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Chapter 3: What Next? 1919

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What Next? 1919

The years following the first Conference were fraught with difficulties, as many major decisions needed to be made, most of far-reaching significance. The committee appointed at Twin Rocks in August, 1918, met several times during the following year. An appeal in the March, 1919, "A Friendly Endeavor" indicates their valiant effort and concern, "Please pray for the C.E. Program Committee. We do want the Conference to be all that God would have it be this summer. Chester Hadley has called it together for the third meeting on March 8th and there will probably be fully that many more before the settlement can be made on the time, the place and the program. They are doing their best. Let us do ours by praying for them as they meet and also by planning to attend the Conference."

A major consideration was evaluating the first experience. Some felt that ten days was too long. Perhaps that choice had been made because of the difficulty of getting to Twin Rocks. The Committee decided to try a six-day meeting next time. Also, some felt that the trip to the beach had put too much work on a few. Erecting the big tent and the many smaller ones, with all the other necessary work in setting up a camp was anything but a vacation for those who had to do it. But the enthusiasm and inspiration remained in retrospect and the value of the Conference to those who attended spurred the committee to tackle the untried road ahead, depending on Divine leading and the prayers of Christian Endeavor members to guide them.

There was the constant need of selling the Conference idea to the "doubting Thomases." While many had caught the vision quickly, some were honestly skeptical as to the wisdom of such a venture, and voiced many objections. Would Conference detract from Yearly Meeting? Recreation and religion combined wouldn't work. Young people would not go to such a gathering for they didn't want to attend a religious meeting. The beach was too difficult to reach. The differing points of view became issues in Oregon Yearly Meeting as time went on. Some felt the young people were "going to the dogs" because they mixed frivolity with spirituality. Some considered the stunt night on the beach sinful. Some were concerned about mixed swimming and the length of girl's ^{bathing} ~~swimming~~ suits. During the 1920s some preachers stayed home on Twin Rocks Sunday and preached against the Conference. The answer of the young people to all the doubters was a continuing Conference with increasing testimonies to the spiritual blessings and growth of a Christian vacation.

The chief problem was the search for a suitable place to meet. If an auditorium were not available, it was necessary to truck down the tabernacle tent. If sleeping accommodations could not be secured, renting of small tents was necessary and they

had to be transported by truck. [✓]Equipment for cooking and serving was a problem. Post-war prices remained almost prohibitive. There were few places available for rent that were suitable for the purposes of the Conference.

Then, the Board of Pacific College decided to invite the Conference to meet in Newberg on the college campus. The planning committee unanimously voted to accept this invitation for 1919. In the June, 1919, "A Friendly Endeavor" they reported, "in making this decision the committee is not attempting at this time to choose a permanent home...as has been intimated. Some of the advantages of the plan become evident at once. The Conference will become accessible to a large number who were kept away last year because of the expense, lack of time, or the inconvenience of a trip to the coast. Our Conference should not be limited to those who are able to get away for a vacation at any certain time. Newberg is within easy driving distance from most of the meetings of the valley, so a number who will not be able to attend regularly will find it possible to come in for some of the classes or for the evening addresses. In the matter of physical comfort, the whole Conference will be better cared for by this plan than was possible last year and that, we hope, without making it necessary for four or five people to give their entire time to the work alone. The use of the college auditorium for...general meetings and of the smaller rooms for class work ought to add greatly to the efficiency of the Conference proper. The use of the dormitories and dining room will simplify the entertainment problem, and the tennis courts, baseball field, the gymnasium, and a goodly number of excursion points of interest will contribute to the enjoyment of the afternoon recreation. Remember, the "place" alone or any number of conveniences will not bring success to an effort like this. Let's pray much. The Program Committee has done its very best and we want every Christian Endeavorer in the Yearly Meeting to do his very level best to make this Conference a real success."

The enthusiastic promotion of the Conferences indicates the continuing vision of the leaders, based on their experiences. Members of the Program Committee spread the word through their churches and C.E. Societies. Quarterly Meeting Superintendents encouraged societies in their areas to support the Conference. Personal letters were written. As the C.E. officers traveled among the Societies across the Yearly Meeting, young people were encouraged to attend. Perhaps the most effective promotion was through the publication, "A Friendly Endeavor." The June, July and August issues had glowing announcements of the second gathering. "Put your worries big and little in a dark place and shut the door. Get out your vacation suit, tennis shoes, fish hooks, and your Conference notebook and let's have a worthwhile convention. We remember with a good deal of satisfaction the way each one took hold uncomplainingly last year in the effort to make the best of the things at hand. Bring the same spirit to Newberg

and we will all be glad of the effort...Make every effort to be there." In the next issue we read, "...now, young people, don't make your plans for the summer without including this Conference. Let's don't be selfish. Some of us might rather take our little ring of bo logna, a soda cracker, a sofa cushion, and a magazine, and get off by ourselves under a cottonwood, and think we were really having a vacation, but nobody would be benefitted but ourselves, unless it might be the pup we gave the scraps to—but if anyone is that selfish there wouldn't be any scraps—so don't think you're entitled to go off alone unless you have nervous prostration or leprosy. We believe God wants His children to have the best there is—wholesome fun and a general good time. Let us unite in prayer that the Holy Spirit may brood over us in every department of, and at every session of this Conference...think twice and pray many times before you decide not to attend the Conference." This acrostic appeared in the July issue: Come and bring your friends, On August 25-31, Newberg, Oregon, Friends Pacific College, Earnestly pray for every session, Remember the place, and the purpose. Every C.E. member present. Now is the time to make your plans. Come, come, come. Enter into the spirit of it."

Announcements of the program and arrangements made the gathering appealing. Plans were made for excellent leadership and a variety of subjects for the lecture and class periods. Provision was made for early morning devotions, "these separate outdoor services will be held any place one may choose and should provide a spiritual stimulus for the entire day. It is not intended to supplant the season for private prayer, but to take the place of the family altar." The August issue had a half page of pictures of the Pacific College campus buildings and canyon. Details of arrangements were announced, "it has been decided to serve the meals on the 'Club Plan' as we did last year. It will be impossible to state what the cost of the meals will be. Last year they averaged 20 cents, making the total cost near \$6.00 for ten days. This year with an increase in the cost of food, but with only six days we judge the total would be about the same. There will be a registration fee not to exceed \$2.00. A reasonable charge for the dormitory cots is designed to help meet the necessary expense which always attends such a gathering." Attenders were told to "provide yourselves with—1. your bedding (also bring an empty straw tick if you have one.) 2. Notebooks and pencils. 3. The August "A Friendly Endeavor" to give you the program. 4. a first-rate, high-class disposition, guaranteed not to shrink or fade or otherwise give out. 5. Bring your fishing outfit and tennis racquet/ and balls, and baseball, bat and mitt." "We also hope that everyone who is privileged to attend the Holiness Camp Meeting at Portland will carry a few of the 'splashings' over to the Conference."

After the excellent planning and ~~enthusiastic~~ promotion, the report of this Second Annual Conference of the Christian Endeavorers in the September issue of "A Friendly

ly Endeavor" was both Enthusiastic and inspiring. "How we wish every member of Oregon Yearly Meeting could have attended...words can't begin to convey the feelings of those who were privileged to be there. We would be delighted to give a graphic account of each session, of the joy of mingling together, of the rest and recreation, and the inspiration of our family worship...prayer meeting on the bleachers, in the open air is where you found us each morning just after breakfast. Here are some of the questions we grappled with in the discussions which Lyra Miles skillfully directed.

1. The call of God—are we called of God to the vocation or avocation which we are following? 2. Christian Stewardship—are we...withholding time or talent from the service of the church because remuneration is not guaranteed? 3. Who is my neighbor—my duty toward him? 4. The type of message—does the message of the church ever change? 5. Pastoral evangelism and the challenge of service... The discussions were freely participated in...gave us ample food for thought and fuel for action. With our minds clear from a refreshing night's rest, we faced the problems before us and presented them to our Heavenly Father with faith in His promise that 'if any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God...' "

The welcome to the Conference was given by President Levi T. Pennington who also gave inspirational messages. "He spoke on the 'Image of God'...showing that the essence of the likeness of man to God was not in a physical or outward way, but in a spiritual or inward way...in powers that are peculiar to man—intellect, emotion and will, and through their exercise we are able to apprehend God. We can know God through Jesus Christ and only through Him..." Other addresses were by Dr. W.P. White, emphasizing the prophecy of Jesus' return to earth, by I. Gurney Lee from II Timothy, showing that the time has come when God must speak to individuals and he showed by seven figures some plans of conduct the Christian must follow..., by E.H. Perisho who gave a conclusive argument that God is God and Jesus is His divine Son, and other leaders and topics. Another reporter avers, "Friends, God was there. You know Jesus had times of going out among the masses and healing and converting them...that was His aim and object...then there were times when a few of those who best loved Him, sat at His feet and learned of Him. Some way we feel that to be a suitable way to describe our feelings about this Conference...there surely never has been displayed a sweeter spirit of love and fellowship...the memory will be a constant fragrance to us."

Other glowing reports came from the classes. "Carl Miller's talks were practical—how to meet people in personal work. Lurana Terrell and Elmer Pemberton contrasted other religions with ours, and it is needless to say that we chose to keep what we have. Before Homer Cox was through with us, we wanted to be right in the middle of a foreign field, and were just recovering from that when E.R. Martin had us

longing to be out in the rural districts in Sundayschool work. E.H.Perisho fascinated us with his philosophy...everyone who attended is right for it, which only goes to prove that those who did not attend are poorer than they were."

"Every day was perfect weather excepting Friday, which was a few degrees too warm for the average tennis player, but most of our players are above average, and the fans were loyal..." About the "Eats"... "in the first place we had them three times a day, in the next place they were good, and lastly there was enough and to spare. We had two excellent cooks who knew their business and three little waitresses who knew just how to do it...The only discordant note was the constant and never ceasing "fuss" between Blaine Bronner and Chester Hadley as to who would get the wood for the cooks. They quarreled over who would saw it, who would split it, and who would pile it up. The young ladies would gladly have taken charge of it themselves, but for two reasons—it would have fostered laziness in both the above mentioned...and then, it was such fun to hear them argue..."

A brief comment in the report, written by Lyra Miles, reveals the basic disappointment of this Conference which seems to have been so well planned, "our regret is that so few comparatively were able to enjoy these blessings with us." The truth is that only sixteen registered, with about 50 altogether who came for part. The dining room served from fifteen to thirty people. The Planning Committee took the small number of attenders into account when they gathered for evaluation and future planning.

At the business meeting resolutions were passed, several pertaining to thank you—to the Pacific College Board for their invitation and welcome, to Newberg Christian Endeavor for preparing the dormitories and campus, to the Executive Committee for their efforts, to Chester Hadley as Superintendent for his successful management and untiring service, to Floyd Perisho as general assistant, to the cooks and waitresses, and to the leaders. Thanks was expressed "to our Heavenly Father for His many blessings... our gathering last year was under the dark cloud of war, with fear and uncertainty as to the outcome. The cloud has lifted and for a time, at least, peace has returned." * A special resolution was presented, "that a committee be appointed to write to the senators and representatives of Oregon, protesting against intervention in Mexican affairs and against Universal Military Training." Several Friends of Oregon Yearly Meeting served in alternate service camps during the war years, some in reconstruction work under the American Friends Service Committee.

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The last resolution guaranteed another Conference "at a place selected by the Superintendent and the Program Committee." The small attendance showed that in spite of an excellent program, convenient accommodations, and a good spirit, it did not meet the Conference goal of a larger group which would include C.E. Society members from all over the Yearly Meeting. But the vision did not change.