

## An Outrage Made Manifest

Activity on the interracial front has been so intense in recent weeks that it is almost impossible to keep up with it. The Council of Methodist Bishops meeting in Detroit issued one of the strongest statements on race we have ever known to come from any segment of the church. Soon after the Council adjourned three Michigan Methodist pastors were jailed in Jackson, Mississippi, for integration efforts at two Methodist churches in that city which have been the scene of incidents in recent weeks. What the end of it will be nobody knows but it is more evidence that we are in the midst of a racial and social revolution which (thank God) has been of the non-violent variety.

The Methodist Council of Bishops should be commended for their forthright statement. It declared that The Methodist Church "stands for the equal rights of all racial, cultural, and religious groups." It said the "church must work to change those community patterns in which racial segregation appears" and it urged Methodist ministers "to receive all who are qualified and who desire to be received without regard to race, color, or national origin."

What we regard as the most significant part of the Bishops' statement is their pledge to individually and collectively support ministers who do receive persons into their churches who so qualify. *This is the one part of the Bishops' statement which represents a specific commitment on their part.* The rest of their statement which is good, exhorts others to do something on behalf of better race relations et cetera.

We believe most Methodists were glad that the threatened picketing of the Council of Bishops' meeting did not materialize. This threat, made by some ministers in Michigan and other states, was designed to stimulate the Bishops to take some strong decisive action. Judging from some statements received by us we surmise that many Methodists would have felt embarrassed, if not resentful, if the picketing had come off as threatened. Some reactions indicated that it would have been in very bad taste for Methodists to picket Methodists in public. Opinions will differ on the advisability of using this technique.

All will agree that it was fortunate it was not used; that the reasons why it was to be used did not exist; and that the Council of Bishops enjoyed their Detroit visit. (See their statement of appreciation published in a box elsewhere in this issue of the *Advocate*.)

At this writing the three Detroit Methodist ministers are in jail in Jackson, Miss. The *Advocate* will keep its readers informed about them. Later on we hope to carry an interpretive article written by one or more of those involved and ask our readers to withhold final judgment until more of the facts are in. Last week's issue described the personal relationship of ministers in the North with those involved in the South. It was largely through their association in seminary days that led to their involvement in the Jackson incidents. We do not recall that any of the daily press reports revealed this. It explains quite a lot if it does not entirely justify their actions in the eyes of all.

It should be remembered that the spark that ignited the Jackson conflagration was the arrest of three coeds, two Negro and one white, who tried to worship in the Jackson Capitol Street Methodist Church on world-wide communion Sunday. They were given unusually heavy sentences but are now released on bail pending an appeal of their cases. The news of this arrest traveled around the world and the image of The Methodist Church was damaged thereby. To help change this false image and reveal the more accurate position of The Methodist Church, these youthful ministers made their trek to join hands with those in the Southland who share their convictions. We suspect these young ministers are revealing in action what the Bishops revealed in words when they said, "We deary, on legal as well as Christian grounds, the denial to any person of any color or race the right to membership or the right to worship in any Methodist Church. Further, to move to arrest any persons attempting to worship is to us an outrage."

## Birchers Criticized

Despite all reports to the contrary the Birch Society is not dead. The other Sunday in Bridgeport, Conn., an estimated 1,000 signatures were secured to a petition for the impeachment of Chief Justice Earl Warren. The signatures were gotten by solicitors on the outside of Protestant churches. None of the pastors were aware that this was being done by the John Birch Society of that city.

The Roman Catholic Diocese of the same city censured a priest who urged his parishioners to sign the petition. The diocese said the priest acted in open contravention to directions previously given by the priest's ecclesiastical superiors. The priest admitted he was a member of the Society. Leaders in

both Protestant and Catholic churches have denounced the Society and urged their members not to participate in its activities.

## Taxation and the Church

To tax or not to tax church properties? That is the question.

Just how far is the present trend to rigidly separate church and state likely to go? The question grows more serious every day and like the decision rendered against prayer in the public schools, we may have a few surprises in store for us.

There has been an increase in the feeling that more taxes ought to be paid by churches; that tax exemption amounts to a government subsidy and therefore those paying taxes have to make up for the exemption churches receive. It is further argued that this means that atheists who pay taxes are helping to support institutions of religion against their will. In fact that is the gist of a suit brought by Mrs. Madalyn E. Murry of Baltimore, an atheist, who was also a central figure in the Supreme Court's decision on prayer in the schools. If she is as successful in this suit as she was in the other, the economic conditions of churches will change drastically.

Few churchmen are showing much concern, perhaps lulled into complacency by the long-standing tradition of tax exemption. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Baltimore, however, is taking an active part in the trial and not without reason. According to Maryland law a property has to be used for religious worship to be exempt. But the suit in question is aimed at all exempt church properties. A conservative estimate indicates that if the suit were won by Mrs. Murry, taxes on church properties in Baltimore would be \$3 million. This would mean that Grace Methodist Church of that city, which now pays no tax, would have to pay \$23,359.00. Anyone can see at a glance what this would do to a church budget.

There is evidence that churches themselves are recognizing the validity of some taxation upon their properties. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. encouraged its congregations to take the initiative in making contributions to local communities in lieu of taxes for such things as police and fire protection and other services.

The Central Presbyterian Church in Des Moines, Iowa, took the suggestion seriously and is making a tax gift this year of \$3,800 to the city. If the church paid full taxes on its property evaluation, they would total about \$17,000. The church has a membership of 1,500.

The matter is one for the courts to decide and there is no guarantee what the outcome will be. Tradition no longer seems to carry the weight it once

did. There are a lot of people unsympathetic or hostile to the churches. Nobody likes to pay taxes and if an institution can help lighten the tax load, there are those who would be willing to let it. On the other hand the church has grown and succeeded to the extent it has in large measure because it has been tax exempt.

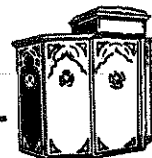
## Divorce and the Presidency

The announcement by Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller that he is a presidential candidate has brought to the fore a more serious discussion of his personal life and its relationship to his possible nomination. There seems to be considerable difference of opinion as to just how much importance ought to be attached to his divorce and remarriage and his ability to perform the duties of a president. There are those who say he should be judged entirely on his ability to function in a political capacity without reference to his divorce. There are others who feel his divorce and remarriage are of sufficient importance to cause him to withdraw. Even the Catholics who have rather strong convictions about divorce are divided. *Commonweal*, a national Catholic weekly edited by laymen, thinks the Governor should be judged on his ability solely. Another publication, *The Sign*, published by the Passionist Fathers in Union, N.J., takes the other view.

We can agree with *Commonweal* that divorce and remarriage per se should not count either for or against Rockefeller. There are oftentimes good and valid grounds for divorce. Divorce and a person's ability to do a job may not be related in any way. It might even be that divorce could improve a person's ability. At the same time we are inclined to side with the publishers of *The Sign*, for it seems to us that they are not objecting so much to Rockefeller's divorce and remarriage as they are to the circumstances surrounding the change in his marital status. The woman he married was newly divorced and the mother of four children and considerably younger than Rockefeller. Two homes were broken up and the children in the one are young which intensifies the seriousness of the situation. Were it simply a divorce for apparently valid reasons, that would be one thing. But divorce and remarriage a la Rockefeller and present wife are something else again. Whether rightly or wrongly many who approve of divorce and remarriage in general will not approve this divorce and remarriage in particular. It is our guess that Rockefeller can't possibly win with this handicap. It is unfortunate that his chances are thus spoiled because he is a man of great ability of which there are too few in every party.

By

John E. Marvin



This is the story of a 103-year-old Senior Citizen who has been a life-long Michigan Methodist, having joined the Sturgis church in 1876 at the age of 16.

## A Remarkable Methodist

**A** CONTINUOUS subscriber to the *Michigan Christian Advocate* for some 83 years, and a reader of it before that in her parental home, is the perhaps unmatched record of Mrs. Frank A. Bacon, oldest member of Burton Heights Methodist Church, Grand Rapids. In 1880 she sent her first subscription to the magazine. On October 12 of this year Mrs. Bacon observed her 103rd birthday, with only a partial hearing loss and the inevitable slowing-up process incident to extreme age to mark the passage of the years. A keen memory for both past and present and a lively interest in the activities of her church from which she is seldom absent are outstanding characteristics of this remarkable woman. Longevity has been a trait of her family, several of her brothers and a sister living into their 80's and her father seeing his 100th birthday before his death in 1914.

The youngest of her family, Mary Jane Whitmer, as an infant, was baptized in a Methodist service in Bluffton, Ind., her birthplace where her pioneer father, Michael Whitmer, a blacksmith and farmer, had settled together with his wife, after residence in Pennsylvania. From Indiana the family trekked to Michigan via covered wagon, settling on a farm near Sturgis in 1865. Mrs. Bacon recalls hearing of Lee's surrender when stopping for provisions at a small community enroute. News of Lincoln's assassination came soon after the family's arrival at their new Michigan home and she recalls hearing reports of the flag flying at half-mast to mark the tragedy. Later neighbors brought the news of Jefferson Davis' capture to the rural community.

In 1876, when she was 16, Mrs. Bacon joined the Methodist Church in Sturgis on probation and she continued a Methodist through her years as a high school student there, as a rural teacher and as a student in Valparaiso University, then a teachers' college. She recalls attending revival meetings in these early days and also camp meeting at Crystal Springs where rattle snakes sometimes discomfited the campers. Her brother-

By **MRS. FRANK E. SCHREIBER**

in-law, Rev. W. J. Hathaway, was a well-known Methodist minister in these days in Decatur, Paw Paw and the South Haven area.

In 1880, while teaching at Paw Paw the young Miss Whitmer met the equally youthful Frank A. Bacon, superintendent of schools in Decatur, while they were traveling on a narrow-gauge train to a teachers' convention at South Haven. Mr. Bacon was the son of Rev. Elisha Bacon who preached at points in the VanBuren area and also the first Methodist edifice in Sparta. Their marriage and the birth of their three sons, Wendell P. of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., Frank M. and Joyce L. of Grand Rapids, marked the ensuing years.

Teaching positions at Wheaton, Ill., and Leonidas, Michigan, and further schooling for Mr. Bacon at the University of Chicago and Albion occupied the years until the family come to Grand Rapids in 1898, Mr. Bacon beginning a 31-year term as teacher in Central High School.



This picture of Mrs. Frank A. Bacon was taken on her 100th birthday.

The family first became members of Trinity Methodist Church, Grand Rapids, later transferring to the Methodist church in Burton Heights, then known as Feakin Memorial. When that congregation became known as Burton Heights Methodist and built the present church building in 1909, Mr. Bacon helped pour the cement for the bricks which are a distinguishing feature of the present sanctuary.

The Bacons took up residence 60 years ago at 2055 Frances Ave., SE, where Mr. Bacon died in 1942 and where Mrs. Bacon still resides. She usually is able to care for her household duties and sometimes can be seen doing a little work in her yard. At present she is recuperating from a fall which has incapacitated her somewhat but from which she is making a surprisingly satisfactory recovery.

Mrs. Bacon has held various offices in church organizations. While a member of both the Women's Foreign and Home Missionary Societies before Unification, she was particularly active in the latter, serving as local president for several terms and also as the Society's Grand Rapids District corresponding secretary. Other offices held include the presidency of the former Ladies Aid Society. Among her present interests is the Senior Citizens group which meets at Burton Heights Methodist Church each week under sponsorship of the city recreation department. She seldom misses lunch with the group and stays for a game of dominoes or the program which may follow.

To illustrate her remarkable memory, she recently recited word for word a recitation she gave when an eight-year-old at a Sunday school picnic in a grove in the rural Sturgis area.

Besides her three sons Mrs. Bacon's descendants include five grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren, most of whom live in the Grand Rapids area.

Burton Heights Church holds in affectionate regard this life-long Methodist and is very proud to claim her as its outstanding member.

## Kazoo District Accents Missions

An estimated 350 persons filled Milwood Methodist Church in Kalamazoo browsing, listening, learning and sharing during the Kalamazoo District Mission Convocation. Beginning at 3:00 p.m., while the mass choir rehearsed, the group viewed attractive mission displays (World, National, Youth, and Woman's Division) and previewed latest mission audio-visuals shown by Rev. John Cermak.

Setting the tone for the day, Rev. Charles Manker, District Missions Secretary and devotional leader, expressed the heart of missions as genuine concern for persons in need.

Highlights included an informative panel on schools of missions, "How we did it," moderated by Mrs. Donald Strong; a rapid fire "Question-Answer on Advance Specials" with Superintendent Charles Hahn supplying the answers asked by District Missions Secretary; a moving address by Dr. Dwight Large, senior minister of Lansing Central, on the National Mission theme: "The changing city challenges the Church." During Sack Lunch Time the social hall was colorfully decorated in the theme of Southern Asia and background oriental music added atmosphere while youth of local Kalamazoo dressed in costumes appropriate for the day waited tables.

The day was climaxed with the mass choir singing under the direction of Jack Frey, choir director of First Church, "God so Loved the World," a



Principals at the Convocation during sack-lunch time were: (l-r) Rev. William Blanding, host pastor; Vern Forester, in charge of local arrangements; Dr. Charles Swan, of Albion College, evening inspirational speaker; Rev. Charles Hahn, Kalamazoo District Superintendent; Rev. Charles Manker, District Missions Secretary—  
Photos by Richard Street.

challenge to Christian vocation by Mrs. Richard Miles of Sturgis, and the evening address by Dr. Charles Swan of Albion College speaking on India. Evening Worship was led by Mr. Hahn with Douglas Myers and Robert Lower, District Youth president and vice-president, assisting.

## Methodist Men



News of local church, sub-district or district Methodist Men's activities are solicited for this column. If possible, copy should be typewritten and double spaced.

### Albion-Lansing Lay Speakers Receive Recognition Cards

Lay speaking is a vital part of the program of Methodist Men on the Albion-Lansing District. "Major Methodist Beliefs" by Mack B. Stokes was used as a text for the six-week course which was a regular class in the annual Church Workers School held in Lansing. Ray Francisco of Battle Creek is the district director of lay speaking and

coordinated the three programs held in Lansing, Jackson and Battle Creek.

Wesley Robinson of Mt. Hope Methodist Church, Lansing, who has been the instructor for two years, presented Course Cards of Recognition to nine lay speakers at the final session October 22. Currently there are 65 men and women who are officially recognized as certified lay speakers on the district.

### 11 Ministers, 4 Seminarians Jailed for Integration March

WILLIAMSTON, N.C. — (RNS) — Eleven Northern ministers and four seminary students — all white — were arrested as they led a group of about 70 Negroes in an anti-segregation march from Green Memorial church here to the Martin Council Courthouse three blocks away.

All of the Negroes also were arrested. The marchers were charged with unlawful assembly, parading without a permit, and obstructing traffic.

They were ordered to post \$500 bonds each — which they refused to do, preferring to remain in jail.



Afternoon speaker on National Mission theme, "The changing city challenges the Church" was Dr. Dwight Large, senior minister Central Church, Lansing, seen at one of the many displays in the narthex of the Milwood Church.



Those qualifying to receive cards of recognition in lay speaking on the Albion-Lansing District, according to the standards approved by the General Board of Education of The Methodist Church are, left to right: Kenneth Merryfield, Mulliken; Fred Warner, Williamston Center; Richard Pratt, Holt; Leon North, Grovenburg; Charles Love, Lansing Central; Douglas Garn, Gresham (Eaton Co.); J. J. Richards, Lansing Christ Church; Vivian Meacham (Mrs. Orin), Lansing Trinity; and Wesley Robinson, instructor. Elbert Kelsey of Lansing Trinity, who made the photograph, was also a qualifying lay speaker.