

BX
8360
.D7

1227

The PRESBYTERIAN SURVEY

BX
8360
.D7

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES

JULY, 1924

General Assembly Notes

R. E. Magill, Secretary

A Clear Call to the Presbyterian Churches

Robert E. Speer

Protestant Witnesses in Italy

Fred. S. Goodman

Indians of the Three Americas

L. L. Legters

Signs of the Times in Foreign Fields

S. H. Chester

Our Supply of Ministers

Henry H. Sweets



Published by
EXECUTIVE AGENCIES OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE U.S.

The PRESBYTERIAN SURVEY

Vol. XIV

JULY, 1924

No. 7

General Assembly Notes

R. E. MAGILL, *Secretary*

THE ASSEMBLY of 1924 can well be called a progressive—conservative body. The conclusions reached indicate that the members were forward-looking men and that they were not afraid to vote their convictions when the issue was between progress and a backward step.

When the issue touched matters involving the stand of the Church on the fundamentals of faith there was no debate and not a voice was raised in defense of the so-called Modernist views.

The deliverance of the Assembly of 1886, touching the question of Evolution was reaffirmed. This was prepared by Dr. G. B. Strickler and others, and was a strong reply to Darwinism which was rampant in those days, and affirmed the Church's stand on the account of man's origin as found in the Bible.

The Situation in the Foreign Field

The numerous overtures about the situation in the Foreign Mission Field and the presence of Missionaries who represented widely divergent views as to methods and policies promised to precipitate a lengthy and bitter debate on the floor of the Assembly. Wise counsel prevailed however, and the whole matter was referred to a special committee composed of one representative from each Synod.

This Committee sat for twenty hours and missed most of the Assembly sessions in an effort to get all the facts and formulate a report which would satisfy all parties and prevent a long debate on the Assembly floor. The members of this committee came to a unanimous conclusion and presented a report which was adopted by the Assembly without a dissenting vote, and accompanied with the singing of the doxology and prayers of thanksgiving for the harmonious solution of a perplexing question.

Recognition of Women's Work

A number of overtures were before the Assembly asking that the action of last year placing women on the Executive Committees be rescinded. These overtures had stalwart supporters on the Assembly floor and a majority report was presented by the Committee on Bills and Overtures, recommending that the question be sent down to the Presbyteries for consideration and advice. A minority report prepared by three elders was submitted, recommending that the action of the last Assembly be approved.

The debate was spirited and the action of last year was attacked on the ground that it was unconstitutional, unscriptural and contrary to the practice of the Church.

The case for the defense was summed up by Rev. Charles L. King, D. D., Pastor of Grace Covenant Church, Richmond, Va. This was Dr. King's first Assembly, but he commanded attention in his maiden speech, in which he reviewed the formation of the First Executive Committee in 1861. He reminded his hearers that the fathers of the Church fixed no restrictions as to membership on Executive Committees and did not specify that membership should be confined to *male* members of the Church, but provided that *private* members of the Church should be eligible to membership on Executive Committees.

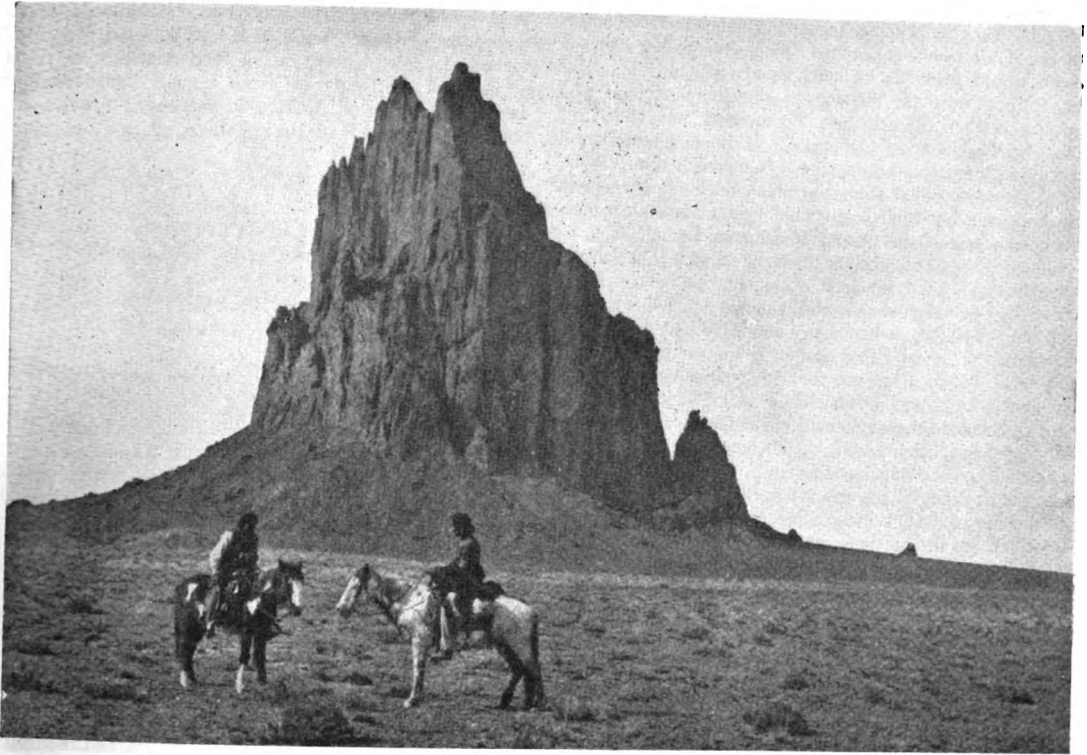
Dr. King paid a merited tribute to the splendid work of the Auxiliary and called attention to the statements in the reports of the Executive Committees that the newly elected members were rendering a service of high value on every Committee. The Assembly, by an overwhelming vote adopted the minority report, thus endorsing the action of the last Assembly in giving women membership on the Executive Committees.

Change in the Church Year

The matter of changing the Church year to correspond with the Calendar year provoked some discussion, but was not given the attention the gravity of the issue demands.

The Standing Committee recommended in a majority report that no change be made. An appeal was made to change to the Calendar year in the interest of the country churches and the issue was muddled by discussing the condition of country roads in the fall as compared with March. The tremendous changes involved in fixing new dates for all the Church courts and rearranging the whole working schedule of the Church was lost sight of, and debate was cut off before all the facts involved could be presented.

If the order for the change stands the Church will have an experience equivalent to going over Niagara Falls and through the rapids below the falls. It is *possible* for a man to survive such an experience, but so far only about one has lived to tell the tale, while scores of adventurers have not even furnished corpses for a funeral.



INDIANS OF THE THREE AMERICAS

L. L. LECTERS



THE MOST neglected people in the world today, from a missionary standpoint, are the Indians. Though they make up one of the five great races, yet in the past, they have been almost entirely left out of missionary work. Even in the United States where most has

been done, there are 50,000 who are without missionaries, and many thousands of children without school privileges; but in the lands to the south of us the neglect is appalling, schools unheard of, hospitals unknown, missionaries few and scattered.

There are many reasons for this neglect. Distance always lends enchantment, and the Indians have been so near our door that they have been overlooked. Within three days of easy travel, either by train, or by boat and train, we can be in dense heathenism. Within four days sail from New Orleans, a young Indian woman was offered as a sacrifice, three years ago, to appease the anger of heathen divinities and to stay the ravage of disease. These people are so near our gate that we pass them by, as did the Knight who sought the Holy Grail.

Many people think that the Indians who live on this continent are Catholic, that the Padres reached them, and that it is now impossible and unnecessary to turn

them from Catholicism. But most of the Indians who have been reached by the Catholics have brought with them their old religions, and have grafted on to the old forms a few new things, such as baptism and worshipping saints. I saw in a large city, in front of a Catholic church, the witch doctors burning incense on their altars, with all their weird songs and incantations. I saw the witch doctors act as god-fathers, collecting the baptismal fees. I wondered whether they split the fee with the priests. Wherever one goes, one still finds the altars on every high hill, and the Indian at his devotions.

I said to an intelligent Indian, "Have you one of those small stone images?" He said, "Yes." I asked him to sell it to me, and was informed that it was not for sale. I said to him, "But, my friend, you are a Catholic, you do not need it." He said, "I reverence the saints, but I worship my gods." It is true they have heard the name of God, but they are still heathen. Jesus is but an image, perhaps a wax figure, or one made of clay. In Guatemala they have, in their most sacred place, an image of the black Christ.

Another reason for the neglect is a lack of information, and misunderstanding. Many people think of the Indian problem as a matter of blood, for instance; in the United States anyone who has Indian blood, though

it be but an eighth, is an Indian. In the countries south of us, if all who had Indian blood were called Indians there would probably be sixty or seventy million. But an Indian, from the missionary standpoint, is one who speaks neither Spanish nor Portuguese, but who uses his own language or "idioma." If he can understand a foreign language the missionary can reach him. However, the fact is that there are many millions who speak no language but their own tribal tongue, hence are outside the reach of the present missionary forces.

These tribes and groups are very large. The largest tribe in the United States is about 30,000. I have seen tribes in Central America and Mexico which have 450,000 and 500,000, with many more groups which are from one to seven times larger than anything in this country. I am informed that in South America there is a tribe numbered by millions. In Mexico there are said to be more than two million Indians who speak no language but their own. In the small country of Guatemala, in a portion less than a third the size of South Carolina, there are a million in seven tribes, besides the 320,000 in smaller tribes. On the North American continent there are 100,000 in Canada, and 340,000 in the United States, making about 4,420,000 Indians who speak only their own language. The estimate for South America is from fifteen to twenty millions, no one knows, for no one has yet ventured to make a complete survey in Brazil, Columbia, Peru, Bolivia and Venezuela, but taking 15,000,000 as a minimum we have not less than 19,420,000 Indians. These are the neglected ones.

Another reason for this condition is that the scattered tribes are in out-of-way places, hard to reach because away from the regular lanes of travel, generally in small isolated groups, often with slight variations in dialect in the same tribe. They spread over an immense territory, from the Rio Grande, the Texas border mark, to Terra Del Fuego; in South America, over a country extending east and west farther than from Maine to San Francisco. A territory so large, and conditions so trying, as to test the strength of the strongest, and the courage and daring of the most intrepid.

It is a real pioneer work, like that done by Paton, McKay and others in the days of old. To serve here

men would have to live away from civilization, far from the routes of travel, back in the hills, apart from comforts and conveniences, eating food to which one is not accustomed and separate from human companionship; and if in parts of Mexico, a month or two between mails, or if in parts of Brazil, three, six or more months between mail times.

It is a lonely life, but that is not the reason for the lack of missionaries. Many of our young men are ready to go to the hardest fields, or to risk their lives among the savage headhunters, ready to live or to die for others. But today the money fails. Our Boards must hold back from entering new work when the churches fail to send funds sufficient even for the present work. How long shall the past neglect go on? It is not for Boards and Committees to answer. They can move only after we have moved.

Another reason for this condition has been in part the language in question. An Indian missionary must first learn the language of the *country* to which he goes, then that of the *tribe*. He must make his own grammar and lexicon, translate the Bible into the Indian tongue, and then teach the untutored to read, that the Indian, too, may hear the good news in the "tongue in which he was born." Wherever missionaries have done this, many Indians have become Christians. In one tribe of 100,000 there is a strong church of 10,000 members. In another country two missionaries told me that 3,000 had become Christians in the last two years.

Today among the best native workers are men who were ignorant Indians, but who have learned the Spanish language and are preaching to Spanish people, reminding one of the Indian work in our own country, in old Indian Territory, where the Indians have given back to us men like that sweet singer, and gospel preacher, Frank Hall Wright. As I have tramped through these countries, I have wondered why our Indians in Indian Presbytery could not go and carry the gospel message to their brothers in Mexico, supporting their own men, bringing to others of their race the message given them. Will the Christian Indians of our favored land permit the neglect of the *Red Men* to go on?

