

# Statistical Proof Now Available To Show Growth Of Church Membership

## Dr. Landis Says Increase Greater Than Of Population

By LOUIS CASSELS  
United Press Correspondent

Washington—(U.P.)—Dr. Benson Y. Landis, editor of the Yearbook of American Churches, said today there is "abundant statistical proof" that total church membership is growing far more rapidly than the overall U. S. population.

But he said the much-discussed church boom has been "very uneven" in its impact. Some of the oldest and best-known Protestant denominations have not kept pace in the phenomenal growth of recent years. And a disproportionately large share of church gains have been registered in new suburban areas, while many city and rural congregations have actually lost members.

Dr. Landis is widely recognized as the nation's top authority on church statistics. The yearbook which he edits, under the sponsorship of the National Council of Churches, was the source of the figures published last fall showing that U. S. church enrollment had reached an all-time high of 97,500,000, or more than 60 per cent of the population.

The accuracy of these figures has been questioned in several quarters. One of the sharpest challenges came from Prof. Winthrop S. Hudson of Colgate-Rochester Divinity School. He asserted in a recent issue of Christian Century magazine that the reported boom in church membership is "largely an illusion."

Dr. Landis acknowledged in an interview that his yearbook accepts at face value the membership figures supplied by various denominations. He conceded that the statistical reporting methods of religious bodies vary in accuracy from "very careful checking" to "outright estimates."

But he said these facts do not mean that the yearbook's total is necessarily too high. On the contrary, he said, it is entirely possible that it is too low, and that U. S. church membership has now passed 100,000,000.

Dr. Landis cited these factors which, he said, tend to offset any disposition on the part of some denominations to report "optimistically" on their enrollment:

1. The figures published in the current 1956 yearbook were, for the most part, based on 1954 membership lists. Spot checks show that there has been substantially later growth which is not reflected in the figures.

2. The total did not include two fairly large denominations—Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses—which have a policy against publishing membership figures.

3. Some denominations have a system of distributing financial quotas among their member churches on the basis of their reported enrollment. This operates to discourage any padding of membership figures.

Moreover, he said, the authenticity of the church boom is borne out by other statistics.

Sunday school enrollment, on which nearly all groups keep week to week nose counts, has risen sharply since 1947 and now totals a record 37,000,000.

Outlays for church construction, reported by the federal Dept. of Labor and Commerce, jumped from \$126,000,000 in 1947 to \$748,000,000 in 1955 and an estimated \$850,000,000 this year.

Sales of Bibles and religious books, reported by publishers, totaled \$29,000,000 in 1947 and \$55,000,000 in 1954, the last year for which figures are available.

Finally, Dr. Landis said, whether or not the church membership figures for any given year are precisely accurate, there is "no doubt at all" about the general upward trend.

Berean Baptists of White City will meet Sunday, Feb. 5, for the first time in their new chapel which is located on Crater Lake highway south of Antelope rd.

The redwood edifice has been constructed in less than six months, mostly by volunteer labor. The building will serve as a Sunday school and church unit. A date for dedication has not been announced.

Sunday school convenes at 9:45 a.m., and worship service is at 11 a.m., the pastor, the Rev. Glenn S. Wade, announced.

Pre-partition India was a little more than one-half the size of the U. S.



DR. PAUL S. WRIGHT  
Moderator

## Officer's Visit To Be Occasion For Activities

Dr. Paul Stuart Wright, Portland, moderator of the general assembly of the Presbyterian church in the USA, will visit here Thursday, Feb. 9. Three activities, at which he will appear, are planned for that day and will be attended by valley Presbyterians.

First will be a Presbyterian Men's luncheon at noon that day at the First Presbyterian church in Medford.

A dinner is scheduled for 6 p.m., to be attended by all church officers and friends of Dr. Wright. This event will be held at the Medford hotel.

That evening at 8 o'clock the moderator will speak at the Phoenix Presbyterian church. The choir will furnish music and all elders and ministers will march in the opening procession.

As moderator of the general assembly, Dr. Wright holds the highest honorary office in the Presbyterian church, which has a membership of some 2,658,900 persons.

His term of office is for one year and during this term he is serving as chairman of the general council, spiritual and financial coordinating body of the church, represents the church at official gatherings and functions, both civic and ecclesiastical; and makes visits to churches, judicatories, institutions and regions of the church.

He is also responsible for making appointments to committees of the assembly during his term.

Dr. Wright was born of missionary parents in Tabriz, Iran. He became pastor of the First Presbyterian church, Portland, in 1941.

## Coadjutor Designate To Receive Rites

The Rev. James W. F. Carman, bishop coadjutor designate of the Episcopal diocese in Oregon, will receive Holy communion Tuesday, Feb. 7 at 10 a.m., at Trinity church, Portland. The Right Rev. Henry Knox Sherrill, presiding bishop, will administer the rites.

Traditionally, only the family of the new bishop and the participating clergy receive at this time. But provision is made, as in the coming ordination of Dean Carman as bishop coadjutor, for services in all Episcopal churches in the diocese at an earlier hour that morning with special intention for the consecration.

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## Presbyterians Set Reception Rites; Events Planned

New members will be received by the session at the First Presbyterian church at 5 p.m. Sunday. The Rev. John Reynolds, who has been conducting the class, will present them.

At the morning services Dr. D. Kirkland West will speak at both services on the theme, "Are the Ten Commandments out of Date?" At a 7:30 p.m. service, the film, "Martin Luther," will be shown. The film depicts the struggle in the church at the time of the Reformation and the place that Martin Luther played. The public is invited.

The High School Westminster fellowship will join with six other churches in Medford for an Interdenominational Youth rally at the First Methodist church at 6:30 p.m., when Mark Hatfield, Salem, dean of students at Willamette university, and state senator, will be speaker.

A time of fellowship will follow the services at the YMCA. Music in the morning services will include anthems by the Westminster and Chancel choirs, under the direction of Allen Lehl.

The Stars and Stripes fly day and night from a flagpole atop a hill overlooking Deadwood, S.D., by special act of Congress.

Forests in Brazil cover about 100,000,000 acres.



EVANGELIST—William L. Devereaux, Los Angeles, will begin revival meetings at Medford Assembly of God, 1108 West Main st., Sunday at 11 a.m. He will speak at other meetings at the church that day and daily at 7:45 p.m., except Monday and Saturday.

Evangelist Devereaux has conducted meetings throughout this country and Canada and is a frequent Youth for Christ speaker. Musical groups will present selections at each service. A Sunday school rally will be held at 9:45 a.m., when the speaker will outline plans for an enlargement program in the school.

Church youth groups will represent Medford Friends, First Baptist, Assembly of God, First Presbyterian, St. Mark's Episcopal, First Methodist, Zion Lutheran, First Christian and Phoenix Presbyterian. High school students of any faith are invited.

Advisers are Mrs. George Flanagan and the Rev. John Reynolds of the First Presbyterian church, and the Rev. Robert F. Burger, St. Mark's.

Two men, cleared of auto theft charges walked out of the police station Thursday and stole a driverless taxicab. They were rearrested.

## First Youth Rally Speaker Announced, Program Listed

Mark Hatfield, Salem, dean of students at Willamette university, and state senator, will be main speaker at the first interdenominational youth rally ever to be held in Medford and which will convene Sunday, Feb. 12 at 6:30 p.m. Scene of the rally will be First Methodist church. Young people from various local churches have planned the rally to promote a better understanding of Christian youths' parts in an ever-changing world.

Greg Milnes of the Episcopal youth will conduct the worship service. The Methodist youth choir, augmented by young people from other choirs, will sing. Musical groups from several churches will participate. Nancy Walstead has been in charge of the musicians.

A recreational and fellowship period will be held after the rally service at the YMCA building, and was planned by Joyce Gregory.

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Advisers are Mrs. George Flanagan and the Rev. John Reynolds of the First Presbyterian church, and the Rev. Robert F. Burger, St. Mark's.

Bridgeport, Conn.—(U.P.)—A sneak thief stole \$41 from Judge James C. Shannon's wallet in his coat hanging in an office closet while the Superior Court judge presided over a criminal trial.

## Town Deserted After Reports Of Sinking

Sehore, India—(U.P.)—This provincial town has been deserted by 8,000 of its 10,000-odd residents as a result of panicky reports of recurrent earthquakes and rumors that the area is "sinking."

Reports say Sehore was rocked by earthquakes eight times in the past 10 days, but it has been impossible so far to find anyone who actually felt them. No such tremors were registered by seismographs.

## Woman Travels 150 Miles For Birth of Fourth Child

Duluth, Minn.—(U.P.)—Mrs. Arthur Madsen, 34, decided she wanted a doctor when her fourth child is born and traveled 150 miles from her Canadian northwoods home to reach one.

The trip was by snowshoe, snowmobile, dogsled, automobile and bus.

Mrs. Madsen and her oldest son, Chris 6, left their home on the Canadian side of Saganaga Lake Saturday morning in a snowmobile, an automobile-powered by a half-track.

They were unable to continue their trip after crossing the lake because the dogsled they planned to hitch a ride on was laden with trappers' supplies. So Mrs. Madsen said she and her son built a fire, and waited for her husband, a guide, to show up. The fire was signal for him to come.

Her husband, Arthur, arrived with a toboggan, which he dragged across the lake ice, and snowshoes. They loaded their

baggage on the toboggan and set out on snowshoes for the end of the trail three miles away.

The last quarter of a mile, Mrs. Madsen and her son rode on a dogsled sent out by the trappers to meet them.

A weekly mail truck was to take Mrs. Madsen and her son into Grand Marais, Minn., but failed to arrive because of a 17-inch snowfall.

Mrs. Madsen and Chris then got a lift by automobile from an Indian guide, George Plummer, who took them to a lodge where there was a telephone.

An emergency call sent a snowplow crew from Grand Marais to the lodge to open a path for Mrs. Madsen and her son. It was the next morning when the two reached Grand Marais. They took an afternoon bus to Duluth, 57 miles away.

As many as 2,000 persons per square mile live in the Ganges valley of India.

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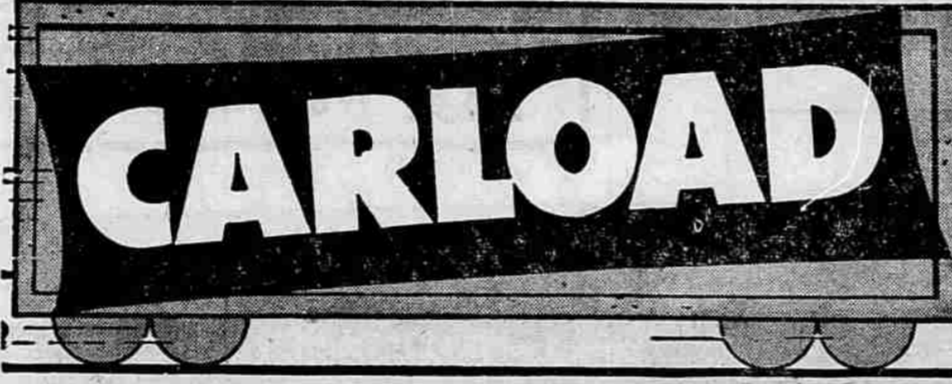
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