

line is asking, 'What do you want?' This community has very unusual power to get what it wants. It is not characteristic of the members of this parish to own heavy investments and have large capital accounts. But none the less, because of income based on ability, it is characteristic of this community to get about what it wants. It wanted a new Village hall, a new fire station, a park system. It has them all. It wanted a Village plan, has it and believes it will be carried out. And wanted a larger Library and is getting it. It wanted an enlarged Community House. It has it. It wanted a new Skokie school. It got it even though it had to follow extra-legal methods to raise the money. If we want mosquito abatement we shall get that too. Our people travel, join clubs, buy cars, build homes as very few people do. So far this Village has equipped itself pretty well. It is typical here to get what we want. The plumb line is asking, 'What DO you want?' That is the meaning of this campaign.

"Please notice, I am speaking in the plural. Though we have to give as individuals, the question we must answer is a community question. It is what we want for the community. I pray we may be delivered from the folly that has cursed the life of many a church, the folly of building for some individual—a preacher of the hour, or a leading member of the hour. We must do something very different from that and much more important than that. In a community like this the time comes to a growing church when it must do something final. It builds for the generations. It builds for a long succession of preachers and leaders. It builds a home that may stand for two centuries or more. In the leadings of God it is such a problem that is laid upon us. The plumb line is asking whether we can think in such terms. We must answer what we really want for Winnetka, for what we really want we shall get.

**Cites Practical Viewpoint**  
 "Of course, this brings us face to face with the unusual responsibility of this church. Business men have recently been talking to me very feelingly about that. One said, 'We are building a big service station for something never before attempted in America—to help keep a place like Winnetka united in its religious life.' He was not clear as to when and how branch stations must be considered. But an adequate central service station seemed to him essential. He spoke of how China has recently been saying that it wants nothing of our out-worn denominationalism, the splitting of Christians who believe essentially the same thing and seek essentially the same thing into alien camps with their constant threat of misunderstanding and of war. He asked how great a calamity it would be if in such a time Winnetka, long hailed everywhere as a leader in this most vital problem of Christian unity, allowed itself a backward step. And he added that to make Christianity such a decisive influence in an otherwise well united community, to establish here a group of successful unrelated churches.

would cost three or four times as much as for this church to solve the problem. Another business man added a few days later that, although it does not do to push the analogy between religion and business too far, there is a true comparison between a church and an industry. Both need facilities for production and, in the face of a growing market, must increase those facilities both to take care of present demand and to increase the demand. Otherwise they lose out. Neither of these men had a closed mind about the questions the May meeting wisely left open. But both saw this enterprise as a plumb line let down among us to ask us what we want. When the plumb line let down in Israel the horizon was dark with doom. Israel was threatened with a tearing asunder, a carrying away, a leading off captive, a desolation and emptiness, a falling of sons and daughters by the sword, a division of the land by line. What do you want?

**"What Do You Think of the Church?"**  
 "But, although included in them both, more searching than the question, 'Do you understand?' and more searching than the question, 'What do you want?' is the third question that this plumb line is asking us. It is the question, 'What do you think of the church of Christ?' Is it more or less important than these other things that we get because we want them? Is it more or less important than Village hall or Fire station or Park system or library? Where does it come in in the Village plan and in our recrea-

tional life? What place does it have in the education of children and adults? How does it compare with travel, clubs, cars, private homes? Is it something for mind and the gracious heart? which it is worth while keeping the open "Look at all the good in this community that the church has sired. Look at its age-long mothering of the arts, its nurturing of health, of education, of idealism. See it welcoming the last born child as a gift from God and shepherding youth into the paths of Jesus. Hear it above all the greed and strife and agony of life singing the song of the new Jerusalem coming down out of

heaven from God wherein dwelleth righteousness. Count the refreshments it brings to the weary in life's battle, its bestowals of a wealth that moth and rust cannot corrupt, its saints of yesterday and its saints of today. Remember its steady witness that we are not beasts that perish but each has a place all his own in the mind and heart of the infinite and eternal Father. Remember that Jesus loved it and gave himself for it and made it the keeper of the everlasting hope. What do you think of the church of Christ? 'Then said the Lord, Behold I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people.'

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# This Christmas

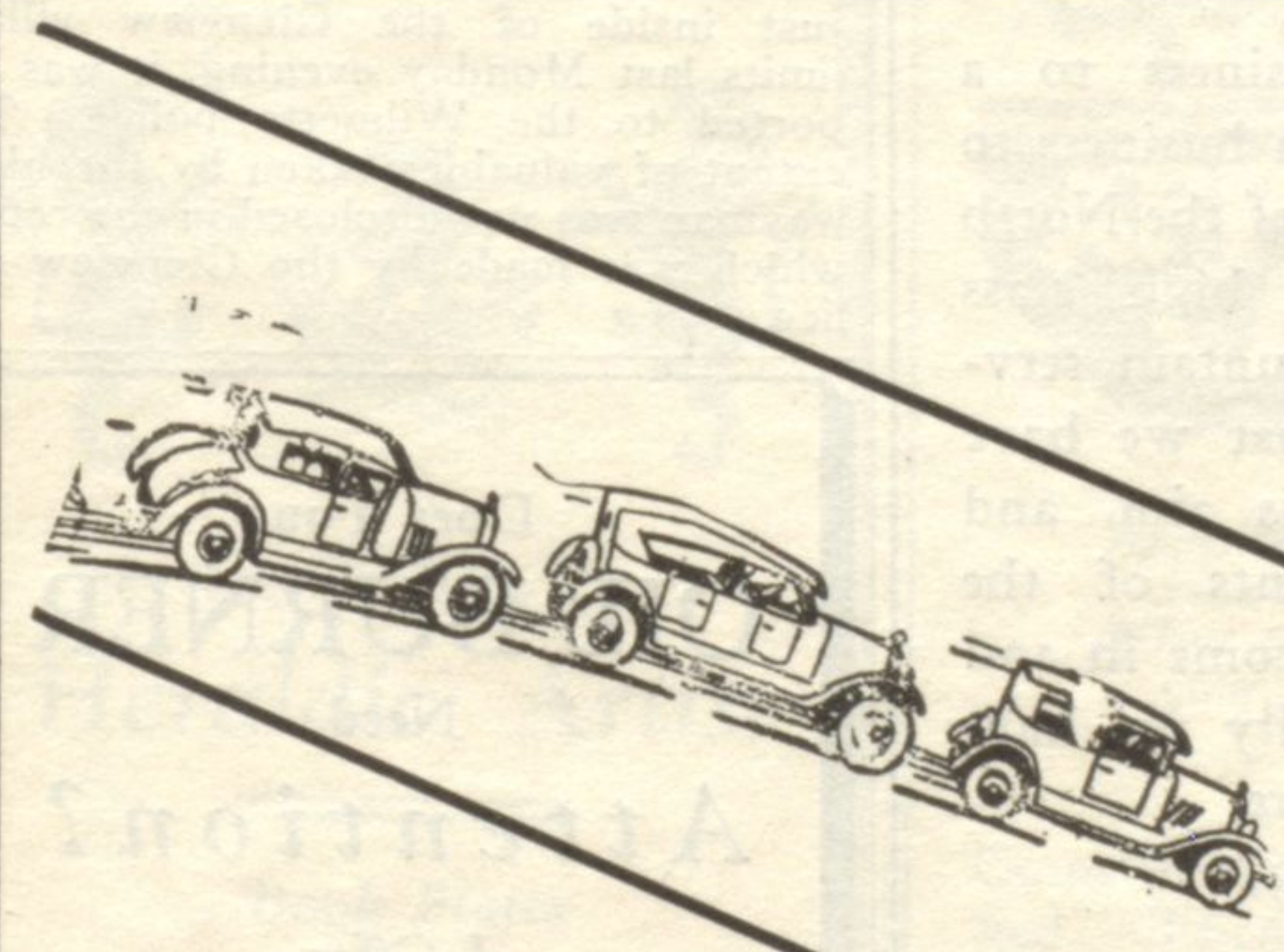


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