

The Presbyterian Outlook

Continuing The Presbyterian



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Early Assembly Actions

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MAY 9 1960

First Arkansas leader in 60 years is elected moderator of the 100th General Assembly in Jacksonville: Marion A. Boggs who completes the first team of brothers (with Wade H. Boggs) to be moderators. . . . Retiring moderator, Ernest Trice Thompson, calls for church leadership to set tone for society and presents joint "Message to the Nation" with UPUSA leaders. . . . Ad interim study on adult work is approved and committee is continued. . . . Benevolence budget for 1961 adopted for \$9,456,230. . . . Examination of tithing is directed. . . . Central treasureship to be studied. . . . Tobacco stocks held by agencies are left untouched. . . . Book of Church Order sent to presbyteries for vote as presented by committee. . . . Possible dual ordination (with Episcopalians) not recognized. . . . Per capita tax raised from 21¢ to 27¢ without discussion. . . . Formal induction of James A. Millard, Jr., as stated clerk is scheduled. . . . "Stewardship of accumulated possessions" called for by Presbyterian Foundation. . . . Annuities and Relief program is praised. . . . Presbyterian Survey circulation marks 228,000. . . . Ambitious plans noted in television, radio, audio-visuals. . . . Minister's moving expense is certified as a "church expense." . . . Protest of persecutions in Colombia is issued. . . . Request of Mexican church for full fraternal relationship is recognized. (Continued next week.)

The Presbyterian Outlook

OLD IN SERVICE

CONTINUING THE PRESBYTERIAN TRIBUNE

NEW IN SPIRIT

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Little Rock Pastor Becomes Assembly's Moderator

**Marion A. Boggs of Second Church
Is Elected by 100th Assembly
In Jacksonville**

An Arkansas "favorite son" was named moderator of the 100th Presbyterian, U.S. General Assembly, meeting in Jacksonville, Fla.

Marion A. Boggs, pastor of the Second church, Little Rock, since 1939 and with all but one year of his ministerial life spent in the Synod of Arkansas, became the first moderator from that synod since Joseph W. Martin, chief justice of Arkansas' Supreme Court, was elected in 1900.

Dr Boggs received 260 votes in a final ballot against R. Matthew Lynn of the First church, Midland, Texas, who received 251. The first ballot eliminated H. E. (Jeb) Russell, Second church, Memphis, Tenn., and James Sprunt, Bethel church, Staunton, Va. The vote was: Boggs 146, Lynn 136, Russell 135, Sprunt 94.

Gavel and Celtic Cross

Dr. Boggs was inducted into office by the retiring moderator, Ernest Trice Thompson of Richmond, Va. He was presented the symbolic gavel and the traditional Celtic cross which is held by successive Assembly moderators in the U.S. and UPUSA churches. The crosses were originally three until the 1958 merger of the U. P. and USA Presbyterian Churches when two of them were welded. Originally contributed by former moderator Harrison Ray Anderson, Fourth church, Chicago, Ill., consistent worker for Presbyterian reunion, they are reminders of the hope of eventual union of the divided Presbyterian family when the crosses will become one.

Dr. Boggs was nominated by President Samuel Burney Hay of Stillman College (Ala.) who paid tribute to Dr. Boggs' long and diverse contributions to the church. J. Randolph Taylor, Washington, D. C., pastor, seconded the nomination, describing Dr. Boggs as "a man of symbolic significance . . . a man who has become the epitomized expression of the kind of reconciliation that we in our General Assembly would serve and should serve in the light of our present day." As Little Rock has become a symbol to the world, he said, "so we have



DR. BOGGS: "A man of symbolic significance."

a symbol of the kind of ministry of reconciliation whereby we would obey the Pauline injunction to 'speak the truth in love.' " Dr. Boggs has been true to his prophetic insight, he said, "and yet at the same time has not lost the vision of his pastoral responsibilities and has held his laymen to him."

Dr. Lynn was nominated by Lawrence Stell, Charlotte, N. C., pastor, and Hubert H. Hopper, Dallas, Texas, Presbyterian executive, who described his far-reaching service and his identity with the full scope of the church's concern.

M. Graham Clark, Point Lookout, Mo., nominated Dr. Russell and the seconding speech was made by D. Brantley Burns, Knoxville, Tenn., elder. James Sprunt was nominated by R. F. Kepler, Staunton, Va., and Ralph E. Moore, Cleveland, Tenn.

Newspapers in Jacksonville had also predicted the nomination of Arthur V. Gibson, Atlanta, Ga., pastor, but it was understood that a decision against this step was reached on the afternoon before the Assembly opened.

When the Assembly opened, 513 commissioners had been enrolled and this number was later increased to 521.

Dr. Boggs' election marked the first time in the church's history that brothers

Mexican Fraternal Delegate Urges Consideration of His Church On Basis of Equality

have been elected moderators of the Assembly. Wade H. Boggs, Atlanta, Ga., former executive secretary of the Board of Annuities and Relief, now retired, was moderator in 1954.

In addition to the retiring moderator's sermon (page 5), Dr. Thompson also presented a joint "Message to the Nation," drawn up by a committee of eight, named by the UPUSA and U. S. moderators (page 8). This was something new in the Assembly's history and it was not presented for any possible action by the Assembly.

Riverside Entertainment

Albert J. Kissling, pastor of the host Riverside church, welcomed the Assembly, read a letter of greeting from Governor LeRoy Collins, and presented Howard Covington, chairman of the Riverside committee, who said, "I have often wondered why a General Assembly never repeated itself in a church. I now know!" A full corps of workers from Riverside and other Jacksonville churches provided efficiently and imaginatively for the comfort and expeditious operation of the Assembly. It was the judgment of commissioners that no church has provided more commodious and up-to-date facilities for this annual meeting.

In the extended first-evening session, the moderator received a plaque from officials of Boy Scouts of America, marking Scouting's 50th anniversary, in appreciation of the fact that a higher percentage of Presbyterian congregations sponsor Scout troops than any other denomination.

Chaplains Presented

Eighteen active-duty chaplains were recognized by the Assembly and tribute was paid their work in the Armed Forces and Veterans Administration.

Five former Assembly moderators were presented: John R. Cunningham (1947), C. Darby Fulton (1948), W. E. Price (1949), J. McDowell Richards (1955), William M. Elliott, Jr., (1957). Also, E. C. Scott, who retired last year after 24 years as the Assembly's stated clerk, was presented.

A MESSAGE TO THE NATION

ON THE OCCASION of the celebration of the 400th anniversary of the Scottish Reformation we, a joint committee appointed by the moderators of two communions sharing this heritage and grateful for their common tradition, address ourselves to the nation where God has set us to labor in the ministry of his Son.

We recall in this Jubilee Year the figures of John Calvin and John Knox and their witness to the truth that sets men free. We remember how Calvin transformed a city through his proclamation of the gospel and his concern for the whole counsel of God, and we are reminded how Knox summoned the church to be the instrument of Scotland's renewal. Nor do we forget that our fathers in this land, imbued with the same faith and filled with the same concern, sought to establish a nation under God that would take seriously his will for men and be an example in liberty and justice for all.

Divided Witness

We confess that the voice of our churches within this tradition has not always been clear, that our witness is often divided, and that we are involved in today's crisis and today's guilt.

We acknowledge the revolutionary character of the age in which we are set and the urgent necessity to deal creatively and forthrightly with problems in magnitude beyond anything that has been known to man.

We proclaim our faith in Jesus Christ as the sovereign Lord of history and our joy that today's revolutionary situation offers the possibility of confronting all life with Jesus Christ.

In the midst of this epoch we dare to address the nation in the confidence that it too, like the church, is ordained of God and has a ministry to perform. In fidelity to the Word of God we bring to your attention God's claim upon the world, his offer of forgiveness, and his summons to service.

I. This Is God's World

We affirm and rejoice in the assurance that this world is created, sustained and controlled by the God revealed in Jesus Christ.

God is the ruler of the universe. The so-called "space age" in which we live means, not that God is banished, but only that the scientist has used gifts conferred upon him by his creator to unlock some of the secrets of His world. When he sunders an atom or weighs an unseen star, he is but writing a footnote to the Psalmist's words: "The heavens are

telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1).

God is the Lord of history. In the disquieting course of human affairs today, with evil forces arising to disillusion the faithful and darken the fair face of hope, we cannot forget that in some of history's most somber hours God's mighty works have justified men's assurance that "The Lord our God, the Almighty reigns" (Revelation 19:6). We are confident today that, while we cannot desecrate the course of future events, the ruler of all our yesterdays is likewise the Lord of all our tomorrows. Despite all that seems to belie it, we are sustained by the faith that God is working out his purposes in our own troubled time.

II. Man, Created in the Divine Image, Has Sinned Against God

We proclaim the Biblical truth that all men are created by God in his image, called to sonship and service and made the objects of his redeeming love in Christ.

Every human being, therefore, is clothed with a dignity and endowed with rights which only God can give or take away. Under God men are *equal* in dignity, rights and worth, despite the disparity in their gifts, the variations in race, the differences in language and the distinctions of social, economic and national status. Moreover God made man, and deals with him, as a morally responsible person whom he summons to obey his holy will.

It is the human tragedy that men have been universally disobedient, that they have rebelled against God, that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). As a consequence, they forfeit the fellowship with God he created them to enjoy and live alienated from him and from each other and wrongly related to the world.

III. God Offers Forgiveness Through Christ

In mercy which only God could show, he came to this earth in the person of his son, took upon himself the nature of man, suffered death on the cross and rose again from the dead to redeem his estranged children. In humbly obeying the Father's will even unto death he bore the penalty of our sins. In resisting all temptation he won the victory over sin and in his glorious resurrection he triumphed over death. To all who repent of their sins and place their trust in him, God offers forgiveness and restoration to his favor and fellowship.

IV. God Summons Us to Obedient Service

1. In Marriage and the Home

He who created us male and female has also established and sanctified the institution of marriage. The union of man and wife is a sacred and binding relationship, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ and to be held in honor by all men. Two persons forming this union give to one another a solemn vow and covenant and, acknowledging the divine presence, call God himself to witness. Thus their union is not theirs lightly to esteem nor lightly to destroy.

We recognize the complexity of the problems, the strains and tensions, to which marriage and the home are subject in our modern culture. We therefore call upon the people of our nation, in the name of God, to accord these institutions the honor and inviolateness he intends them to possess. We remind all those entering this relationship that God commands them to preserve the sanctity of their own home, to recognize each other's dignity and rights in equal measure and, as sinful human beings to whom he offers forgiveness through Christ, to deal in charity with each other's shortcomings and offences.

The sexual relation is the creation of God and is not therefore evil in itself. Within the marital bond it is to be regarded not merely as a means of bringing children into the world but also as a divine provision for the mutual fulfillment of husband and wife.

The God whose creative grace makes possible the blessing of children through marriage likewise vests man and wife with moral responsibility in the exercise of their procreative function. This responsibility is intensified today by what is known as "the population explosion" and the threats to human welfare it involves. The bringing of children into the world is a privilege not to be lightly or selfishly evaded by married couples. On the other hand, the responsibility of prospective parents obligates them to consider well how their children are to be provided with that which will make for their best physical, cultural, moral and spiritual development.

If man and wife are not to be denied mutual fulfillment in the sexual relation, and if society is not to be penalized by the unplanned and irresponsible production of children, it will follow that access to information regarding the best methods of birth control is the right of all married couples, and the provision of this information the duty of a responsible society.

The fact that marriage is ordained of

God does not mean that all persons should marry. Nor does it mean that in all cases the fullest life is to be found only in marriage. Under God each person is called to his special service, and in some cases responsible obedience may involve remaining single. The contribution of unmarried persons to the welfare of human society has been an incalculable blessing.

2. In Man's Work

In a world created and ruled by God, it is the duty and privilege of every person to serve him in some activity with the gifts he has received. Accordingly, the Apostle Paul said: "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). Thus any worthy labor, whether of hand or brain, may become an individual's divine vocation. There should be no ultimate distinction between sacred and secular vocations—all worthy callings, accepted in the spirit of service to God and man, are sacred.

Any human endeavor may at times grow monotonous and sink to the level of a chore and in this day of mass production, of the assembly line and automation, many tasks may seem trivial and meaningless. But the recognition that all life may be lived to the glory of God can invest the trivial task with meaning and shed upon the meanest chore the light of high purpose.

We are summoned not only to see the significance of our work, but also to deal in love and justice with our confederates in work. We are called to remember that all men, whether representing management or labor, are equally endowed by God with dignity and rights. The command that we love our neighbor as ourselves means at the very least that these two groups, jointly engaged in production or in the service industries, should deal with each other in justice and, in its full dimension, that they should seek each other's welfare.

It is the duty of every individual, whatever his work or his role, to examine his practices and those of his group in the light of God's call to work as a divine vocation and as a service to humanity.

This will surely mean that the need and welfare of society as a whole, and not just the interests of separate individuals and groups, will remain a paramount concern.

3. In Race Relations

"God shows no partiality" (Romans 2:11). All men are created in his image, equally precious in his sight and the objects of his redeeming love in Christ. God summons us, therefore, to recognize their dignity and equality before the law, acknowledging their right to an equal opportunity for development and service.

No human differences, such as the color of men's skins, can annul the fact of their essential equality or justify any discrimination based on the denial of it. Let us remember also that beyond the call to justice God calls us to love our neighbor as ourselves and to recognize that anyone in any kind of need is our neighbor.

In our land where men of many races, nations and religions are met together we face what is perhaps an unprecedented opportunity to fashion a society which manifests the God-ordained equality of men. We are divinely challenged to resolve the racial tensions that characterize the world, jeopardize its peace and prejudice the development of individuals and racial groups. Foremost in this endeavor should be the church. In her worship and organization and in the institutions to which she is intimately related racial discrimination has no place and all aspects of her life should be governed by love.

4. In International Relations

It is the will of God that men should live in peace with one another. War is the supreme, the all-inclusive evil in human society. We should, therefore, spare no effort to avoid all misunderstanding, hostility, avarice and national policies that might make for war. Of urgent and crucial importance is the cessation of the race in armaments, especially between our nation and the U.S.S.R.

We are not suggesting that our nation unilaterally disarm, but we call upon

her leaders and all her citizens to seek with other peoples every possible means of halting the production of instruments of destruction that threaten the survival of the human race on this planet.

We are not helpless. We call upon the leaders and the citizens of our nation to strive in every way possible to promote goodwill and to cement friendly relations between our people and the other peoples on the globe. The loyalty and service we owe our own country are best fulfilled when we see ourselves also as citizens of the world, acknowledging our obligation to all men and seeking, under God, a true family of all nations.

V. God Summons Us to Repentance

We have fallen far short as a church and as a nation in furthering obedience to God's will in the crucial areas of marriage and the home, of man's work, of race and international relations.

As a church we recognize that judgment begins in the House of the Lord and confess our full involvement in the world's failure and guilt. We have been insensitive, exclusive and often irrelevant. We have been so preoccupied with our forms and programs that we have refused to take seriously our mandate to love and serve the world God loved and for which Christ died. We confess our need for continuing, earnest study of these great issues and, in fidelity to our Reformed Tradition, the church's need for further reformation.

As a nation we acknowledge that we have sometimes been generous, but with mixed motives, and that we have been unwilling to make the costly sacrifices requisite to being a true servant of mankind. We have become soft and undisciplined. We have been more concerned with the threats to our national life from without than we are with the more serious dangers arising from our own lack of integrity. In a day in which world leadership is thrust upon us, we are inadequate to meet its demand.

Let us as a church, as a nation and as individuals heed God's call to repentance and to renewed obedience. Let us realize that the unprecedented temporal blessings we enjoy as favors of God do not necessarily bespeak his approval of our life and conduct. Let us listen to what he may be saying to us through the very forces which have arisen against us and which threaten our security from without and from within. Let us see in the changing order of our day not only God's judgment upon us, but also a reminder of his unfailing mercy and his promise of new possibilities for freedom, order and justice. Let us return to the holy and loving God whose we are in true repentance, in undying hope and in glad obedience. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

NOTE—Moderators of the two Presbyterian (U.S. & UPUSA) General Assemblies enlisted the help of the following men in drawing up this Message to the Nation:

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