

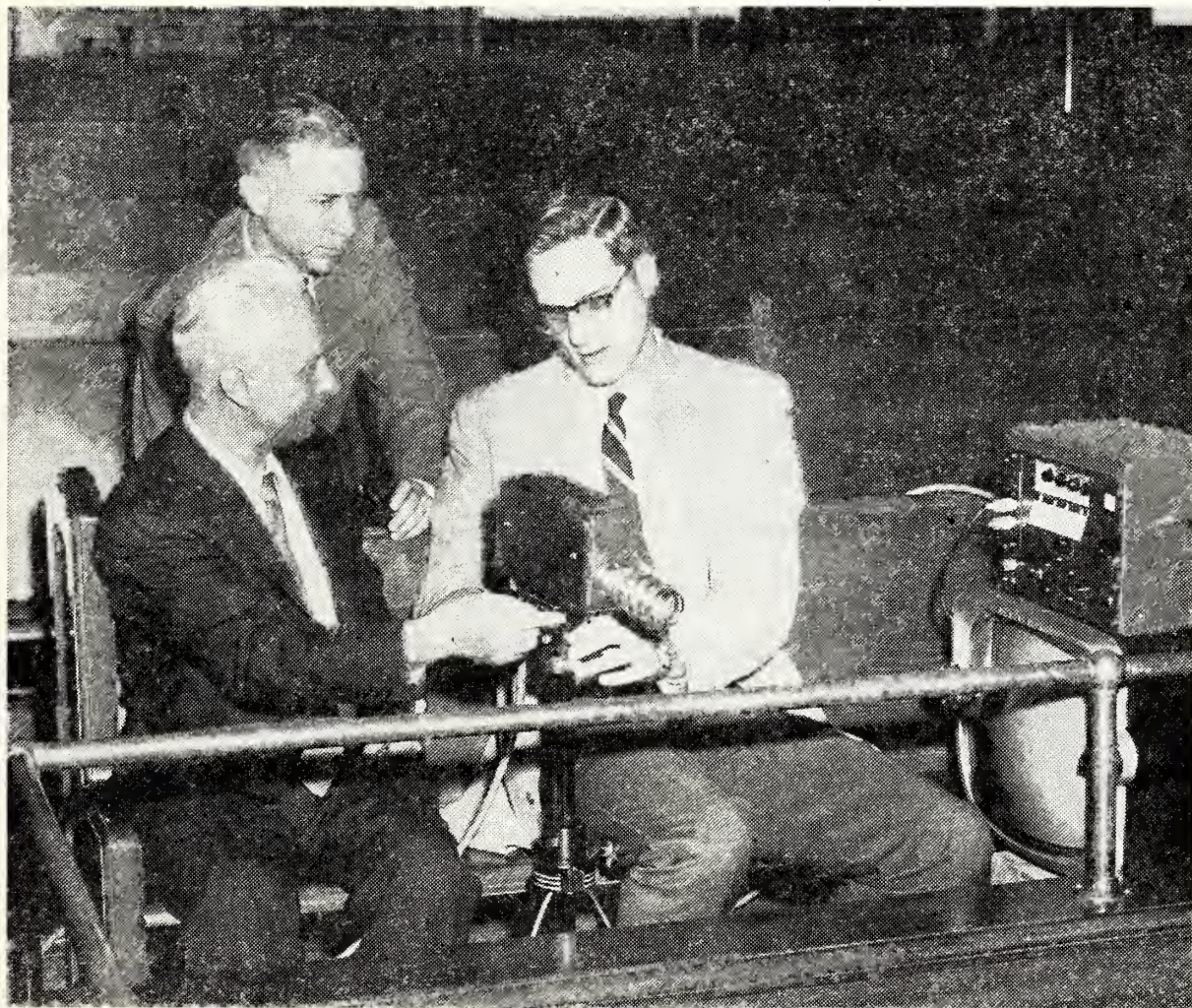
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New Equipment for Audio-Visual Center, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va.

Standing: Dr. Robert White Kirkpatrick; left: Prof. W. A. Yoder; right: Don Dickenson

(See Page 21)

A Biblical Study of the Place of Women in the Church

By William Childs Robinson

Columbia Theological Seminary

This is the proper setting of the question. The issue is not what rights have women in a democracy, but what place has God given them in the Church. Let us begin, then, by clarifying the presuppositions of the matter.

I. The Church is the house of God. This fact is evident from the correlation between the people of God in the Old Testament and the New Israel gathered about the Messiah in the New. In both testaments it is the flock of God. In the Gospels, Jesus says "I will build my Church," Mt. 16:18; and "fear not little flock it is your Father's purpose to give you the Kingdom," Luke 12:32. The coming of the Spirit at Pentecost constituted the disciples of the Church of the living God, Acts 2 and 1 Tim. 3:14-16. Paul constantly speaks of the Church of God, or of the Church of God in Jesus Christ. In Ephesians He magnifies the Church as instituted by God, as also he does in 1 Cor. 3 and elsewhere.

II. As the Church is the house of God, so God has ordained her order and her officers. In Mark 3:13, Jesus called to Himself Whom He would and ordained them as the Twelve Apostles, cf. Jn:15-16. In 1 Cor. 3:9 as read from the Greek, all the workers are God's and are fellow workers of each other. In 1 Cor. 12:28, God has set in the Church the various officers, as in Eph. 4:11 the ascended Christ has given these offices and officers to the Church, and as in Acts 20:28 the Holy Spirit has made the elders to be overseers or bishops in the Church. From these texts I do not understand that the election of officers in the Church is democracy's right to choose her spokesmen; but rather that God has trusted the priesthood of all believers to choose the persons to whom He has given the characteristics which show that they are those whom God would have for particular offices. This conclusion is strengthened by observing that wherever particular officers are to be chosen their qualifications are set forth, as for a place in the Twelve Apostles, Acts 1:21-22; the seven Acts 6:3f; the elders 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Tit: 1:5-9; the deacons 1 Tim 3:8-13.

III. In ordering His Church our Lord has given the places of regular government to men both by the example of those He has called and by the conditions for such offices. In the Old

Testament we have the example of the patriarchs, Moses, Aaron and the priests, the prophets, the judges, the kings. There are occasional exceptions to the last three, perhaps one each. In the New Testament the Twelve are men, as is Judas' successor and as is Paul. So are the seven chosen in Acts 6, and so are the responsible witnesses to the resurrection mentioned in the primitive creed, 1 Cor. 15:3f. In the conditions mentioned for elder as given above some can apply only to a man.

IV. Likewise by example, in governing His Church God has used women in highly significant and useful places. Above, mention was made of a woman as a prophet, one as a judge, and one as a reigning queen, Miriam as a poet and singer. There was Rahab in connection with Jericho's capture. The Apocrypha has at least one heroine. In the New Testament, the mother of our Lord was Mary—his only human parent. As He was brought into the Temple Hannah gave thanks. During His ministry certain women helped substantially in His support, Luke: 8:2-3. Mary Magdalene seems to have been the first to see Him after His resurrection. Mary and Martha each ministered to him—each in her own way. The women are mentioned as included with the praying disciples in Acts 1:14. Among the women mentioned later in the New Testament are: Phoebe "the deaconess," Rom. 16:1; Prisca or Priscilla, several times mentioned before her husband as though her ministry were more effective than his, Acts 18; Rom: 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19; and the daughters of Philip who prophesied. Another case of women prophesying is given in 1 Cor. 11:5, although it is noteworthy that the Apostles thought it necessary to put limitations on the same. Euodia and Syntyche seem to have given Paul trouble by leading opposing groups, Phil. 4:2. In 1 Cor. 14:34-35, Paul said that it was shameful for women to press forward with questions: "If they want to instruct themselves, let them ask their husbands at home." Women were not to take part in discussion in which questions were asked and doctrines settled. Somewhat later the same question came up again, apparently after heresies and schisms had arisen which favored the authority of women to the full extent, even to the administration of the sacraments. At that occasion the Apostle said: "Let the woman learn in silence with all sub-

jection. But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man," I Tim. 2:11-12. The abuse of the heretics or schismatics led the Church to draw the line against the women participating in authority to preach or administer the sacraments.

V. In Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor

female, for ye are all one in Christ, Gal. 3:28. I understand this to mean that each one of us has direct access to God through faith in Jesus Christ. My standing before Him is no different from my wife's. I have no priority over her in the things of Christ and God. But the Apostle did not interpret this to mean that there was no difference in order in the home. Eph. 5:22-33. Nor, order in the Church, I Tim. 3.

Dr. James Archibald Jones Inaugurated President of Union Theological Seminary

Before a brilliant group of friends and well-wishers from our own church and representatives of other denominations and institutions, Dr. James A. Jones was inaugurated as President of Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, on April 4th.

This Journal regrets that space forbids the printing of Dr. Jones' address in full. We do give to our readers the following excerpts from that able and thoughtful paper:

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"I believe in the importance and high place of preaching the unsearchable riches of grace which are contained only in the Gospel of Christ. I believe in the necessity of training men in the content of Biblical Christianity. I believe that the 'minister,' whatever be the particular mode of his ministry, is a technician, and that he should be disciplined in those skills of pastoral leadership by which the benefits of Grace are communicated most intimately and effectively to the race of men. I believe that ministers actively engaged in parish tasks, in teaching, in missionary service, in administrative assignments need the stimulus that comes with continued study over the long years after their more formal academic education is complete. I believe the time has come for the Presbyterian Church in the South to offer to its own and to others facilities for superior post-graduate education. I believe that this Seminary has an obligation to use its large resources and its talented personnel in a planned program of training lay leaders throughout its constituent bounds. If there is justification for an agricultural school using public funds to offer extension courses in order to assist the people of a state to produce better potatoes and better cows, it would appear that an institution such as this has an obligation to extend its influence beyond

its campus, to city streets and country villages, in prospect of enabling Elders and Deacons and Church School officers and teachers to produce within the local church better men and women, better boys and girls.

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"The facts are these: The Church is World Mission, and the Church is Social Event.

"Mark carefully the fashion of these phrases. The Church does not 'have' a mission, it *is* a mission. Fidelity in mission is not a desirable consequence of the Church's existence: it is that without which the Church does not exist. Its very being is rooted in an enterprise. A man neither knows nor receives the benefits of Christ's redemptive grace who does not wear His kindly yoke in an evangelistic endeavor which moves with brave persistence and unflagging zeal to communicate the mercies which His Gospel provides. And such a work cannot be within a circle that is narrower than God's own concern; no more than it can be 'off limits' to any who have betrothed themselves to Christ.

"Note that the mission is world-wide. This means that the Seminary must be aware of and sensitive to the cross currents which fill the stream of modern history with treacherous eddy-water. The Church is not 'of the world,' as the Bible plainly says. But the Church is in the world, and its mission is to the world, as the Bible says with equal, if forgotten, clarity.

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"Protestants are critical among themselves and ridiculed by others for what the uninformed call the atomizing consequences of its varied emphases in polity and program. The truth is that there prevails among Protestants and their concerted endeavors across the world a more fundamental and intelligible unity in matters that