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THE NEW PRESIDENT.

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“The Presidency of Union Seminary is the biggest job in the Southern Presbyterian Church today!” “The best qualified man in the Southern Presbyterian Church for the Presidency of Union Seminary is B. R. Lacy, Jr., of Atlanta, Ga.!” These statements, made at different times by a minister of our Church express the conviction of the author of this article and constitute his apology for writing it.

The first of these statements scarcely requires argument. The men who shape the thinking and direct the training of the Presbyterian preachers of the next generation will exert the predominating influence upon the future of our Church. Union Seminary is the largest of our four seminaries. Just a few less than one-half of the ministers serving our Church today were educated at Union. Of the candidates of our Church in theological training in 1925, Union enrolled one more than the other three seminaries combined. Such facts imply that the President of Union Seminary will be the outstanding figure in the realm of theological education in our Church.

It is the second statement that challenges attention. Every true lover of the Seminary has viewed with anxiety the decline in the health of her beloved former president. They have dreaded the time when he would be forced to relinquish the office he filled in so incomparable a way. Wherever alumni have gathered, this question has been asked, “Where will the Seminary turn for a successor?” It is my deep-seated con-

THE PENSACOLA ASSEMBLY.

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A General Assembly has a personality. Some Assemblies are more attractive and more effective than others. If one tries to personalize an Assembly he inevitably begins with the Moderator, for the Moderator is bound to project himself into the work of the body more effectively than any one else, and the general character of the meetings is a complex of his personality with that of those who take part in the discussions, seasoned by the type of the community, the weather, and to a great extent by the pastor of the entertaining church.

We had a most interesting and popular Moderator, and a pastor host whose geniality matched his efficiency and made him a fit spokesman for a congregation and community that dispensed a hospitality of bounty and cordiality the equal of any that I have ever enjoyed.

It was a good-natured Assembly. No one got real angry; while a hearty laugh would ring out frequently. It was a worshipful body of men. Frequently a discussion would stop, and some one would lead in fervent prayer for divine guidance, which was freely given. The formal devotional periods at the opening of the morning sessions were unusually well attended, and the young ministers that led these services gave proof of real ability to bring the message from God's Word. The singing was refreshing in heartiness and volume.

I am inclined to nominate the Moderator himself as the best possible expression of the character of the Pensacola Assembly—Dr. James Skinner, from the wide spaces of South-west Texas. And there is an interesting story right here for those who were not at the Assembly. It is fair to assume that the young Kentuckian who went out to Texas when it was *Texas* had many an exhilarating experience in "busting a broncho", as well as engaging in other frontier pastimes. But

up to the time he came to the Assembly at Pensacola he had taken these animals in hand *seriatim*. When he was elected Moderator he found, at the first evening session, that it was up to him to "bust" a whole *herd at one time!* And he did it! But what a time he had!

When a man is good for almost everything else it is asking too much to insist that he must be an expert parliamentarian in addition. Dr. Skinner intimated, before the herd broke loose, that he would agree with any one that he was not expert in parliamentary matters.

And hence the story. It was the first evening session, and reports of the Executive Secretaries were being presented in the familiar and unctuous generalities which time has hallowed, when it came the turn to hear from the Superintendent of Woman's Auxiliary. One of the Secretaries started to read Mrs. Winsborough's report, when a commissioner said he would be most uncomfortable in facing his wife and daughter on his return to his home, if the Superintendent was refused the privilege of reading her own report; therefore he moved that she be requested to do so. Then, *presto!* The General Assembly changed in a moment to a "Convention"—all kinds of motions and calls were made; the Moderator tried to agree with everybody, no matter how different he might be from everybody else; and so it went for probably thirty minutes, until some one made a motion to adjourn, which quickly prevailed. But what a session! I have witnessed many exciting and tense situations in church courts, but never one like that evening session.

A high court of the Church of Christ turned into a kind of mass meeting. Different speakers unconsciously spoke of it as "This Convention", and all of the jarring and contention usually associated with Conventions were in evidence. What is the explanation of such a breakdown? No men are more likely to be stampeded from strict propriety to inconsiderate and intemperate contention than a group of refined Southern gentlemen, when they think their women are being imposed upon or treated unjustly. No matter what our individual feeling may be on the "woman question" in our church, we must

recognize that others have their convictions, which are just as full of regard for women as ours, and are as vibrant with all of the best impulses of courtesy as we are. It is shallow and unfair thinking for those that advocate a courtesy course towards women's activities in the church to charge or imply that those that insist upon asking, "What do the Scriptures teach on the subject?" are lacking in respect or appreciation of them.

And it is well for us to remember that at no time, when this subject has been up for discussion, has the Assembly faced that most important aspect of it. It was well for the Assembly later to recall the action of 1916, and to add to it the definition of the relation which the Superintendent of the Auxiliary sustains toward the Assembly.

There were many heavy hearts that night, and many who sought strength and guidance at the Throne of Grace.

When we came back Friday morning there was a new spirit in the Assembly, and there was an assurance that all would be well. And all was well from that hour to the last moment of the work of the Assembly.

The principal difference between a good sermon and a poor one is in the hearer; and the difference between an effective Moderator and an ineffective one is largely in the spirit of the body of Commissioners. That herd of bronchos were well broken to their work.

And that election of a Moderator! No derby could be closer or more exciting. I was sorry at first that my nominee was not elected, in the interest of dispatch of business; but he can wait; and everybody is happy that the courageous and indefatigable leader of the far Southwest was given the honor, and that he made complete conquest of every member of the Assembly. It was wonderful how he earned the love and loyalty of everybody. It explains his great success in the "Tex-Mex" and other enterprises in Texas. He beamed good will, fairness, moral courage and the spirit of a real leader. In the busy hours of the closing day, when he was "going good" as a presiding officer, twice he knocked an empty water glass off the side of the pulpit, which elicited the unsanctified

remark from the press gallery that "the Moderator abhors an empty glass".

The Speakers.

There were few formal speeches and no orations. Few came "loaded". Of course the special advocates of the Hancocks had carefully prepared arguments, while the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions had a printed statement of their side, which was full and clear.

I would award the prize for the best speaker on the business of the Assembly to Dr. H. W. DuBose, of Spartanburg, S. C., on the Stewardship question. He had about everything that is essential to an effective address—he knew his subject, and just what he wanted to say, and the effect he hoped to accomplish. He presented his ideas in terse terms which were suffused with genuine feeling, did not hesitate a moment, and stopped when it was evident that he had much more that he could say. For all of which hearers are usually thankful. I did not agree with his main contention, which made it all the more creditable that he could make such an effective speech on the wrong side of the question.

Stewardship Problem.

The first syllable of the first word in the title of this section is fairly descriptive of the situation when this very important matter was under discussion. This confusion was not due to inferior minds muddling the question, nor to any efforts to get an unfair advantage. It seemed to be due to the failure of the business mind to grasp fully the religious implication of Stewardship on the one hand, and the inability of the ecclesiastical mind to clearly comprehend the significance of a budget and the absolutely necessary supporting, cooperating and promoting activities involved in it. The more they talked the more confused the situation became. There was apparent hostility on the part of some to the Stewardship Committee,

and a desire to do away with it, or at least to strip it of practically all its powers. There were intimations that the policies of Executive Committees did not harmonize; that one of these Committees was probably jealous of others; that the Committee that thought another Committee was jealous was in a position, by reason of a large official force, and an additional available force of its workers, to go through the churches and gather many specially designated gifts, etc., etc.

The "designated gift" was the sorest spot. One side argued for the lifting of all "hampering restrictions", so that any cause might send its representatives wherever an opening could be found; that to do otherwise was to attempt to restrict the liberty of churches and individuals, and to limit the work of the Holy Spirit in moving hearts to generous and special gifts.

On the other hand, it was urged that it would be fatal to anything like a balanced financial program for the church to weaken the efficiency of the Stewardship Committee; that it would defeat its own end in the long run by arousing resentment by over-much pressing of special claims; and that it would invite an undignified scramble between competing causes.

It became obvious that further discussion so near the close of the Assembly would fail to reach a wise conclusion. This had been foreseen in the more quiet consideration of the overtures relating to the Executive Committee of Stewardship by the Committee on Bills and Overtures, and they had presented a recommendation which had been adopted by the Assembly providing an *ad interim* Committee to give thorough study to this whole subject. When the Assembly was tired and somewhat irritated by the clash of ideas over this report of the Standing Committee on Stewardship and the suggestion was made that an *ad interim* Committee had already been appointed to do what the Assembly had demonstrated it could not do in the time available, a motion was made to refer the whole question to that Committee, leaving the question of Stewardship in the meanwhile *in statu quo*. This motion was eagerly accepted, and the discussion was quickly and very willingly ended.

We need to be deeply interested in this matter; to be much

in prayer for the light which is needed, and which did not appear to be shining in the Assembly.

The Assembly dropped the subject with a feeling of relief, but also of apprehension on the part of some. We feel that we are not yet masters of Stewardship, budget, percentage distribution and the spirit of cooperation which they call for. Too many pastors and church officers fail to educate congregations concerning these things; there are too many people in our ministry and church membership who are partisans of special causes, they are *lopsided* towards Home Missions or Foreign Missions, and are willing to let other causes get along as best they can.

One of the Executive Secretaries is disturbed over a remark made by me in discussing the Stewardship report. He writes as follows:

"In looking over the Christian Observer of June 2 I was appalled to see in the northeast corner of page 14 that you are represented as using the following language: 'I deplore the fact that our Executive Secretaries are arrayed against each other.' I remember distinctly what you said, and it was nothing like what you are reported as saying. You deplored the fact that the Executive Committees should be pitted against each other as was apparently done in one of the speeches made on the subject. It is not a fact that the Executive Secretaries are arrayed against each other. If this statement should go uncontradicted it would certainly have an extremely bad effect, it seems to me. I should therefore warmly appreciate your correcting this in a subsequent issue of the Observer."

He is anxious to have it corrected. I wish I could do it, but as well as I can recall what I said, I think the Observer reported it fairly. I wish the situation were different. It would be most helpful if a spirit of utmost sympathy and cooperation were the rule in all the relations of our Executive Committees. But somehow the relation especially between the great Missionary agencies appears to be strained. These causes have the attitude of competitors.

If this were a situation deliberately brought about by the overreaching of Secretaries or Committees, I fear that I would not have the moral courage to say so. But I am the more willing to say what I have said because I believe the situation

of which I am speaking is the result of a *faulty organization* of Executive agencies, and an *inadequate denominational spirit*. We have separated one of our great tasks (Missions) which should be one in thought, effort and enthusiasm. We have sundered into *two competing Causes* what should be *one inspiring enterprise*.

It may not be advisable to attempt an early merger of our Mission work, Home and Foreign, but we should insist upon such regulation of their competing efforts as is provided for in the budget and in the Executive Committee of Christian Stewardship oversight. Otherwise it is asking too much from human nature to expect our Secretaries to be diligent in their tasks of promotion and not fall victims to the spirit of rivalry which is inevitable as things are at present.

I am certain I could not do as well as they do. I hope this explanation will satisfy the Secretary mentioned above; and I trust that such readjustment or reorganization of Executive agencies can be made as will make it possible for our capable and industrious Secretaries to work without the necessity of appearing to be in a scramble to see how many cents each may get out of every dollar contributed.

While the very complicated subject of Stewardship was at its tensest period a fine elder, who is a successful business man, attempted to drift into the discussion. But it was going faster than he thought, and he was like one trying to get a seat on one of the horses of a merry-go-round when it is at top speed. The centrifugal force threw him out each time he tried to get on. And before he could get a seat on his hobby the time limit of five minutes was over. The remainder of the story is evidence of how wicked newspaper men can be:

News Man: "On which side of the question are you?"

The Elder: "Didn't you hear my speech?"

News Man: "Yes, that was what aroused my curiosity."

A refined fitness: The Stewardship Committee held its meetings in the Jewish Synagogue across the street from the church.

The Hancock Case.

Objection was made to the use of the term "case" in this connection, because it hinted at a judicial proceeding. It was far from that. Except for a little rise of temperature on the part of the two worthy brethren who advocated the return of the Hancocks to their China field, with or without the approval of the Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, there was manifest a wonderful restraint; and there was nothing that approached a reflection upon the orthodoxy or Christian character of anybody.

I must confess that it is the first Foreign Mission controversy that I have studied enough to have a fair understanding of its merits or demerits since I was appointed to serve as prosecutor by my Presbytery in the trial of one of our missionaries to China, about twenty-five years ago. It was a real trial, on the insistent demand by him that we recognize that he was not in harmony with the teachings of the Confession of Faith, and that the Confession was not in harmony with the Bible. He insisted on coming home to have it out with the Presbytery. The charges against him were sustained by the Presbytery, and he did not return to the foreign field. As evidence of the spirit which marked that judicial case, in which I was prosecutor and he was defendant, it will be sufficient to say that each day of the protracted trial he was a guest at my table for one or more meals; and that I have a book which I prize very highly, which he sent to me after the trial with cordial expression of his fraternal esteem and appreciation of my attitude towards him during the trial.

The Hancock case was of the same character in its kindly spirit. The reasons for not returning them to their field in China were the unsettled conditions of Mrs. Hancock's health (she had suffered two attacks of spru), the fact that their fellow workers in the Mission area in China did not advise their return (it is a fixed rule that when a missionary comes home on furlough, the other missionaries of that station are called upon to vote on whether they deem it wise for him to be returned), this advice not having the slightest reflection

upon their personal character or their soundness in the faith, but in this case relating solely to the insecurity of Mrs. Hancock's health, and a lack of cooperation with the work of other missionaries on the part of Mr. Hancock.

That is the Hancock case. The Executive Committee of Foreign Missions decided that it would not be for the best interests of the work in China for them to return; and that it would not be a wise use of the money of the Church to make further experiment in this case. So, with assurances of Christian esteem for this devoted couple, the Assembly with an all but unanimous vote sustained the Executive Committee in the decision which they had reached in the matter.

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While the Professor (of one of our Seminaries) was reading the report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Missions relating to the Hancock matter, which report was a literary gem as well as a wonderful handling of the subject, he spoke of something as being "unescapable". A fine young brother in the back of the church: "Mr. Moderator, does he not mean to say 'inescapable'?" The Professor: "Mr. Moderator, if the young brother will consult the Dictionary, he will find that either is correct. Mr. Moderator, it now reads 'unescapable' with 'inescapable' in parenthesis."

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Training School at Austin Seminary—Normal School at Montreat.

I class these subjects together, because they involve a principle which occasioned very earnest discussion and involve the whole question of the relation of the General Assembly to Educational Institutions.

An overture came from Texas asking for the establishment of a Training School at Austin Seminary. This was answered in the negative by the Standing Committee on the Assembly's Training School. Several overtures asked the Assembly to take over the management of the Normal School at Montreat as an Assembly institution. The Bills and Overtures Committee answered this in the negative. The Assembly adopted

the recommendation of the Bills and Overtures Committee, while it granted the request from Austin in general terms, and appointed a strong Committee representing all the interested institutions to bring to the next Assembly a policy for the Assembly to follow in such matters.

The arguments were pointed and the issue was plain. On one side it was stated that it would be most unfair to build up a great and useful training school in a remote part of the Assembly, and deny a similar privilege to another section a thousand miles away; that the claim that it is sometimes difficult to place all the graduates of the present institution ignores the fact that such an institution in the far Southwest would develop a demand for its product, as well as inspire young people to attend its classes; on the other hand, the plea was made that the school at Richmond is not adequately equipped yet, and this should be done before another school is attempted; that the Richmond School is sufficient for the present needs of the Church.

The discussion went deeper into the matter when the position was taken that the Assembly has no business to own or control any educational institution; that it has declined to own or control a Theological Seminary, except to exercise veto power over election of professors, and to offer advice to governing boards; that it has fixed the educational unit as the Synod; that it is appropriate for Synods in an area of common interests to unite in the ownership and control of Theological Seminaries, Colleges, and Orphanages, as they do now, and *Training Schools*; and there is nothing in the character of a Training School which warrants making an exception of it.

The action of the Assembly on these matters, and in the light of the discussion, was by a strong majority in favor of recognizing the right of any section of the country that desires the benefit of a Training School for lay workers, to establish such a school, and that it should be established and supported by the interested Synods. It was recognized in the discussion that each of our Theological Seminaries has a natural right to encourage the establishment of a Training School alongside of the Seminary, and that the name of the Assem-

bly, and the benefit of a share in the Assembly's budget, should not be the peculiar privilege of one such institution, but if granted at all, should be a privilege common to all.

Canadian Delegates.

The General Assembly had most engaging and refreshing evidence that interest in church matters in Canada is keen. We had two stalwart and vigorous fraternal delegates from the land of the maple leaf and snow: Dr. Laird from the United Church of Canada—a union of Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian people; and Dr. J. K. Fraser from “The Presbyterian Church of Canada”.

An interesting and breezy discussion arose as to the use of the title, “The Presbyterian Church of Canada”; Dr. Laird asserting that by reason of the votes of congregations, presbyteries, synods and Assembly, those who went into the United Church of Canada carried the name with them, and that this is confirmed by act of the Dominion Parliament, with notice that no other body can claim or use the title “Presbyterian Church of Canada”.

Dr. Fraser claims for his side that the ecclesiastical voting was only an apparent majority of the Presbyterians of Canada; and that the act of Parliament in forbidding the use of the name to the remaining Presbyterians is unconstitutional, and therefore they ignore it, and defy the United Church to take it to the Privy Council (the Supreme Court) and have it tested. The United Church people assert that it is constitutional, and they dare the continuing Presbyterians to test it before the Privy Council! There you have it.

Anyhow, these strong and most interesting men made a fine impression on the Assembly, and added much to the life of its sessions.

The Assembly gave expression to most cordial appreciation of their presence as fraternal delegates, but concluded not to set a precedent of making an annual exchange of delegates.

Dr. Dobyms said it is evident that the believers at Jerusalem were Presbyterians, for when they heard that the Gospel

had broken out in Samaria they appointed an *ad interim* Committee, composed of Peter and John, to go down to Samaria and see what it was all about, and to report back to Jerusalem; but it is doubtful whether the believers at Antioch who sent out Barnabas and Saul were Presbyterians, for there is no record that any one objected.

How Not to Invite the Assembly.

Selecting the place for the next meeting of the Assembly is always a high spot on the calendar. Sometimes carefully prepared "spell-binders" are sent to marshal all the business, social, historic, climatic and other data before the commissioners. This was done by the pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Eldorado, Ark. With all the unction of a Florida real estate agent, he pictured the rise of that favored town from an obscure little village to a magic city, whose glory could be expressed only in thousands of tons of freight, millions of gallons of oil, and staggering statistics of undreamed of comforts awaiting the happy commissioners of the 1927 Assembly. He got the Assembly, but his speech had nothing to do with getting it.

Dr. Anderson frankly acknowledged that he wanted the Assembly to meet at Montreat next year, because it would give him fine leverage in raising the money for the completion of the new Montreat Inn, where the commissioners would be housed.

Dr. Mack extended the invitation to come to Charlottesville, Va.; and his charm of manner, coupled with an alluring recountal of all the beauties of that wonderful section, and reminders of the inspiration which the commissioners would receive from the many nearby places of capital importance in Presbyterian history, made one feel that he could understand the sentiment of the tidewater section of Virginia in the good old days, that heaven was "somewhere up the Jeems River". But Charlottesville ran one, two, *three* in the voting.

What was wrong in these invitations? And why did the Assembly go to Eldorado? The way not to invite the Assem-

bly was illustrated by Eldorado and Charlottesville—by telling what a wonderful place such a community is, and how favored the Assembly would be if it could meet there next year.

Montreat wanted it for the financial aid it would bring to the building program there. This was frankly stated; but it misses entirely the spirit and purpose of an Assembly meeting so far as the *place* is concerned, which is to meet *where the Assembly can do the greatest good*. That is why they decided to go to Eldorado—because it is a portion of the Assembly which needs encouragement and deserves whatever advantage an Assembly can bring to it; and Eldorado was fortunate in surviving the speech made in its behalf.

The Continuing Assembly.

Just before the adjournment, on the closing day of the Assembly, attention of the commissioners was called to the fact that our Constitution is changed in the New Book of Church Order, so that an Assembly does not dissolve, as they did before 1925, but adjourns only; and that it can be called to meet again if occasion should arise before the date set for the Assembly of 1927. This carries with it the privilege and responsibility of a peculiar relation of all the commissioners to all the executive agencies of the Assembly. It should assure a great bond of prayer as we daily bring all these interests to the Throne of Grace. The Moderator has sent a most appropriate reminder of this situation to the members of the Assembly.