

New Congregational church will be cheaper

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Association of Congregational Churches, which three years ago pledged its support to a scheme to provide a new church at Corby, reaffirmed its promise at its autumnal meetings at Market Harborough on Saturday, when details of a revised programme were given.

The Rev. R. G. Wilkinson, who presented the scheme to the original scheme for up to build a church for up-

wards of £25,000 on a site presented by Messrs. Stewart and Lloyds in the north part of the town.

He said that Corby had changed enormously in the last three years and under the old scheme the Congregational Church would have been surrounded by six churches within a distance of half a mile.

A new site in the south east of the town, but as near the town centre as possible had been chosen and a guarantee had been given by the Corby Development Corporation that there would be no other church in the area.

A second big change in the scheme was its cost. The original scheme was to have cost between £25,000 and £40,000, but the new one was to be not more than £13,000, and £7,000 was already available.

Mr. H. H. Pickering, moving a resolution that the association should reaffirm its pledge to support the Corby scheme in its revised form, said there was a feeling among their friends in Corby that "the county had forgotten them."

Some churches had immediately contributed to the Corby fund but the county as a whole had not, added Mr. Pickering.

Mr. R. G. Perry, Northampton, seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

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Ministers' meeting



Northants Evening Telegraph, 6 Monday, October 5, 1953.

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Layman has an advantage

Professor's talk at Harborough

AN advantage which a lay preacher has over his ordained colleague is that he is closer to the lives of his congregation, said Professor E. C. Blackman, of New College, London, at the autumnal meetings of Northamptonshire Association of Congregational Churches at Market Harborough on Saturday.

Prof. Blackman, who has written a book on the subject of lay preaching, pointed out, however, that the ordained minister had far weightier responsibilities than the layman.

Deprecating the system of classifying preachers into lists A and B, he said he hoped the practice would eventually cease.

First essential of a lay preacher was a firm belief in the faith he was to preach—but sometimes this qualification was not present: "This is a terrible thing," he said.

ELOCUTION

During question time, Professor Blackman was told that lay preachers could be both seen and heard in the pulpit, but this was not always the case with ordained ministers. "Why is it that you people who have the work of training men do not encourage them to speak out so that everyone can hear them?" he was asked.

Professor Blackman replied: "Probably the reason is that the people who train them in elocution treat them as actors." He said he would take the matter up with the authorities.

There was a good deal of laughter during a discussion on how long sermons should last. The Rev. R. G. Wilkinson, Corby, telling the story about the American church where there was a notice for the preacher which read: "If you don't strike oil in ten minutes, stop boring."

Professor Blackman replied that a good principle was to preach for as long as one remained interesting. The limit used to be 20 minutes, but there was a tendency for sermons to get a little longer.

The Rev. P. E. Wadey spoke of the lay preacher who was called upon so frequently that he rarely had the opportunity of worshipping under his own minister.

Professor Blackman suggested that Northamptonshire might copy Oxfordshire in organising buses to go round the villages and bring country folk to services in the towns.

WHIST DRIVE RAISED £4

A whist drive held in the County School, Gretton, on Friday raised £4 1s. 6d. for cricket club funds. Winners were Miss Marshall, Mrs. F. Lees, Mrs. J. Whitworth, Mrs. H. G. Binder, Mr. V. E. Vavasor and Mr. D. Golland. Mr. T. Davies won a competition. Mr. T. Smith was M.C.

CHATting informally at the autumnal meeting of Northamptonshire Association of Congregational

Churches at Market Harborough last Saturday are, left to right: The Rev. W. J. Palmer (formerly of

Daventry and now retired), the Rev. B. Skilton (Yardley Hastings), the Rev. W. Gunton (Yelvertoft), the Rev. S. Atkins (Brishtock), the Rev. W. Hunter (president of the association), the Rev. W. Wilkinson and the Rev. E. K. Doman (Kettering).

FINANCE NEWS IS DISTURBING

REPRESENTATIVES at the autumnal meetings of the Northamptonshire Association of Congregational Churches at Market Harborough on Saturday heard some disturbing news regarding the finances of the Home Churches Fund and the London Mission Society.

The County Commissioner, Mr. M. E. Parkin, spoke of the attitude of some people towards the Home Churches Fund, and said that he had the impression—as did many ministers—that these people did not care about the welfare of the fund.

He reported that changes were being considered regarding H.Q. finances and said that although he did not know the full details he understood that at the May meeting in London the finances of the Congregational Union might be merged into one. This would mean that there would be a budget for one appeal, and the Home Churches Fund would be included.

As this would mean the conclusion of independent appeals, he called for an all-out effort to finish on a strong note.

RED DANGER

He counted the last named reduction the most tragic of all in view of the danger of Communism in India and the fact that Communist money and propaganda was being poured into the country.

Big reductions would also have to be made in home administration, amounting to £5,500.

Mr. Doman commented that it seemed that Congregationalists were falling down on this job. He considered that the matter went deeper than the shortage of money or people, for the real bankruptcy was spiritual.

He declared that if they continued to reel back from one defeat after another, the time would come when they would be within measurable distance of seeing the end of Congregationalism as a major Christian grouping in this country.

SPLENDID FUND

Commenting that it was a splendid fund, Mr. Parkin said that although all the stipends for their ministers were not extravagant, they were far better than they used to be. He added, however, that not all of them were adequate in these days of heavy costs.

Several representatives commented on the position. One said that Northamptonshire was on the receiving end, getting more out of the fund than it paid in. He declared that it was humiliating that they had to trust to people outside the county.

Another spoke of the inadequate stipends and called for the association to take this matter far more seriously.

It was resolved to ask the secretary to contact the churches asking them to give this subject their serious consideration.

MORE ECONOMIES

Recalling that several years ago the society had had to make economies, he warned that more major economies would have to be made in future.

Every year since the war expenditure had exceeded in-



October

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