

Africo-American Presbyterian

AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH, AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.—John viii:32

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ABOUT FAIRFIELD SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTION AND SCHOOL OF METHODS

AN EXPLANATION

Within recent weeks I have received several inquiries as to why the Sunday School Convention and School of Methods of Fairfield Presbytery is not holding its coming meeting at Coulter Memorial Academy, Cheraw, S. C., where it has met for the past three years, and where the Convention at its last meeting voted unanimously to hold its meeting, July 10-13th, 1935.

That those inquiring and the public in general might, have the situation as far as we know it here at Coulter Academy, I am sending this word of explanation as a member of the Executive Committee of the Sunday School Convention and School of Methods, also as Principal of Coulter Memorial Academy.

A meeting of the Executive Committee was called by the President, the Rev. A. S. Powe, at the Sumter Second Presbyterian church, Sumter, S. C., March 27th, 1935. This meeting was called to arrange the program for the approaching meeting of the Convention. After the program had been arranged the President spoke at some length and with much effort and oratory called attention to the fact that the Convention must exercise rigid economy and by all means reduce the heavy financial burden now resting upon the people of the Sunday schools within the bounds of the Presbytery. At the close of his remarks a motion was made "To offer the housing committee of Coulter Memorial Academy \$1.50 for each delegate for board and lodging from Wednesday afternoon until Saturday afternoon." Heretofore the charge had been \$2.00 for the same time. Upon the passage of this motion I offered three objections, namely:

First: That I did not believe that the committee had the authority to change the rate of the board and lodging when the Convention itself had voted to return to Coulter Academy for the next session under the same conditions under which they had met here for the past three years.

Second: That I did not believe that the committee had the power to move the place of meeting of the Convention which had been selected by the unanimous vote of the Convention unless extraordinary conditions had arisen which made it unwise to hold the meeting at Coulter Academy, the place selected by the Convention itself. No such conditions had or have arisen.

Third: I objected to the motion on the ground that I did not believe that the maker and the supporters of the motion represented, as they said they did, a general complaint on the part of the people of the Presbytery that \$2.00 was too much to charge for nine full meals, and lodging for three nights, with plenty of ice water in every building on the grounds. This is what we have furnished at each Conference for the past three years as any one who has attended all of these meetings can testify. Yet these brethren say that the people say that \$2.00 is too much for the above.

The motion, however, prevailed and a majority of the committee voted to offer the Housing Committee of Coulter Academy \$1.50 for three day's entertainment.

I then and there notified the committee that we could not entertain the Convention according to our standard for the \$1.50 per delegate. But we would entertain them for \$1.50 each, which heretofore had been col-

lected from each delegate and designated as "board" and the 50 cents which had been collected heretofore and designated as "registration," making a total of \$2.00, which amount we have been receiving for the past three years from each delegate.

The President wrote me twice urging me to take the Convention for the \$1.50. However, I had already given the committee my word on that proposition.

Since the Committee meeting, on March 27th, 1935, I have not been notified of any subsequent meeting of the Executive Committee, yet there has just come to my desk a copy of the new program, which announces that the Sunday School Convention and School of Methods will be held at Kendall Institute, Sumter, S. C. It seems strange to me that these radical changes could be made without the Executive Committee being called together or consulted, either by letter or otherwise. I am told by the host of the Convention that the President and the Sunday School Missionary made the arrangements with him for this meeting. I am wondering by what authority do these brethren proceed. I am sure no such authority was voted them by the Committee or the Convention.

Now let us look at the economy: The new program which has just arrived has the following instructions to delegates. Expense items are:

"Registration, 50 cents.
"Meals and Lodging, \$1.50.
"Note books, etc., approximately, 50 cents.

"Each Sabbath school is asked to send 10 cents per capita.

"Each Christian Endeavor Society is asked to send 10 cents per capita.

"Any other organizations responding are asked to send 10 cents per capita."

These are the exact quotations of the financial instructions. You will please note that these are the identical financial requirements we have had for the past three years. Now where is the economy? How does this relieve the complaining people "who must be relieved of the financial burden."

Is there more economy in collecting \$2.00 from each delegate at Kendall Institute than there was in collecting the same \$2.00 at Coulter Academy? I think it is Dr. Yorke Jones who says that "Motives can never disguise themselves in methods."

I am giving this explanation to the press, because I wish to assure our friends and enemies, too, if there be any, that Coulter Memorial Academy has not receded one iota from her known policy of friendship and hospitality which have been her cardinal characteristics for all the years. We want you to know that we asked no more financial consideration for entertaining the Sunday School Convention and School of Methods this year than we have received each year since the organization of the school features with the Convention three years ago.

We have ever been committed to the service of the public in general and the great Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., in particular, which has given us our being. And, with faith in God, we fear nothing, and are ready to serve.

Since I began my ministry 27 years ago I have not missed a single meeting of our Sabbath School Convention, and God willing I shall be at the meeting at Sumter, July 10th.

G. W. LONG,
Cheraw, S. C.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CINCINNATI, OHIO, MAY 23-29.

(Report made up from the General Assembly Daily News and other sources.)

THE OLDEST AGENCY OF THE CHURCH

By Dr. H. B. Master
General Secretary Board of Pensions

(From Report to the General Assembly.)

The outstanding event of the past year so far as the Service Pension Bureau Plan was concerned was the crisis which developed in February, 1935, through the introduction at Washington of the Wagner-Lewis Bill, providing old age pensions for the rank and file of the workers of America. So short was the time between the introduction of the bill and its proposed passage that it seemed as though your own Board and all the other Pension Boards of the various Churches affected were practically helpless even when the existence of the Economic Security Act became known.

The first concession secured was the exemption of our churches from the Unemployment Tax of 3 per cent on the annual pay roll of each Church. That proposal was so unpalatably unsuited to the position and needs of our ministers and missionaries, and would have been so expensive, costing our own Church a sum which has been estimated to be as much as \$600,000 per year, that the government's committee of experts had little if any objection to granting the request of the Church Pensions Conference for exemption therefrom. An organization employing less than ten in its staff is not now subject to Unemployment Tax.

The Pastor and His Salary

What your board sought to emphasize was the fact that the relation of pastor and Church is not that of employer and employe, but something totally different. Every statement in our Form of Government bearing on this subject makes clear how utterly the pastoral relation differs from that of the ordinary wage relationship. That he may be free from worldly cares and avocations, he is granted a certain allowance.

There were certain serious objections by our Church to the Government Economic Security Act. It does not make any provision for a disability pension, or a widow's pension, or pensions for minor orphan children. The Service Pension Plan does provide all of these benefits. It is based on the most careful actuarial calculations, which were checked by the experts of one of the great insurance companies. In addition to all this, the government plan was not and will not be available for any man past 60 or when salary is more than \$250 a month. It will pay no pensions until 1942.

In the beginning the cost of the Economic Security Act is relatively low in terms of dollars, but high when the protection it does not offer is considered.

Making the Facts Known

Under all these circumstances it seemed best, and our duty, to send out a letter giving all the facts to the ministers of our Church and the treasurers of the local churches. This was done and the response was most heartening. Thousands of replies were received, and the general secretary read every one of them, including the postal cards, personally and made acknowledgment of every communication thus received.

It was the interest which so many of the brethren took in this matter and the letters

which they and their members sent to Congressmen and Senators which were largely responsible for the final victory.

A Change for the Better

So rapidly do events move, however, that the original Lewis-Wagner bill very soon gave place to the Wagner-Lewis-Loughton bill. The latter is an amended — a very much amended form of the first Economic Security Act. It contains the Amendment asked by the Church Pensions Conference, but a "title" or article which reads as follows:

"The following, however, are excluded: Agricultural, domestic and casual labor; service at sea, in federal or State governments or subdivisions and instrumentalities hereof, and

"Service performed in the employ of a corporation, community chest, fund or foundation, organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes, no part of the net earnings of which inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual." As already indicated this was not the amendment suggested by the Churches.

The new bill is a great improvement in many ways over the original bill, and if the amendment again proposed by the Churches could be incorporated will probably prove well worth a trial.

Disconcerting Facts

It should be noted already that your Board did not seek for exemption on the ground of traditional separation of Church and State, but only on the ground that our ministers were already protected by their own Church Pension system, which was working satisfactorily and had stood the test of years. The amendment to the bill offered by our actuary, George A. Huggins, asked only that those ministers be exempted who were at least as adequately protected by the Service Pension Plan as they would be under the Economic Security Act. The desire and the effort was not to exclude from government protection anyone not a member of the Service Pension Plan. That was a responsibility your Board felt it dare not assume.

Therefore it could only ask, in the language of the amendment, for what was felt to be in the best interest of all those covered by the Service Pension Plan. And when the government did finally exclude all Churches from the operation of the Economic Security Act we were told frankly that it did so because the government felt it could trust the Churches to do the right thing, the fair thing, in the matter of protecting all their paid, whole-time workers.

There is another fact deserving of serious consideration. Under the Economic Security Act there were a large number of workers in the churches — assistants, secretaries, visitors, janitors, etc., — whom the churches would have been forced to protect under the government compulsory plan. This group lost that opportunity for protection when the Churches were exempted. What now will be their status? From one of the government's experts came a communication to the effect that it was inconsistent for our churches which have so strongly urged social legislation to be unwilling to pay moderate contributions whereby "their janitors, secretaries and similar employes—would draw an annuity when old."

What was written in ignorance of the fact that your Board has already in operation an employe retirement plan to cover every paid whole-time employe of our churches, and in which already several hundred employes, not eligible for the Service Pension Plan, are registered, were again the exemption granted by the government does lay a heavy weight of moral responsibility upon our churches and other salary-paying Presbyterian organizations, to see that this class of workers is at least as fully protected as they would have been under the government plan.

Some Astounding Figures

At the close of the fiscal year, that is to say, on March 31, 1935, the Board was paying the astounding number of 5,711 pensions: 1,206 in the sustenance Department; 1,675 in the relief Department; 2,830 under the Service Pension Plan. The amount paid, including the support of the Homes and the Minister's Cottage at Albuquerque, was \$1,944,964. This does not mean there were 5,711 pensioners, but it is a record of which any Church may well be proud.

TO CELEBRATE SESQUICENTENNIAL

The 147th General Assembly on Saturday adopted a recommendation of the General Council reading as follows:

"1. That the General Assembly of 1935 authorize the General Council to prepare plans for the celebration of the sesqui-centennial of the General Assembly in 1938.

"2. That these plans include, if feasible, a special Memorial Fund to be raised in such a manner and for such objects as shall be hereafter determined.

"3. That it be made the occasion for the collecting and publishing of historical material throughout the bounds of the Assembly, the Stated Clerks of the several judicatories being called upon to lend their full cooperation and assistance to the Department of History in the formulation and execution of this important work.

"4. That the Presbyterian Church in the United States be invited to participate, in the earnest desire that these two great branches of Christ's Church may be brought in closer fellowship and cooperation through the realization of their common heritage.

"That the whole movement be permeated with an effort to advance the spiritual interests of the Church."

EMPHASIS FOR A NEW YEAR

The 1935-'36 emphasis for the Presbyterian Church on "Christ in the Life of the Church," approved by the General Assembly, calls each Presbyterian church to an examination and evaluation of its entire program. The purpose of this self-study is to discover how all the forces of a church may be more closely linked together for the most effective united approach to the task of the whole Church in facing present-day conditions. Effort will be to get each organization that is a part of the local church to think in terms of the whole Church as a unit having a total program to which each organization makes a contribution.

In addition to strengthening itself by unifying its organizations and programs, each church is asked to set itself to increase the efficiency of its lay-leadership, thus adding in large measure to its power for influence toward righteousness.

Some of the major questions that will need to be faced are these: What changes or improvements are needed in the methods which the Church

uses for accomplishing its task? Should the educational method be recognized increasingly as basic? How may greater warmth and spiritual vitality be developed in the Church's program and in the lives of its members? How can the local church organize all its forces and resources most effectively for its total task? What qualifications and preparation are necessary for all types of workers, if their service is to be most fruitful?

The slogan to be used with this emphasis is: "The Church Presses On"; in a day of widespread change the Church is restudying its program and moving forward.

A PASTOR'S MAGAZINE

Without debate but with a few negative votes, the Assembly adopted the recommendation of the General Council approving the plans for publishing for an experimental period of ten months a pastor's magazine which, Moderator Vance informed the commissioners, would in effect take the place of the discontinued Presbyterian Magazine. The plans embodying the report of the Special Committee on Periodicals of the Council provided, among other details, that a small, compact periodical be published weekly for ten months of the year, be mailed free to pastors to reach them every Monday morning and to contain devotional matter and news of the work and materials of the Boards of the Church.

(Continued on page 2)

PENNSYLVANIA GOVERNOR SIGNS EQUAL RIGHTS BILL

Harrisburg, Pa., June — (A. N. P.)—Despite the pleas of hotel and restaurant operators throughout the State, Governor Earle, Tuesday, signed the Reynolds Equal Rights Bill, thereby enacting it into a law.

The equal rights bill was introduced by Representative Hobson Reynolds, Republican of 47th Ward, Philadelphia, one of the five Negro members of the House, and carries provisions of fines from \$100 to \$500 and imprisonment for from 30 to 60 days for any restaurant, theater, movie house or public institution which refuses to serve or otherwise discriminates against any citizen of the State of Pennsylvania on the ground of race or color.

Immediately following the introduction of the bill in the House of Representatives the Pennsylvania Hotel Association got busy and members of the House and Senate were swamped with petitions, urging the defeat of the bill. The pleas fell on deaf ears and the bill was passed by both bodies, with the support of the Republican and Democratic members.

With the passage of the bill the efforts of the hotel men and other opponents were directed toward the governor and at the same time pressure was continued on the Senators and Representatives to such an extent that at the same time the Governor was affixing his signature to the bill enacting it into law, both legislative bodies had adopted a resolution recalling the bill. Under the law, however, no bill that has been signed by the governor can be recalled.

NOTICE

To Pastors and Church Sessions:

I am now available for evangelistic Services and Bible Lectures, and shall be pleased to serve city as well as rural churches and schools in any section of our great Church. Address:

REV. A. A. HECTOR,
314 West Clay Street, Richmond, Va.