

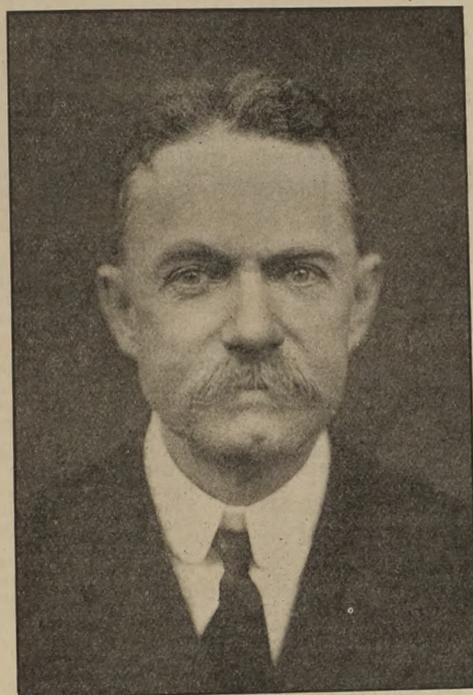
Christian Observer

GENERAL ASSEMBLY REPORT.

Vol. 105.

LOUISVILLE, KY., MAY 30, 1917.

NO. 22



Rev. John M. Wells, D. D.
Moderator of the Assembly of 1917.

Twentieth: We recommend the re-election of Dr. E. W. Smith as Executive Secretary of the Committee of Foreign Missions for a term of three years.

Total Gifts For Benevolence.

Foreign Missions.....	\$ 529,258
Assembly's Home Missions.....	125,872
Synod's Home Missions.....	103,449
Presbyterial Home Missions.....	192,733
Congregational Home Missions.....	129,413
Christian Education and Ministerial Relief.....	277,000
Sunday School Extension and Publication.....	40,059
Schools and Colleges.....	240,037
Bible Cause.....	10,201
Orphans' Home.....	126,573
Miscellaneous Benevolence.....	183,886
	\$1,951,118

Campaign Committee On Stewardship.

The Campaign Committee on Stewardship has done a most remarkable work for the Church this year. The apportionments for the various Presbyteries were sent to the Presbyterial chairmen. Successful effort has been made to increase the number of congregations making the every member canvass, and to get those already making it to make it more thoroughly. The appeal for the stewardship life has been nobly rung out this year throughout the Church, under the direction of the Secretary of the Campaign Committee. The religious press, the printed page and the personal messages have all been used in making the appeal. Fifty-two Presbyterial conferences on stewardship were held during the winter. Definite plans were formulated for the carrying of the messages from these conferences to the individual congregations. It is probable that more than fifteen hundred churches were reached with a definite message, in the conducting of these conferences.

It is believed that only good can result from that great effort. February 18 was also designated as Stewardship Day; programs were furnished for the day and reports as to fine results of the day have come from many churches. In a further noble effort to get people to think earnestly on the great and fundamental question of stewardship, a contest was arranged by the Campaign Committee on Stewardship. Through the generosity of themselves committed to the stewardship life, six hundred dollars was put in the hands of the Campaign Committee to be used as prizes for the best essays on the subject of Stewardship. That all might enter on an equal basis, the contest was divided into five sections. The interest surpassed the expectations of the Committee, more than five hundred and fifty registered in the contest. It is felt to be certain that almost all these contestants will become committed to the Stewardship life. These contestants will furnish a splendid army of leaders scattered throughout the bounds of the Church to bring their followers into the larger life of Stewardship.

And yet the work is but in its beginning, and the problems are many. Remembering that in only two or three brief periods of the Church's history, namely, in the apostolic days, almost again until about the middle of the nineteenth century, for a very brief period, and then not again until just now, has the great question of stewardship ever been seriously studied. And further, being convinced that all methods, however perfect, can be but failures, except as they be constructed on the sure foundation of right principle, we would therefore recommend:

(1) That our Committee and our Secretary of the Campaign Committee be most heartily commended for their work, and assured of the confidence and approval of the Assembly in and on all their efforts.

(2) That since Christian Stewardship has to do with every cause of the Church, the Assembly request each of the Synods to hold a conference on the subject, the program of this conference to be prepared by the chairmen of Systematic Benevolence in consultation with the Chairmen of the various benevolent causes.

(3) That the Presbyteries which have so persistently pushed the principles of Christian Stewardship during the past winter be commended for their diligence, and encouraged to continue in the good work; and that all other Presbyteries, who for any reason, did not take part in the Stewardship Campaign, be urged to do so in the future.

(4) That since the Every Member Canvass is the scriptural application of the Christian Stewardship principle the Assembly re-affirm its unqualified belief in the plan, and recommend that it be made an annual event in all churches not later than the third Sunday in March, and in order to obtain the greatest results, both spiritual and financial, at least one month's preaching and teaching be devoted to the principles and application of Christian Stewardship.

(5) That since the Sunday school offers the greatest opportunity for the Church to raise up a generation of leaders and workers qualified to teach intelligently the principles and illustrate most wisely the methods of Christian Stewardship, and that the Sunday schools may be thoroughly informed, that each Committee be instructed to prepare, according to the Assembly's arrangement of months a suitable course of instruction to appear from month to month in the Sunday school literature.

(6) That for the same reason all the sessions be urged to see that regular instruction is given concerning the whole work of the Church in young people's societies, and that these societies be encouraged to make offerings for all the benevolent causes of the Church, and to this end the Executive Committees be directed to furnish sources of instruction to appear in the Young People's publications.

(7) That inasmuch as the office of deacon is a spiritual one, and the Church has no literature on the subject, that the Secretary of the Campaign Committee be instructed to have prepared a deacon's training course.

(8) That the report of the Campaign Committee be printed in the Appendix to the Minutes of the Assembly.

(9) We recommend the re-election of Rev. R. L. Walkup as Secretary of the Campaign Committee on Stewardship.

(10) We recommend that the membership of the Campaign Committee on Stewardship, which is now constituted as follows: H. H. Sweets, D. D., E. W. Smith, D. D., Homer McMillan, D. D., R. E. Magill, Dr. J. L. Howe, be increased by the addition of the following names: J. B. Hutton, D. D., A. D. P. Gilmour, D. D., J. B. Spillman and R. A. Brand.

(11) We recommend that the General Assembly engage now, led by the moderator, in a prayer that our people may be able and willing to give the \$1,925,000 named as needful for the Benevolent Causes, and that the pastors be urged to lead their people in definite prayer for the amount mentioned throughout the year.

Overtures.

1. In answer to the overture from the Presbytery of Albemarle asking that the month of February be no longer selected as the time for special appeal for any other cause but that it be left wholly and intact for the support of the Home Mission work, we recommend that the Overture be answered in the affirmative.

2. In answer to the Presbytery of Montgomery asking that the Assembly add an additional member to the Committee of Systematic Benevolence from the Synods within whose bounds the Executive Committees are located, we recommend that the overture be answered in the negative.

3. In answer to the overture from the Presbytery of Pine Bluff asking that the Assembly go on record as disapproving of the separation of the gifts of the Women's Auxiliary from the gifts of the men; inasmuch as our whole Church polity is well known to be pronouncedly against such procedure, and inasmuch as the Auxiliary as an organization has ever striven to work in utmost harmony with the polity of the Church in this, as in all other matters, we recommend that the overture be answered in the negative.

4. In answer to the overture from the Presbytery of Lexington asking that the Assembly leave the question of whether the Executive Committees shall have the right to make special appeals to the "every member canvass" churches, be left to the individual sessions, we recommend that the overture be answered in the negative.

5. In answer to the overture from the Presbytery of Lexington asking that the method of making the apportionments to the Presbyteries be changed, we recommend that the overture be answered in the negative.

C. M. Boyd, Chairman.

Dr. C. W. Grafton, chairman of the Standing Committee on Bills and Overtures presented a report which was considered seriatim, amended and adopted as follows:

BILLS AND OVERTURES.

Report of Standing Committee.

One. In answer to overture number 1, from the Presbytery of Pine Bluff, asking that the proceedings of a session of that Presbytery at Monticello, Ark., instead of at Warren, Ark., as previously appointed, be legalized: We recommend that the request be granted.

Two. In answer to overture from the Synod of Georgia, asking that West Point church be transferred from Synod of Alabama and Presbytery of East Alabama to Synod of Georgia and Presbytery of Atlanta: We recommend that the bounds of the Synod of Georgia and Alabama be changed so that the church will be transferred.

Five. In answer to overture from Dallas Presbytery, touching the rights to and disposition of the property of a dissolved church: We recommend that the Assembly make the following statement:

"When a local church, either with or without its consent, is dissolved by a Presbytery having jurisdiction over such church, without making disposition of the property of such dissolved church, all such property shall, upon such dissolution, vest in and become the property of such Presbytery and such Presbytery shall have full power to sell, convey and dispose of such property and the proceeds thereof and to authorize the conveyance thereof to be executed in the name of the Presbytery by such person or persons as it may direct, care being taken, however, that in all such cases conformity be had to the laws applicable, if any, of the States wherein such property may be located, and care also being had that the conditions, if any, of the instruments of conveyance be observed."

Six, Seven, Eighty-three, and a Memorial. In answer to the overtures from Presbyteries of St. Louis, Roanoke, and Abingdon, and a memorial from Rev. W. M. McPheeters, touching "Woman's Position in the Church": We recommend that the Assembly reaffirm the action of 1880 as follows: "Inasmuch as the public preaching of the Gospel is a branch of the ministerial office, to the authorization of which ordination or licensure is essential, and inasmuch as inspired Scripture as interpreted by our Standards, nowhere, in the case of women, sanctions such a solemnity, but, on the contrary, does clearly prohibit it, this Assembly does therefore declare the assumption of this sacred office by women to be opposed to the advancement of true piety and to the promotion of the peace of the Church and this to such an extent as to make the introduction of women into our pulpits for the purpose of publicly expounding God's Word an irregularity not to be tolerated. It is the settled doctrine of our Church that women are excluded from licensure and ordination by the plain teaching of the Scriptures, and therefore cannot be admitted to our pulpits as authorized preachers of the Word; and also that they are prohibited from speaking by way of exhortation, or leading in prayer, or discussing any question publicly in the meetings of the church or congregation as a mixed assembly. This is according to the mind of the Spirit as expressed by Paul in I Corinthians 14:34, 35, and I Timothy 2:11, 12. But we do not hold that Christian women are forbidden to hold meetings among themselves for mutual edification and comfort by pious conversation and prayer, or to devise ways and means to aid the general branches of church work, such as home and foreign missions, etc., or to teach a class in the Sabbath school. Work of this kind we approve and commend, but public speaking in the promiscuous assembly of the congregation or church is contrary to the Holy Oracles, and therefore, should be prohibited and condemned by the Presbyteries and church sessions." Put on the docket for the next Assembly.

Eight. In answer to the overture from the Presbytery of Potosi, asking an interpretation of Paragraph 277 of the Book of Church Order: We recommend that the Assembly state that the expression, "beyond the bounds of his congregation into the bounds of another," refers exclusively to congregations of our own Assembly.

Nine. In answer to the overture from Brazos Presbytery touching licensure and ordination: We recommend that the Assembly declare it irregular to license and ordain a candidate at the same meeting of Presbytery; see Paragraphs 129, 139, 140, Book of Church Order.

Ten. In answer to the overture from Congaree Presbytery, asking if Presbytery may appoint deacons on committees, commissions, boards of trustees or educational institutions: We recommend that the Assembly answer that deacons may be appointed to perform any duty not required to be performed by a presbyter.

Eleven. In answer to overture from Suwanee Presbytery, asking that the Stated and Permanent Clerks of the Assembly be elected for three or five years rather than as at present; and that an election be held at this meeting: We recommend that it be answered in the negative.

Twelve. In answer to the overture from the Presbytery of Florida, asking that special days and programs for the Sabbath schools and churches be appointed upon other than the first Sabbath of the month: We recommend that the request be granted.

Thirteen. In answer to the overture from the Presbytery of Transylvania, asking that the Assembly recommend to the Presbyteries a serious consideration of Ministerial Support: We recommend that it be answered in the affirmative.

Fifteen, Sixteen, and Seventeen. In answer to overtures from Orange, Enoree and Harmony Presbyteries, asking a return to the plan of Presbyteries paying the expenses of commissioners to the General Assembly: We recommend that the overtures be answered in the negative.

Eighteen. In answer to the overture from Meridian Presbytery, asking the Assembly to send down an overture to the Presbyteries recommending the rotary method of electing elders and deacons: We recommend that it be answered in the negative.

Seventy-eight. In answer to the communication from Fayetteville Presbytery, giving reasons for not complying with the Assembly's plan of paying the expenses of commissioners: We recommend answer as follows: "The Assembly would call the attention of Fayetteville Presbytery to the fact that the Assembly has thought it wise to adopt the mileage system as the best system to carry into effect Paragraph 58 of Book of Church Order. Therefore the Assembly urges Fayetteville Presbytery to comply with this action of the Assembly."

Seventy-nine. In answer to the overture from Highland University church, Austin, Texas, asking for a change in the Book of Church Order, Chapter 12, Paragraph 235, so that resident members who neglect for twelve months the worship and ordinances of the Church may be placed on the roll of non-communicating members: We recommend that it be sent down to the Presbyteries for their approval.

Eighty. In response to the resolution introduced by Rev. Hooper Adams, and to similar papers from others, touching a petition to the President of the United States for the appointment of a day of prayer: We recommend the following: "The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in

the United States in session at Birmingham, Alabama, hereby humbly petitions the President of the United States to appoint a day of prayer in the near future for the confession of national sins and for the peace of mankind."

Eighty-four. In answer to the individual overture of Rev. W. C. White, asking for the appointment of a Standing Committee on revision to obviate any conflicts between the actions of this Assembly and former Assemblies, and to remove blemishes in the literary form of papers adopted: We recommend that it be answered in the negative.

C. W. Grafton, Chairman.

The Standing Committee on Resolution of Thanks submitted a report which was adopted by a rising vote. (We regret that lack of space prevents the publication of this report which reflected the cordial and sincere thanks and appreciation for the many courtesies shown the Assembly.)

It was ordered that the gavel presented to the Assembly at the beginning of this meeting be presented to the moderator as an expression of appreciation.

The report of the Standing Committee on Audits was taken from the docket and adopted as follows:

AUDITS.

Report of the Standing Committee.

(Abstract. The various financial reports of the Church were found to be in proper form, etc.)

Recommendations.

Recommendation No. 1. For the use of the Committees on Audits and for the sake of uniformity of reports, we recommend that all committees charged with auditing the accounts of the various Treasurers be required to send to the Stated Clerk complete copies of the Treasurers' statements to which shall be attached the signed certificates of said committee, or of the accountant making the audits, when the services of such accountants have been employed.

Recommendation No. 2. Owing to the fact that the next meeting of the General Assembly will be held at Durant, Oklahoma, the expense of the Commissioners attending that meeting will be more than is usually the case, and to meet these expenses it will be necessary for the Assembly to fix the Presbyterial assessments at 6 cents per member. We therefore recommend that this be made the per capita assessment for this year.

Recommendation No. 3. In 1916 the Committee on Audits in some way overlooked the recommendation of the appointment of Trustees to fill the vacancies in the Board of Trustees of the Assembly caused by the expiration of the term of office of three of its members. We therefore recommend that the Assembly appoint John R. Pharr, J. B. Ross, and Rev. Alexander Martin, D. D., for the remaining two years of the term.

Recommendation No. 4. We further recommend that Capt. A. G. Brenizer, Dr. A. A. McGeachy, and Geo. E. Wilson, President, whose terms of office expire this year, be re-appointed for a term of three years.

R. G. Vance, Chairman.

The report of the Standing Committee on Theological Seminaries was taken from the docket and adopted as follows:

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES.

Report of Standing Committee.

Your Committee would report that there have come into our hands reports from the Board of Trustees of the following Seminaries: Austin, Clarksville, Columbia, Louisville, and Union; and we have carefully considered the same.

Austin Seminary has a total endowment of about \$81,000. The building and grounds are estimated to be worth \$100,000, with a total income of \$8,950. Total expenditure of \$16,565. Number of students, twenty-one. We note with regret that Dr. Neal L. Anderson has declined the call to the presidency of the Seminary because of financial conditions in which he found the affairs of the institution when he reached Austin last September and which he felt he was unable to remedy on account of circumstances connected with the general educational interests of the Synod of Texas. It is the prayer of the Assembly that conditions in this School of the Prophets may be so adjusted as to insure its usefulness to the Church.

The report of Louisville Seminary is very gratifying. The number of students enrolled is sixty-five. The permanent resources are \$772,055.40; total value of land and buildings, \$228,286.29; productive endowment; general endowment fund, \$295,896.71; professorship endowment fund, \$75,000; scholarship endowment fund, \$60,362.50; library, \$3,002.10; other endowments, \$109,507.80. Total income for the year, \$23,230.85. Expenditures, \$35,749.86.

We note that at the beginning of the session, 1916-1917, the four departments, Religious Education, Missions, Christian Ethics, and Christian Sociology, which had been hitherto elective, have been incorporated in the regular curriculum—