

CHAPTER IX

The United Conference, 1939-1960

Unification ushered in a new era for American Methodism. It was a signal to initiate advances in many areas of Christian concern. The united Conference in southern California and Arizona was no exception. There were problems to be sure, but the twin factors of facing them realistically and of having strong episcopal leadership helped tremendously. The first report of the united Conference in 1940 showed 94,792 members and 485 full ministerial members. By 1959 there were 217,513 members and 726 ministers. Preaching places and parsonages had increased more than 100.¹ More important, as had been the case before unification, Methodism in southern California and Arizona made significant contributions to the Church as a whole.

1. BISHOP JAMES CHAMBERLAIN BAKER

One name that will always be associated with Methodism in southern California and Arizona is James Chamberlain Baker. A large measure of credit for the achievements of the united Conference—and the Southern California Conference in the 1930's—can and should be given to Bishop Baker.

James C. Baker was born in Sheldon, Illinois, on June 2, 1879. Son of a minister, he himself was ordained in 1900 and entered the Illinois Conference. Graduating from Boston University School of Theology, he had pastorates at McLean, Illinois, 1905-1907, and Trinity Church, Urbana, Illinois, 1907-1928. As minister at Trinity he conceived the Wesley Foundation and was its director there from 1913 to 1928. From this first group grew the Methodist Student Movement which has Wesley Foundations and Wesley organizations throughout America.

Kansas City was the scene of James C. Baker's election to the episcopacy in 1928 with jurisdiction over Japan and Korea. Following a four-year supervision there, he was assigned to the San Francisco Area in 1932 with Hawaii, Japan, and Korea also under his care. Bishop Baker moved to the southern part of California when the

episcopal residence was transferred from San Francisco to Los Angeles in 1939. During his career many positions of great responsibility and honor have been accorded him: President of the Council of Bishops, 1948-1949; chairman of the International Missionary Council, succeeding John R. Mott, 1941-1947; member of the Oxford Conference in 1937, of the Madras Conference in 1938; presiding officer of the Whitby Conference in 1947; member of the Amsterdam Conference in 1948; member of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, 1948-1954; consultant for the United Nations in San Francisco, 1945; member of the four-man Protestant delegation to Japan after Japan's surrender; vice-president of the Board of Education and chairman of the Division of Educational Institutions, 1944-1952. Bishop Baker has been joined in a rich life by his wife, the former Lena Benson. In 1951, on their fiftieth wedding anniversary, many friends came to honor them. Though retired in 1952, Bishop Baker has continued a busy and productive life, including teaching at the School of Religion of the University of Southern California until 1956.

The creation of the area system of episcopal supervision in 1912 meant better administration because the bishops could now settle down. On the west coast San Francisco became the episcopal seat. The emergence of this new administrative device, however, did not greatly improve the supervision in southern California and Arizona. From 1912 to 1932 three bishops preceded James Baker in the San Francisco Area: Edwin H. Hughes, Adna W. Leonard, and Charles W. Burns. In regard to southern California none of them demonstrated the vigor and liberal spirit which were to mark Baker's leadership. Only when Bishop Baker was assigned to the San Francisco Area did southern California and Arizona receive significant attention. He made many efforts to know personally the men of the Southern California Conference and to become aware of the various difficulties facing them. It has already been acknowledged that he quickly moved to unify Methodist work in Los Angeles, thus laying a firm foundation for future growth after unification.

Before unification he had insisted on the organization of a central Conference office, particularly a single treasurer. Unifying the treasuries into one man's responsibility made for much greater coordination than ever before possible under separate treasurers for various matters. Moreover, in J. Wesley Hole, who has held the office of Statistician and Treasurer since 1938 (assistant to A. Ray Moore 1936-1938), the Conference found a layman of the first rank in business ability, personal integrity, and a wholesome dedication

J. Wesley Hole



Bishop William C. Martin

to the Church. Dr. Hole's personal example of stewardship, his thoroughness, and his devotion to his job constantly have helped to stimulate the Conference laymen and ministers alike to further achievements. Elected to the Uniting Conference, he has also been chosen to attend every General Conference since then, the only layman or minister so honored.

Bishop Baker also exhibited real wisdom in his policy of visiting seminaries. He began this soon after coming to the San Francisco Area. At the time he was the only bishop to visit and to recruit young ministers. His deliberate intention was to discover good youthful leadership. His philosophy, however, was always: "I am not bidding. I can offer you an opportunity."²

As unification drew near there was much feeling as to whether a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church or the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, should be named to head the area. The supervision was given to James Baker, with William C. Martin of the former Southern Church graciously going to Omaha. The years of division kept unity from occurring automatically. Bishop Baker did much to create a real esprit de corps. His personal warmth to the ministers of the old Pacific Conference engendered this same spirit among all the men. Confidence which he had instilled before 1939 was renewed as the united Conference clearly recognized his awareness of all problems of the area. Bishop Baker's optimistic outlook that these could be met and overcome was an important ingredient in the growth of the merged Conference.

The dignity which he accorded the office of the District Superintendent encouraged a freedom of thought throughout the Conference. He expected his cabinet and pastors to be their own masters; never were they supposed necessarily to reflect the opinions of the bishop. "Think for yourselves and upon the problems of your district" was a key note with Bishop Baker.

He also encouraged discussion of problems at every level of the Conference, through district and sub-district. This policy proved very productive. The many different programs, such as finance and evangelism, which were to be brought before Annual Conference, had been reviewed thoroughly, with no evasions, on lower Conference levels. Thus when Annual Conference met, most avenues had been explored and everyone had had opportunity to know the proposals and the possibilities. This has meant year after year a laity and ministry prepared to launch major enterprises immediately following Annual Conference with unity and with a knowledge of exactly what they were doing and what they wanted to accomplish. This



Bishop Gerald Hamilton Kennedy

approach, first used by the Southern California-Arizona Conference, has since been adopted by many others.³

This climate of free discussion has been responsible for two significant marks of the Southern California-Arizona Conference. First, the ministers and lay people work together as a group. A strong unanimity is evident on all levels. Able men and women function together as teams on many committees and commissions. While the individual is important, of course, it has become characteristic of the Annual Conference that no one person nor group controls it. Teamwork has become deeply ingrained because of Bishop Baker's early guidance and the continuation of this spirit under Bishop Kennedy. Second, the Conference has been without any serious divisions. This appears to be more remarkable because of the extremely heated discussions on the floor of every Annual Conference, especially in the field of social action. Seldom, if ever, has any important matter moved to a vote without discussion. Frequently, particularly regarding social issues, the final vote is very close. Such disputation each year has been followed just as assuredly by solid teamwork across the Conference. This has been possible because of the atmosphere of free opinion which Bishop Baker fostered from 1932 to 1952 and which Bishop Kennedy has continued to strengthen.

Perhaps the best testimony to James C. Baker's episcopal leadership occurred in 1948 with the creation of the Los Angeles Area. Previous to that date all of California was under his jurisdiction. The rapid growth of the Southern California-Arizona Conference made it imperative that a separate area be created. In 1940 the active membership of the Conference was 94,692. In 1948 it was 129,489.⁴ Donald H. Tippett, former pastor of the Los Angeles First Church and newly elected bishop, was assigned to the San Francisco Area while Bishop Baker was given jurisdiction over the Los Angeles Area.

2. BISHOP GERALD HAMILTON KENNEDY

When Bishop Baker came to San Francisco and immediately made all parts of his area of vital concern to him, ministers in southern California and Arizona, who had not previously enjoyed fully adequate episcopal supervision, began to feel his support and guidance. Bishop Baker had the rare ability to bring out the latent talent within his men.

One of the young ministers in the San Francisco Area whom he had helped to develop was Gerald Hamilton Kennedy, who was destined to succeed him as the bishop of the Los Angeles Area. Bishop

Kennedy has publicly recalled his gratitude to Bishop Baker, yet in his own way he already has left his mark on the Conference and on Methodism as a whole. The social passion of the Conference, its unanimity of feeling and purpose, and the freedom of the pulpit have all continued. Preaching has been stressed and strengthened especially because of the personal example of Bishop Kennedy, known throughout the Church as one of Methodism's finest preachers.

Gerald H. Kennedy was born on August 30, 1907, in Benzonia, Michigan. From College of the Pacific he received his A.B. in 1929; from Pacific School of Religion his A.M. in 1931 and his B.D. in 1932; from Hartford Theological Seminary his S.T.M. in 1933 and his Ph.D. in 1934; and from various schools many honorary degrees. On June 2, 1928, he married Mary Leeper. His rise to the episcopacy was spectacular. When elected by the Western Jurisdictional Conference at Seattle on the thirteenth ballot in 1948, he was forty years of age. He had held pastorates at First Congregational Church, Collinsville, Connecticut, 1932-1936; Calvary Methodist Church, San Jose, California, 1936-1940; First Methodist Church, Palo Alto, California, 1940-1942; and St. Paul Methodist Church, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1942-1948. In July of 1948 he became Bishop of the Portland Area.

He has been chosen to give many of the most honored lectures in America. Among these have been the Earl Lectures, Pacific School of Religion in 1946; the Peyton Lectures at Southern Methodist University in 1950; the Quillian Lectures at Emory University in 1951; the Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale in 1954; the Auburn Lectures at Union Theological Seminary in 1957; and the Gray Lectures at Duke University in 1957. Among the books which he has written some are: *His Word Through Preaching*, *The Best of John Henry Jowett*, *The Lion and the Lamb*, *If They Be Prophets*, *Who Speaks for God*, *God's Good News*, *The Methodist Way of Life*, and *I Believe*.

Many have said that Bishop Kennedy came to Los Angeles with the passion of a prophet, the intellectual outlook of a scholar, and the preaching ability that remains one of the best in the Church. Under his direction in seven years the membership of the area increased more than 50,000; more than 100 new men joined the Conference in full connection; and over 60 strategic new churches were opened.⁵ Likewise the Hawaii Mission under his jurisdiction has made continuous improvement. The past few years under his guidance give all indications of a future for the Los Angeles Area of great

numerical growth, sincere spiritual awakening, intellectual achievements, and social concern.

3. BISHOPS FROM THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA-ARIZONA CONFERENCE

It will be recalled that six men from the Southern California Conference were elected to the episcopacy. An additional one, Glenn Randall Phillips, was elected in 1948 from the Southern California-Arizona Conference. He and Donald Harvey Tippett, who entered the united Conference in 1940, were also recipients of Bishop Baker's guidance, and, like Gerald Kennedy, have made their own distinctive mark on Methodism.

i. *Glenn Randall Phillips*

Glenn Randall Phillips, born in Paulding County, Ohio, May 21, 1894, changed from pre-law to pre-ministerial status in his junior year at Ohio Wesleyan University. He transferred to Garrett Biblical Institute to complete his seminary work after one year at Drew Theological Seminary. He volunteered for overseas duty with the British Y.M.C.A. En route to India, after a year and a half in England, his ship was torpedoed. He returned to the United States and was applying for a chaplaincy when the war ended. Married to the former Ruth E. Clinger, Glenn Phillips began his ministry in Moorpark, California. Other pastorates he served were at Santa Maria, North Hollywood, and First, Phoenix, before going to First Methodist Church, Hollywood, where he was minister from 1930 to 1948. During these eighteen years under his direction the church became one of the strongest in the Western Jurisdiction.

Elected to the episcopacy in 1948 Bishop Phillips was assigned to the Denver Area, which embraces Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, and northeastern Nevada. He is a member of many boards and commissions, including the Board of Missions, Board of Lay Activities, and the Commission on Church Union. He is a trustee of the University of Denver and of Iliff School of Theology. He and Mrs. Phillips have travelled widely in recent years, visiting Methodist Missions around the world. He was one of the twelve Bishops representing American Methodism at the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Evanston in 1954. His son, Randall C. Phillips, is pastor of Wilshire Methodist Church in Los Angeles and an alumnus and trustee of Southern California School of Theology.



Bishop Glenn Randall
Phillips



Bishop Donald
Harvey Tippett

ii. *Donald Harvey Tippett*

Donald Harvey Tippett was born on March 15, 1896, in Central City, Colorado. He received his A.B. and D.D. from the University of Colorado; his M.A. from New York University; and his B.D. from Iliff School of Theology. His early pastorates in Colorado included Longmont, Johnstown, Christ Church in Denver, and Gunnison. Then he served Church of All Nations in New York City, Bexley Methodist Church in Columbus, Ohio, and First Church, Los Angeles, 1940-1948. He was elected a bishop at the Western Jurisdictional Conference in Seattle in 1948 and was assigned to the San Francisco Area, which he still supervises.

Bishop Tippett is presently President of the Television, Radio and Film Commission of The Methodist Church and Chairman of the Board of Ministerial Education. He has written several books, among which are *Desires of a Godly Man* and *Desires of a Religious Man*.

4. EVANGELISM AND CHURCH EXTENSION

In 1947 Leonard Oechsli, District Superintendent of the Pasadena District, said:

"The story of California is the story of migration" and the present migration should be our greatest concern. The future for California will be determined in no small degree by what happens here religiously, and the people called Methodists, because we are largest numerically, have the largest responsibility.⁶

At that time, with southern California on the verge of perhaps the greatest population influx in American history, it was fortunate that there were men and women of vision and determination in the Conference. During the war years an intense emphasis upon evangelism had secured many new church members. Perhaps even more significant, these emphases produced many pastors and laymen trained in evangelism. Leonard Oechsli intimated that these were crucial times. During the past twenty years part of the strength of the Southern California-Arizona Conference has lain in its emphasis upon personal witnessing as a way of reaching people and their critical needs.

World War II took its toll, and many churches showed decreases in certain departments. The continual evangelistic emphasis was responsible for such strength as the churches retained. The General Conference of 1944 launched the "Crusade for Christ," emphasizing evangelism, a new world order, and stewardship. In 1945-1946 alone over 18,000 people joined the churches of the Southern California-

Arizona Conference.⁷ When the General Conference of 1948 promulgated the "Advance for Christ and His Church" setting a goal of two million new members on confession of faith, the Southern California-Arizona Conference, under the chairmanship of Dr. Fred Trotter, immediately established "pilot churches" where activity centered for one whole week. The Advance, continued for 1952-1956, was concluded with the "March of Faith" in 1955-1956 with Alec G. Nichols as chairman. This total Conference effort brought a wide exchange of ideas and pulpits and resulted in this latter year alone in over 12,000 new members.⁸

The emphasis for 1956-1960 was upon the local church and within it went a "Concern for Persons," climaxed in October, 1959, with a three-day "doorbell" evangelism campaign. Dr. Stanley S. McKee, Long Beach District Superintendent, served as executive chairman. Some 405 Methodist evangelistic leaders, laymen and ministers, from forty states aided Conference ministers and laymen in a "Sharing God's Good News" crusade. A total of 15,403 persons, more than 14,500 of them laymen, visited homes and talked with 46,513 persons. Nearly 12,400 persons made "commitments" to join congregations or church organizations. Bishop Kennedy declared: "This is the greatest thing we've ever done in the Southern California-Arizona Conference . . . New life has come to our churches." These were the best evangelistic results in a three-day period in the history of Methodism and drew wide-spread comment across the nation.⁹

Hand in hand with evangelism there has gone church extension, in which area too the Conference has made outstanding advances. The first three years of the united Conference saw the working of the "Methodist Building Fellowship," a project to raise money in units of \$5,000 each under the leadership of Harold E. Baker, President of the Board of Missions. In 1942 there followed the "Sanctuary Crusade Commission," which virtually took over the previous work. Bishop Baker was chairman and James Edwin Dunning the Executive Secretary of this Commission. The purpose was to liquidate the debts on churches, Plaza Community Center, and All Nations Foundation. No other Conference in all Methodism had undertaken as extensive a program as this.¹⁰ The debt of churches in 1940 was more than two million dollars, occasioned by the depression which had followed the gigantic expansion of the 1920's. The phenomenal achievements of the Conference were made more notable by the coming of the war with its resultant pressures and drain of finances. From June, 1941, to July, 1943, when \$919,000 of indebtedness was erased, 83 churches retired all of their debt [excluding parsonages]. A little

more than two million dollars was raised in all for erasing mortgages and for new building structures. Dr. F. W. Mueller, Executive Secretary of Church Extension Section of the Board of Missions and the Church Extension of The Methodist Church, characterized this great sanctuary fund campaign as "a demonstration of well patterned cooperation and triumphant success."¹¹

Another significant event happened in 1952. When the Advance for Christ quadrennium was completed, the Conference decided to move forward on a Conference program using approximately the same quota figures which had been used in the "Advance for Christ." That made it possible to make generous provision for church extension without having a series of campaigns. As a result, between \$25,000 and \$30,000 has been sent each year to the National Board to be used in other Conferences with a need for additional help but without sufficient resources.

In 1948 George Steed of Alhambra, an active layman of the Conference, asked J. Wesley Hole, Conference Treasurer, for suggestions for establishing a Memorial Fund in memory of his parents, the Rev. and Mrs. George Steed. This resulted in the creation by the brothers, George and Roy Steed, of a Revolving Loan Fund for purchasing sites for new churches. The first property bought with the aid of the original \$5,000 gift was a five-acre lot in Phoenix, Arizona, where the Aldersgate Church was later erected. Three other sites in California and Arizona were purchased with that first gift.

The initial success of the fund stimulated a Conference-wide effort in the fall of 1953 to raise \$400,000 for a Bishop's Prospectors Fund. Details of the campaign were arranged through the Executive Secretary of the Board of Missions, Frank S. Williams, who has been outstanding in this field. His awareness of possible future developments in church extension and his personal devotion to it and to missions have made these aspects of the total Conference program noteworthy. Under the direction of Verne Orr, Jr. and Bishop Kennedy, a series of 13 dinners across the Conference realized over \$208,000 in pledges and cash. Additional work on the Prospectors Fund Campaign brought the total pledges to over \$283,000 by March 1, 1956. Many individuals since then have begun memorial funds, thus adding to the resources available. Several new churches already have been built on land secured by the Bishop's Prospectors Fund. Among these are: Christ Church, Norwalk; Aldersgate, Phoenix; Barstow; Hope, Tucson; Los Altos, Long Beach; Granada Hills; West Covina; Orangethorpe, Fullerton; Montclair; Palmdale; Holly-

park, Los Angeles; La Tijera, Los Angeles; St. Matthew, North Whittier; Crossroads, Phoenix; Woodland Heights; and Edgewood, North Covina.

The original purpose of the fund remains of high significance—to get the land while the price is still favorable. Properties are held in the name of the Conference Board of Missions until title can be transferred to the new church when it is incorporated. At that time the Board, from its church extension funds, replaces in the Bishop's Prospectors Fund the amount contributed toward the land purchase. This releases the money to be used to buy other property.

The Big Brother Movement is another vital enterprise in the Conference. Years ago several churches, following the lead of First Methodist Church, Los Angeles, had helped to start other churches. Now this has been continued on a greater scale. First Church, Las Vegas, was a Big Brother for Griffith Church, Las Vegas, investing \$150,000 in its land and first unit. Numerous other churches also have been Big Brothers, such as Trinity, Pomona, to Claremont; Santa Maria to Baywood; First Church, Ventura, to Ojai and Goleta; Catalina, Tucson to Christ Church, Tucson; First Church, Glendale, to Granada Hills; and Pacific Palisades to North Redondo.

A fast growing church in a developing area is often swamped with new members and children. The first unit often is inadequate to meet the needs. Money to make possible additional room is a great boon. In order to provide the loans, the Stewardship Loan Fund has been established, to be paid back gradually by the local church. This church extension has gone forward with an increasing rapidity since 1939.

While the Conference has made excellent progress in evangelism and church extension, it has not been without problems in these fields. Significantly, however, it has not closed its eyes to them. The process of decentralization which had begun in the cities in the twenties and increased in the thirties, greatly accelerated with the coming of World War II. As more and more industries moved in, people moved out. It became imperative that the Church readjust its programs and bring all possible resources to bear upon this changing society. In 1949 under the direction of Dr. Murray H. Leiffer of Garrett Biblical Institute, the first urban seminar on the Pacific Coast was conducted in southern California. Since then similar seminars and conferences have been held periodically to assist ministers in meeting the complexities of city evangelism. In 1953 a committee guided by John L. Mixon made a thorough investigation of First Church, Los Angeles, its resources, membership, and possibilities.

The findings pointed the way toward a re-evaluation of the role of downtown city churches throughout the Conference. Program planning and building planning have benefited through this and similar studies made under Mr. and Mrs. Mixon's guidance across the Conference. The Los Angeles Missionary and Church Extension Society has stressed its vital responsibility in meeting city problems and in helping churches to relocate or to merge resources. Other societies, such as the San Diego Methodist Union, have likewise attempted to solve similar problems in their local areas.

While advancement has been going on in the cities, the Conference Commission on Town and Country has also been active. It has stimulated an interchange of ideas and programs among the various churches outside the almost wholly urban Los Angeles District. Problems such as the farm laborer and the transient migrant have been faced and often overcome. These smaller churches have created a sense of community through such activities as prayer groups, fellowship dinners, and actual involvement in social ills.

Each church in any Conference must meet its peculiar difficulties in its own way. Much help has come from headquarters through the Co-ordinating Council of the Conference. As early as 1943 a committee, with Ray Ragsdale as chairman, was appointed to make an objective study of all boards, committees, and agencies with a view to unify and co-ordinate their work. Since the results were not fully satisfactory, another committee, with Hayden S. Sears as chairman, was appointed in 1952, looking toward reorganization and reduction of the administrative machinery. The resulting Co-ordinating Council was established in 1954. Under the new set-up boards and agencies were to initiate studies and formulate creative plans for present activities and future programs. All these were to be co-ordinated at an Annual Planning Conference. This involved wide representation from nearly all of them and also included the Bishop and District Superintendents. New offices were created: two Executive Secretaries; and Directors of Adult Activities, Youth Work, Children's Work, Public Relations and Communication, and Camp Facilities.¹²

Problems within the Conference soon came to light, among which were overlapping work and conflicting lines of authority. With these in mind the 1958 Conference made revisions, designed to strengthen the Council's work. The major change lay in eliminating (1) confusing and conflicting lines of administrative leadership and responsibility and (2) overlapping between the work of the District Superintendent in his district and that of Co-ordinating staff person-

nel. Additional executive strength was given to the Boards of Lay Activities, Christian Social Relations, and Evangelism. A Strategy Committee also was created to prepare the agenda for each meeting of the Coordinating Councils.¹³ It is yet too early to ascertain the effectiveness of the reorganization. Representation is wide, comprising every board and agency in the Conference. Co-ordinated planning to implement the Annual Conference program is done carefully with a follow-up meeting in the ensuing spring to evaluate the work.

5. STEWARDSHIP AND MISSIONS

The excellent record of stewardship by the Conferences before 1939 was continued by the united Conference. The loyal response to the "Sanctuary Crusade" and other aspects of Conference church extension already has been pointed out. Another aspect of benevolence is missionary work. The Southern California-Arizona Conference has been among the top Conferences in the missionary outreach of Methodism. The Crusade for Christ to rebuild a war-torn world found this Conference with a quota of \$632,000. Over \$700,000 was paid.¹⁴ Over one million dollars was raised thereafter in the "Advance for Christ." The Conference stood fifth in the United States in all money paid by Annual Conferences and eighth in per capita giving. These figures include only the General Conference Advance. If the Annual Conference payments were included, the Conference probably would be ranked first.¹⁵ To prick the conscience, however, the treasurer reminded the Conference members that over one hundred churches gave less than 50% of their quota in spite of the fact that the per capita income in the Southern California-Arizona region was the highest in the land.

The Conference has had a history of never being satisfied with the status quo. For the year ending May 31, 1956, among all Methodist churches giving \$8,500 or more to World Service and Conference Benevolences on apportionments, seven out of the first fifteen were from southern California and Arizona.¹⁶ This Conference, though not of the first ten in size, was first in per capita giving to World Service and Conference Benevolence on apportionments (\$4.34), second in per capita giving for total benevolences (\$8.57), first in per capita giving for current expenses (\$21.01), and first in per capita giving for all purposes (\$63.84).¹⁷

Besides the Conference proper, its Woman's Society of Christian Service has shown a similar determination continually to improve its stewardship. In 1943 the Conference Woman's Society was eighth

in membership and first in per capita giving in the United States. It was one of three that gave over \$100,000 to missions.¹⁸ Fourteen years later it was fourth in size but first in per capita giving (\$7.24) among all the major Societies in the United States. Only one other Society reached a higher per capita average.¹⁹ For the 1959 Conference year it repeated this achievement.²⁰ Many local churches and individual groups have shown missionary concern. Some have brought displaced persons and families to America, others have supported foreign missionaries, still others have financed church projects in needy areas, especially Mexico and Hawaii.

6. THE LAITY COMES OF AGE

With unification the laity gained full status throughout the entire Church. In the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, this already had been the case. As has been indicated, however, in the Methodist Episcopal Church the laity were never members of Annual Conference. Full equality of opportunity and privilege after 1939 led to a strong and forward-looking program.

The continually high attainments in the fields of evangelism, church extension, and stewardship, which have been previously examined, were made possible by the devotion, planning, and hard work of the laity in conjunction with the ministry. Laymen have proved their value time and time again by leadership on boards and committees, by concrete support of the local church program, and by the high quality of their lives. Bishop Kennedy has often paid tribute to the unselfish work of the laymen and laywomen.

The Conference has been most fortunate in its Conference lay leaders. Bert L. Cooper, attorney, and member of Trinity Methodist Church in Pomona, was its first Lay Leader, 1939-1941. In those early months of unification he did a statesman-like job of laying a solid foundation for the future. The organization proceeded slowly, with a certain confusion and uncertainty regarding duties and opportunities. To remedy this situation Mr. Cooper gave encouragement and practical ideas. Especially important was his urging of a four-year term for the Lay Members of the Annual Conference in order that they might derive the value from Conference and make a vital contribution to it and to their local churches.²¹ Mr. Cooper was succeeded by Alpheus B. P. Wood, who served from 1941 to 1955. During these years the laymen made their influence felt in every line of Conference endeavor. In February, 1942, the first laymen's day was held in the local church. A one-day retreat was inaugurated in 1943,

something which has grown steadily in attendance and effectiveness. During Mr. Wood's term a fully unified spirit was achieved, goals were clarified, and leaders on all levels were trained. The first Bishop's Laymen's Luncheon was held in November, 1952. This became an annual affair, filling the largest dining room of the Statler Hilton Hotel in Los Angeles, and brought together laymen from across the Conference for inspiration and fellowship. The large attendance led in 1954 to the setting up of three additional annual meeting places: San Diego, Phoenix, and Tucson. These too have been filled to capacity.

In 1955 Alpheus Wood was succeeded by Hubert Orton, a businessman engaged in real estate and insurance. Under Mr. Orton, who is still Lay Leader, the gains of previous years have been continued and new ideas also have been advanced. One of the most notable of these is the Weekend Witness Mission, started in the fall of 1955, and giving laymen the opportunity to witness in visitation evangelism.²² Another is the Board of Lay Activities workshop. The first was held on January 24-25, 1959, at Pilgrim Pines, a mountain camp near Yucaipa above Redlands. Such questions as "Where are we? Where are we going? How do we get there?" were discussed. The workshop, which will be an annual affair, gives the members opportunity to compare notes, discuss, and receive guidance on various aspects of their local problems.²³

Prior to unification an unofficial group of laymen in southern California had been meeting together for constructive work and had called themselves "The Methodist Men," a name adopted by the united group of laymen throughout the Church.²⁴ Gradually across the Conference clubs became chartered. By 1944 68% of all the churches had local groups. In 1959 there were almost 300 fully chartered Methodist Men Fellowships in the Conference. Besides their total support of the Conference program, the laymen have sponsored many projects. One of the most outstanding has been the Student's Scholarship Fund, which was originated in 1948 as the result of the effort of a layman, George Beer. Alpheus Wood presented the idea to the Conference Board of Lay Activities which endorsed it. Lynn W. Ballard and other laymen developed its operation. Numerous young men and women have been aided.

The Woman's Society of Christian Service of The Methodist Church began in January, 1939, as a fusion of the several older societies. Today it is the largest religious women's group in all the world. Within one year after the Conference Society was organized there were 260 societies with 25,000 members.²⁵ Today with a membership



Mrs. Charles A. Trowbridge, Conference President, W.S.C.S., 1956-1960

of more than 45,000 the Conference W.S.C.S. ranks fourth in membership in the United States, with 385 local Societies and 132 Wesleyan Service Guilds. The women, like the men, have been most fortunate in their choice of leaders. There have been six Presidents of the Conference Woman's Society of Christian Service: Mrs. L. F. Sedgwick, 1940-1943; Mrs. F. W. Boerner, 1943-1946; Mrs. Neal D. Ireland, 1946-1950; Mrs. Earle K. Scott, 1950-1954; Mrs. Edwin A. Ingham, 1954-1956; and Mrs. Charles A. Trowbridge, 1956-1960.

Like the laymen, the women have played a vital role in the life of the Conference. The effective missionary and stewardship program of the Woman's Society has been suggested elsewhere, as have the many institutions which are a part of the women's program. Year after year the Conference Society has pushed forward to new goals. A significant recent project is the Missionary Tour in participation with youth, giving young people the opportunity to observe the many home missionary efforts. Each summer since 1940 a World Friendship Camp has met with a two-fold purpose of missionary recruitment and education of junior and senior high school age girls.

It is not an exaggeration to state that much of the success of the Southern California-Arizona Conference has been due to an extremely consecrated Woman's Society of Christian Service.

6. ACCENT ON EDUCATION

Methodists in southern California and Arizona brought into the unified Conference a wealth of experience in the entire field of Christian education. Since 1939 both the ministry and laity have worked steadily for an enlarged and enriched program.

Workshops for teachers of each age group, summer observation schools, institutes and camps increasingly have played an integral role in the outreach of the Board of Education. "Three Great Days," which began informally immediately after unification, became an annual event in the winter. Held in one of the larger churches, this program made available good training in Christian education to anyone in the Conference. Instruction in teaching methods was the primary consideration. By 1957 the school had grown so much that three different locations were utilized. The following year more than six churches became centers for the instruction.

Excellent leaders for the various age levels undoubtedly have been among the causes for the sound and active program of the Conference Board. Alice Louise Brown was Director of Children's Work 1939-1951. She was succeeded by Ethel Ristine. James McGiffin headed up the Conference Youth program from 1939 to 1945 when he was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas K. Farley, who served until 1956. Under the direction of Mr. Farley, the youth program was greatly expanded, the camping program was enlarged, more thorough officer training was provided, and a well-organized structure was constructed from the local level up to that of the Conference. The Rev. Richard Edgar came as Mr. Farley's associate in 1952 and after Mr. Farley left continued in that capacity until 1958. The current director of Youth and Student Work is Elbert Dow Hoffman, who has served in this office since 1956.

In charge of the over-all program was Dr. Gerald B. Harvey, the Executive Secretary of the Board of Education from 1943 to 1956. Transferring from Wisconsin in 1928, Gerald Harvey worked in several churches in the Southern California Conference as pastor, associate pastor, and Director of Christian Education. In 1943, after two years as Pasadena District Superintendent, he succeeded Jesse Lee Corley, who had held the position of Executive Secretary for twenty-four years, pioneering as one of the first educational secre-

taries in American Methodism. In 1956 Gerald Harvey was elevated to the national position of Executive Secretary and Field Representative, Joint Commission on Christian Education for Foreign Fields of The Methodist Church. In this unique situation he has been attempting to strengthen the Methodist program of Christian education in foreign lands. Following Dr. Harvey's acceptance of this responsibility, the secretary of the Board of Education was also made a General Associate Secretary of the Co-ordinating Council.

An outstanding aspect of the Conference Christian educational program has been continual instruction in and promotion of Methodist Church School Curriculum. The aim has been to have every church school use the Methodist literature. By the end of 1959 more than 90% of the churches had done this. Laboratory schools and workshops, offering firsthand observation in the use of these materials, have continually helped to raise the level of effective teaching.

Of note also has been the activity of the Methodist Youth Fellowship, the national youth organization created in 1940 to replace the former Epworth League. On the older youth level the Wesley Foundation has been influential. Numerous college and university campuses have full-time or part-time Wesley Foundation directors or are affiliated with the Student Movement. From 1939 to 1956 the program was under the general direction of Herman N. Beimfohr. Since then Elbert Hoffman has been in charge of this, with Dr. Beimfohr responsible only for the program at University of California at Los Angeles. By 1959 the Conference reached seventeen institutions of higher learning in southern California and Arizona, ministering to more than 10,000 Methodist youth. The Wesley Foundation has worked closely with the University Religious Conference, a co-operative enterprise among religious groups which offers religious courses to university students. The Methodist Student Movement has made a significant contribution to youth work throughout the Church. During the years 1949-1951 a very complete survey of Methodist work at colleges and universities in Arizona, California, and Nevada was conducted by Murray H. Leiffer. This produced forty-three different conclusions and recommendations for developing the ministry to college youth. Many of these involved the strengthening of religious ties on the pre-college level, especially since "the growth of students into effective leaders is largely determined by their pre-college life in the home, church, school, and various youth group relationships."²⁶

The program for Junior and Senior High young people has likewise advanced. "Youth Day at Annual Conference" began in June

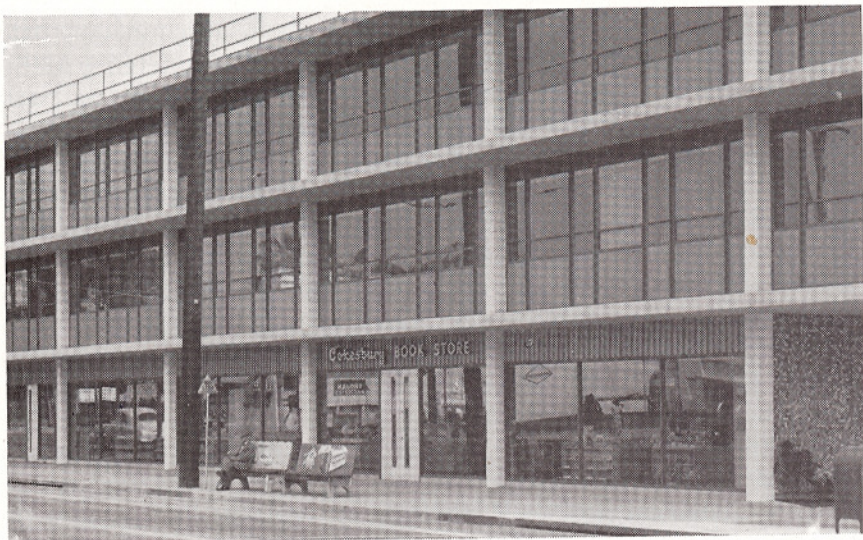
of 1940. Conventions, institutes, retreats, educational seminars—these have been part of the well-rounded program of the Conference Methodist Youth Fellowship. The Methodist Youth Exchange has sent work teams to Germany and caravans to Hawaii. In 1955 the program was broadened to include the Methodist Service Projects Commission and has included European Seminars and work teams to Japan and Central America. The Camp Commission, organized in 1944, encouraged the Conference to buy good facilities for camps and to rent other sites that could not be purchased. Today the Southern California-Arizona Conference is considered to have more camps than any other Conference in all Methodism.²⁷ The Conference owns Arroyo Grande (Arroyo Grande, California), Cedar Glen (Julian, California), Cisquito (near Saugus, a gift of the late Mr. Don C. Porter of South Pasadena), Lazy W. (near San Juan Capistrano, California), Colby (Singing Springs, California), Methodist Leaders' Lodge (Wrightwood, California), Mingus Mountain (near Jerome, Arizona), Pinery Canyon (southeast of Williams, Arizona), and Sturtevant (north of Sierra Madre, California). Within two hour's drive of any church in the Conference are good facilities for Christian recreation and family living.

Indicative of the Conference interest in education is the fact that it has raised or helped to raise several men of exceptional educational leadership in Methodism. Gerald Harvey has been mentioned. Three others deserve special attention.

Harold C. Case came to First Church, Pasadena, in 1945 after successful pastorates in Illinois, Kansas, and Pennsylvania. In 1951 he became the fifth President of Boston University, one of Methodism's large educational institutions, and seat of Boston University School of Theology.

Walter G. Muelder, who was a member of the Southern California Conference and then of the united Conference, became Dean and Professor of Social Ethics of Boston University School of Theology in 1945, following teaching positions at Berea College and the University of Southern California. He has been an outstanding leader in the ecumenical movement and has written widely on theological and ethical problems, including *Religion and Economic Responsibility* and *Foundations of the Responsible Society*.

Murray H. Leiffer entered the Southern California Conference on trial in 1924 and joined in full connection three years later. Since 1929 he has been on the faculty of Garrett Biblical Institute in the field of social ethics and is recognized as one of the foremost leaders and authorities on church survey work within Methodism.



Methodist Headquarters Building

8. CONFERENCE HEADQUARTERS

When certain tax situations made the Plaza Community Center untenable as the Conference headquarters, a Headquarters Corporation was authorized by a special Annual Conference on December 18, 1953, the same Conference which assumed one half the financial responsibility for the Arcadia Hospital. The following June, full authority was given the Corporation to act to secure a new location. Proposals were received from Wilshire Methodist Church, First Methodist Church, Los Angeles, Pacific Homes Corporation, and the Los Angeles Church Federation. After investigation, the proposal from Pacific Homes Corporation was accepted because of accessibility, costs, parking, and facilities.

Originally the Headquarters Corporation was authorized to purchase and to hold property, but the contract with Pacific Homes Corporation was on a lease basis. Since the arrangements were very satisfactory, the Conference ordered the Headquarters Corporation dissolved in June, 1956.²⁸ The dedication service was held on Tuesday, April 10, 1956. The new building at 5244-5250 Santa Monica Boulevard has extensive meeting rooms, vast office space, and meal service. The Cokesbury Book Store occupies most of the first floor.

9. THE COKEBURY BOOK STORE

The Methodist Book Concern and a book store of the Methodist Episcopal Church was established in San Francisco in 1852. In southern California a book store was operated for a number of years by the Board of Education of the Southern California and Southern California-Arizona Conferences at 125 East Sunset Boulevard. In 1943 the Publishing House took this over. In 1956 the Cokesbury Book Store was moved to the new spacious quarters at 5244 Santa Monica Boulevard.

10. COMMISSION ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

As new channels of communication have developed, Methodism usually has tried to utilize them. The only church in the Conference which operated its own radio station was Trinity Methodist Church, Los Angeles. First Methodist Church, Los Angeles, broadcasted its morning services beginning in the late 1920's. In the late 1940's the television ministry was inaugurated. Funds have been allocated yearly to make this aspect of Methodist communication vital. The Conference itself does not operate any television station. Many of its ministers periodically have appeared on devotional programs, while several churches have had their worship services televised on "Great Churches of the Golden West."

In 1951 a new chapter began in Conference public relations with the appointment of a full-time director, the Rev. Crawford Trotter. His pioneering efforts not only brought The Methodist Church closer to the newspapers by improving church-press relations but also related the Conference to the Church's National Commission on Public Relations. Meantime a Television, Radio, and Film Commission was actively engaged in promoting church advancement in these areas. Experimental pilot films as well as broadcasts of many of Bishop Kennedy's addresses have resulted. Of much benefit to the Conference in this work has been Glenn McMurry, staff member of the department of cinema at the University of Southern California. Thoroughly trained in the field of communications, he has had experience at home and abroad with the United States government. Until 1958 he served as the Executive Secretary of the Commission. The present Executive Secretary is Bruce Williams, formerly of the *Advocate/Together* staff.

In 1958 the Television, Radio, and Film Commission merged with that of Public Relations under the name Commission on Public

Relations. It is hoped that the merger will help to co-ordinate these fields better. Already numerous churches have established local committees on public relations. The objectives of the Commission are to present the story of Methodism to the people of the Conference, to provide them with training and counsel in the use of public relations techniques, to try to correct misconceptions of the Church, and to answer criticism of it.²⁹

11. OUTREACH TO OTHER RACES AND NATIONALITIES

Since unification the concern evidenced for other races and nationalities has continued to manifest itself, especially through the various institutions already discussed. Mention also should be made at this point of four additional matters.

i. Integration of the California Oriental Provisional Annual Conference

From time to time in past Methodist history a General Conference has made it possible "if and when it seemed desirable" for various Provisional Annual Conferences to integrate with Annual Conferences through which those groups geographically were located. In 1948 General Conference took such action in regard to the following Provisional Conferences: California Oriental, Latin American, and Pacific Japanese.

The first step to apply this principle in the Southern California-Arizona Conference was taken in 1949 when Bishop Baker appointed a Committee on Integration representing both groups. That committee reported in 1951 but its recommendation was confined to the California Oriental Conference. The ministers and laymen adopted the resolution accepting the appropriate churches and members of the Provisional Conference into the Annual Conference. By 1952 the merger had been completed, and thirteen additional ministers received their appointments from Bishop Baker.³⁰

ii. Integration of the Latin American Provisional Annual Conference

In February, 1953, a special committee representing the Southern California Conference, the California-Nevada Conference, and the Latin American Provisional Conference met. A vote taken indicated that an overwhelming majority of both laymen and ministers favored integration. Meeting again in May, the group decided that June,



A delegation to the Japanese Provisional Annual Conference

1956, should be the date for final integration. This would allow time for the Latin American Conference to raise its minimum salary schedule and also would allow an adequate period to prepare the churches for merger. Plans proceeded according to schedule. On June 22, 1956, in Executive Session, Bishop Kennedy announced the transfer of twenty-seven ministers and approximately 2,375 members into the Southern California-Arizona Conference.³¹

iii. Japanese Provisional Annual Conference

This Conference, organized in 1940 after forty years as a Mission Conference, is still independent. Two churches of the Conference are outside the Western Jurisdiction. It is expected that eventually integration will occur, but apparently the ministers of this Conference prefer to remain as a Provisional Conference until all their churches become self-supporting.³²

iv. The Growing Influence of the Negro

In the 1940's and the 1950's Negroes continued the westward migration which had been evident before the time of unification. The Southern California-Arizona Conference has tried to fulfill the needs of this racial group by adding new churches. In 1959 there were ten

active Negro churches with an approximate membership of 6,218. Holman (membership 1,944) and Wesley (membership 1,367), in Los Angeles, are the most prominent Negro churches. L. L. White has been at Holman since 1947, and E. W. Rakestraw at Wesley since 1936. Mr. White was elected a delegate to the 1960 General Conference.

Inter-racial work has proceeded cautiously, yet courageously. A changing city demands a changing philosophy in church relations as well as in other areas. By 1959 there were more Negro ministers in the Conference than there were Negro churches. In 1956 the Rev. Dan Towler, Negro minister and former member of the Los Angeles Rams football team, was appointed to the Lincoln Avenue Church in Pasadena. This church, while predominantly Caucasian, had some Negro members and was close to a large Oriental community. When Mr. Towler took the pastorate, a few of the Caucasian members left, but others of the same racial group who believed in integration took their place. In 1960 this church was continuing a ministry on this same basis in its transitional neighborhood.

Normandie Avenue was the first all-white congregation to have a Negro pastor. The Rev. Nelson B. Higgins, Jr., a former Baptist, was assigned to this church in June, 1957, by Bishop Kennedy after considerable study of changing conditions. The appointment attracted nation-wide attention.³³ In twenty years the membership of the church has dwindled from 250 to 43. It was evident that the community had been in transition for a number of years. Normandie Avenue Church had maintained a closed door policy with respect to Negro members except for allowing Negro children to attend the Church School. With a population of about 20,000 in the area, there was a great need to keep the church alive. Consequently, Mr. Higgins was appointed as an Approved Supply. Although many members left, many new ones joined. Neighboring churches gave much support, both in morale and physical equipment.

Mr. Higgins was an excellent preacher and had a fine personality that won many friends for himself and the church in the early months of the new plan. When it came to administration, however, Mr. Higgins met difficulty because of his Baptist background. He was continued as Approved Supply in 1958. When it became apparent that the organization of a Methodist church was not congenial to him, he resigned and decided to organize a small Baptist Church in the same community.

In 1959 the Rev. Wilbur Johnson, Methodist minister from Richmond, California, was appointed. The transition has been made and

the people have rallied to his support. In the near future a building program is contemplated. The increase in membership from 43 in 1957 to 213 in 1959 vindicated the decision to integrate this church.³⁴

12. UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Unification led some to feel that an independent theological seminary might be established. A Conference Commission decided the time was not ripe for creating a new School of Religion and commended the graduate School of Religion of the University of Southern California as worthy of continued support. In 1949 Dr. Earl Cranston was appointed Dean of the School of Religion by the University of Southern California. Loyal to both the University and to The Methodist Church, Dean Cranston guided the school through years of very critical readjustment.

In November, 1952, the Trustees of the University changed the Articles of Incorporation, eliminating the provision that a majority of the trustees must be Methodists. This was done "to eliminate any possibility of misconception."³⁵ Significantly, a week later the trustees received the first annual gift of \$419,000 from the County of Los Angeles for services through the University's School of Medicine.³⁶ The following February a committee was appointed by Bishop Kennedy to represent the Conference in negotiations with the University to clarify the relationship between the Conference and the School of Religion. When subsequent discussions did not lead to a satisfactory working agreement, the Conference determined to establish a separate school of theology. In January, 1956, a new but continuing school of theology, authorized by the Southern California-Arizona Conference in 1955, and wholly independent of the University of Southern California, was incorporated as a legal organization, known as Southern California School of Theology, and retaining the entire faculty and curriculum of the School of Religion. It met at University Methodist Church, across the street from the University, for one year pending the determination of a permanent home. Invitations were received from several places, from San Diego to Santa Barbara and as far east as Redlands and Arizona. An official committee of the Conference, drawing upon experts from across the country, completed a study and recommended to Annual Conference that Claremont be the new location. Eighty years previously Charles Maclay had made possible the Maclay College of Theology through a magnificent gift. Now another layman, who desired to remain anonymous, donated well-located and extensive land in Claremont

that the tradition of Maclay might be continued. In the fall of 1957 classes opened in buildings leased from the Associated Colleges of Claremont while the permanent campus was being readied. It was occupied early in 1960.

To assess the long history of the Southern California Conference, and its successor Conference, in its relationship with the University of Southern California is no easy undertaking. The hopes and dreams of the early leaders were that a great institution of Christian learning could be established and cultivated for the people of southern California. When Maclay College of Theology became a part of the University, those original desires assumed added significance. Times changed. The University survived the almost fatal depression of 1888-1894. Even as Los Angeles mushroomed so did the University. To many connected with the University, as well as no small number in the Annual Conference, the University seemed to have grown to be too large for the Conference alone to finance adequately. If every institution of Methodism that did not receive all the support it felt entitled to from an Annual Conference were to sever its relationship, Methodism today would have few, if any, institutions. The leaders of such schools always have known that funds must be sought elsewhere. Yet it must be admitted that few schools of Methodism had grown as large as had the University of Southern California by 1928. Needing a tremendous endowment, the University then decided to change its by-laws, and twenty-four years later the last reference to The Methodist Church was eliminated from these same by-laws. With this and subsequent steps a great university, born and nurtured in the Christian faith and life, became secularized. It had followed a pattern not unique in the history of American higher education.

A new chapter in the life of the School of Theology is now unfolding on the Claremont campus. In October, 1957, Dr. Ernest Cadman Colwell assumed the Presidency of the seminary. As a well-known New Testament scholar, able administrator, former president of the University of Chicago, and former vice-president of Emory University, Dr. Colwell had already provided outstanding leadership and guidance. The entering class of 1957 was the largest in the long history of the institution. The Conference was confident in pledging strong support to such a school that promised great things for the future of Methodism and for other denominations as well.

13. CALIFORNIA WESTERN UNIVERSITY

Until the organization of Alaska Methodist University in 1958,

California Western University in San Diego was the newest Methodist institution of higher learning in America. This school is another aspect of the Conference's concern for education. In 1951 a committee was set up to negotiate with the University, then known as Balboa University, regarding the possibility of Conference affiliation. The Annual Conference in 1952 committed itself to accept the University as a Conference institution if the school by 1957 had met certain conditions including sufficient endowment, adequate equipment, and library facilities. By 1956 these had been satisfied, including accreditation by the University Senate of The Methodist Church and by the Western College Association. The Conference then granted affiliation. Under the leadership of President William C. Rust, a minister of the Southern California-Arizona Conference, the University has made progress. Building has proceeded rapidly; standards of faculty and library excellence have kept pace. In 1961 in conjunction with the school the Conference expects to enter into an endowment drive for an additional one million dollars. As the only Protestant affiliated school of higher education in its county, California Western appears to have an opportune future.

14. CONTROVERSIES

i. Executive Session

Second, this objection rests on the supposition that all the preachers will vote alike and all the laymen alike. That is a pretty far-fetched supposition. We have never seen "rugged individualism" more rampant, upon the part of both ministry and laity, than in an Annual Conference. Methodist polity may not be as independent as that of Baptists, but Methodist people are about as independent in their thinking and acting as anybody we know, and have a confirmed habit of sooner or later breaking up blocks, whether of ministers or laymen, with complete ruthlessness and happy abandon.³⁷

Thus spoke (in part) the Judicial Council on a most interesting case originating in the Southern California-Arizona Conference. The outcome made the executive session an acceptable part of American Methodist procedure because of the action of the Conference.

At the Uniting Conference the discipline and organization of the new Church were determined. Section IV, Article 1, concerned the matter of passing upon the character of ministerial members. Therein it was stated that the District Superintendent may answer for each man, that he may call each man in his district by name in open session, or that the Annual Conference Committee on Conference and

Ministerial Relations may ask each District Superintendent to make one report to the Annual Conference. Following these three choices there then appeared this important clause:

Provided, that the Conference may order an executive session of the Ministerial Members, to consider questions relating to matters of ordination, character, and Conference relations.³⁸

On June 22, 1945, during Annual Conference, the ministers of the Conference held an executive session, without admitting laymen, to pass on matters of ordination, character, and Conference relations. The next afternoon Bishop Baker was asked for a ruling on the legality of the session. No ruling was given, and the same afternoon a unanimous resolution was passed by Annual Conference to have the Judicial Council rule on the legality of the session by the ministers on June 22.³⁹

On May 9, 1946, the Council ruled that no Annual Conference had authority to request the Judicial Council for a ruling on the constitutionality of an action of General Conference. The case was dismissed on the grounds that the Council was without jurisdiction in the matter.⁴⁰ Then in June, 1946, the Conference requested the Council of Bishops to appeal to the Judicial Council to determine the constitutionality of the clause. The Council of Bishops voted affirmatively for this appeal.⁴¹

On April 23, 1947, the Judicial Council, with two dissenting, ruled in favor of the ministerial body of the Southern California-Arizona Conference. The Council declared that it was constitutional to choose the closed session for the matter of "ordination, character, and Conference relations," as provided in the constitution of the United Conference and (in 1947) contained in the latter part of the *Discipline*, paragraph 646. The decision was based primarily on two factors: first, that the rule in the *Discipline* was imposed not arbitrarily but rather by choice of ministers and laymen and was the result of an adoption of a motion subject to debate; and, second, that the Annual Conference had a right to designate any group to perform for it a specific item.⁴² This power was enhanced by paragraph 22 of the *Discipline* which stated that "lay members may not vote on matters of ordination, character, and Conference relations of ministers."⁴² The Judicial Council continued:

... the specific denial to a group of the right to vote on a given question negates any presumption of an inherent right in the members of that group to be present and participate in the discussion leading up to such vote . . .⁴⁴

The Judicial Council believed that the wording was ambiguous and should be changed, but to the present time it has remained as it is.*

In brief, the laymen, who are constitutionally members of the Conference, felt that the executive session violated their rights since they were excluded from a group that is part of the Conference. In 1947, following the ruling, the Annual Conference took action to allow laymen to sit in the session without a vote. This was exactly what they were fighting for in the first place. (However, the *Discipline* is still ambiguous as to the right of laymen even to sit in the session.) In 1957 by vote of laymen and ministers, laymen are excluded from the hall only on the question of passage of the character of ministers. Thus ended an interesting chapter in Methodist constitutional history.

ii. Social Study and Action

In 1942 Bishop Baker, in answer to "What is the Church to do?," said:

The Church must recognize the danger within our own borders to our democratic inheritance, to civil liberties, to the hard-won gains of labor and social security. She must foster attitudes which can stand against hatreds which threaten, and the perversions of truth which always accompany war.

She must stand for fair play to minority groups, to the Negro, to the Japanese American citizen, and to other citizens who stem through ancestry from enemy countries.⁴⁵

The stand for civil liberties and for a more just social and economic order by the Conference in the mid-thirties was representative of an unbroken history of similar stands to the present day by Methodists of southern California and Arizona. Such Christian witness has been due in no small part to the direction of Bishop Baker and Bishop Kennedy. Both have stood unashamedly and unafraid in the application of the personal gospel to the social order.

Consistently the Conference has opposed the manufacture, sale,

* It may be noted that the request from the Conference to the Council of Bishops (and thus ultimately to the Judicial Council) was for a ruling on the constitutionality of the paragraph and not the legality of the session (as the original resolution had). Actually the Conference did not order the executive session; the ministers just met. Certainly the *Journal* indicates no such order, and neither Bishop Baker nor anyone else present can remember such order. Because the ministers just met, had the resolution requested the legality of the session rather than the constitutionality of the paragraph, it is perhaps doubtful that an affirmative ruling would have come; for wording of the decision makes Annual Conference action of so ordering a session the basis of the final Judicial Council decision!

purchase, and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Likewise it has opposed legalized gambling. There has not been one year during which a slack attitude could be noticed on any such issues as these.

During World War II every Conference session protested the unfair treatment of the Japanese-Americans who had been herded into relocation camps. The youth of the area secured temporary release of Japanese young people to attend summer Institutes. The Conference was one of the leading groups that helped to make concrete plans to rehabilitate these displaced Americans when in 1945 they returned to a normal life. Local ministers and laymen offered much guidance during this transition.

Following the pattern set just prior to unification, the united Conference has stood firmly on the ground of the right of the individual conscience in time of warfare. It has supported wholeheartedly the General Conference statement that there is not now a common judgment regarding what to do in respect to war. Throughout the second world conflict and to the present time it has reaffirmed loyalty to the United States Government and to the President. At the same time it has been loyal to those men who have registered as Conscientious Objectors, offering them counsel and moral support.⁴⁶ Without variation the Conference has stood against all campaigns of fear in the field of civil liberties including investigations and loyalty oaths. In this critical sphere Bishop Oxnam, formerly of this Conference, has played a leading role, and the Conference unitedly has supported his fight as well as its own throughout California.⁴⁷

More important than mere pronouncements has been concrete action. During World War II laymen and ministers served as hospital volunteers and in emergency relief organizations. Churches had outstanding programs and activities for service men. One Arizona minister is reported to have conducted courses in English for German prisoners of war.⁴⁸

In 1950 a Board of Social Study and Action was formed to lift the matter of Christian concern out of mere debate and to put it into practical effect. In 1956 the name was changed to the Board of Christian Social Relations. This group has taken the lead in specific action. Among other things, it has sponsored seminars on critical problems and has given valuable suggestions to local churches for facing particular problems and organizing them for united action.

One of the most encouraging—and interesting—events in this field involved the Los Angeles Board of Education election of 1957. A committee of citizens asked Bishop Kennedy to be chairman of the Committee for Better Schools. He was genuinely interested but felt

he could not give adequate time to the chairmanship. Frank Williams, J. Wesley Hole, and Ray Ragsdale urged him to accept it, and in a moment of enthusiasm the last-named told the bishop, "If you will accept the chairmanship, I will be glad to help you!" As a result Bishop Kennedy became Honorary Chairman and Dr. Ragsdale the "Working Chairman." Screening the numerous candidates in the election, the committee came up with two appropriate coalition choices, Mrs. Mary Tinglof, wife of an attorney, and Mr. Ralph Richardson, professor at the University of California at Los Angeles. Opposed by all of the metropolitan newspapers, the committee nevertheless proceeded carefully and excitedly with its campaign. Publications from various religious denominations presented the issues. A leading one was the right to teach about UNESCO (United Nations Economic, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) in the public schools. After victory was achieved, Dr. Ragsdale was informed that it was the first time in more than twenty-five years that a Los Angeles *Times*-sponsored candidate for the Board of Education had been defeated.⁴⁹