

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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137

LOVE , BISHOP EDGAR A.

Bishop Edgar Love dies in Baltimore at age 82

BALITMORE (RNS) — Retired United Methodist Bishop Edgar A. Love died here, May 1, at age 82.

Bishop Love was the last bishop to preside over the former all-black Washington Annual Conference of his denomination. In 1965, he led his conference into what is now the Baltimore Conference. He retired from active episcopal service in 1964.

Born in Harrisonburg, Va., he was graduated from Howard University in 1913 and ordained in 1915.

He was awarded theological degrees from Howard School of Religion in 1916 and Boston University in 1918.

A teacher at Morgan State College here until 1921, when he turned to the full-time pastorate, he served congregations in Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

In 1933 he became superintendent of the Washington District of the Washington Conference, and seven years later was named head of the department

of Negro work of the then Methodist Board of Missions.

Bishop Love was elected to the episcopacy in 1952. He was an active backer of the integration of racial conferences in U. S. Methodism. While some blacks feared they might lose position after integration, Bishop Love advocated unity.

When the former white and black conferences in the Washington-Baltimore area were merged in 1964, Bishop Love said: "I stand here with great joy and amazement to witness what we hoped could happen by 1966 but which we thought realistically might not occur until 1968."

In the 1950s Bishop Love served as president of the Methodist Federation for Social Action. He was honored in 1964 by the Methodist Rural Fellowship for his contribution to the rural church.

Bishop Love is survived by his wife, the former Virginia Louise Ross, and a son, Jon Edgar.

TM/2MR - May 10, 1974

classroom — is believed to be a "first" among United Methodist seminaries.

Originally conceived by Judge Woodrow Seals of Houston, "Laity Week" is a sequel to "Ministers' Week" which is held here each February. It was hoped that the first-hand experience of seminary education by a group of lay leaders would help generally to develop better relations between the pulpit and the pew.

Discussing the experiment, Perkins Dean Joseph D. Quillian Jr. observed that more and more laity are realizing the importance of their unique identity as "general ministers" and the emerging significance of the "priesthood of all believers" — be they ordained or non-ordained. He noted that today's layperson is seeking a more thorough theological foundation which will aid in day-to-day living.

Although the laity who converged on the SMU campus encompassed a broad spectrum of ages and religious convictions, all seemed to share one common concern: "How can I equip myself to perform a more useful function in the on-going ministry of my church?"

Answers to this and other questions were implemented by three seven-hour courses and, for late-comers, four four-hour seminars, focusing on everything from Christian love to creative worship to the personhood of Christ. Rounding out

seminary education, Mr. Matheny, a member of the Judicial Council and an active layman, Mr. Matheny refuted claims concerning the declining influence of the church and lay opposition to ecumenism. He defended the church's vocalizing on contemporary affairs.

"Contrary to popular belief," he said, "people want and expect the church to speak out on issues of the day . . . to be engaged in debate and dialogue. The pronouncements of the church in recent years — on war, on Vietnam, on peace, the draft, civil disobedience — have served the cause of intellectual, moral discussion and are portents of strength in the church."

Emphasizing the growing stature of the layperson, Mr. Matheny called on church leaders to enable laity to assume a larger role in the church:

"They (laypersons) want the church to be important, and they want to be important to the church. They want greater opportunities to learn such as are provided by this Laity Week."

"The church," he concluded, "must recognize its obligation of witness to the faith, its obligation to the people of the church to assist them in their desire for more knowledge, which must include, in the United Methodist Church, a greater effort to study our heritage, our history and our condition, in order that the church can remain alive in the hearts and minds of the people."