

Arkansas Methodist

— "SERVING TWO THOUSAND METHODISTS IN ARKANSAS" —
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NO. 31

YOUNG ADULT CAMP AT TANAKO

A Young Adult Camp will be held by the Little Rock Conference of the Methodist Church, August 19-21, at Camp Tanako, according to Dr. Roy E. Fawcett, executive secretary of the Conference Board of Education.

Bill Taylor, Little Rock, president of the Little Rock Conference Young Adults, said the purpose of the three-day session is to train young adults to be better workers and leaders in the local church.

Resource person for the Camp will be Dr. Paul O. Cardwell, who is executive secretary of the Methodist Board of Education in Dallas, Texas.

Miss Ruby Lee Jackson, Pine Bluff, and Hollis Haley, England, will be the recreation leaders; and Dr. J. D. Boyack, Little Rock, will lead a discussion group on study and worship. Mrs. J. D. Boyack will direct the worship services.

Workshop courses scheduled include the following: recreation and creative arts, study and worship, evangelism and church loyalty, and social action and world service. There will be discussion groups on the Biblical foundations of Christian faith.

The fee for the entire session is



DR. PAUL O. CARDWELL

\$6.50, and all those who plan to attend are urged to register as soon as possible. No advance fee is required, and young adults from throughout the Conference are requested to register by sending name, address and name of church to Bill Taylor, 714 North Walnut Street, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Set-Up Meeting At Manila

The Jonesboro District Set-Up Meeting was held at Manila on Thursday, July 14th, in the Methodist Church. The District Staff with their wives had met at the District Parsonage for a picnic on the lawn and had planned for the presentation of the program for the year at the Set-Up Meeting. The following with their wives were present at each meeting: Rev. J. T. Byrd, Director of Evangelism; Rev. W. O. Scroggins, Director of Arkansas Methodist; Rev. H. C. Farmer, Director of Golden Cross; Rev. Harold Spence, District Missionary Secretary; Rev. Harold Eggensperger, Director of Radio and Film; Rev. Raymond Dorman, Director of Temperance; Rev. E. E. Stevenson, Director of Peace; Rev. Arville Brannon, Director of Adult Work; Rev. Ben F. Jordan, Director of Youth Work; Mr. Clyde Evans, District Lay Leader, and Mrs. Walter Lindley, Director of Children's Work. Each of these made a splendid presentation of the work for the year at the Set-Up Meeting.

Rev. Frank F. Copplestone, exchange pastor at First Church, Jonesboro, led the devotional meeting with an inspirational and challenging message.

All apportionments on World Service, District Fund, Methodist Hospital Building Campaign, Church Building, and G. J. and I were accepted and the indications are that the District will pay in full

Interesting Charge Meeting On Bay-Pleasant Valley Charge

On Sunday, July 31, the three churches on the Bay, Pleasant Valley and Lunsford Charge met together at the Pleasant Valley Methodist Church. In the morning the pastor, Rev. B. Vernon Dennis, preached in the Bay Church, while Rev. Charles Stuck of Jonesboro and Rev. Young Sun Hahn, a Korean minister who has been studying in our country, spoke to the Lunsford and Pleasant Valley congregations.

At noon a bountiful feast was spread out under the trees which was enjoyed by all present. We were especially honored by having as our guest for the noon meal Dr. Frank Copplestone of Jonesboro First Church, exchange minister from Liverpool, England, along with his wife and daughter.

At two o'clock in the afternoon we assembled for worship. Dr. Copplestone brought the message of the hour, which was an inspiration to all.

We call it a good day when representatives of three nations preached, sang and prayed together as brothers of a common Father.—Mrs. Lois Coleman, reporter.

all these askings as in previous years.

Every church is to have an Advance Special for the building of a Methodist College in Alaska.—Reporter.

JONESBORO DISTRICT CAMPS

The Jonesboro District conducted two intermediate camps, and one senior camp for the youth of the District this summer with an enrollment of 236 young people in the three camps. These camps were at Wayland Springs near Imboden, Arkansas.

The first intermediate camp was under the direction of Rev. Norris Steele with following persons helping: Rev. Jewel Linam, Rev. Thurston Masters, Earl Carter, Lee Cate, Arvill Brannon, Eugene Fetzner, Wendell Dorman, James Linam, Joe Dean Pierce, Mesdames J. E. Linam, Halys Cathey, M. J. Pollard, Erlene Slocum.

The Senior Camp was under the direction of Rev. Ben F. Jordan with the following assisting: Eugene Hall, M. J. Pollard, James Linam, Grider Thrasher, Eugene Rushing, J. H. Holt, W. L. Diggs, Earl Carter, Eugene Fetzner, Mesdames J. H. Holt, Gilbert Palmer, W. L. Diggs, and Miss Regenia Watson and Wendell Dorman.

The Second Intermediate Camp was under the direction of Rev. E. J. Holifield with the following serving as members of the Camp Staff: Eugene Hall, Mitchell Sanford, James Linam, James Fleming, Leon Wilson, Benny Joe Vancleve, Mesdames E. J. Holifield, Eugene Hall, James Fleming, Misses Sarah Ruth Robinson, Peggy Parks, Maurene Dobbs.

Miss Yoko Motga, who for the past three years has been attending college in America, was present as "The National" in the Senior Camp.

Rev. Frank F. Copplestone, exchange pastor serving at First Church, Jonesboro, was the speaker one night at the Second Intermediate Camp.

iate Camp.

The District MYF Officers were elected at the Senior Camp. They are as follows: President, Roger Sudberry; Vice-President, Ralph Bly; Secretary Jenny Wren; Treasurer, Peggy Parks; Faith, Claudius Bonner; Witness, Kitty Imboden; Citizenship, Janet Hale; Outreach, Marcia White; Fellowship, Larry Dent. — Reporter.

DeWitt Has Reception For Pastor and Wife

Rev. and Mrs. Curtis Williams were honored Sunday night, July 24, following the evening service with a reception given by the Woman's Society of Christian Service, in the recreation room of the church.

In the receiving line other than the honored guests were Mrs. Jake Parker, president of the Woman's Society of Christian Service, Miss Ida Lou Highfill, Youth Director and Church Secretary, C. M. Hillman, Chairman of the Official Board, L. H. Leslie, Superintendent of the Church School and Ralph Graves, President of the Methodist Men's Club.

Mrs. Jake Parker welcomed the Rev. and Mrs. Williams presenting them with a gift of imported cut glass. Both Mr. and Mrs. Williams responded.

The Christian Social Relations Committee and the circle leaders planned the program for the evening. Mrs. Barnes Hampton arranged the serving table.

The serving table was beautifully arranged. Over one hundred guests were served. Ann Spratlin furnished music during the evening.

Ft. Smith District Make Advance Special Gift Alaska Methodist College



John Tolleson of Greenwood, on the left, president of the Camp Council of Ft. Smith District Senior Camp, Shores Lake, July 25-28, presents Dr. W. Henry Goodloe, district superintendent, with gift from the senior campers to be applied toward the Methodist College in Alaska. This is the first advance special gift for this purpose reported in the Ft. Smith District. The young people of the Ft. Smith District are to be congratulated on this worth-while expression of their interest in the youth of Alaska.

NEWS AND NOTES ABOUT FACTS AND FOLKS

GARNER ROBBINS, layman from Osceola, was the guest speaker at First Methodist Church, Manila, Sunday, August 7. Rev. Harold H. Spence is pastor.

REV. N. LEE CATE, pastor of the Jacksonville Methodist Church, will be the guest speaker at the Youth Activities Week at First Methodist Church, Searcy, the week of August 7-13. Rev. Alvin C. Murray is pastor.

DR. W. NEILL HART, Superintendent of the Camden District of the Little Rock Conference was guest preacher at the morning service of First Methodist Church, Magnolia, Sunday, July 31. Rev. C. Ray Hozendorf is pastor.

JOE HARLOW of Shorewood Hills Methodist Church of Jones Mill was presented a pin representing eight years perfect attendance at Sunday School. The presentation was made at the morning service, August 7. Rev. Howard Cox is pastor of the Shorewood Hills Church.

REV. WILLIAM GLENN BRUNER, pastor of the West Helena Methodist Church, will be the guest preacher for revival services to be held in the Spadra Methodist Church on the Hartman Charge, August 15-26. Rev. Aaron Barling is the pastor.

REV. ROBERT JOHNSON, pastor of the Plumerville Methodist Church, and Mrs. Johnson were given an old fashioned pounding by the church members upon returning home from Springfield where Brother Johnson was the guest preacher in a revival held in the Springfield Methodist Church.

REV. GAIL G. ANDERSON, pastor of the Methodist Church, Wheatley, was the guest speaker for the Youth Activities Week in Hughes Methodist Church the week of August 7-13. Assisting with the activities was Miss Helen Hubert, a Hendrix College student whose home is in Colt. Rev. Elmus C. Brown is pastor at Hughes.

LELAND B. JOHNSON was elected Chairman of the Official Board of Shorewood Hills Methodist Church of Jones Mill. Mr. Johnson is also a member of the Building Committee which has as its project the building of an educational annex, consisting of eight rooms. He is an employee of the Arkansas Power and Light Company. Rev. Howard Cox is pastor of the Shorewood Hills Church.

REV. WILLIAM SHERMAN, retired minister of the North Arkansas Conference, now living in Fayetteville, called at our office last week. Brother Sherman was just returning from a months visit with his son, Selwyn Sherman, who lives in Statesboro, Georgia. On his return from Georgia he came by Lake Junaluska. While in advanced years Brother Sherman is in good health and in a fine spirit.

A HUNDRED METHODIST leaders and workers at Lake Junaluska paid tribute with a testimonial dinner to John Q. Schisler, a Methodist educator who will retire this Fall. Dr. Schisler, a native of Bono, Arkansas, who started as a minister 43 years ago, is executive secretary of the Methodist Board of Education's Division of the Local Church at Nashville, Tenn. He joined the Education staff 35 years ago.

DR. FRANK COPPLESTONE, exchange minister from Liverpool, England, was the speaker at a special service of the Nettleton Methodist Church, sponsored by the Methodist Men, Wednesday evening, August 3. Dr. Cop-

plestone and Dr. Ethan Dodgen, pastor of First Methodist Church, Jonesboro, are currently exchanging pulpits under a program headed by the National Council of Churches. Rev. Earl B. Carter is pastor of the Nettleton Church.

REV. E. T. MILLER, retired Methodist Minister of DeQueen, died Sunday, July 31, at his home after a heart attack. Brother Miller was admitted to the Little Rock Conference in 1925 and had held thirteen pastorates throughout the Little Rock Conference since 1914, including Oaklawn at Hot Springs, and Twenty-eighth Street at Little Rock. He retired in 1952 after having served the Horatio Charge for four years.

FAMILY NIGHT, was sponsored by the MYF of the Griffin Memorial Methodist Church, Paragould, Tuesday night, July 26. Each person attending was asked to bring a covered dish. After the supper, which was held in the fellowship hall, stunts and acts were given by each Sunday School Class. The evening ended with a quartet singing, "God Be With You 'Till We Meet Again." Rev. Clyde Crozier, pastor, dismissed the group with prayer.

MR. AND MRS. L. F. McLESKEY, residents of Piggott rural route, celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary, July 3, with a reception given by their daughters. Just before the reception a granddaughter, Barbara McLeskey, was married. She had as her special attendants, her grandmother and grandfather, who renewed their vows in silence as the bride and groom received them openly. Except for one year the McLeskeys have lived their entire fifty years of married life in their present home. They are charter members of Langley Chapel Methodist Church on the St. Francis Charge.

REV. JOE HALE, Methodist evangelist, left Camden, July 30, with his father, A. C. Hale, on the first part of a round-the-world trip. They will spend several days in Washington before departing from New York International Airfield on August 6. In the past three summers Mr. Hale has conducted seventeen church-wide evangelistic campaigns in South Arkansas. He has for the past two years been a student in Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky. The young evangelist hopes to return to America with a better understanding of the need of world missions. Countries to be visited include: Great Britain, France, Switzerland, Italy, Greece, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, India, Burma and Thailand.

REV. JEFF E. DAVIS, Chaplain, United States Air Force, was the guest preacher at the morning service of the Park View Methodist Church, Benton, Sunday, August 7. He preached at the evening service of First Methodist Church, Benton, on the same date. Chaplain Davis is a member of the Little Rock Conference and is spending a short period of time in Benton at the home of Mrs. Davis's parents before reporting to his new assignment. He is the former pastor of the Bauxite Methodist Church and had previously served as associate pastor of Winfield Methodist Church in Little Rock. At the time of his appointment to duty with the Air Force, Chaplain Davis was pastor of St. Luke Methodist Church, Little Rock.

DR. E. C. RULE, District Superintendent of the Hope District, was guest preacher at the morning service in the Carolina Church, on the Prescott Circuit, Sunday, July 31. After

the noon meal at the church, Dr. Rule held a session of the Quarterly Conference. Extensive repairs, including a painting job, have recently been completed at the Carolina Church. It is located on the old Washington and Camden Post Road and was organized and the building constructed at a time when it was usually customary for the women to sit on one side of the church and the men on the other side. A partition wall of some three or four feet in height midway in the building is still in existence, left for sentimental reasons and reverence for the founders. Rev. L. O. Lee is pastor of the Prescott Circuit.

A MISSIONARY TOUR of Nashville, Tennessee, for older Youth, sponsored by the Searcy District's Woman's Society of Christian Service, was made August 1-4. Twenty-nine young people and adults left the First Methodist Church, Searcy, early August 1, by chartered bus. Included in the itinerary were visits to the Methodist Board of Education and Evangelism; communion service conducted in the celebrated Upper Room Chapel; the meeting of personnel and students at Bethlehem Centers and Centenary Methodist Institute; and dinner and enrichment hour at Scarritt College. Each boy or girl making the tour was sponsored by an organization of his church. Seventeen churches participated in the tour. Mrs. Vance Thompson of McCrory, who serves the North Arkansas Conference Woman's Society of Christian Service as director of Missionary Personnel, planned the tour. She was assisted by Mrs. H. H. Fulbright, district director of Youth Work. Other adults on the tour were: Rev. and Mrs. W. M. Womack of McCrory, Miss Thelma Pickens of Batesville and Howard Bailey of Brinkley.

WANTED

Nine University of Arkansas Methodist men students to occupy rooms in Methodist Student Center near the campus. Room for nine boys in newly redecorated house, \$15.00 per month. Central Methodist Church minister to Students will live in the house. Write or call Mr. Frank Jones, Central Methodist Church, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

HOMEcoming AT CAPITOL VIEW

All former members and friends of Capitol View Methodist Church are invited to Homecoming Day, Sunday, August 14.

Rev. Wm. A. Stewart, Jr., pastor of the Dardanelle Methodist Church, a former member will bring the message at 10:50 a.m. Delbert Hurst will be soloist.

A basket lunch will be served at noon. Special music from 1:30 until 2:30 p.m. when Rev. C. D. Meux will bring a message.

Come and bring a friend and enjoy the fellowship and worship together. Rev. George E. Reutz is pastor of Capitol View Church.—Reporter

FIRST SERVICE ST. ANDREW CHURCH

St. Andrew Methodist Church, Arkadelphia, held its first services, Sunday, July 31, in the new sanctuary. St. Andrew is Arkadelphia's newest congregation, formed November 1, 1954. Services were held during the first few months in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Homer Collins. Late in January a parsonage was purchased directly behind the church site, and on February 1, Rev. and Mrs. Clint Bursleson were assigned to St. Andrew. Services were then conducted in the living-dining room of the parsonage. Membership of St. Andrew has now reached a total of 88. Growth has been steady and enthusiasm contagious among the members. An active Woman's Society of Christian Service was formed in December. Bradley Blickenstaff was nominated church school superintendent.

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The Layman's Column

By
Charles A. Stuck
Lay Leader
North Arkansas Conference



A TRUE STORY

She is a stewardess aboard one of our large commercial airliners. She is attractive as you would expect a stewardess to be. She has a warm smile that puts young mothers and new travelers immediately at ease. You have to smile at her when she looks at you because she smiles at you first.

She saw me addressing a letter to a Methodist Bishop. She told me that she was a Methodist, and a regular attendant at one of our large churches. Then she asked a queer question. Pointing to the Bishop's name on the envelope, she asked, "Does he have any influence?" I didn't know what to say. Sure, a Methodist Bishop has a lot of influence in several places. It occurred to me that she was about to marry a young preacher and wanted to see him promoted. That was what a lot of people wanted with a Bishop's influence. But she cleared that doubt quickly. In very earnest tones, as she sat on the arm of the seat across the aisle, she told me that she didn't want to be forced to serve cocktails on her job. Some airlines are already doing it, she said, and a number of girls have resigned their jobs as stewardesses, rather than to serve as barmaids.

It required a lot of courage for this fine girl to ask an utter stranger to do something about this matter. But she soon warmed to her argument. She said it was bad enough to have to "herd" a few selfish people who come aboard already under the influence of liquor. One drunk dropped his cigarette between the seats, and although the seat fabrics are fireproofed, who wants a fire in a plane three miles high? She was afraid of the responsibility of being forced to serve liquors aboard the plane; then of having to attend to the needs of mothers and of children traveling alone, while having to soothe a drunk who wanted to become ugly with another passenger, or with her.

Maybe you don't use the airlines, but many thousands of people do use them. Many Christians use them as a rapid and, up to now, a safe method of traveling on the Lord's work as well as for their own business. But if you use the

Editorial

Better To Talk Than To Fight

IN keeping with the deepseated purpose of America to pursue every possible avenue which might further the cause of peace, the United States, despite its distaste for it, is now in direct conference with leaders from Communist China in Geneva. A change of mind on our part made possible this conference which is but another in a long series of conferences of various kinds in which we are attempting to solve our differences around the conference table lest there might be attempts to settle them on fields of battle. So long as it can be done with honor and with some hope for peaceful settlements, there is no question but that it is better to talk than to fight.

It is almost certain that the tensions of recent years would have exploded into a suicidal world war but for the United Nations and the various conferences which gave opportunity for nations to talk over their differences openly rather than brood over them privately. The Big Four meeting at Geneva seemed to demonstrate that the greatest need in the world today is for national leaders to talk together face to face. Only so can we come to understand each other and only so are we able to determine whether our fears, suspicions and mistrust are justifiable.

We in America are quite sure that our nation will never start a war of conquest. We feel sure that it will not go to war at all, despite its stupendous war potential, unless the freedom of our people or the freedom of the people of the free world is threatened. While we know that, some parts of the world are not so sure about it. Our expenditures for the necessities of war are greater than any nation on earth. We have in our possession a stock-pile of atomic and hydrogen bombs that, unaided, could practically destroy the world. We should not be

airlines, and if you don't want them to serve cocktails aboard, please write to:

Dr. Caradine R. Hooten,
Methodist Board of Temperance,
100 Maryland Avenue, NE
Washington, D. C.

Ask Dr. Hooten to tell the proper authorities that you don't want liquors served in commercial airplanes. If thousands of Christians would do this, we might not have to make barmaids of our Methodist girls.

surprised if some nations mistrust our motives.

Whether it be Russia, Red China or whomsoever it may be, America should never fail to accept opportunity for sincere negotiations that promise peace and a better understanding. In our dealings with China, the "Hermit Nation," we should remember that China, comparatively speaking, is only in the beginning of its efforts to relate itself to the rest of the world. In its haste, some of its methods may appear quite crude; some even atrocious. Nevertheless, the established nations of the world should remember China's immaturity and exercise patience as long as patience is a virtue.

Church Extension Needs

ONE of the most pressing needs of Methodism in the Arkansas-Louisiana Area is church extension — the extending of the work and influence of the church through the organization and development of new church organizations. The need for work of this nature varies with a changing economic picture, different population trends, presence of industrial developments, and other factors which may influence the moving of numbers of people to a new location such as a new military installation. Just about all the factors that influence population changes are at work now somewhere in this Episcopal Area, from a decreasing rural population to an increasing population in the county and parish seat towns and larger cities. This all adds up to quite a problem churchwise, for it means that with the opening up of new residential areas around towns and cities there is immediate need for new Methodist churches to serve the Methodist constituency.

Methodism in these two states has been aware of this problem for sometime now, and it was to meet this need that the One Thousand Club was organized. Now in operation in two of the three annual conferences, the program has been the means of giving a few new church situations financial help when they needed help the most — at the beginning and in their building program. But church extension needs in the Arkansas-Louisiana Area will not be met by the Thousand Club program unless the program itself is multiplied several times.

Several of the districts in the Area have already recognized this, and steps have been taken to promote church extension work within their own bounds. Perhaps that is where a larger share of the financial responsibility should be. We know of several "First Churches" which have been instrumental in getting "second" and

Continued on page five)

A Lift For Living

By Ralph W. Sockman

MOTIVES

It is hardly true to say that family life is motivated purely by love. A young woman once said to me that when we ministers talk about mother love as ideal and unselfish we are picturing a situation unreal and unknown to her.



Family ties are woven of several strands—love, comfort, convenience, security, fear. A few years ago the English novelist A. S. M. Hutchinson in his book, "This Freedom," portrayed a wife who felt that her husband had married mainly for a home where he could have his comforts, his books, his possessions—a place he could step into. He, on his part, felt that his wife had married to have a place she could step out of—with a security her unmarried women competitors in the careers did not possess.

And what are the motives which lead to our friendships? Some people we almost instinctively like. Others we like to be seen with. Some of our companions we choose because we can help them, and some because they can help us. The golden bonds of friendship contain much alloy.

Mixed Motives

And why do we come together in our community associations? Again our motives are mixed. Most of us have an instinct for neighborliness. We join in neighborhood activities in order to escape loneliness, to find recreation, to support welfare organizations. Often we organize in our communities to protect property values, to keep out bad influences, and sometimes to keep out undesirable newcomers.

And consider our associations as citizens of our nation. We believe that party government is essential to preserving a free society. Hence we join political parties which express our convictions. But when we analyze our party affiliations, do we not have to admit that sometimes we are

prompted not by sincere desire for what is best for the country as a whole, but by what promises best to serve our own group's interest. Many of us simply vote with the party to which our family and friends belong.

What about our motives in international relationships? Are we working for a new world order out of desire for security, out of fear of some foreign foe, out of hatred of some nation, or out of sympathy for the distressed and displaced peoples of the earth?

Why do we join together in churches? Is it for fellowship, because in church friends can be more safely chosen than in some other circles? Is it for comfort, because the church has the divine keys of consolation? Is it for security, because the church helps to safeguard our society from subversive influences like communism and promises salvation for the life to come? Is it for the opportunity of service, because the church is the longest and strongest lever for lifting the burdens of a distressed world?

As we look at our own reasons for forming our associations, we see that our motives are very mixed. What then?

Danger Tests Us

Danger tests and sifts the mixture of motives which prompts our actions. Danger reveals a fear based on self-interest. When the odds go heavily against us we grow frightened, and each seeks to save his own skin. Fear which stems from self-interest fails to hold men together.

Fear has a legitimate role to play in life. Like pain, it is a sentinel which warns of danger. But when fear moves into the seat of command it heightens the danger. Fear makes us so self-conscious that we cannot see objectively. Fear crows the conscience and perverts moral judgments. Fear weakens our efficiency, even our health, through prolonged anxiety. And when fear becomes panic, it is paralyzing.

Fear can bring men together for a time, but it does not hold them together. During the last decade the nations have been seeking satellites and forming alliances motivated by fear. The year 1955 may go down in history as the year of the "Summit Conference" at Geneva. It will be a red-letter year if the meeting of the leaders proves to have changed the international climate from fear to trust. We hope and pray that it will be so.

Also, you and I had better hold a conference at the summit—that is, with God. And here are the words to open it: "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts."

AUGUST 11, 1955

Page Three

Methodism Looks At Its Small Town Church

BY W. W. REID

The rapidly-changing picture and problems of the rural and village churches and communities of America—and something of their effect upon world economy and the ideologies of peoples—were thrown into sharp focus at the National Methodist Town and Country Conference held at Bloomington, Ind., July 22 to 25. More than 1600 delegates were registered, most of them ministers and laymen representing the Town and Country Commissions of some 85 annual conferences of the Methodist Church.

Called by the bishops of the church, directed largely by the Board of Missions' Division of National Missions, the Conference was supported by all the boards and service agencies of Methodism. Bishop Lloyd C. Wicke was general chairman, and Dr. Glenn Sanford was the secretary of the planning committee. Dr. John B. Howes chairs a committee of rural experts to help put into action some of the findings of the various Conference groups.

The principal work of the Conference was carried on in sixteen "study groups," each considering some phase of the church in rural fields and small communities—and their effect upon American life in general. Here each delegate had opportunity to express his own views and aspirations for the church, and to compare ideas with others. The lay preaching which has been such a blessing in Alabama—can it be utilized in California and in Pennsylvania? was the type of question raised (and often answered) in every group. These questions, suggestions and findings of the several groups—together with some suggestions for General Conference or annual conference actions—will be published this summer by the continuation committee.

This was the third quadrennial conference held by Methodism to help plan the needs of the town and country church. And there was general agreement that progress has been made in the past eight years in understanding the problems and in facing them realistically. Meanwhile the American scene has been changing, modifying the problems or adding new ones.

The Basic Dilemma

But, basically, this is the village or rural churches' dilemma: The people need a ministry

trained to serve the growing and complex needs of congregation and community: that training costs money, and the pastor should have an "adequate support" which churches with static or decreasing membership feel they cannot provide. It costs money and men to maintain the old; it costs money and men to establish and maintain the new; to date Methodism has not thought itself able (in men or money) to do both adequately.

The principal "fireworks" of the Conference came when a speaker was misunderstood to have suggested that thousands of small churches, unable to support a minister, should be closed. The defense which was quickly made of the contribution of the small and rural church to America's way of life and the need for Methodism to minister to the small struggling congregations ("or some one else will") was a glowing—even if unnecessary—paean to "the little brown church in the vale" and its sisters.

"The Source Book"

"The Source Book of Methodism in Town and Country" was prepared by Dr. Roy Sturm and his associates in the Division of National Mission's Department of Research and Surveys as a basis for attempting to reach some conclusions on the problems that face the rural and village churches of the nation—especially those of the Methodist Church.

One of the basic discoveries brought out by this survey is that while the Methodist Church is engaged in a countrywide campaign to build new churches in areas of growing population and in new residence areas, the cost of maintaining so many small churches is growing. This cost is both in money and in manpower.

In presenting some of these facts, Dr. Sturm said: "Eleven and five-tenths percent of the charges (not churches) of Methodism have fewer than 100 members each. I have no lack of appreciation of the service of these churches. The fact remains, however, that Methodism must face the dilemma between continuing to provide millions of dollars plus leadership to keep so many very small churches going or using part of all of these resources in starting new churches in these large new centers of population. There is no es-

Three retired leaders were honored for services over many years to the town and country churches of America. (Left to Right): Professor Charles M. McConnell, Dr. Ralph A. Felton, and Dr. Mark A. Dawber.



caping this predicament. Methodism does not have the financial and leadership resources to do both." It was this last sentence in Dr. Sturm's statement that brought the severest criticism from some of his hearers.

Dr. Sturm, however, was not arguing for closing small churches. In the same address he said: Let no one conclude I am saying we should close these small churches. There are other alternatives, as, for example, a vigorous evangelistic program which would reach the unchurched. Another alternative is for two or more of our very small churches to give careful consideration to relocating on the same site.

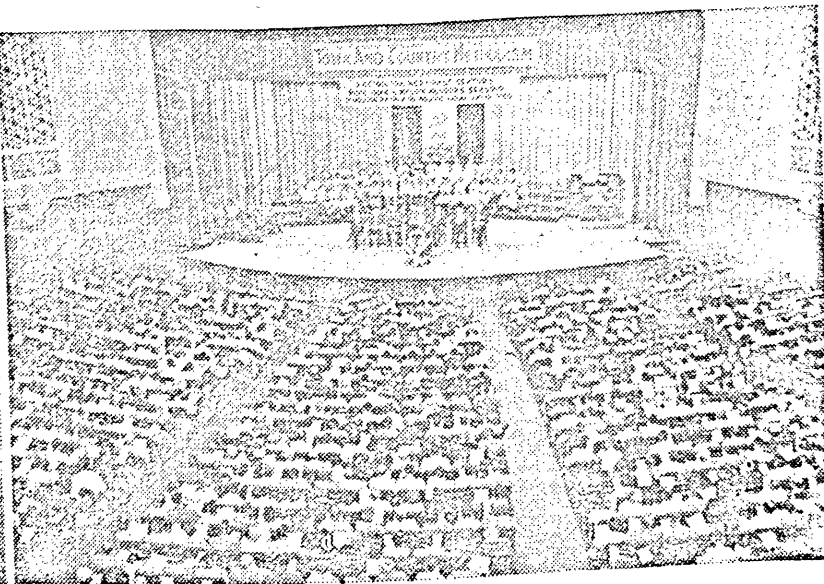
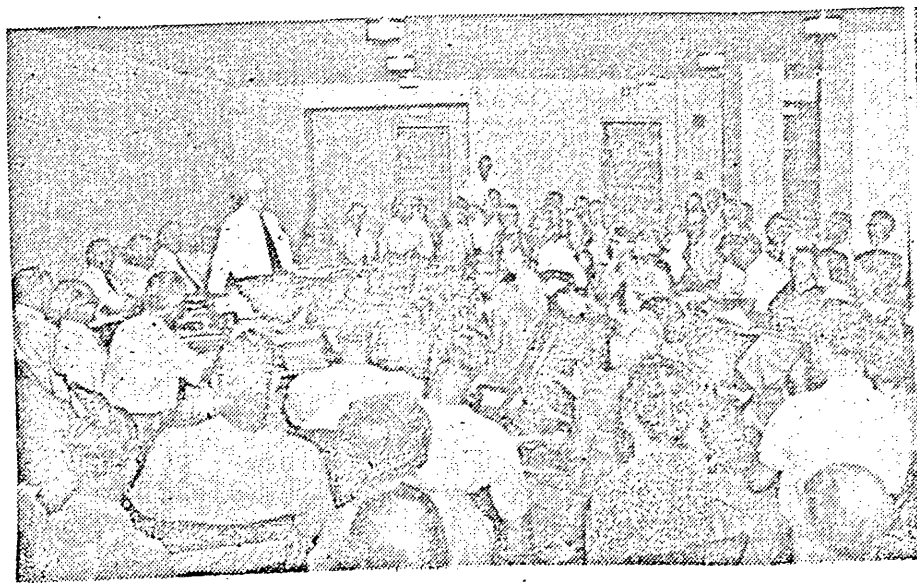
Where the matter was discussed in the smaller study groups, there seemed to be general agreement that Dr. Sturm had "made a point" that if the Church is to continue to maintain higher and higher standards for its ministers, if it is to provide them adequate support financially and otherwise, and if it is to erect new churches or "moved churches" for new communities of people, the whole question of larger parishes, group ministries, and effective circuits must be further studied and developed by the annual conferences. There seemed to be agreement also with Dr. Sturm's suggestion that ordinarily a parish of 300 families is required to keep a church active and a minister adequately supported: this may be

AT LEFT:

The conference met in sixteen study groups (such as this on "Land, Food, and the World Situation") to study the problems of the rural and village churches.

BELOW:

Sixteen hundred delegates were at the National Methodist Town and Country Conference at Bloomington, Indiana.



within a few city blocks or scattered over a county or two.

The Platform Program

While most of the time of the Conference was given over to the detailed work of the sixteen study groups, the daily platform program drew a variety of speakers who presented a wide range of interests related to the work of the town and country churches. The speakers included: Alexander Nunn, editor of the *Progressive Farmer*, Gov. George N. Craig of Indiana; Bishop Gerald F. Ensley of Des Moines; Dr. Eugene L. Smith of the Board of Missions; Dr. Arthur S. Flemming, president of Ohio Wesleyan University; Dr. Herbert E. Stotts of Boston University.

The Village Church and the World

The dispossessed and underprivileged peoples of the world, especially the landless farmers whose livelihood depends upon the soil, will not be denied their elemental rights much longer, Dr. Eugene L. Smith said.

Modern Rural Pioneering

"To me this whole matter of training young men for the ministry involves some basic philosophy of what the church is for," said Mr. Nunn. If we merely want our ministers to rail out against the more easily attacked sins of the age on Sunday, marry the young, baptize the babies bury the dead, do some casual visiting of the sick, then we don't need to train them to help bring the kingdom of God to earth.

"It's not that we need or want trained farmers in our pulpits. I'm trying to say that we do need ministers who know something about agriculture's place in American economic and social order. We do need ministers who have enough knowledge and enough zeal to want to understand the New Testament and to follow Jesus' teachings. Jesus reached people by understanding their everyday problems and making himself a part of their everyday life."

The Churchman and Peace

Dr. Fleming made a plea for all church people and all citizens to exercise their right to vote and to each make some contribution to the attainment of peace. "When we give our time, energy and resources to government, welfare agencies and the church, we develop as a result of our experiences, the conviction that life's greatest satisfaction comes from helping others realize their highest possibilities."

Two Interpretations of Life

There are two quite contradictory interpretations of life existing side by side in the civilization in which we as Americans are living, Bishop Gerald F. Ensley told the Conference. He was using as his text the passage in the Gospel of John, "Some said it thundered, and some said an angel spoke."

"One of these two interpretations is the naturalistic," said the Bishop. "It says that nature is all that there is to life, and therefore we must continue to develop science, and to explore all the hidden secrets of nature. The other interpretation is the spiritual. It says that there is purpose and meaning behind all physical life and that we must learn to know and to follow that purpose and meaning. In a word, we are divided between those who hear only the noise and thunder of the world, and those who hear the voices of the angels—the spiritual meaning of all life."

General Conference Memorial

The study group on "Land, Food and the World Situation," chaired by Bishop H. Bascon Watts, unanimously adopted a resolution calling upon the 1956 General Conference of the Methodist Church to "add its endorsement" to the principles outlined by some 88 Protestant, Jewish and Catholic clergymen recently in asking that the abundance of America farms be shared with the needy throughout the world. This statement called upon Americans to share their great wealth with the world's need, and to do so separating it from programs of military aid, with full use of non-governmental agencies, and with maximum use of United Nations agencies.

Awards Made

A feature of the Conference was the presentation of the National Town and Country Conference's first awards to men who had long served the rural and town church in national capacities. This "Quadrennial Award of Honor" (a citation)

Activities At Methodist Children's Home

By Georgia Neely, Methodist Information

Forty-six of the 58 children who live at the Methodist Children's Home in Little Rock, have attended, or will attend a summer camp session this year.

Dr. Connor Morehead, Children's Home Director, said the camp attendance would probably have been 100 percent, but camps will not enroll girls under nine years of age.

One of the largest groups to go to camp included 17 boys who attended the Kiwanis Club Boys' Camp, July 11-23.

The boys made a good showing by bringing home first place ribbons in swimming, both the 100-yard free style race and the 100-yard relay; the softball throw; the 50-yard dash; the cross country relay; best at saying grace; and best at repeating the camper's creed.

Thirteen of the 17 boys brought back either first, second or third place ribbons, and some of them won as many as eight ribbons in as many different events.

Eleven girls from the Home were among those who went to the YWCA Cooperative Camp, August 1-13.

Dr. Morehead said both the Kiwanis Club and the YWCA extended special invitations to the children at the Home to attend their camps, and paid all the expenses for those who went.

Other children from the Home attended Methodist Camp sessions at Aldersgate, June 20-24; Tanako, July 18-22; and others will go to the Senior Retreat at Camp Keener, August 14.

The extensive camping program is just another of the many efforts made by the Home toward creating a full and happy life for its little residents.

The Home is set up on the cottage-plan which permits the children to live in small groups in the six, neat, brick buildings which

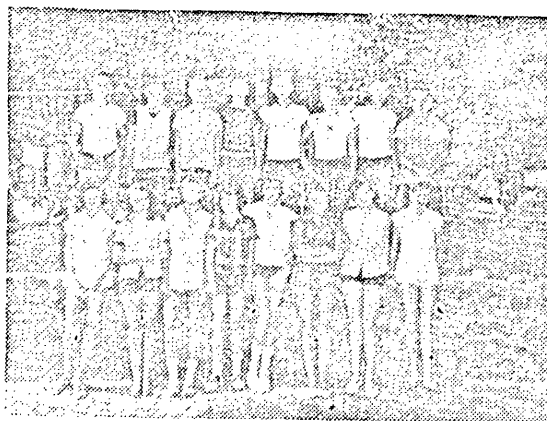


These girls from the Children's Home attended the YWCA Cooperative Camp at Camp Pfeifer, August 1-13.

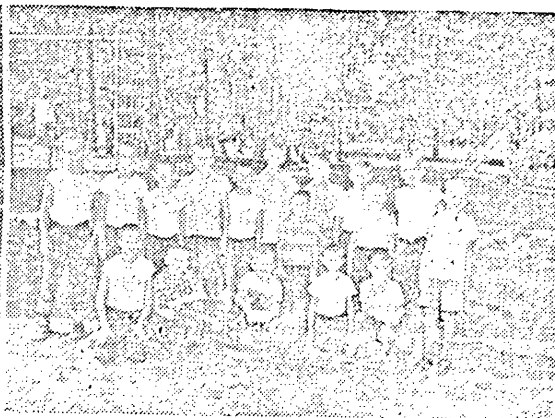
are located at 2002 Fillmore Street. Each cottage has its own dining room, kitchen, living room and bedroom; and a house parent lives in each cottage.

The children's enthusiastic response and eagerness to participate in the camping program is in keeping with the spirit always shown at the Home, Dr. Morehead said.

"They were all proud of their achievements at Camp," he said, "and we are proud of the impressions they made for themselves and for the Home."



Pictured above is the group of boys and girls who attended the Intermediate Camp at Tanko, July 18-22; and also those who will go to Senior Retreat at Camp Keener, August 14.



Above are shown the boys who attended the Kiwanis Club Boys' Camp, July 11-23. Some of the smaller one were allowed to go because their older brothers attended.

SPECIAL MATERIAL PROVIDED FOR TV STATIONS

A new step designed to provide television stations with films for building their own quality religious programs has been taken by the Protestant Radio and Television Center, 1805 Clifton Road, N. E., Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. John M. Alexander, president, announces today.

The Center is making available to television stations across the National libraries of religious

will be made at each future gathering of rural leaders. This year it was made to Dr. Charles M. McConnell, retiring as professor of the rural church at Boston University School of Theology; Dr. Ralph A. Felton, retired from the faculty of Drew University, Madison, N. J.; and Dr. Mark A. Dawber, formerly rural church leader of the National Council of Churches. The presentations were made by Bishop Wicke on behalf of the Conference.

Another Conference highlight was the visitation of team of preachers, teachers and other rural leaders to churches within a hundred mile radius of Bloomington. Two hundred fourteen teams, averaging about five person per team, visited as many churches or circuits, conducting services and church schools—and appraising the services made by local churches to their communities.

music on film, using the registered trade mark, Hymnscriptions. Production is on a cooperative, non-profit basis, with costs subsidized by the denominations owning the Center.

A number of sources are providing complete religious programs. This is believed to be the only source of TV program materials enabling stations to put together their own local religious programs.

CHURCH EXTENSION NEEDS

(Continued from page three)

even "third" churches organized, lending financial and leadership support from the outset. We know of one such "First Church" which is now on the verge of a large building program for itself that is making provision for \$50,000 or \$60,000 to establish another Methodist church in that city. All of these illustrations indicate that more Methodist leadership is aware of the tremendous need for new Methodist churches.

May we suggest that any consideration of needs for the present which does not include new Methodist churches and congregations will be incomplete. Methodism has a definite role to fulfill and unless its church extension program is strengthened, and that right now, the scope of its influence will be lost to others who somehow find the resources and capitalize on the opportunity.

NORTH ARKANSAS CONFERENCE NOTES

By Ira A. Brumley

Special Mission Study Course

More than sixty persons have been invited to work toward certification on the special mission study course, "The Christian Mission in a Revolutionary World," which is a mission study course to be used throughout most of the Protestant denominations of the United States this fall and winter. Already fifty persons have accepted the invitation to join in this enterprise.

This program is being made possible by the cooperation of the Board of Education, the Board of Missions, and the Woman's Society of Christian Service of the North Arkansas Conference.

Reference materials are being provided each of those entering this enterprise. Materials are already being sent out to those who have accepted the invitation.

Three coaching conferences are to be held in September: Jonesboro, September 19; Searcy, September 20 and Fort Smith, September 22.

It is expected that not less than seventy-five training schools will be conducted throughout the conference during the fall and winter, using this course.

This is the foreign mission study course of the W. S. C. S.; and will

This is the foreign mission study in the fall. W. S. C. S. groups will want to check with their pastor to discover whether or not this unit is to be offered in the local church or in a nearby church, as the women can secure their council recognition by taking this course of study.

The following have already accepted the invitation: H. L. Robison, James R. Chandler, S. B. Wilford, James Beal, Floyd G. Villines, Jr., Elmo Thomason, E. J. Holifield, Miss Mildred Osment, Harold O. Eggensperger, Bennie Jordan, J. H. Holt, R. A. Dorman, Earl B. Carter, I. L. Claud, Ralph Hillis, Raymond Franks, Hubert E. Pearce, Pryor R. Cruce, Robert B. Howerton, Mrs. D. G. Hindman, R. E. Connell, Gerald D. Hammett, Miss Mary E. Chaffin, James E. Major, John S. Workman, N. Lee Cate, Alvin C. Murray Vernon E. Chalfant, J. W. Watson, David Conyers, Henry A. Rickey, Joel Cooper, Robert A. Simpson, George Wayne Martin, Alf A. Eason, William A. Stewart, W. Henry Goodloe, Jesse L. Johnson, Charles P. McDonald, Alfred A. Knox, Paul M. Bumpers, J. H. Hoggard, Fred G. Roebuck, Roy I. Bagley, Mrs. Roy I. Bagley, Archie N. Boyd, Worth W. Gibson, William Wilder, James S. Upton, and Ira A. Brumley.

District Christian Education Institutes

Five District Christian Education Institutes have been scheduled for the week of August 29 - September 2, as follows:

Searcy District, Searcy August 29
Batesville District, Batesville August 30

Jonesboro District, Jonesboro, August 31

Paragould District, Walnut Ridge, September 1

Forrest City District, Forrest City, September 2

Each of these meetings is to begin at 6:30 P. M. and close about 9:30 P. M. Each person is to make plans for his or her own meal as no arrangements are being made for

COULEY, MT. ZION HOLD VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

With an average attendance of fifty-one, the Couley, Mt Zion Methodist Vacation Bible School, which was conducted at the Couley Church, July 11-15, was brought to a close with a display of the articles made, and a picnic lunch at Durham's camp. There were fifty-eight present at the picnic. Mrs. Dovie Rikard was dean of the School.

The Kindergarten department, taught by Mrs. Alice Kelley and Mrs. Sally Garner, learned new Bible verses, made Bible picture booklets, flower vases and pin cushions.

The Primary department, taught by Nora Beth Kelley, Mrs. Cheston Stevens and Melba Ruth Garner, learned new Bible verses, made Bible booklets, spice holders, banners and birthday plaques.

The Junior Department, taught by Mrs. Gracie Little and Mrs. J. C. Cardozer, read Bible stories, made paper baskets, ash trays, broom holders and napkin holders.

The Intermediate Department, taught by Mrs. E. C. Strickland, studied the Last Words that Jesus Spoke on the Cross, made napkin holders, belts and vases.

Others helping in the School were: Mrs. Carroll Keiffer, Mrs. Jesse Mitchell, Mrs. Bertice Kelley, Mrs. Carlos Luther, Mrs. Belle Little, Michael Ray Little, and Alford C. Stevens. Refreshments were served each morning by Mrs. Bertice Kelley.

Rev. W. R. Akin is pastor of the Couley, Mt. Zion Charge.

—Mrs. E. C. Strickland

the evening meal. Each program is to begin with a worship service led by the respective district superintendent. Following the general meeting there are to be group meetings for the various class and departmental groups, as follows: Nursery workers, Primary workers, Kindergarten workers, Junior workers, Intermediate workers, Senior-Older Youth workers, Adult workers, and general officers, including church school superintendents, pastors, etc.

Miss Vera Zimmerman of the Department of Children's Work, General Board of Education, will be leading the Nursery workers. We are most fortunate in securing the services of Miss Zimmerman for these five institutes.

Rev. Robert Clemons of the Department of Adult Work, General Board of Education, will be leading the Adult workers. Splendid groups of adult leaders were in the district meetings last year, but we hope even greater groups will attend this year. Dr. James S. Upton, Conference Director of Youth Work, will be in the four institutes beginning with Batesville, the workers with Seniors and Older Youth.

The district superintendents of the respective districts and the Executive Secretary will be meeting with the General Officers.

Children's Workers are being secured to lead Kindergarten, Primary and Junior workers.

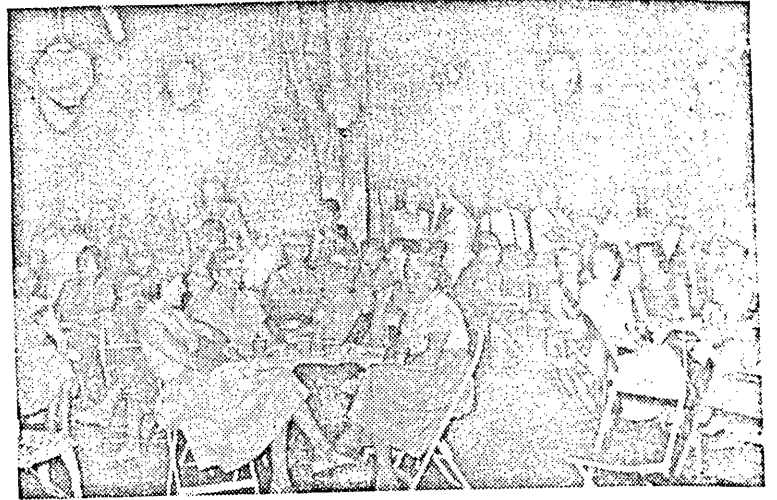
VACATION SCHOOL AT CROWVILLE AND BASKIN

The Crowville Methodist Church held its Vacation Church School from June 27 through July 1, with average attendance of 36. The theme for the week was "Living and Working together". The school closed with a program on Friday night, July 1.

The Baskin Methodist Church

Woman's Society of Christian Service

Paragould Society Holds Annual Picnic



Approximately 70 people attended the annual picnic and covered dish dinner of the Woman's Society of Christian Service and the Wesleyan Service Guild of the First Methodist Church, Paragould, July 7th on the lawn of the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Dollins, Linwood Drive.

The lawn was attractively decorated with Japanese lanterns and an array of colored balloons and the tables adorned with patriotic

colors, were centered with small flags. The Rev. S. B. Wilford, pastor, gave the invocation.

Members of the Elizabeth Trice Circle were in charge of the program and presented their version of the TV program, "I've Got a Secret." Rupert Blalock was master of ceremonies. This picnic was given in connection with the work of the committee on Christian Social Relations and Local Church Activities. Mrs. Ed Dollins is chairman.

FALL SEMINARS ANNOUNCED

Searcy

The Searcy District Woman's Society of Christian Service has set August 22 and August 25 for Educational Seminars to be held at Harrison and Cabot respectively. Registration will begin at 9:00 a.m. and the morning session will open at 10:00. Mrs. Walter Jimmerson, district president, will preside.

Literature for the new year will be on sale. — Mrs. C. C. Hunnicutt.

Arkadelphia

The Educational Seminar for the Arkadelphia District Woman's Society of Christian Service will be held at Grand Avenue Methodist Church, Hot Springs, on August 18 beginning at nine o'clock. Mrs. John Glenn of Murfreesboro, District Secretary of Missionary Education and Service, will preside over the meeting.

The opening worship service will be given by the district rural worker, Miss Polly Lassiter of Arkadelphia. Mrs. Glenn will present the program materials for the year and give general methods of teaching the studies. The Studies will be previewed by Mrs. Charles Lutterloh of Hot Springs. Mrs. Alvin C. Stone and Mrs. Allen Gannaway of Arkadelphia, and Mrs. R. E. Harris of Malvern. Mrs. Doyle Shirley, District Secretary of Literature and Publications, will be in charge of the literature.

President of the Grand Avenue Society is Mrs. Clarence Allen who will serve as Chairman of local hospitality committee.

held its Vacation Church School from July 11-15. Average attendance for the Week was 45. The school closed with a program Friday morning following by a picnic at the church.

Rev. S. B. Dampier is the pastor of the Crowville-Baskin Charge.

ZONE MEETING HELD

Monticello District

Officers Training Day was held at Kingsland June 23 for women of Hampton, Fordyce, Kingsland and Warren societies, with 30 in attendance. The meeting opened with quiet music by Mrs. Edgar Outlaw, and Rev. Edgar Outlaw, host pastor, led in prayer.

Mrs. Jack Thompson, Hampton, presided, and gave the opening devotional.

The group was served pot luck lunch in Fellowship Hall.

Mrs. Grady Hughes, district secretary of Literature and Publications, placed a floral arrangement at the altar and spoke of letting the church literature live.

Instructors were: Mrs. Horace Everett, Fordyce; Mrs. Searcy Harrell, Hampton; Mrs. Martin Hoyle, Warren; Mrs. John Nelson, Warren; Mrs. John Valentine, Fordyce; Mrs. Booth Hope, Fordyce; Mrs. Grady Hughes, Warren.

Mrs. Frank Thompson closed the meeting with prayer. The next meeting will be at Thornton.

Zone V, Monroe District

Zone V of the Monroe District met in Waterproof July 14 at 9:30 a.m. with Rev. John G. Gieck, host pastor, giving the opening prayer. Mrs. Fred Falkenheimer, zone leader, presided.

Mrs. W. E. Person, local president, welcomed the 41 members from St. Joseph, Waterproof, Ferriday, Clayton, Newellton, Wesley Chapel and Vidalia. Mrs. Clyde Smith, Vidalia president, gave the response.

Speakers for the occasion were: Rev. Gieck and Mrs. S. E. Cathey, district secretary of Spiritual Life. A skit was given on the work of the society. Lunch was served in Fellowship Hall.

The next Zone meeting will be held at Ferriday on the 4th Thursday in October.

ARKANSAS METHODIST

SOCKMAN URGES CHURCHMEN WORK FOR REAL - REVIVAL

One of the nation's best-known preachers called at Cleveland for church leaders and workers to turn America's growing spiritual hunger into a real revival. "Religion has become the great vogue in the United States but a vogue is not enough," Dr. Ralph W. Sockman, pastor of Christ church (Methodist), New York City, told some 5,000 Christian educators attending the 23rd quadrennial International Sunday School Convention. "Our best hope of a religious revival is through the pew rather than the pulpit," he said. "We have not enough preachers. . . We must count on laymen to do the evangelizing." There could be a mighty revival in America within a year, the clergyman said, if laymen would start talking about their religious experience "in the same straightforward way they discuss everyday affairs." Dr. Sockman said top priority must be given to the task of reaching American youth with religious instruction through the church and the home.

Public School Superintendents Ask More Stress On Religion

Public school superintendents from 35 American cities adopted a resolution in New York urging that schools make a greater effort to help students understand the importance of religion in their lives and aid them to build and live by a "system of moral and spiritual values." The resolution was one of nine comprising a statement drawn up by the 14th annual Work Conference for Superintendents of Schools sponsored here by the department of educational administration at Columbia University's Teachers College.

Predicts New Surge Of Church Building

A prediction that America will have 70,000 new churches and synagogues in the next ten years, costing six billion dollars, was made at Cleveland by a church building authority. Moreover, said Dr. C. Harry Atkinson of New York, the next decade will see 12,500 other church buildings go up at a cost of another billion-plus — most of them earmarked for religious education. Dr. Atkinson, executive director of the Bureau of Church Building, National Council of Churches, said the estimates are in line with reported current construction. He said they also reflect a national upsurge of religious interest that has swollen church and Sunday school enrollments to the greatest totals in history.

British Exchange Preachers Amazed At American Church Activity

Five British clergymen who are now in this country as exchange preachers said in New York they were amazed at the "tremendous activity" of American churchgoers. The ministers were guests of hon-

or at a luncheon sponsored by the National Council of Church' department of ecumenical relations. The Rev. Henry C. Snate, Anglican vicar of Whalley, Blackburn, Lancashire, said the British group had been impressed by "the great number of people who go to church, the distances they will travel and the lengths they will go to attend church, and the great amount of activity laymen undertake in the church."

Dog Tags To Spell Out Religious Preferences

Religious preferences of Armed Forces personnel will be spelled out on their identification tags in the future instead of being designated by a single letter, the Department of Defense announced in Washington. When it is impracticable to spell out the denomination's full name, "meaningful abbreviations" will be used. At present, the religion of service personnel is indicated on the tags by the letter "P" for Protestant, "C" for Roman Catholic, and "J" for Jewish. The letter "X" has been used for all other religions, and "Y" for those not desiring to have any religious preference indicated. Aim of the new policy, the Department said, is to "more appropriately identify members of faiths previously included in the 'P' or 'X' categories." Religious preferences are noted on identification tags to assure that chaplains, in an emergency, have a clear knowledge of an individual's faith so that appropriate last rites can be administered.

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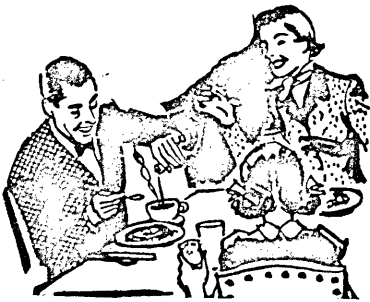
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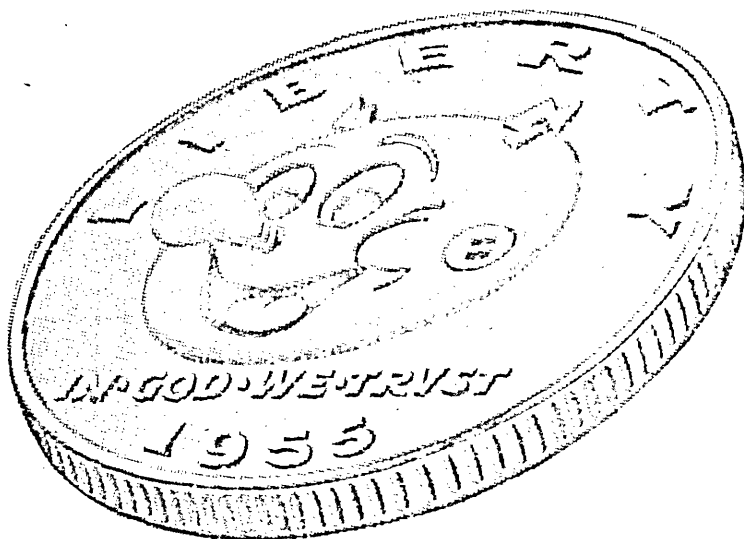
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REV. H. O. BOLIN

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LESSON FOR AUGUST 21, 1955

HOPE FOR THE DESPAIRING

READ THE ENTIRE LESSON FROM YOUR BIBLE

Isaiah 55

MEMORY SELECTION: *Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live.* (Isaiah 55:3)

This is the third and last lesson in UNIT VIII: "LESSONS FROM THE EXILE". It is well enough to note again the general aim of the unit: "To help men and women, through a brief study of the Exile, withstand temptation to conformity and despair."

The theme of the first lesson of the unit was "Loyalty Under Difficulties." The lesson material gave the account of the refusal of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to worship the idol, or image of himself that was set up by Nebuchadnezzar. For their defiance of the king they were thrown into the fiery furnace, but God took care of them and they came out without even the smell of fire on their garments. They were loyal in spite of difficulties and came out winner in the end.

Theme of the second lesson was "True to Conviction". The material of this lesson told of the wild party given by Belshazzar. A hand came writing on the palace wall. None of the wise men could read and interpret the meaning of the message thus written. They called for Daniel. Without fear or favor he read the message. He also rebuked Belshazzar for his failure to gain a lesson of the thing that had happened to his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel was true to his convictions even though telling the truth on this occasion might cost him his life.

This brings us to our theme for today - "Hope for the Despairing". The aim of this lesson is "To bring hope to adults who are inclined to despair over present-day world conditions and portents." This lesson is well chosen and the aim is very timely. We are living in a crisis time. Two great ideologies - paganistic Communism and Christian Democracy - are at mortal combat. These two ideologies will either have to learn to live together in the same world, or one of them will finally eliminate the other. Just now it seems that they are on the road to a program of co-existence. In the back part of the thinking of many people today there is the question "Is there any hope?" We can't help but believe that there is hope and we feel certain that hope is in Christ.

A Look At The Scriptures

Our Scripture today is the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. Some of the greatest Bible scholars insist that this is one of the most helpful chapters in the Old Testament. It is unsurpassed in all the realm of literature, whether in the Bible or out of it, for its beauty of expression.

The Bible passage begins with an invitation, and invitations to that which is good are always helpful. These Jews had been in captivity in Babylon for more than half a century. Many of those who had ori-

ginally gone to Babylon were already dead; those who remained had grown old. When they first arrived there they had high hopes of a speedy release. False prophets had encouraged them in this idea. They were told by these false prophets that they and their king, Jehoiachin, would be released and would return to Jerusalem in a couple of years. Years passed on and this prophesy was not fulfilled. The Prophet Jeremiah, who remained at Jerusalem saw that these false hopes were hurting the captives. He wrote to them insisting that the exile would last for many years and advised them to settle down in Babylon, build homes, marry, rear families, and take part in the social and political life of the country. They followed this advice and became very prosperous in their new-found home.

These displaced Jews became great traders. In the place of remaining a nation of priests they became a nation of merchants. This experience in Babylon was the beginning, on the part of the Jews, of becoming the greatest merchants of the world. That disposition remains to this day.

In 539 B. C. Cyrus became a great conqueror. The following year he took Babylon over, and then one year later passed a decree that the Jews might return to their homeland. They had been in Babylon for quite a while. It will be remembered that the first captives were carried there in 597 B. C. Then, a still larger group was carried there in 586, when Jerusalem fell. The final deportation took place in 581 B. C. It will be noted that the first group had been in captivity for 6 years.

The Prophet Isaiah lived and worked in Jerusalem. His active ministry covered a period of fifty years, beginning in 745 B. C. and closing with his death in 695. It will be noted that he died about a hundred years before the first deportation. He wrote the first 39 chapters of the prophesy that bears his name. A mere perusal of the Book of Isaiah will show that he began writing long before the fall of Jerusalem, while the chapter that forms the background for our lesson was written at about the time the Jews were to be freed to return to their homeland. Since the scholars do not know the name of the man who wrote the latter part of the Book of Isaiah, they call him the Second Isaiah.

With this information as a background, it will be well to restudy the fifty-fifth chapter of Isaiah. As stated above, the chapter begins with an invitation to come to the Lord. The exiles had become prosperous in their adopted land and were inclined to remain there and try to satisfy the longings of their souls with material things of life. The Prophet knew that they could never become thoroughly happy and

fully satisfied with such practices. He challenged them to put first things first; to set their affections on the higher values of life. They were spending their energy and wasting their lives on that which was not spiritual bread; food for the soul.

The Prophet believed that if he could get the Jews to return to Palestine, reconstruct Jerusalem, rebuild the Temple, and reestablish the true worship of God, all would be well. He felt that they would again become the great missionary nation of the world. Again they would be a nation of priests rather than a nation of merchants. With great earnestness the Prophet pled with the people to forsake their sins and return to God. He made wonderful promises as to what God would do for them if they would only obey him. The very root of their sins was materialism. Our generation is cursed with the same problem. This wonderful man of God pled to these wayward people with such earnestness and zeal this Scripture is said to be the most evangelistic passage in all the Old Testament, and it stands well with anything along this line to be found in the New.

Now, may we note again the aim of our lesson: "To bring hope to adults who are inclined to despair over present-day world conditions and portents." Do you get the connection between the teaching of this great chapter and the aim of the lesson? Here were some displaced people; individuals who had been carried away as captives to a foreign country. At first they were heartbroken. They longed for their home land. False prophets caused them to think they would soon return. Time passed on. Weeks, months, and years rolled by. More than half a century passed. Long before this time they had lost all hope of ever seeing their native land again. The Prophet came upon the scene with the revelation of the fact that in the midst and despair hope is in God.

Literally hundreds of thousands of people are in the grip of despair today. They are displaced people. They have either been carried away from their home land, or the governments of their countries have been taken over and they have been reduced almost to a condition of slavery. These people are not receiving anything like the kindness and consideration that the Jews received in ancient Babylon. Their hearts are broken. They are in the grip of despair. Is there any hope for them? The Prophet contends that there is. He feels that their hope is in God. It might be an eye-opener for those of us in the free section of the world to know just how many thousands of people who are virtually enslaved but who are placing their hope in God in our day.

Causes of Despair

One of the chief causes of despair in for individuals to try to build their hope on a false foundation. The Jews had done this very thing. They had not fully forsaken God, but they had attempted to worship him and receive his blessings while they refused to obey his commands. They thought they could have religion without morality. They felt that they were the chosen people of God and regardless of how they lived God would continue to favor them. They had not come to realize that nations as well as individuals reap what they sow. They had to learn this the hard way, and when as a

natural consequence of their sins they came to suffer great punishment, they felt that God had let them down and had forsaken them. This led them straight into the grip of despair.

Literally millions of people are building their hopes on false foundations today, and as these foundations fail - as they are sure to do - they will find themselves in the grip of despair. One of these foundations is paganistic Communism. This "ism" is setting itself up as a way out for the people of this age. It will fail; for it is operating on the theory that the problem of the world is economic failure, when as a fact it is moral failure. People can wallow in material things and still die in despair.

Another modern day cure all is Scientific Humanism. This "ism" defies the human race and leaves God entirely out of the picture. Its Bible is a book of science. It would turn all the forces, inventions, and discoveries of science into the betterment of the human race. It has no place for a personal God and therefore, prayer is eliminated. It has no place for a holy God who desires that his creatures be holy and therefore, the teeth are extracted from the conviction of sins. It will fail for sin is at the root of despair and it has no remedy for sin.

Still another modern, false foundation is Nationalism. Colonialism is over, and literally scores of countries which were once tied on to other nations are now declaring their freedom. This is especially true with great sections of Asia and Africa. These people are simply making a god out of Nationalism, but they will learn to their sorrow that nations as well as individuals can do wrong, and that wrong doing will bring nations into a state of despair just as same as it does individuals.

Still others are trying to build their hopes on Democracy. Mind you, this Democracy minus Christianity, and when Christianity is left out Democracy will no more keep nations of individuals from falling into the grip of despair than will the other "ism" mentioned above. To be sure, Democracy grants quite a bit of freedom, but that freedom can be greatly abused. It can be used in doing evil as well as doing good. As a matter of fact the freedom it grants is often used to do evil in the place of good right here in our own nation. Many conniving people abuse these freedoms by using them to take undue advantage of others. Democracy is not a safe foundation upon which to build hope that will forestall despair unless it is filled with the Spirit of Christ. When it is thus filled we have the assurance that the freedoms it grants will be used for good rather than evil.

It is very obvious to us that there are scores of people who are thoroughly sold on Democracy but will have nothing whatever to do with Christianity. They place their hope on education, legislation, and applied science. That is exactly where Germany placed her hope, and she went down. Russia is placing her hope on these same principles today. We feel that she will fail, and by the same token Democracy without Christianity will also fail. All of them fail at one and the same point, and that is, not realizing that the root of despair both for the individual and the nation is in sin. The hope of the world today lies in Christ for he alone furnishes a remedy for sin.