

## Chapter 18

## CONFERENCE CAMPAIGNS

At least seven Conference-wide campaigns for funds were conducted while I was in the Treasurer's office. Most of these efforts have involved a great deal of pre-campaign planning as well as a heavy load of additional work on the office during the actual campaign and during the collection period.

A campaign usually is proposed to the Annual Conference because a special and specific need for capital funds exists. There are times when two or three different needs surface at the same time. It is the prerogative of the Annual Conference to determine the time period to be given to a certain campaign. In order to avoid having two appeals too close to each other, the Conference may determine several years ahead what campaigns can be scheduled. A Conference rule prohibits a campaign among the churches without Conference approval.

Once approval has been given and dates are set the intensive planning starts. Usually there will be two leaders involved. One is the chairman of the Campaign Committee who is the spokesman, and the other will be the director. In at least four of the Conference campaigns a professional director has been employed. The firm that has been used for all our Conference campaigns when outside professional leadership has been used has been H. P. Demand and Associates of Evanston, Illinois. This firm specializes in Institutional fund raising. It is oriented more toward Methodist organizations, churches, conferences, colleges, hospitals, etc. than is any other professional fund raising organization. Mr. Demand has been a long time member of First Church, Evanston and was recommended to us originally by Dr. T. A. Stafford, Executive Secretary of the Board of Pensions.

The first Conference-wide effort at fund raising was an emergency in 1934 when it came to light that the money raised by apportionments to the churches in 1933-34 for pension payments during 1934-35 had been used for other purposes. The effort known as the Loyalty Campaign succeeded in raising about \$100,000. This was accomplished under leadership of a Conference committee without professional help.

The first Conference-wide campaign with some outside help was known as the Sanctuary Crusade. It was a double purpose campaign. The first purpose was to get churches to reduce their debts. The second purpose was to pay off the indebtedness of the All Nations Foundation (\$38,500) and the Plaza Community Center (\$27,000). The outside help came from Dr. F. W. Mueller, Executive Secretary of the Church Extension section of the National Division of the Board of Missions in Philadelphia. His advice and help was without cost. It is doubtful that we could have had the measure of success that this campaign enjoyed without his help. Dr. James E. Dunning was chairman of the campaign committee. Indebtedness

on the churches June 30, 1941 was reported at \$1,830,350. This total was reduced more than \$1,500,000 in three years. In addition, another half million was raised for new buildings and improvements, and the \$65,500 indebtedness on the two institutions was paid off in full. Altogether more than two million dollars were raised by this crusade.

In the early forties interest was developed in a new Ministers Reserve Pension Plan which had been authorized by the General Conference and which was to be administered by the General Board of Pensions. There were two basic options. An Annual Conference could enter the plan for all its members, active as well as retired. The cost of funding service rendered in the future from the date of entry into the plan was relatively simple. It would cost the Conference nine per cent of the average salary of the Conference per member per year. That total was relatively what the Annual Conference had been apportioning for its claimants annually under the former plan known as the Current Income Plan. The real problem was to find the funds to cover all past service of active and retired men which would have to be funded. To begin with no Conference could see its way clear to carry the double cost involved, and so a second option was offered. It was called the Partial Entry Plan. It involved entering new members into the Reserve Plan as they came into membership in the Conference and at the same time continuing the Current Income Plan of apportionments to the churches for retired members, widows and dependent children. It was computed by the Board of Pensions that to fund the cost of new entrants in the Reserve Plan would require \$546,000. A committee recommended to the Annual Conference that a campaign for a total of \$840,000 be authorized for the early part of 1944. Mr. John Yates, lay member of the Wilshire Church, was the general chairman. Inquiries had been made about various fund raising organizations. When the recommendation from Dr. Stafford was received it was decided that Mr. Yates and I should meet and interview Mr. Demand. I had a meeting to attend in the Board of Pensions office in Chicago and Mr. Yates arranged a trip east at the same time. We met in Dr. Stafford's office and we were greatly impressed with Mr. Demand. He knew all the angles of Conference organization. His background was originally as an executive of the Y.M.C.A. He was a large man physically as well as mentally and spiritually. Neither Mr. Yates nor I had any reservation in our report to the committee and recommended that the Demand organization be employed. The dates were set for April 14 to May 20, 1944. This was during the session of the General Conference at Kansas City. The intense preliminary organization and preparation was all done before I left for Kansas City. While I was gone for three weeks, my absence was not felt in any way. I kept in touch with Mr. Demand by letter and by phone. The campaign was highly successful. More than one minister testified to the fact that after the campaign was over in his church there was no distasteful after effect. Everybody seemed to feel good about the whole experience.

The 1948 General Conference adopted a program known as the Advance for Christ. It was a combination plan involving raising about \$25,000,000 for use nationally and overseas plus the needs of each Annual Conference

for whatever was planned as its own Advance program. The Conference Advance Committee was chaired by Dr. Fred Trotter. Our total objective including our share of the General Conference amount worked out to be \$1,100,000. Again the leadership of Mr. H. P. Demand was sought. The campaign was scheduled for October 11 to November 24, 1949. One of the features of the Demand campaigns was a series of sub-district rallies when ministers and lay officers of the local churches could be oriented to the reason for the campaign and how they were to fit into it. The questions and answers period was always lively and helpful. Usually I had the happy responsibility of answering the questions, particularly those related to the financial aspect of the campaign. It was a great privilege to be so closely associated with Fred Trotter who was one of my closest ministerial friends. The campaign succeeded in raising slightly more than the objective.

In the early 1950's the tremendous Church Extension program of the Conference was in full swing. One great need which was unmet was for a fund which the Conference Board of Missions could use in making small loans to new churches to supplement the primary loan from the National Division or a bank. Almost in every case between the time estimates of costs were made upon which loans were negotiated and the time a building contract was finalized, costs were up so that the church involved needed an additional five or ten thousand dollars before it could go ahead. Mr. George Steed of Alhambra, one of the great laymen of our Conference, and I were on a train one day going to Buck Hills Falls, Pennsylvania for a meeting of the Board of Missions. George and his brother, Roy, who were the brothers in the Steed Bros. Construction Company, were interested in establishing some kind of a memorial to their parents. Their father was a ministerial member of the Conference and had only shortly before been killed by an auto just a block from the Headquarters. We discussed several ideas including a scholarship plan. Then I proposed that they give the first memorial gift to establish a Revolving Loan Fund for the Conference Board of Missions. The idea appealed to them and under the chairmanship of Dr. James E. Dunning such a plan was commenced. The need was so evident and the idea so well accepted that a plan to raise several hundred thousand dollars was discussed. This resulted in a movement known as The Bishop's Prospectors. Mr. Verne Orr, Jr. acted as chairman. He and Bishop Kennedy held a series of meetings across the Conference and succeeded in getting over \$400,000 subscribed. Other memorial gifts were added from time to time. This will be described in detail in another chapter. The Revolving Loan Fund proved to be a most valuable tool in meeting a need which the Board of Missions had.

In 1954 great interest was building up to find a way of completely funding the entire pension responsibility of the Conference in the Ministers Reserve Pension Fund Plan. A strong study committee had been established with Dr. Everett Palmer, pastor of First Church, Glendale as its chairman. Negotiations were conducted with the General Board of Pensions for a plan whereby the money raised in 1944, which had not all been used, could be added to other reserves on hand and the balance of the obligation amortized over a period of time. The Board had an actuarial computation made and told us the total cost of funding all past service

to be paid out over a period of thirty years would be slightly over four and one-half million dollars. This plan would mean a sharp increase in annual pension apportionments, but it would result eventually in a much better pension plan with far greater stability than the Current Income plan. The proposal did not involve a campaign for funds except that the apportionments would be greatly increased. A series of 27 sub-district meetings was set up in the early part of 1956 for the purpose of explaining this complicated proposal to the leaders in the Churches. There was to be a team of three to go to each of the meetings. One member of the team would preside, one would bring an inspirational message appropriate for the occasion, and one would make the presentation of the idea and answer questions. The responsibilities were worked out for each member of the committee to go to three or four of the meetings - except me. I was to go to all 27 to explain the nitty gritty of the plan. It was time consuming and took a lot out of me. There was a lot of negative reaction in the meetings and many predicted defeat at Conference. It was adopted by the Conference without a dissenting vote. In the 1956 Journal there are just four lines about it. It reads: "Everett Palmer reported for the Pension Study Commission calling upon J. Wesley Hole and Dr. Charles Calkins, Board of Pensions, Chicago to speak to the report. It was adopted." Obviously, all the efforts we had put in to take the message of need and the proposed solution to the grass roots of the Conference were worthwhile.

Another Conference interest that has always existed is Theological Education. Late in the 1800's the Conference established the Mackay School of Theology in San Fernando. It later became the School of Religion at the University of Southern California. The University was always considered a Methodist institution. Until in the late 40's a majority of the Trustees were required to be Methodists. However, the Trustees had the authority under their Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws to amend these provisions. A large bequest had been made to the University on condition that it be a non-sectarian University. The Conference had not supported the University financially for many years. Consequently, the Trustees amended their Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws to terminate whatever relationship still existed with Methodism. A very humorous (to me) incident occurred after this action was taken by the Trustees. Bishop Baker was highly incensed over the action. He wrote a letter to Dr. Von Kleinsmid that really scorched the paper. Before he mailed it he wanted Dr. Walter Buckner to read it. After Dr. Buckner had finished reading it he said "It's a mighty fine letter. Too bad it isn't based upon facts." The letter was never mailed.

The relationship of the School of Religion to the Conference had not been very close during recent years and now was even farther from being satisfactory. The University turned it into an undergraduate department and the Conference was faced with the necessity of establishing its own School of Theology. I didn't have much to do with that whole process so I won't go into detail about it. A Conference search committee was established, and after considering eight different proposed sites for a School of Theology it selected a site in Claremont - and the School of

Theology at Claremont was born. Obviously, it needed financial nourishment and the Conference approved a campaign for 1958-59 for \$1,000,000. Dr. Will Hildebrand and Judge Donald A. Odell were named co-chairmen. A contract was worked out with the H. P. Demand organization and Rev. Allen Carter, who was at that time a ministerial member of the Virginia Conference and was vice-president of the Demand organization, was assigned to the campaign. Dr. Hildebrand proved he had financial leadership qualities and acumen which surprised a lot of people including me. I had always admired his sense of worship and knowledge of ritual, but I hadn't seen him in action before on a great financial drive. Later during the ten years we worked closely on the Board of Missions of the Conference we became close comrades in many different situations. I said in an article that was published in February of 1959 - "In planning the campaign the finest leadership possible was sought. Dr. Will Hildebrand and Judge Donald A. Odell, two of the sterling leaders of our Conference, were selected as co-chairmen. One million dollars will be subscribed and the School of Theology at Claremont will be built." And it was! A total of \$1,100,000 was subscribed - 10% over the goal.

Another pressing educational need developed in the early 60's when the Conference undertook the sponsorship of California-Western University in San Diego. This need plus an urgent need for more church extension money were combined in the Campus Church Crusade of 1962-63. The chairman of the committee was Dr. Ed Reeves who was Superintendent of San Diego District. The H. P. Demand organization was again contacted for leadership and Allen Carter was again assigned as Director. The goal was for two and one-half million dollars. Allen Carter turned out to be just what was needed for this effort. He was originally from the former South Church. In his early ministry he had been Assistant General Secretary and Treasurer of the General Epworth League of the former South Church. Later he was a Regional Director of the American Red Cross and then became a part of the Demand organization. He was a good churchman and had all of the innate shrewdness of the politicians of the South. He was as resourceful as any man I ever worked with. He was a real "find" and was a great teammate. Allen and Mary, his lovely wife, became two of our closest friends. Again the effort was a great success. A total of \$2,561,729 was pledged.

Campaigning for funds is not my first love. I must admit I enjoyed the fellowship with strong leaders that was involved. I enjoyed the sub-district orientation meetings and it was a source of great joy and satisfaction to receive the funds and see what was accomplished with them. When it is all put together, over \$8,000,000 resulted from the campaigns with which I was associated. And, as the boys say, "That ain't hay!"

## Chapter 19

## PRE-CONFERENCE LAYMEN ORIENTATION MEETINGS

A feature of Methodist organization which was "born" at the Uniting Conference was the use of "Lay Leaders" on the local District and Conference levels. This idea came from the former South Church where it was used quite successfully. It took a while to really become useful in some of the former Methodist Episcopal Churches. As a matter of fact, there was outright resistance to the idea on the part of a few former M. E. pastors. The existence of a "lay leader" in a local church seemed to create insecurity on the part of some pastors. I heard one say, referring to the lay leader: "The more he lays and the less he leads, the better I like it."

On the Conference level Donald A. Odell, Conference Attorney, served as the first Conference lay leader. He was succeeded by Alpheus B. P. Wood, a retired business man in the Wilshire Church. Alpheus was the son-in-law of Bishop McIntyre. He had lots of free time and seemed to thoroughly enjoy the responsibilities of the office. While he never blatantly abused the privilege of being on the inside, so to speak, as far as knowing what was going on in the political life of the Conference was concerned, he thrived on being the first to know of some development. I spent a lot of time with Alpheus talking over many ideas. He never appeared to be very aggressive but he always seemed to know how to get a job done or he knew how to find the one who could and would get it done.

Another important change in the status of laymen that was developed in 1939 was that instead of being "delegates" to the Annual Conference, the lay representatives elected by the churches became "lay members" of the Annual Conference. This new status gave the laymen equal rights, privileges and responsibilities with ministerial members except that lay members were excluded from an Executive Session of the Conference when ministerial qualifications and relations were handled. This was a kind of "professional" session for ministers only.

One problem Alpheus and I discussed several times was that lay members would come to Conference completely in the dark concerning proposals that were being made by various Boards and Committees. Ministers had the advantage of having various ministerial associations and groups which met regularly and at which the proposals coming before the Conference could be discussed.

We finally came up with two ideas to help the lay members to become better informed before they went to Conference. One was to have "Preliminary Reports" published and distributed to all members of the Conference - lay and ministerial - before the Conference met. This placed a good deal more work on the Conference Secretary prior to Conference. It meant setting a deadline date of April 1st for reports to be in the hands of the Secretary in order that he could get them printed and distributed before June 1st. Obviously, some proposals would be developed after April 1st that could not be included in the printed Preliminary Reports. On the other hand, it was

a great help to lay members to have the information to study before going to Conference.

The other proposal I made to Alpheus was that we hold a series of pre-Conference District meetings of lay members for the purpose of briefing them on the issues coming up. We would have to use great care to see that the meetings were for the sole purpose of information and that there be no propagandizing.

The Board of Lay Activities, which was Alpheus's Board, sponsored the meetings. At first a team of men went to present the various matters. After a year or two only Alpheus and I would go. Alpheus would open the meeting, explain the purpose and then turn it over to me. I would have picked out the controversial issues, would explain both sides of the issues and then answer questions. We would start at 7:30 and finish by 9:30, but we never had enough time. Because many lay members could not get to one of the earlier meetings, we had a final session on Monday morning, the day Conference opened. Usually this session would have more than 100 persons present which meant it was more of an address on my part than a discussion.

In order to cover the Conference in less than two weeks, we had to use every night. In Arizona we would have a meeting in Tucson early on Sunday afternoon and one in Phoenix at 7 p.m. I would catch a plane about 9:30 and get home about midnight. After Hawaii became a District we added another weekend to the series. We would have a meeting in Hilo on Friday night; one on Maui Saturday afternoon; one on Kauai Saturday night and one in Honolulu Sunday night.

We averaged ten meetings each year and we did it for twenty consecutive years. It was a rough schedule coming as it did at the busiest time of the year.

After Alpheus retired Hubert Orton became the Conference Lay Leader and he continued with the meetings where Alpheus left off. Several times exponents of some particular program or emphasis made an effort to "crash" our meetings. We never allowed that to happen. Occasionally I would be accused of slanting my presentation on one side or the other of a controversial issue, but for the most part my audience could not detect my personal opinions. I certainly tried to keep my own feelings unknown.

After 1968 the Board of Lay Activities was named the Board of the Laity and became a part of the new "Program Council." There had been a great surge of the philosophy of "self-development" and "grass roots participation" in programming. This movement had a jargon of its own that left me cold. I guess the leaders of the Program Council sensed my inability to interpret their philosophy. At any rate they insisted on having one of their number attend these pre-Conference briefing sessions. This was possible because the Board which sponsored the meetings was now subservient to the Council. Dr. Lawrence Hinshaw, who was serving as the Conference Director of the Program Council, went along on the 1970 and

and 1971 sessions and expounded on his "inferential participatory style of input." My final series was in 1971 just before the Conference session when I retired. The kind of meetings we had conducted for twenty years were finally put to rest. In place of them, various caucuses of District and of ethnic groups were set up.

While I thought the meetings were worth-while and I regretted seeing them discontinued, I recognized that they were victims of a change in philosophy that swept across the whole Church. I am grateful to have had the opportunity for twenty years to help lay members better understand their responsibilities, and I am glad that the movement which did away with the idea did not develop while I was still in the Conference office.

## MY REGULAR JOB

If you have read this far you may be wondering just what my regular job was. Much of what I have already written about came under my regular responsibilities-but much of it was also extra-curricular.

Before I came into the office in 1934 the General Conference had adopted legislation which allowed an Annual Conference to designate its Commission on World Service and Finance as the depository for the funds of all Conference Boards and Agencies. This was referred to as a Central Treasury Plan. Such a plan had been developed in our Conference in 1928. Consequently, when I became the Treasurer of the Commission I also became the Treasurer of all the Boards and Agencies of the Conference with the exception of the Women's Society of Christian Service.

There was prior to 1934 an odd custom of having a different person elected as Treasurer of the Conference as compared to the Treasurer of the Commission. The Treasurer of the Conference functioned only during the Conference session which in the early days would last for as much as ten days. He would receive the final remittances of the year from the churches at the Conference session. He had an assistant for each district and these assistants did a great deal of work in receiving the reports, counting the money and tabulating all the records. The report of the Treasurer would include what had been paid into the office during the year plus what had been turned in at Conference. The fiscal year closed June 30th and since Conference was usually held the third week of the month some funds were received even after Conference had adjourned. The Treasurer of the Conference session would turn his records over to the Treasurer of the Commission who would integrate the records received into the permanent books.

Two major changes were made soon after I became Treasurer of the Commission. The practice of having another person serve as Treasurer of the Conference session was discontinued and the Treasurer of the Commission served through the entire year. The fiscal year was changed in 1943 to end May 31st so that all records were closed and reports were completed before we went to Conference.

Another fiscal report which was received from the pastors and was tabulated at the Conference session was the annual statistical report of each church. Again the Conference Statistician had a staff of assistants to do the work. Any similarity between what was presented as an annual statistical report and accuracy was purely coincidental. When the man who had served as statistician for many years was to retire, someone proposed that the work become the responsibility of the Treasurer's office. Consequently, I became Conference Statistician as well as Conference Treasurer.

The office was operated as a joint responsibility of the Commission on World Service and Finance and the Conference Trustees who managed the Endowment Fund. My title with that fund was Executive Secretary and

Treasurer of the Conference Corporation. Most of the employees in my office did work for both organizations. Consequently, for many years the costs of the office were divided one-third being paid by the Trustees and two-thirds by the Commission on World Service and Finance.

Whenever some major problem arose that required a joint decision, a joint meeting of the two groups would be held. As far as I can recall there was never any difference of opinion on any policy matter. It was a very harmonious arrangement.

To begin with there were three people in the office. In addition to the Treasurer, there was Frank Webber, my assistant, who kept the books, and a secretary. As the work load increased other employees were brought in. This would be true at peak times of the year, particularly just before, during, and after Conference.

One peculiar responsibility was added to our office in 1950 when the Conference sessions were moved to the University of Redlands. Prior to that the sessions would be held at one of the large churches of the Conference. Everybody arranged for his own housing and ate his meals wherever he chose. Usually the sessions would be in a metropolitan section of Southern California which meant that a large group of people stayed at home and drove back and forth. Arrangements were worked out for the Conference to be held at the University of Redlands since the school year was over by the date the Conference would meet. Most of the members of the Conference could stay in the dormitories. All meals would be served in the University dining hall. It was really a superior arrangement. Very few people would drive back and forth which meant much better attendance in the sessions.

This kind of an arrangement meant that registrations and reservations for room and board had to be handled in advance of the session. Also, assignments of members of Conference to rooms in the dormitories had to be done in advance. The University facilities were all made available to us, but we were required to handle all reservations and assignments. The committee in charge decided all the work should be done by the Treasurer's office. This meant that we had to become the equivalent of a hotel manager.

Many unforeseen problems plagued us. Some member would register as a single and after being assigned to a dormitory room with other men, would show up with a wife. Or a male lay member would register and a lady would show up to take his place. We tried to avoid errors as much as possible. We used yellow registration blanks for ministers and blue for laymen. Obviously, there would be both men and women among the laymen, but we didn't anticipate any women would register with a yellow ministerial form. We did have a woman minister serving a church and she sent in her registration on a yellow form, which was proper. We separated the yellow forms-singles in one pile and couples in another. Then we started assigning the singles to dormitory rooms not noticing that one of the singles was a lady. There was much consternation in camp when she came, got her assignment and discovered she was assigned to a room with two male ministers.

We soon learned the dormitory layouts and knew where every room was located. One year we got the sheets from the University showing a room in one of the halls that we had not used before. We wrote to find out if a mistake had not been made and were assured the list of rooms was correct. We checked the blueprint of the hall in question and could not see where such a room could be, so we wrote again and asked that the matter be checked out. The answer soon came that no such room existed and that the sheet listing the room was a mistake. Several times later the University officials jokingly said we knew more about their facilities than they did.

Fortunately, as the Conference grew in size the University also grew and expanded its facilities. At least eight new dormitories have been built since 1950, the first year we used the campus. Another dining hall has also been added.

It is obvious now that the facilities at Redlands will be inadequate to house the Conference without severe limitations. In 1972 the General Conference enacted legislation to permit an Annual Conference to have as many lay members as ministerial members. In our Conference this means adding about three hundred additional laymen. It also means that there is practically no space in the auditorium for wives, family members or visitors. It may mean that some other arrangement will have to be made for accommodating the Conference, perhaps in some Convention facility where the auditorium is adequate. If so, the housing will have to be in hotels or other public facilities and the delightful experience of being housed on a college campus will be terminated.

The Central Treasury Plan has had many advantages. One has been that because so many accounts have been pooled there has always been a sufficient balance on hand that borrowing to meet budget obligations in the early months of the year has not been necessary. In the former days when there were separate treasurers for each account, the treasurer of the District Superintendents account had to borrow ten or eleven months of the year in order to pay salaries etc. during the year. Although the Commission on World Service accounts were largely in and out accounts, the balance in its bank account, particularly at Conference time, would increase to very large figures.

Ray Meyers, my associate treasurer, and I tried to estimate the volume of business handled by my office during my 37 years. It could only be an estimate, but we concluded that we had handled at least \$100,000,000, and had written at least 1,000,000 checks in that period.

Another by-product of a Central Treasury Plan was a periodic accusation that too much power and authority were vested in one person. At least three times I recall movements headed by some dissatisfied brother would surface in an effort to "clip my wings." Each time a committee would be appointed to study the problem but each time my administration would be vindicated. I was quite aware of the power and authority in my office but I certainly tried to avoid any unwise use of it. I always remembered the advice a banker gave a Bishop in a session of the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference several years ago. The banker was chairman of the Episcopal Committee

and in the recommendation of the committee there was an infringement upon the prerogatives of the Bishops relative to the boundaries of the Episcopal Areas. The presiding Bishop dressed the banker down for fair and told him that setting the boundaries of the Areas was the authority of the Bishops. The banker replied that he would like to remind the Bishops that authority is like a bank account - the more you draw on it, the less you have. As far as I know, I never depleted my authority by unwise use of it - but I cannot deny it was there. Just to indicate how earnestly I tried not to use the power I might have had, four years before I retired one of my less favorite ministerial associates on the Conference Board of Missions blatted around that I was running the Board and that some of my authority should be given to someone else. I immediately arranged for George Williams to be elected Controller, a title I had had, and I never attended another Board of Missions board meeting. I did meet with some of the committees whenever information I had was needed.

I purposely avoided debating an issue on the floor of the Conference. I tried always to give whatever information I had that the Conference needed but I seldom took sides publicly on any issue. One exception was when the Conference had been asked to become the sponsors for Balboa University-later changed to California Western University. An evening had been set aside for the presentation of the proposal and the debate. Dr. Robert Griffin was the president of the University and made quite a pitch including assurance that the Conference would never be asked for financial support. All we would be asked to do would be to give the University our backing. I knew that sooner or later we would be asked for financial support and I made what I thought was a strong speech against being misled by the representations that had been made. A young minister from San Diego District-Thomas Denman-got the floor and took me apart and ended by saying "We aren't going to let the Statistician call the signals for our team." To say I was crushed is an understatement. I went to my room to lick my wounds in private. One of my close friends sensed that I had been cut deeply and he looked Tom up and insisted that he apologize. The next morning Tom found me and did apologize. I told him to forget it, that if what he had said had come from a more responsible member of the Conference, it would have bothered me. Apparently my speech didn't register very heavily. The Conference voted to accept the University as one of its institutions. I was tempted many times in years later on to remind the Conference that the assurance had been made we wouldn't be asked for financial support. Altogether we eventually put in more than \$2,000,000 of Conference and Church funds - and then finally cut the relationship completely.

The clamor for decentralization of power in the Treasurer's office finally got to me personally although every step that followed to decentralize came on my own initiative. In 1966 I resigned as Executive Secretary and Treasurer of the Conference Corporation. Al Wright who had been one of my assistants was elected and his office was set up entirely separate and independent from the Conference Treasurer's office. Harold Johnson was brought in first on a part-time basis to become

familiar with the work of the Board of Pensions. In 1969 I resigned and Harold was elected on a full time basis to take over that Board. His office is separate and independent of the Conference Treasurer's office.

And so the decentralization process has taken place. Several people have told me that confusion has accompanied the demands of dissidents for decentralization. Naturally I have felt that what we had was efficiently and economically operated. I have been grateful more than once that my retirement was timed so as to spare me from the agony that would have resulted from what took place after I left.



Bishop Kennedy and J. Wesley Hole reviewing Treasurer's report at Annual Conference in Redlands, California.

## Chapter 21

## CONFERENCE HEADQUARTERS

I suppose most of those who may read this story will think of the Methodist Center in Los Angeles as being only at 5250 Santa Monica Boulevard. I can remember five different locations where the offices have been and two others where they came near being.

My first recollection of a Methodist Headquarters was about 1915 or 1916. My father was the President of the Board of Trustees of the Sunnyside Methodist Episcopal Church which was located on 93rd Street near Vermont Avenue. The church wanted to relocate but in order to do it some financial assistance from the Conference would be needed. I went with my father on the street car one day to downtown Los Angeles to call on the District Superintendent, Dr. Byron Wilson, in an effort to get the help needed. The offices were in the Wright and Callendar Building on Hill Street near Third.

My next contact with Methodist Headquarters was in the early 20's. I went to see Dr. A. Ray Moore in connection with some Epworth League business. At that time the offices were on the second floor of a Mortgage Company building at 1047 South Hill Street. I remember meeting a young minister there by the name of G. Bromley Oxnam who was later to become one of the great Bishops of the Church. Few people know that he was a skilled mathematician. He really was the one who devised the "Grade Figure" method of figuring apportionments and he did it with a slide rule.

From the Hill Street location the offices moved to the Chamber of Commerce Building at 12th and Broadway. That is where they were the first year I came to work as Business Manager in 1934. I recall an amusing incident that took place in the Chamber of Commerce offices. I was President of the District Epworth League in 1924 and came down to see Dr. L. T. Guild who was District Superintendent. He was a gruff character, and when I was waiting to see him I could hear him giving some poor guy a real working over. His office was on the fourth floor and the windows opened out into a light well. I'm sure he sensed I was scared to death. Some time later someone told him how frightened I was the first time I was up to see him. He laughed and said "Well you were able to walk out after our visit, weren't you?" To which I replied "Yes." Then he said "If you will look out my window you will see a rag and a bone and a hank of hair of some less fortunate individual who went out of the window."

In 1934 plans were being made to move to quarters in the YMCA building on Hope Street just a half block north of First Church which was at 8th and Hope. Actual blueprints had been made of the floor plan for our offices. About that time the Plaza Community Center was in financial trouble. It was located at 125 Marchessault Street, which later was changed to Sunset Boulevard. The building had a basement and four floors. The top three floors had never been finished. The proposal was made that our offices could be accommodated on the second floor of the building and that our rental would solve the financial problem of the Center. This was worked out and we moved into very inadequate offices. Later the third floor of the

building was finished and we had more room. The location was right next to Olvera Street and just a short block from the Union Railroad Station. That section of town deteriorated rapidly and while we were there for twenty years, there were many proposals to move. In the meantime the indebtedness on the Plaza building had been paid off in full by funds raised in the Sanctuary Crusade.

In the early 50's overtures were made by First Church, Los Angeles to bring the Headquarters to the Educational Building at 813 South Hope Street. Again floor plans were drawn to convert the top floors of the building to meet our office requirements. The one hitch was the fact that there was no off street parking facilities available during the week. On Sundays the church had the use of several commercial parking lots in the vicinity, but these were not available during the week. About this time Pacific Homes was contemplating erecting a new office building on Santa Monica Boulevard between Kingsley and Hobart. A plan was worked out for us to have about 13,000 square feet of space which was the entire second floor of the building. There was adequate parking space available and the Methodist Publishing House could have a book store on the ground floor. A ten year lease was worked out and in 1956 our offices moved to the new location. The lease was renewed in 1966 for an additional ten years.

As this is written in March 1975 a search committee is at work on another location. Pacific Homes has indicated that it wants the building at 5250 Santa Monica Boulevard for conversion into an apartment house facility for senior citizens. It has been determined that the Headquarters will stay out its present lease which runs to December 31, 1976 and in the meantime will explore other possible locations.

The community around the present location has been taken over pretty much by undesirable pornographic book stores, girlie shows and similar lewd places. It certainly is not the kind of a community for a Church Headquarters to be in. Time will tell where the offices will next be located. Whereas once a location near the Union Railroad Station was convenient, the need now is to be near an airport limousine terminal. Times do change! And with these changes the address of the United Methodist Center must also change.

## Chapter 22

## DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

I had a nightmare one night. It was after a particularly difficult day. Velma was rudely awakened when I began to kick her. She yelled at me "What on earth are you doing?" I answered "I've got him! I've got him!" She said "You've got who?" I replied "One of the District Superintendents." I decline to identify the culprit. I'm not a psychologist and I don't know how to interpret such a thing as a dream or nightmare. One of my more sophisticated acquaintances claims that my nightmare is a Freudian revelation. I'm sure it isn't because I've dealt with a great many District Superintendents and I haven't wanted to kick more than two or three.

The office of District Superintendent is extremely important in the Methodist system. I doubt that anyone knows more how really important it is than I do - unless it is the Bishop.

I counted up one day all the Superintendents I have worked with in the Conference office. There are 56. In addition, I knew several prior to going to work for the Conference and several have been appointed since I retired whom I have known for many years. While there are certain duties that each must perform, they have a lot of leeway in doing their work in their own way and no two do it exactly alike.

One of the weaknesses of our system has been that a man is appointed a District Superintendent with very little advance training and is really on his own with very little help. I was always flattered when a newly appointed Superintendent would seek help and guidance from me and I was always glad to spend time with him. No minister in the Conference has need of knowledge of Conference Rules and Disciplinary requirements more than a Superintendent. The administration of finances in an Annual Conference is so closely governed by rules and regulations that anyone who is related to financial administration is soon in deep trouble if these requirements are not observed. Fortunately, very few of those who have been Superintendents in our Conference have tried to ignore or by-pass the rules and regulations.

I wish I could take the space to comment on each of the Superintendents I have worked with. A person can't work for six years with another man without feeling a sense of gratitude for the association. Most of the 56 served their full term of six years but a few did not. I only know of one case where the Bishop took a man off a District in our Conference before he completed his term. A few others requested that they be released from the office before completing their terms.

Most of the Districts in our Conference cover such large areas geographically that the work requires many nights away from home. Since most of the Superintendents have had their offices in their homes, an added burden has been placed upon the wives in answering phone calls and doing many other things in the absence of the husbands.

The Superintendent is in a real sense the pastor of the ministers on his District. He has to be the champion of his men whether it is with the people of the churches or with the Bishop and the Cabinet. I have really been amazed at the competency of the Superintendents as they have defended their ministers. At the same time, in my limited experience in a local church the Superintendents have been amazingly knowledgeable about the local situation, its history and its needs.

Many of my closest friends have been Superintendents. I know from being with them in official as well as unofficial relationships of some of their heartaches and frustrations. They are a choice group of men and my hat is off to them. Certainly the Hole Story couldn't be written without reference to them.

I was amused at an incident Dr. Ray Ragsdale reported when he was appointed on Los Angeles District. He came home from Conference with the announcement that he had been appointed Superintendent of Los Angeles District. His son, Russell, who was about ten years old wanted to know what a Superintendent was. Ray said "Well you know Bishop Kennedy don't you?" Russell said "Yes." Ray said "A District Superintendent is a little lower than a Bishop" to which Russell replied "Is there anyone lower than a District Superintendent?"

There are many places in the United States where there is no Methodist Church, but there is no place in the country that is not within the boundaries of some District of an Annual Conference. Every inch of ground in our nation is the responsibility of some District Superintendent. They are, with very few exceptions, tremendous ambassadors for Christ and the Church.



Left to right: Dr. Harry Komuro, Superintendent Hawaii Mission, Bishop Gerald H. Kennedy and Dr. Wm. Vernon Middleton, National Division, Board of Missions, Philadelphia and later Bishop.

## Chapter 23

## MY BISHOPS

When I was a youngster it was quite a thrill to even see a Bishop. I can remember going to an Annual Conference session for the first time with my parents. The session was being held in Long Beach. Bishop Adna W. Leonard was presiding. I watched him with nothing less than awe. The first time I really met a Bishop was in Santa Barbara in 1928 when I went to represent the youth asking the Conference for the Rally Day money to finance a full time Conference Director. Bishop Charles Wesley Burns was presiding and he was very cordial to me. My heart really beat hard when I was introduced to him and had a short visit with him. I have never tried to count up the number of Bishops that I have since met, but I am certain it would exceed 100. But only two have been "My Bishops." In my thirty-seven years with the Church, eighteen were with Bishop Baker and nineteen were with Bishop Kennedy.

I had a very close relationship with three others - Bishops Bruce Baxter, W. Vernon Middleton and Everett Palmer.

Dr. Bruce Baxter was a very popular professor at the University of Southern California when I was active in the Epworth League. He would often be asked to be the speaker at a rally or convention. Whenever he was announced to be the speaker a good crowd was assured. He was a dynamic and forceful speaker. His messages were always profound and yet quite simple. He had a great sense of humor. I recall when we had a symposium of four speakers at a convention in Los Angeles. Each one was to have fifteen minutes and another event was to follow so that we had to be through on time. Bruce Baxter was the last of the four on the program. Each of the first three went over his time so there was only a couple of minutes left for Bruce. He was equal to the occasion. He said "When I was in college I took Latin. We translated "Caesar" but until tonight I never understood the full significance of the opening sentence which reads "All Gaul is divided into three parts", and he sat down. Bruce was always writing short notes to his friends. In 1947 when I was given an honorary degree I received a note from him. All it said was "Dear Wes: Congrats. Bruce". His men in the Portland Area all called him "Bruce" and he knew every one of them by their first names. The last time I saw him was when the Council of Bishops met in the Huntington Hotel in Pasadena in April of 1947. In June he had a heart attack during the Oregon Conference session and died. When I heard of his death I remembered a verse he had sent me sometime before which said:

"Each time I pass by the Church  
I stop in for a visit,  
So that when I'm carried in  
My Lord won't say, who is it?"

Probably the Bishop with whom I spent the most time before he was elected was Bishop W. Vernon Middleton. Vernon was Executive Secretary of the Church Extension Department of the National Division when the Church Extension program was booming. He made many visits to our Conference. I

would always meet him at the airport and go with him to see the new projects. We stayed together on many trips, both on the mainland and in Hawaii. Our families were together whenever they could be. Vernon was as clean as a hound's tooth. He was fun to be with but he was also all business. If he thought a project was making a mistake in its planning he would tell them so. His predecessor, Dr. F. W. Mueller, always had an air of mystery about what help could be given and where funds would come from. Not so with Vernon. Everything was out on the table and when he said there were no funds available, there were none. When he was elected Bishop in 1960 he was assigned to Pittsburgh. We had decided to have the 1964 General Conference session in Pittsburgh and so he walked right into the responsibility of entertaining the General Conference. During the years preceding the Conference our Commission went to Pittsburgh several times. Each time I had a chance to be with Vernon and his charming wife, Miriam. The Conference went off without a hitch. In 1966 Vernon was in a cab in Minneapolis rushing to catch a plane. He suffered a fatal heart attack in the cab. He was a great man and he died too young.

Everett Palmer came to Southern California from New Jersey in 1951 to become pastor of First Church, Glendale. The first time I met him he said he wanted something to do in the Conference. So many men who transfer in to take large pulpits play hard to get. They want to be asked to work in Conference assignments. Everett soon was on the Board of Trustees and was one of my bosses. He headed the Study Commission which was responsible for recommending to the Conference in 1956 that the Ministers Reserve Pension Fund plan be adopted for all members of the Conference-active and retired. He was known in Glendale as a "slave leader" rather than a "slave driver." He never asked anyone to do something which he himself wouldn't do. No one thought of him as a possibility to be Bishop in 1960 when we went to San Jose. He was high up on our delegation but his name was scarcely mentioned. I think he had four votes when Ray Ragsdale withdrew. After futile attempts were made to get the Conference behind this or that name someone suggested Everett Palmer. The reaction was "Why didn't we think of that before?" He was elected and assigned to a new area-Seattle. In 1968 some adjustments had to be made within the Jurisdiction. Everett had been in Seattle 8 years and could stay another 4. Portland was open because of the death of Bishop Grant. Marvin Stuart had been in Denver only 4 years and didn't want to move. When the Episcopal Committee asked Everett about moving to Portland he obviously didn't want to do it but he said "I'm a Methodist preacher and I believe in the itinerant system. If that is where I'm appointed I'll go and do the best I can." One of the most difficult conversations I ever had was with Mrs. Palmer trying to convince her that Everett was not being demoted. The appointment to Portland was really a bitter pill for them but they took it like the real troopers they were. Everett was a hard personal disciplinarian. He worked hard at physical exercise which he thought he needed. He and Florence were in Palm Springs for a vacation right after New Year, 1971. He was out exercising and when he didn't return to their room at the time he said he would Florence began looking for him. He was in the car and apparently had a heart attack before he started the motor. Everett was a wonderful

man to know and to be with. I wished more than once that I could have been a member of his church. He was truly one of God's chosen men.

When I came to work for the Conference in 1934 Bishop James Chamberlin Baker was Bishop of the San Francisco Area of which our Conference was a part. He had been elected to the Episcopacy in 1928 and assigned to Japan and Korea to succeed Bishop Herbert Welch. Bishop Welch is generally credited with having written the Korean Creed which is in our Hymnals. I talked with him in New York one time about it and he gave Bishop Baker much of the credit for writing it. In 1932 Bishop Baker came to San Francisco. My first reaction to Bishop Baker was an absolute fear. I had seen him preside at one session of the Conference before I began my work in 1934. I have already related how I discovered the near financial debacle in the Treasurer's office and how I tried desperately not to give out any information about it. One day in the early fall of 1934 I received a telephone call from Mrs. Stone, Bishop Baker's secretary in San Francisco, stating he would be at the Clark Hotel the next morning and wanted to have breakfast with me. I did meet him but I wasn't very hungry. My fear was short lived and really was never justified. He put me at ease in a hurry. He wasn't so much concerned over the financial plight of the Conference funds as he was over the circumstances. The one question uppermost in his mind was "Has there been any dishonesty?" Lack of judgment could be forgiven-but not dishonesty. Fortunately, there had been no dishonesty.

My feeling of fear about the Bishop was soon replaced by respect. He held high and important offices in the Church and he always conducted himself in a manner that commanded respect. I have known some men whose office was respected but whose conduct left something to be desired. Bishop Baker was an able administrator. He had an uncanny ability of giving a responsibility to a man and getting the most out of him by his implicit confidence in the man. His confidence in me at times was so complete and expectant as to be almost embarrassing. If a man honestly tried and failed there would be no vindictiveness on the Bishop's part. Certainly anyone who had any dealings with him at all, respected him.

A third phase of my relationship to him developed out of respect. It was an overwhelming admiration. You can condescendingly respect someone without admiring him. Admiration grows out of respect. There were many reasons why I admired Bishop Baker. His character was without a blemish. His love and worship of his beloved companion of the years was similar to that of my father for my mother. This relationship was a source of great inspiration to those who knew the Bakers intimately. He was never at ease on a platform until he knew where his Lena was seated. Their love for each other was genuine and mutual and rare. A symbolic red rose was in front of her picture from the time she left him until he died. Their love affair probably was a bit square for the mod generation but for a fuddy dud like me it was the most. I always admired his uncompromising refusal to compromise. For this reason he wasn't a very good politician in the affairs of the Church. He demanded of his men mental alertness, moral purity and financial honesty. There was no middle ground.

The relationship I enjoyed with Bishop Baker during the final years of his life was one of deep affection. Love and affection do not develop quickly. Time is a very necessary ingredient. As the years came and went my relationship with him rose above our obvious differences intellectually, politically and socially. I grew to love him like a son loves his father. As his responsibilities in the Church decreased, mine increased. He seemed to derive as much satisfaction from my services in the Church as I did. Certainly a great share of my incentives stemmed from the confidence he placed in me and the constant encouragement he gave me.

I have two mementos which Bishop Baker gave me. One is a painting of the Pali in Hawaii. It was a present to him from the Hawaii Mission when he retired. The other is two ebony elephants which he purchased in Madras, India in 1938. My name was on them when he died. Obviously, I prize these remembrances very much.

One day ten years before he died he said that he hoped I would say some words about him when his time came. I promised him I would. I kept that promise on October 1, 1969 at a beautiful service in First Church, Pasadena although it was about the most difficult duty I ever performed.

The manner in which I met Dr. Gerald Kennedy was symbolic of my relationship to him later in my career. I am not certain about the year but I think it was 1935. He came down from San Jose where he was pastor of Calvary Church to be the speaker at an Epworth League Institute at Camp Radford. It was my custom on Saturdays during the summer to help register an incoming group at each Institute. We had a cabin at Big Bear Lake which was about four miles by trail over the mountain from Radford. By auto it would be about 40 miles around. There was a good trail from near our cabin over to Seven Oaks which went by Radford. I would hike over in the morning and register the camp and then hike back late in the afternoon. Just above Radford a mile or so was a huge promontory called Grand View Point. On the Saturday that Dr. Kennedy arrived in camp he went for a hike with two cocker spaniel dogs which he brought with him. He was sitting on Grand View Point when I came along. I knew who he was from pictures I had seen. I stopped and visited with him awhile. I never had any idea I would some day be as closely associated with him as I was. All of my associations with him have been mountain top experiences!

The next time I saw him was thirteen years later in University Methodist Church, Seattle at the Consecration Service where he was to be consecrated a Bishop. I was a marshal for that service. Four years later he was assigned to the Los Angeles Area to follow Bishop Baker who retired in 1952. I have previously related how active I was in 1952 to get someone else appointed to Los Angeles. As it has turned out I'm glad I didn't succeed.

The Board of Lay Activities wanted to do something whereby the laymen of the area could welcome the new Bishop. A committee was set up and a luncheon was arranged for the fall of 1952. It was called The Bishop's Laymen's Luncheon. It was to be held at the new Statler Hotel. Over 1000 tickets were sold and the idea was such a success it was repeated every year

Bishop Kennedy was in the Los Angeles Area. Seldom if ever were there less than 1000 men present. Civic leaders were invited and many attended. The Bishop always had a pertinent message and usually it was nothing less than a sermon. It was only one of the impacts he made upon the city as Bishop. The luncheons were not cheap and several times there were attempts to pressure the Board of Lay Activities to hold the luncheons in a less expensive place. The judgment was that to move the luncheons to a church or some less prestigious place would nullify the impact of the event. Anyway, the capacity of the rooms available was always sold out.

After a few of the luncheons had been held the Bishop wanted to make an annual award to the "Outstanding Layman of the Year" as a feature of the luncheons. The interest on an anonymous gift of \$1,000 enabled the purchase annually of a beautiful plaque which was presented each year to the recipient of the award.

One of my jobs was to order the plaque each year after "the committee" had selected the one to be honored. In 1969 I asked Bishop Kennedy about a month before the luncheon about who the recipient was to be. He cut me off in a very unusual manner saying he had already arranged for it. Then I said I would need to know the name in order to get the plaque inscribed to which he replied that George Williams had taken care of it. I guess my obvious shock was so evident he decided to let me in on the secret. I was the layman to be honored! It was a thrilling experience and the plaque I received is now hanging on my study wall. It reads: "The Bishop Gerald Kennedy Award, conferred upon J. Wesley Hole, Honored Layman of the Southern California Conference-1969-in recognition of Distinguished Service to the United Methodist Church."

Another honor which came to me from Bishop Kennedy was late in 1969 when he wrote and published a book titled "For Laymen and Other Martyrs." Just before the book was to go to press he called me into his office and told me the book was being dedicated to me. I was so thrilled and proud I could have shouted. On the fly leaf in the book is the simple inscription "This is for J. Wesley Hole." He autographed a copy for me with a statement that is too personal to quote.

Soon after Bishop Kennedy came to Los Angeles we discovered that several of us in the Headquarters family had birthdays in August. Another friend with an August birthday is Rev. Wun Bew Wong, pastor of the Chinese Methodist Church. We decided to have a Chinese dinner to celebrate. Wun Bew is just a week younger than I am. Bishop Kennedy's birthday is a week after Wun Bew's. The August birthday Chinese dinner became a tradition and is still observed except that now it is a luncheon instead of a dinner. It is an occasion we always look forward to.

Bishop Kennedy's preaching had a great effect on me. I never missed a chance to hear him preach. I think the most powerful sermon I ever heard him preach was in First Church, Honolulu. His sermon was on the Prodigal Son. In front of me sat a man who had just been released from prison. His father was in his eighties and was blind. He was a retired minister in

our Conference and never knew his son had been in prison. Perhaps these circumstances magnified the impact of the sermon, but whatever may have been responsible it made a lasting impression upon me.

The last time I heard him preach was April 16, 1972 in Decatur, Georgia. It was the Sunday before General Conference was to begin. My brother, Les, rented a car and we drove out to Decatur to attend the service. On the following Wednesday Bishop Kennedy suffered a slight stroke and was flown home. He was retired at the Jurisdictional Conference in July 1972, which was held in the University Methodist Church, Seattle. This was the same church in which he had been consecrated as a Bishop in 1948.

He had been serving First Church, Pasadena as its preaching minister but decided during the summer of 1973 that he could not continue. He and Mary purchased a small home in Laguna Hills, Leisure World and moved in that fall. Fortunately, they are only about 15 miles away and I try to see him every couple of weeks or so. We usually go to lunch and visit over our memories of many things we did together.

There is nothing I can say about Bishop Kennedy that has not already been said. He has been the recipient of every conceivable honor that could come his way. He has been chosen to give every Lectureship of any importance in the country. In 1964 at the General Conference his picture appeared on the cover of Time Magazine. The article in the magazine said he was one of the ten greatest preachers of the Century. In spite of all the honors and accolades he has remained as humble as he was before they were bestowed upon him. Truly "he has walked with kings but never lost the common touch."

To be able to call him "My Bishop" is one of the greatest privileges of my life.

When I retired I referred to my association with Bishop Baker of eighteen years and with Bishop Kennedy of nineteen years. I told of the man who had been married twice, first to Millie and then to Tillie. They had both predeceased him. When he was making arrangements for his own demise he asked that he be buried between Millie and Tillie. Then he added "and tilt me a little toward Millie." I added the proportions of nineteen years to eighteen years is about the proper tilt.

Bishop Baker was like a father to me. Bishop Kennedy has been like a brother. I certainly am most fortunate to have had such a long, happy association with these two saints, both of whom I can call without any reservation "My Bishop!"