Methodist Church. It is important that he be aware of the needs of our people. He must be able to command the respect of adults and youth and must have the affection of the children. It is important that he be a mature person.

III. WHY DOES THE COMMISSION ON EDUCATION RECOMMEND A MINISTER OF EDUCATION?

While we cannot say that only a man could do and be all of the things we want for this job, our experience with the problem of attracting a mature woman who could remain with us for a long period of time was discouraging. Our experience with Mr. Shoaf and Mr. Bishop seems sufficient to indicate that a minister can do many of the things which we need to have done with more ease than the women who seem to be available for the job. It seems, for instance, to be important that our young people come to think of the program of the church as an appropriate calling for men as well as women. Much of the work is such that it is late in the evening, and under other conditions, making it easire for a man to schedule it. The cost of a good man is greater than the cost of a mature woman of equal caliber, but it seems to be justified.

IV. HOW WOULD THE ADDITION OF ANOTHER STAFF MEMBER AFFECT THE ASSIGNMENTS OF OUR PRESENT STAFF?

In general the answer to this is given in the introduction. Much of the work described represents the expansion of the program of the church. The specific

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responsibility for assigning staff personnel would still rest as it must with the senior minister. It is anticipated that the associate minister would devote the major portion of his time in helping the minister directly in the pastoral work of the church. He indeed might become much more readily available as a counselor and be directly associated in such programs as those developed for after school recreation. He could devote more time and attention to the cultivation of the post high school dropouts from the program of the church. He could continue to assist in the development of summer programs for youth and would certainly be needed to assist even in the more specialized responsibilities in such areas as leadership recruitment and training.

V. CAN THE CHURCH YET AFFORD AN ADDITIONAL STAFF MEMBER?

This question is one which must eventually be answered by the Official Board and by the Commission on Stewardship and Finance. It would seem, however, that several points should be made. It seems like false economy to spend the money to build a more than adequate plant and then to withhold it from the development of a program equal to those facilities.

The future of a church is in its youth. Young newcomers to town will naturally gravitate to those churches which provide aggressive programs. The younger families now in the church could gravitate to the suburban churches. It is from these young families that the future budgets of the church will be raised. The hope of the downtown church is in the fact that it is large enough to offer a fuller program of activities.

For those of us with young families, the matter is more immediately pressing. The program of the church ten years from now is not nearly so important to our families as the program which is available within the next six months. Every year that we wait for a better program is a significant fraction of the time available for our own children.

Submitted for the:  
Commission on Education  
Dr. Earl I. Brown, Chairman

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Submitted for the:

Commission on Stewardship

Dr. Earl J. Beman, Chairman