

Religion and Education

The year was a busy one for the churches and schools of Iowa as efforts were made to keep up with the needs of expanding memberships and enrollments. Many new churches were built and plans for others were announced. The Christian Church added new buildings and parsonages costing about \$1,000,000. Bishop F. Gerald Ensley reported that Iowa Methodists would build about 8 or 10 new churches during the year, while the Presbyterian Synod director, the Rev. Henry C. Schneider, said that 6 to 8 new sanctuaries were either being built or were in the planning stage. Spencer's new First Congregational Church won first prize for unfinished church buildings in the competition of the Church Architectural Guild of America. The Iowa Council of Churches made a special effort to promote church construction in Des Moines, Waterloo, and Davenport where population growth made it most necessary.

The Methodist Church completed a survey of its membership which revealed that it had 285,443 members, the largest number of any Protestant denomination in the state. Nearly 23,000 new members were admitted in 1954. There were now 948 Methodist churches valued at over \$51,000,000.

The United Lutheran Synod of Iowa observed its centennial at its annual convention in Davenport. The Iowa District of the American Lutheran Church likewise was 100 years old in 1954, as was its Wartburg Seminary, which had graduated 1,489 men into the ministry since its founding.

Of special interest to Iowa Protestants was the second meeting of the World Council of Churches at Evanston, Illinois, in August. Among the 191 official delegates from the major denominations in North America were four from Iowa. David B. Cassat, Dubuque businessman, and president of the National Council of Presbyterian Men, was a delegate from the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. The Rev. Holger O. Nielsen of Cedar Falls was the only delegate from the American Evangelical Lutheran Church. Mrs. Frank G. Brooks of Mount Vernon, national head of the Woman's Division of Christian Service of the Methodist Board of Missions, was a representative of her church. Dr. A. E. Haefner of Wartburg College was one of five delegates from the American Lutheran Church. Ten other Iowans were listed as "accredited visitors" to the meeting, while many others went to Evanston to listen to parts of the sessions which lasted over two weeks.

One of the best-known Catholic figures in the state, the Rev. P. M. Dobberstein, died during the year. His famous Grotto of the Redemption at West Bend, upon which he had been laboring for

many years, was still not completed at the time of his death. The Very Rev. Terence McDermott, a native of Eagle Grove, became the first American to head the ancient Dominican Order of the Catholic Church.

At the State University of Iowa, Dr. M. Willard Lampe, who had headed the School of Religion since its founding in 1927, retired, and was replaced by Dr. Robert Michaelsen.

A member of the Old Amish sect in Buchanan County was tried on a charge of refusing to take the oath of induction when he was drafted in 1953. Federal Judge William F. Riley dismissed the indictment, not because of the youth's religious convictions, but on the grounds that he had been denied all of his rights of appeal when he had originally been classified 1-A.

At Sioux City 5,000 delegates from Iowa and neighboring states met in a district assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses. A representative of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society warned that the world was living "in the last days." He compared the effects of the H-bomb era to those of the flood in Noah's time.

During 1954, school problems remained numerous. Seventy-nine Iowa school teachers who had taught from 40 to 60 years, went into well-deserved retirement. Between 2,500 and 3,000 new teachers were needed to replace those who retired or left the profession, and to meet the demands of

a steadily rising enrollment. Less than half this number were graduated from Iowa's colleges and universities in June. "In the absence of an adequate number of fully qualified people who are making a career of teaching," President James W. Maucker of Iowa State Teachers College declared, "the class-rooms are being handled by people not fully qualified and people who have other responsibilities."

Stop-gap measures took care of most of the vacancies in the elementary grades where the most critical shortages had existed in past years. In 1954, however, high schools had difficulty securing instructors in women's physical education, home economics, music, English, and the sciences. Home economics teachers were so scarce that some schools were considering offering the subject in alternate years only.

By 1958 authorities predicted an enrollment of 635,000 in the state's public schools, over 100,000 more than in 1953-1954. In December the State Department of Public Instruction reported that Iowa's school districts must spend \$112,377,954 by September, 1959, in order to provide 3,620 new classrooms. This was an expensive program, but as the *Des Moines Register* pointed out, the total cost was only half that of the new supercarrier *U.S.S. Forrestal*.

The greatest need for new schools was in the large urban counties. Polk County needed to

spend \$18,500,000 by 1959 if its school system was to meet the anticipated rise in enrollment. The taxpayers of Cedar Rapids approved a bond issue of \$5,950,000 for two new high schools after school officials warned that the existing high schools soon might have to go on a two-shift schedule, half of the students attending school in the morning and the rest in the afternoon only. Added to an elementary school bond approved in 1953 this gave Cedar Rapids an \$8,700,000 school construction program.

Not all Iowa communities were as capable of handling the cost of new school needs as were the large cities, however, and so a demand arose for greater assistance from the state. The Department of Public Instruction announced that it would ask the next legislature to increase state aid to schools by \$15,749,000 a year. Most candidates for the legislature approved of increased state aid but wondered where the extra money would come from. It was also hoped that greater Federal assistance could be obtained. Assistant State Superintendent Paul F. Johnson told a Congressional committee "that this emergency cannot be met in Iowa without such assistance."

Meanwhile, school district reorganization advanced slowly, despite the reorganization law which went into effect in May, 1953. Dr. M. L. Cushman, professor of rural education at Iowa State College, declared that school districts in over

half the state's area operated no schools. Instead, the taxpayers in these districts used the school taxes to pay the tuition of school-age children at neighboring district schools. The taxpayers of these districts tended to oppose consolidation because of fears that such a step would mean increased taxation. The *Waterloo Courier* maintained that this problem was "much more serious than the average citizen realizes."

During 1954 Miss Jessie M. Parker rounded out 16 years as State Superintendent of Public Instruction. After a number of years of campaigning by Miss Parker, the legislature in 1953 established a State Board of Public Instruction with the office of Superintendent becoming an appointive, instead of an elective one. Miss Parker, who had been Superintendent longer than any other person in the state's history, left office widely respected by school officials and citizens alike. To succeed her, the new board appointed J. C. Wright, his appointment to begin in 1955. He had been superintendent for 14 years at Keokuk where he had directed a building program that gained national recognition.

In the field of higher education a shuffling of leadership also took place. After 14 years as president of Grinnell, Dr. Samuel N. Stevens resigned, as did Tom E. Shearer, who had been head of Parsons College since 1948. The new head of Buena Vista College was John A. Fisher, who had

held several important positions at Coe since 1946. At Simpson, Dr. William E. Kerstetter was formally installed as that college's fifteenth president.

Most of the same problems which beset public school administrators also haunted Iowa's college leaders. The freshman classes were 15.5 per cent larger than those of 1953. By 1959 the peak levels of 1949 were expected to be equalled, and as the children of the post-war era reached college age that peak was due to be left far behind in the following decade.

A report prepared by former State Senator Alden L. Doud of Douds for the legislative interim committee indicated that 5,000 more liberal arts students could be handled with the present facilities. Although the report made no recommendations, Doud, who accepted no pay for his efforts, felt that overcrowding, particularly at the state-supported schools, could be eased if "much greater publicity" was given to the available opportunities at the private colleges. The latter reported that they had room for 4,000 more students in their existing plants.

Capital improvements at private schools depend largely upon private donors. Simpson College launched a campaign to raise \$2,500,000 by its centennial in 1960. Cornell College received a grant of \$600,000 from the Olin Foundation to build a men's dormitory. President Russell D. Cole termed this gift "the key" in the school's am-

bitious reorganization program since the lack of rooming facilities for men had been handicapping the college's growth.

The State Board of Education requested that the next legislature appropriate \$6,156,200 a year for capital improvements at the state institutions, well over twice as much as was provided in 1953. However, officials always had to face the alarming possibility that inflation or war in the future would again upset the best laid plans. In 1945 Iowa State College had been authorized to build nine new buildings, but due to subsequent inflation only four had been constructed. Similarly, scarcely two-thirds of the University's post-war expansion program was finished as originally scheduled in 1954.

On a somewhat less serious side, some fans gave Iowa's football coach, Forest Evashevski, a Cadillac worth \$6,500 in appreciation for all he and his staff had "done for the university and state of Iowa." Many wondered if other University faculty members were not equally deserving of recognition.

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