

advertisements or the traditional church pages.

Without any formal newspaper training, she started her life's work in 1914, writing for the church press.

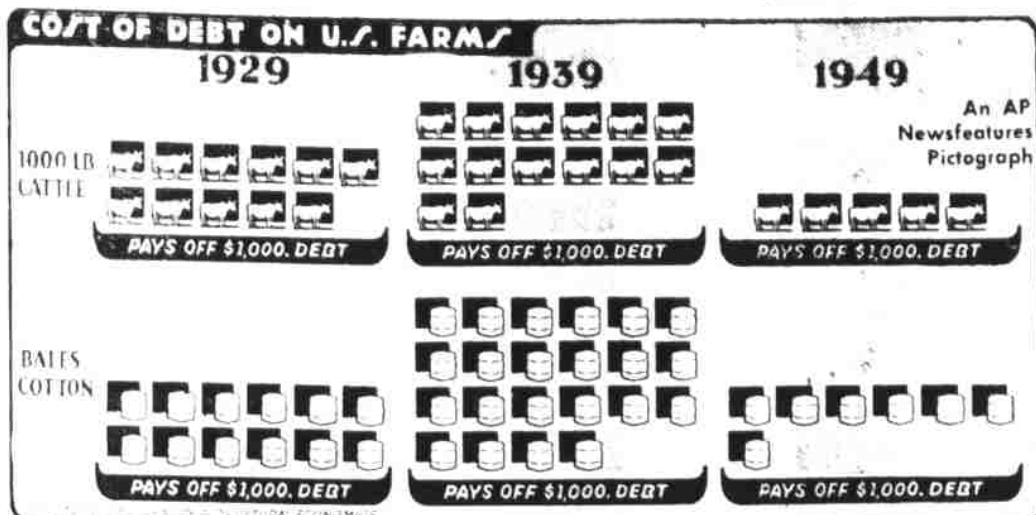
The idea for a church news service came to her four years later. While working with Dr. Elmer F. Clark on publicity for the forthcoming 1918 Centenary of Methodist missions, she realized that the churches were paying in advertising for what actually was straight news.

At the time she was in charge of the church press—writing for religious publications. The Methodists also had a section on "secular" press relations, dealing with the regular daily and weekly newspapers and magazines.

Church "news" as published in the dailies and weeklies, consisted largely of sermons delivered by local ministers. When a church group wanted to have an important announcement published, it bought space and advertised, like stores and theaters.

Acting on her idea, Mrs. Turpin sent questionnaires to hundreds of newspapers in her area.

The newspaper editors' replies were enthusiastic. They wanted



church news.

Armed with this information, she received the endorsements of the Methodist church boards which had their headquarters in Nashville.

In 1927 she was the only woman in the nation to be occupied in the gathering and distribution of religious news.

In the Unification of 1940, her headquarters became the Nashville branch of the far-flung Methodist Information Service.

In her work, her objective is simply to have her religious news stories competing for a spot on the front page with fires, presidential elections, and the other "big" stories.

"I don't like to see my stories on the church page," she said, summing up her campaign briefly. Her first summer as publicity director at Lake Junaluska produced an acid test of her crusade for news space for church events.

It was during the church's so-called "heresy" era. A minister from Canada, who had been invited to make a public address at the Assembly, expressed ideas which many church leaders at the time regarded as heretical.

Now these ideas are generally accepted without feeling. At the time, the minister's speech provoked a storm of controversy at the Assembly.

Mrs. Turpin was on the spot. Officials hoped that the speech would not be reported in the newspapers. It was her debut as the press agent.

But that was her job. The minister had made his statements before a public gathering. She made her decision after a period of agony.

The story appeared in several daily newspapers.

But Mrs. Turpin went on the spot again. Assembly officials took heart in the thought that the newspapers had garbled her version.

With considerable apprehension, she showed the officials copies of the story she had sent to the press. "It was a good thing in the long run," she said, reflecting on the incident.

The result was, excellent from every angle. Among the Assembly and church officials, it established her reputation as an accurate, honest reporter.

The newspaper editors recognized her as a "press agent" who could be counted on to give them accurate, complete information on events at the Assembly—not just the stories that glorified the institution.

Since then, there have been stories that would bring pain to the publicist. No institution likes to see its tragedies on a front page.

Mrs. Turpin early found the wisdom of releasing the facts from the institution's official source. During one season many years ago, a boy drowned in the Assembly lake. She immediately obtained all the facts and phoned it to the newspaper.

This was one of the cases which gave both the Assembly and Mrs. Turpin a reputation among newspaper editors of straightforwardness in handling the news.

Her attitude has won her the affection and respect of the working newspapermen on the more than 400 daily newspapers and scores of weeklies that publish her tremendous volume of Methodist

news. And, though she's never worked on a newspaper staff, she's accepted as a member of the family in newspaper offices all over the east.

"I can walk into the Associated Press office in Atlanta," she said, with a hidden note of pride, "and no one will take their feet off their desk or put out their cigarettes for me."

Someone will simply smile and ask "Would you like to use a typewriter, Mrs. Turpin?"

This mute affection for her is the result of her untiring efforts to ease the difficulties of newspapermen who come to cover an important church conference.

During the war, one of these sessions was scheduled for Atlanta. Mrs. Turpin's job was to set up a press room for the wire service and daily newspaper correspondents assigned to the conference.

Typewriters were hard to get then. Consequently, when she heard that 12 were being delivered to the press room, she was elated.

But reporters checking the room on the eve of the conference turned to her and said sadly, "We can't use these typewriters."

Ninety-nine percent of newspapermen use the "hunt-and-peck" system of typing.

Mrs. Turpin realized that the 12 typewriters had only blank keys—since they had been borrowed from a school for the blind.

While she was walking dejectedly down the street, she was struck by a solution to her problem when she saw a corner drug store.

Walking in, she bought several rolls of white adhesive tape.

All that night she worked, putting little strips of tape on each of the keys of each of the typewriters, and marking them with their proper letters and figures.

At 4 a. m. the job was finished, and the press room was in perfect order for the horde of newspapermen who would be swarming in a few hours later.

At another important conference, she saw a young reporter, who was ill, doze off in the middle of a significant discussion by high church officials.

Mrs. Turpin knew that the boy's paper wanted that story, and would fire him if he didn't get it.

Calmly, she went to work, took detailed notes as the newsmen slept.

When the session ended, she tapped him gently.

The reporter was stricken with dismay when he realized he had slept through the important meeting. But then he brightened immediately when Mrs. Turpin handed him a full, detailed report.

"They've done the same for me, too."

Competition between newspapers in the same city is traditionally sharp. And when one reporter intensely loyal to his own paper covers an event, then gives a copy of his story to the opposing paper, he's making the supreme sacrifice.

Yet that's what happened during another church conference.

Mrs. Turpin had agreed to cover the conference for the afternoon paper. But during one of the meetings, she was informed that there was a serious illness in her family.

A reporter for the opposing paper stepped in and resolved the conflict.

"You've been fair to us," he said.

The matter was settled. He made a copy of his own story and sent it for Mrs. Turpin to the competing newspaper.

Her tireless devotion to the church is in her blood.

She is a direct descendant of Edward Dring, one of the members of the conference that formed the Methodist Church in America in 1784. After he was converted in Ireland by John Wesley, founder of Methodism, he came to Virginia and founded the church there in Brunswick County.

Her husband, Cyrus W. Turpin, who was connected with the Methodist publishing house, operated the Book Store at Lake Junaluska many summers until his death in 1935.

Their son, Robert M. Turpin, is a successful attorney in Midland, Texas, and their daughter, is now Mrs. James H. Burke of Knoxville, Tenn., where Mrs. Turpin lives during the winter in what she calls the "mother-in-law wing" of the Burke home.

The veteran reporter, though confining herself to news of Methodism, has found herself on contact with good "straight" news stories.

While working at a conference in Wichita, Kansas, she went out late one night for her pre-bedtime "coke." Her objective was a store she knew stayed open late every night.

But when she arrived she found the place apparently closed. As she tried the door, a man dressed in what looked like a uniform told her rudely, "The store's closed for the night."

The next morning, a front page story made her realize that she had come to the store while it was being robbed. At the time she was trying the door, the operator was being tied up by friends of the man outside. The newspaper told her the place had been looted of its drugs.

Invaluable in her work is her keen sense of news values.

And these have been supported mutely in the way editors of responsible publications have handled the same subjects in which she herself saw news value.

For instance, last month she was scanning through a copy of Dr. Elmer Clark's new book, "Small Seeds in America," a survey of the many religious denominations in the United States.

She immediately wrote a concise, pithy review of the book and sent it to The Mountaineer and other newspapers.

That week-end, detailed reviews of Dr. Clark's book were carried by two national news magazines.

By her personal deeds, the public relations director should remain anonymous.

"He should play his subject up, not his own personality," she says. But, though unsought, recognition has persistently sought her.

Bethel Church Holds Membership Sunday

Seven children, young people and adults were baptized last Sunday as the Bethel Methodist church observed Membership Sunday.

The Rev. Clyde Collins, the minister, reported that 18 people joined the church as new members either by transfer of letter, profession of faith, or by reinstatement.

Several others, unable to attend last Sunday's services, will be received into the church later.

The pastor called the roll of the church, and each member present received a membership card.

Fines Creek Church To Have Homecoming

This Sunday will be Homecoming and Decoration day at the Hiram Rogers Baptist Church in Fines Creek community.

The members will decorate the church from 10 A. M. to 11 A. M., when the morning worship services will start.

Preaching the sermon will be Rev. P. C. Hicks of Canton.

Following the picnic dinner at noon, there will be singing by quartets and other groups, starting at 1 P. M.

The principal speaker will be the Rev. M. L. Lewis, pastor of the Hazelwood Baptist Church.

Last year, Bishop Garber called her before the huge group of delegates at a Methodist Conference in Columbia, praised her work, and asked her to say a "few words."

To the spectators who had risen in a body to their feet and applauded vigorously, she smiled.

"I've stood up for the Methodists many times, but this is the first time the Methodists stood up for me."

Methodists stood up for her again only a few weeks ago.

It happened during the Sunday services at the Lake Junaluska auditorium the morning after her pageant on the history of the Assembly had been presented to a capacity audience.

And it came as a distinct surprise.

Dr. Love casually referred to the pageant, then asked Bert Shree, of High Point, who directed it, to come forward.

Then he started to praise Mrs. Turpin for her part in the pageant, gave Mr. Shree a bouquet of roses, and asked him to present them to her.

As the congregation stood and applauded, she came forward to receive her award.

Sam Burgess, a young University of Georgia graduate, was appointed to fill her place as manager of the MIS Nashville branch.

And judging from the size of the letter which came today from the Lake Junaluska Assembly News Service, he's going to need all his energy to match the work of his predecessor.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Turpin says she's not planning not right now, anyway, to return as publicity director of the Assembly next summer.

"I've discovered," she mused, "that cooking is really a creative art."

In her "retirement" also, she is thinking about doing some fiction writing.

But, she believes, it's going to be somewhat difficult to turn from writing about what did or will happen to what could have happened.

"I am retired," she said again, and then added, somewhat hopefully, "But I am on call."

Christian Educator Says Roots Of Social Action Should Be In Bible

The Rev. M. Leo Bippy, of Nashville, Tennessee, expert in the field of Christian education for adult Sunday School classes, will be the featured speaker on the Lake Junaluska Assembly platform tonight, under the auspices of a southwide Leadership School for Christian Workers in session here until Tuesday.

In a discussion this morning, he said: "When the Bible has its rightful place in a program of Christian education, those who are caught up in a program will be interested in bringing people into the Christian fellowship."

"A continuous, comprehensive program of evangelism has its roots in the kind of teaching that ought to be a part of the program of Christian education in every church. If men and women are studying the Bible as they should, they will be interested in the preaching services of the church; they will give to the causes of the church because of their concern for men and women in the community and throughout the world."

"Out of this concern will flow those missionary interests that make it possible for each and every Methodist to have a part in a worldwide venture in extending the Kingdom of God."

"A program of social action in a Methodist church is no more an elective than is prayer."

"If a church guides its people in the Christian way of life, they will face the issues that confront them in their communities. They will not be able to live the Christian way of life and not try to do

Revival Set For First Methodist Church Here

Revival services will be held next week at the First Methodist Church of Waynesville, starting Sunday morning.

After the Rev. Russell Young, the pastor, preaches the sermon at the Sunday morning services, Bishop Paul Kern of Nashville, Tenn., will address the congregation at 8 P. M.

Dr. Pierre Harris, pastor of the First Methodist Church of Atlanta, Ga., will preach services Monday through Friday.

His first sermon will be at 8 P. M. Monday, and he will be in the pulpit for services twice daily thereafter, at 10 A. M. and at 8 P. M.

something about the political situation and the problems created by alcoholism, health hazards and other issues that confront them in their communities.

"A program of social action should have its roots in the teaching of the Bible that is going on in the local church."

"Whom shall we teach? The answer is all people. Through a study of God's Word and through the guidance that comes from teaching in the local church, we will discover how to make it possible for His power to channel in and through our lives."

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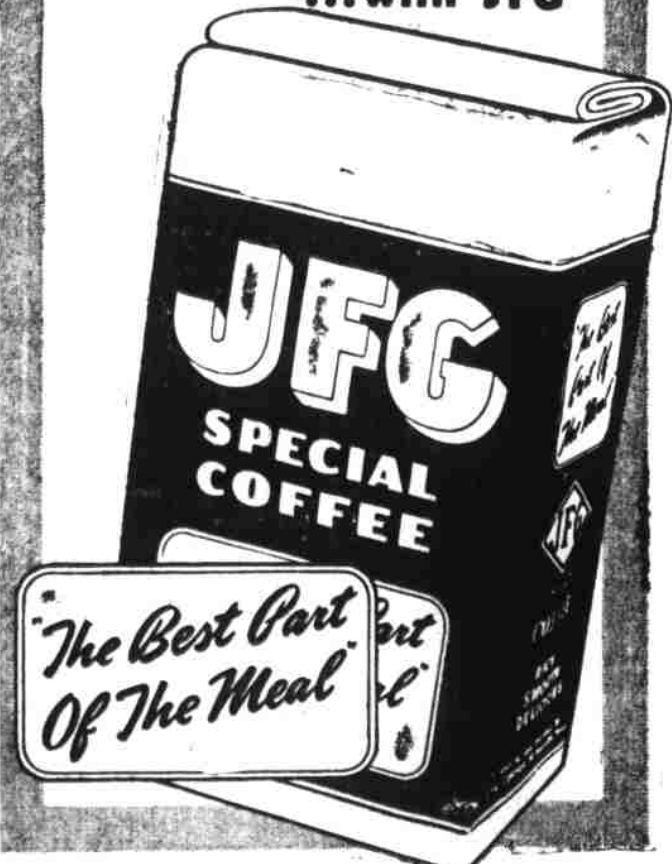
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