RECENT DEATHS

Death came to Bishop Hoyt McWhorter Dobbs in Shreveport, La., Dec. 9 (see Newsbeat, Dec. 22). He was 76.

In 1940 Bishop Dobbs was granted a sick leave. He was officially retired at the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference in 1944.

Bishop Dobbs received the B.D. degree from Vanderbilt university, Nashville, Tenn., and the D.D. degree from both the former Southern university, Greensboro, Ala., and Emory university, Atlanta Ga. Prior to his election as bishop in 1922, he served pastorates in his native state of Alabama, Kansas City, Mo., and Fort Worth, Tex.

He was known as a forceful preacher and "a Southern gentleman of the old school" because of his courteous manner.

As a bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Bishop Dobbs presided over mission fields in South America and Conferences in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana and Arkansas. He is survived by two children, a daughter and son. His wife died in 1931.

HOYT MCWHORTER DOBBS was also the son of a preacher, the distinguished Samuel L. Dobbs. Hoyt's birthplace was Antioch, Alabama, and his date of birth was November 16, 1878. He died from tuberculosis in 1955. He became an alumnus of the college in 1899 and received his honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in 1922. He was granted membership in Phi Beta Kappa and Omicron Delta Kappa, honorary societies at the college. Before being elected bishop at the General Conference in 1922, he had served churches in the North Alabama Conference which he had joined in 1904, in Kansas City, Missouri and in Fort Worth, Texas and for several years was dean of the Theological School of Southern Methodist University. His son, Hoyt, Jr., and daughter, Margaret, also attended his alma mater.

I recall two outstanding incidents indicative of our close friendship. Upon his election to the episcopacy he was assigned to supervise our mission churches in South America, in which area he became so impressed with a struggling youngster in Brazil by the name of Oscar Machado that he offered to pay his tuition fees if I would assign him campus work that would cover his room and board. When I met the lad at the Louisville and Nashville R.R. Station in Birmingham he gave me a blank look when I spoke to him in English, but he grinned broadly and answered promptly when I began with French, the language which is second to Portuguese in his native country. The other incident was the bishop's appointment of me to represent the two Alabama Conferences on the Joint Methodist Hymnal Commission that issued the "new" hymnal which first appeared in 1933 and is now being pushed aside by the newer hymnal which has appeared a generation later.

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Church Construction

"Methodism is in the midst of the greatest building movement in its history," according to Rev. Earl R. Brown, executive secretary of the Division of National Missions. Over $7,000,000 have been raised for new churches and church improvements in the past two years.

Although reports are not conclusive, Dr. Brown predicts that the years 1952-56 will witness more new church buildings than any other period in history.

This is only one phase of the general construction boom going on in churches throughout the United States. The Departments of Labor and Commerce report a new record set in October, with work started on an estimated $80,000,000 worth of buildings.

It brought to $472,000,000 the value of new construction undertaken by churches in the first 10 months of this year—which is 21 per cent above last year's figure. Government officials were very much surprised at the October figure, since construction normally declines in the fall because of inclement weather.

If present trends hold up, a new record will also be set in 1953. The departments report $475,000,000 worth of new construction work by churches this year, compared with $300 million in 1952. This is not due to any increase in the number of churches, but rather to an increase in the amount of work done per church. The new churches have been larger and more elaborate than those built in 1952.

In the light of this boom in church construction, it is interesting to note that the New Testament does not specifically forbid building, but does emphasize the importance of the spiritual over the material. The apostles were not content to build temples for their religion, but sought to build up the body of Christ through the preaching of the gospel. This principle has been followed by Methodism throughout its history, and is evident in the present building movement.

The construction of new churches is not only a sign of the growth of Methodism, but also a symbol of the vitality of the church. It is a reminder that the church is not only a building, but a living organism, growing and changing with the needs of its members. The construction of new churches is therefore not only a physical activity, but a spiritual one, a manifestation of the vitality of the church and its commitment to the mission of Christ.