

Walter G. Williams and the Methodist Church

LOWELL B. SWAN

THE Methodist Church has been a large part of Dr. Williams' life. He was first a member of the Methodist Church in England and then transferred to this country. He joined first the North East Ohio Conference in 1926 and was ordained deacon. In 1931 he was ordained an elder and served the following charges in that conference: Waynesburg; Union Avenue and Wade Park Churches in Cleveland; and Massillon-Wesley. He transferred to Colorado Conference several years after he came to Iliff as a professor. He served as a supply pastor to the Simpson Methodist Church during an interim appointment.

You could say that the whole world has been his preaching circuit. He has preached in many Methodist pulpits over all the world, of course, in many other pulpits, also. His interest in World Methodism led him to take part actively in the World Methodist Council as a member, and he has served as a member of the Commission on Ecumenical consultation.

Nationally, Dr. Williams has lent his influence. He has served as a reserve member of the Judicial Council, a member of the Commission on Ecumenical Consultation and as an advisory member of the Commission on Worship. He is at present a member of the Regional Committee on Missionary Personnel of the Board of Missions. During the General Conference of 1960 in Denver, Dr. Williams held an important chairmanship on the Local Entertainment Committee from the Denver Area.

The Rocky Mountain Methodist Annual Conference has been the recipient of much effort on the part of Dr. Williams.

LOWELL B. SWAN is President of The Iliff School of Theology.

Practically every Methodist Church in the Denver Metropolitan area has had Dr. Williams in its pulpit or teaching an adult class or delivering a lecture on archaeology. But this is also true of our Methodist Churches in nearby Wyoming, Utah, Nebraska and Kansas. Of course, his ecumenical spirit has led him also to do the same for many other denominations of this region.

His responsibilities in the Annual Conference have been very great indeed. The affairs of the ministry have been his real concern. The Conference Board of Ministerial Training and Qualifications has had the major portion of his time and talent. However, the District Board of Ministerial Qualifications and such committees allied with the ministry such as the Committee on Conscientious Objectors, on Disability, on Conference Relations, and on Accepted supply Pastors have also found him faithful and giving of his talent.

Dr. Williams has also served on the District Interim Licensing Committee, on Conference Publicity Committee, on General Conference Memorials Committee, and he was elected a reserve delegate to the Jurisdictional Conference of 1948.

There are no doubt many other responsibilities which he has had to shoulder in the Annual Conference for which he has never received credit. He has always been willing and very well qualified for so many tasks and many a chairman relied on his most excellent knowledge of the Discipline.

Certainly, it can be said of Dr. Walter Williams that the Annual Conference owes a very great debt to his wise counsel and indefatigable effort in its affairs.

It is appropriate to add a brief summary of Dr. Williams' academic career, since so much of his distinctive service

to the church has been in the role of scholar. He received his A.B. degree from Mount Union College, B.D. from Garrett Biblical Institute, and Ph.D. from The University of Chicago. In 1951 Mount Union College awarded him the honorary degree of Litt.D. In 1960 he was elected Fellow of the International Institute of Arts and Letters.

In addition to having been Professor of Old Testament at Iliff since 1942, he served as Dean of Students from 1950 to 1961. His educational experiences have been wide and varied. He was instructor in Semitic Languages at The University of Chicago from 1933 to 1935, lecturer in Religion at Baldwin-Wallace

College in 1936 and 1937, and visiting professor at Garrett in the summers of 1936 and 1954. In 1951 he was lecturer and in 1957 visiting professor at Union Theological Seminary, Matanzas, Cuba. In 1951 and again in 1961 he was honorary lecturer at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. In 1961 and 1962 he lectured in sixteen theological seminaries in the Far East. He has recently served as visiting professor at St. Thomas Seminary, indicative of his continuing ecumenical interest and involvement. He has actively participated in several archaeological expeditions, most recently at Dhiban, Jordan, and plans to continue this important work.

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