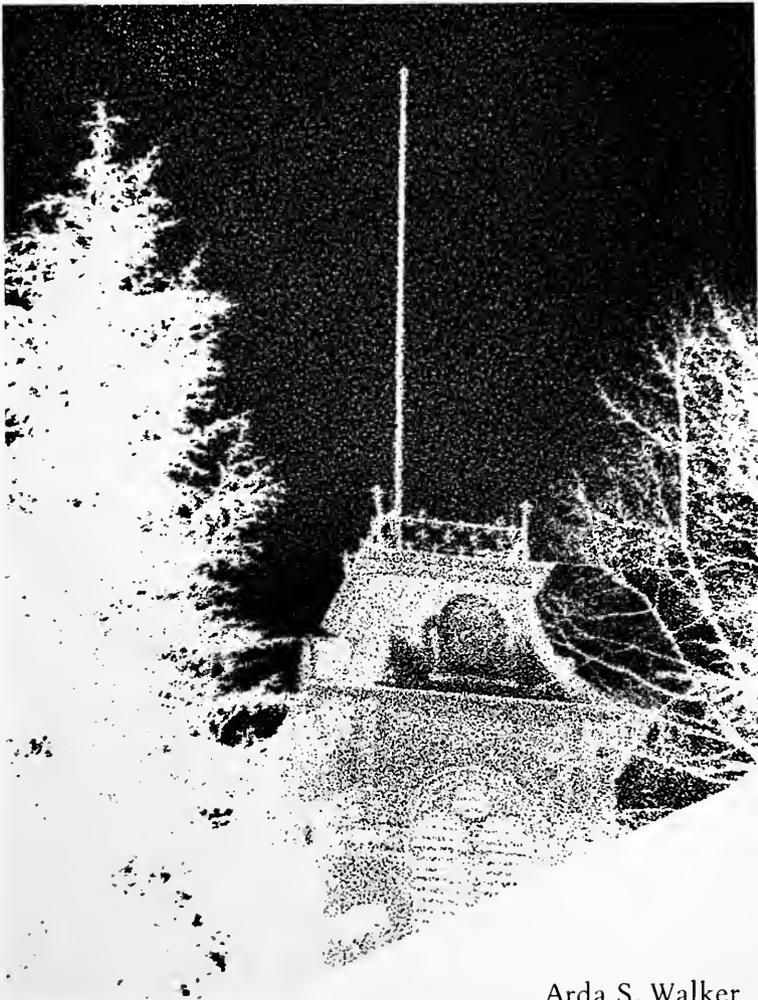


FROM AN "INGATHERING OF SOULS"

to

"WHO SPEAKS FOR MAN?"

A Century of February Meetings



Arda S. Walker

Acknowledgement:

This history was prepared at the invitation of the 1976 February Meetings committee, co-coordinators David P. Young (Faculty Coordinator for Religious Life Activities) and Barbara Kerr (senior biology major). Additional encouragement and help was gratefully received from Elizabeth H. Jackson (Professor and Chairman of the Department of English, 1935 - 1975) and Virginia Turrentine (library staff).

One Hundred Years of Meetings

So profound is the influence of the February Meetings on the moral and religious welfare of the College that it would be very hazardous indeed to intermit the series even for one year.

The Annual meetings are as much a part of the annual program as are the holidays; and the authorities of the institution would be as apt to give up Commencement Week as to surrender the College Meetings as they are called.

As these earnest pronouncements by President and Faculty of Maryville College in the early 1900's affirm, February Meetings have long been central in the College calendar and life. Thousands of students have in these meetings for the first time professed Christ. One record during 1926, the fiftieth year, cited 2600 known converts by that time. Many other students, as led by the spirit of these meetings, have entered upon mission work in what was once called Maryville's "Foreign Legion," more yet into full-time Christian work. These numbers may be multiplied manifold to represent the students who here renewed their decisions to improve their personal lives, decisions sometimes earnestly pursued, sometimes undoubtedly soon forgotten.

Numerous faculty, administrators, and alumni who have provided the core of leadership for the College first became Christians under the inspiration of Meeting leaders. Dr. Samuel Tyndale Wilson, fifth president of the College, was a new convert in the first series of Meetings as were his wife and Miss Margaret Henry, missionary to Japan, teacher, and first supervisor of student aid. The sixth president was likewise converted in one series of Meetings and later led two other series. The seventh president was the leader of two series prior to his presidency. Perhaps not all these products of the religious emphasis services would be as fervent as was Dr. Wilson in tying their work for Maryville College to this early experience. Wilson, writing in 1917 while on a campaign for the College, declared: "Forty years ago this February all the purposes and principles of my personal life were transformed. I am now in New York working for Maryville College *solely* because of a decision that I made in room 24 of Memorial Hall, late at night on February 12, 1877." Historically, while Memorial Hall has

disappeared, the centrality of the “February Meetings” to the life of the College cannot be denied.

“In the Beginning”

In 1877, when the first series of collegiate revivals opened, “the footprints of the rebellion,” as a then member of the student body reminisced, “were still visible.” Only a decade had passed since Professor Lamar, after earnest endeavors, had succeeded in reopening the College on a new campus, buildings of the old having been destroyed by the Civil War. General Sherman at one time occupied the campus. One early reporter indicates that it was to General Burnside, then encamped on the campus, that General Sherman sent a note, “Hold the Fort, I’m Coming,” a phrase that was taken over into evangelistic hymnology and traveled the English-speaking world. It was only little more than a decade since Lt. General Weaver of the Confederate Army had arranged his artillery on the ridge just back of the future site of Baldwin Hall and by throwing a few heavy shot over the courthouse dislodged a small Union force and persuaded them to surrender. Anderson Hall was scarcely seven years past the laying of its cornerstone, and, as Dr. Wilson recalled, students could then jump over the cedars in the central campus while much of the surrounding area was heavily forested.

Information on the genesis of the Meetings is tenuous and sometimes inconsistent, resting primarily upon the memories of participants at a later date—memories which, dimmed by time, were occasionally contradictory. Foundations antedate the Civil War, when Dr. Anderson held meetings in town at New Providence Church. After the Civil War, the college was too small to support an independent “revival,” and united with local churches. On the first of February, 1877, in the old chapel on the second floor of Anderson, Dr. Nathan Bachman,¹ “father” of the Meetings, held

¹An article dated February 18, 1939, in the *Highland Echo*, asserts that Dr. Elmore was the first to conduct these meetings. Since Elmore as a student in 1869 worked on Anderson Hall and graduated only in 1875, this statement is undoubtedly in error.

the first series. Writing in the early years of the twentieth century, Dr. Wilson said, "Other series of meetings were held afterward during the next 7 years; but, from 1886 to the present, they were held every year." A later recollection of Dr. Wilson indeed did indicate annual meetings from 1877. In 1926, an *Echo* account explained a seeming discrepancy by stating, "Due to the fact there were two series of meetings in 1877, this [1926] makes the fiftieth series of the meetings."

In early years, closely connected with the success of the "College Meetings," as they were then called, were other religious organizations, especially the YMCA and YWCA. This relationship was not incidental. On March 3, 1877, just after the series of meetings held by Dr. Bachman, three students met in Samuel Tyndale Wilson's room in Memorial Hall and formed the first College-based YMCA in the United States. Dr. Wilson later reported they had been "led to it by the conversions incident to a very successful series of revival meetings that had just preceded." "The aggressive Christian work of a year," they decided, "cannot be done in ten days' revival. Revivals are good. Constant and aggressive Christian work is better. Both together are best." This sentiment was to prevail for most of the hundred-year period that followed.

Any adequate historical study must take into account the changes in social and intellectual climate as an institution passes through time. The Maryville of 1877 was significantly different from Maryville in 1900 and 1975. The town of Maryville's Main Street was clay and had been graded only to College Street. Not until six years after the "Meetings" began was the city linked to Knoxville by telephone. An electric light plant was not installed until 1901. The College ad in the *Maryville Independent* in 1876 reads as follows:

MARYVILLE COLLEGE

Will open the second half of the Term

Monday, January third, 1876.

Tuition \$10 for the half term. Incidentals \$1.

Good Board \$2 per week.

BOTH SEXES ADMITTED

The most complete Chemical and Philosophical

Apparatus ever brought into East Tennessee.

A NORMAL DEPARTMENT

has been organized by Prof. S. Z. Sharp, a competent instructor.

Maryville College is prepared to give a more thorough education than can be obtained elsewhere in this section of the country. For Catalogues or information address Rev. P. M. Bartlett, President.

“Good Board” may have been an overstatement. Dr. Calvin Duncan, recalling in 1894 his days in the early seventies, spoke of “poorly ventilated kitchens and poorly prepared food.” These kitchens were for the benefit of students who preferred to board themselves. Fuel, light, and washing was \$10 per year; room rent, \$2.50.

The student body was significantly different. Total enrollment in all departments—Primary, Preparatory and College—was 130 in the late seventies. In 1882 the College department was comprised of only 32 students, of which five young men graduated. The following year, of 22, only three graduated, this time all young women. Some of these students were mere children. In 1895 the Board of Directors found it advisable to abolish the Primary department and to limit the entering age to 15. While the student body climbed to around 1000 in 1920, the majority of these were in the Preparatory School, which was disbanded in 1926 because of the establishment of high schools in the area. In addition to the Bachelor of Arts, a Degree of Bachelor of Letters for Young Ladies (1885) and a Master of Arts for Alumni with successful graduate careers were offered.

Faculty were different—called upon to be far more versatile than present-day teachers and to be more widely prepared. For instance, in the 1890’s the Board appointed Professor Goff to the Chair of Elocution and Modern Languages. His duties were to

care for the rhetorical work of such classes as are not required to study in the Preparatory building and that of the Freshman class of the English-scientific course, if the faculty so decide; also to teach 2 years each of French and German; to teach the history of English Literature and French’s study of words in the English Department; to have charge of the Christmas entertainments and of the Adelpic Union public exercises; to assist in the Library.

The Board added, “We require Professor Goff to attend summer school to prepare for his chair in this vocation.”

While facilities, faculty, and students in the beginning years were somewhat different, problems and some people sound strikingly

familiar a hundred years later. Deficits were an annual event. The synod in October 27, 1877, reported "some embarrassment in paying salaries to Professors." In 1900 the Board sought to decrease the deficit by abolishing the positions of registrar and librarian. The energy crisis was imminent. By 1899 the student-provided wood, carried up two flights of stairs to a wood-burning stove in each room, had been replaced by a boiler house. This technological advancement was responsible that year for the delay of a week in the opening of school for the second term because the boiler exploded, just as the technology of gas energy was responsible seventy-five years later for a similar delay. The following year, the President boasted of a coal pile of 450 tons which "makes us independent of coal strikes or car famines this Fall" and removes the possibility of postponement of the opening of College.

Student interests may be gleaned from the topics they chose for debate or for commencement addresses, each student then being required to make such a valedictory address. In 1900 students debated "that the gathering of Americans in cities threatens the perpetuity of the government." Commencement speeches included "Problem of Crime"; "Conservation of Energy"; "Earth's Adaptation to Man"; "Women in Literature"; and the not-so-familiar topic of "Ultramundane Math." Topics for outlining in Professor Wilson's class included "Defects of our jury system" and "Mrs. Nation's Saloon-Smashing." Other student concerns were to be found in the well-digging then in process, the location for which was designated by a water-witch, a procedure protested by the students. The students also protested tearing up the lawn for water pipes, a complaint whose ghost materialized recently with student objections on an ecological basis to introducing a new sewerage system to the campus. Women in sports were very much in the news at the turn of the century, as the girls' basketball team annually played and even frequently defeated U.T. In 1913, the Maryville College baseball team supported by the entire student body, who took a special train to Knoxville, met the New York Giants in an exhibition game, and the following year they were defeated by the Brooklyn Nationals by only 11 to 0! It is against this background of similarities and differences that progressive changes in the "College Meetings" must be examined.

“With Purpose of Heart”

To read the record of one hundred years of February Meetings without being constantly aware of the purposes held by those responsible for these events would do violence to the principle of historical-mindedness and to truth. A more “modern” or perhaps self-styled “more sophisticated” age must not impose its own standards of propriety or assume that its own ways of getting things done are the measuring rod for a past generation. It also behooves those nurtured in an earlier “idyllic” age not to judge too harshly and anachronistically on the basis of their selected memories the techniques of today for fulfilling current purposes. The one thing that may be tested on a continuous basis is the objective or spirit behind evolving methods. To arrive at such a “spirit” is difficult. Much depends upon remaining fragmentary written records or the absence of such records. Much depends upon who the reporter was.

How does one “read” the spirit? Does he examine the formulated statements of those responsible for inaugurating and carrying out the Meetings? Does he rely upon the expressed responses of the few student voices that managed to see their views in print? Does he try to assess the mood that shines through action and read between the lines? All of these techniques taken together will help those interested to understand the invisible spirit and to trace the evolution of the “College Meetings.” For the present, we will direct ourselves to the stated purposes of the leaders and the spirit which permeated them. Later we will present the manner and techniques of holding the Meetings. An attempt will then be made to assess the student response and the spirit focused in the successive generations.

With a measure of regularity from the early years, those responsible for planning the Meetings published synoptic statements of the aims of the annual series. Frequent at first, the numbers and precision of these statements have tended to fade out in more recent times, perhaps because responsibility for the planning shifted from the executive faculty to committees composed of students and faculty representing a wider spectrum of College life. Perhaps it was because, in more recent years, the purpose was assumed to be firmly established, or perhaps again because there was a less systematic approach on the part of the planning committees. When

the patent statements are examined over the hundred-year period, one notices a subtle shift in their temper, or maybe a broadening out and lessening of the preciseness of purpose. This may best be seen through characteristic statements in three different time periods: the early years, including the administration of President Wilson, in which statements have a remarkable consistency; the administration of Dr. Lloyd; and the administration of Dr. Copeland.

In 1895 one leader stated that the "aim is not only the conversion of every boy and girl in College but also that every student be a member and an active member of the YMCA and YWCA." Later statements in the 1920's expressed it thus:

to turn our thoughts from the commonplace and awaken within us an interest in the higher things of life

The time-honored purpose of the college in these meetings is to build up in every student a genuine Christian character, to inspire him to usefulness in life, and to prepare him for immortal life beyond.

During the middle period of the century the basic statement of purpose, in the terse words of President Lloyd, was "Christian Faith, Christian Life, Christian Service." Already toward the end of the Lloyd administration, in 1951 and again in 1954, this purpose was put in more general and less precise terminology: "to devote a portion of the College year to concentrated spiritual emphasis." Early in his administration President Copeland designated the period as that set aside "to focus our time and energies upon the essential opportunity and responsibilities of the Christian Faith." By 1970 the definition of purpose as published in the *Highland Echo* carried a negative as well as a positive expression: "The purpose of the meetings is not to convert everyone to a particular position or to demand that all of us be Christians. The purpose is to confront the College community with ideas and new perspectives on the Christian's relation to his nation and his church." The careful observer reading these statements will note a metamorphosis from the objective of personal conversion to confrontation with ideas and perspectives on Christianity in relationship to the secular and a shift from "the hereafter to the here." No longer was the "demand that all of us be Christian." On the surface it would appear that more attention was being given to the intel-

lectual understanding of the Christian faith and less to the emotional act of becoming a “professing Christian.” This change had not come suddenly but had slowly evolved and reflected not only changing religious climates in the national community but gradual changes in the nature of the student body and its professors. One cannot, however, state that in the earlier period the whole purpose was toward a change of the inner being and faith, and in the later period the whole emphasis was action. Both ingredients have been present throughout the time, but the proportions of each have gradually been reversed. Some probable reasons for this shift will be returned to later.

Behind these manifest statements of objectives lies an essence that can only be distilled from non-explicit evidence. There is a spirit that permeates the endeavors of those responsible for the “Meetings,” “revivals,” “Pentecostal experiences,” “Spiritual Ingathering,” “spiritual emphasis,” or “February Meetings and January Meetings”—the various names by which the College Meetings have been known. The very terminology speaks of a spirit which was changing. To arrive at this “essence,” the statement of hopes for the meetings and, more important yet, the successive statements of “what the meetings were not” are helpful.

E. A. Elmore in 1904 declared the motto of Maryville College to be “as always, ‘Education for Evangelization.’ ” Early leaders were quite open in the use of this term. The President most active in the spirit of evangelism was Dr. Wilson, who had personal concern for and guided the spiritual progress of each and every student throughout his college life. A leader of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in 1914 stated to a national meeting that he knew of only one College president (Dr. Wilson) who personally led the students to direct and definite acceptance of Christ. Early in the century in a New York speech entitled “Planning for an Ingathering” President Wilson revealed the spirit of the planners when he cited necessary ingredients for a successful program—first the selection of Christian men for the work, men who honor religion and God above all things and who enforce careful discipline; for, as he noted, “when the decisions of the College authorities are patient and impartial, just, and fair, unmistakable and inflexible, they teach in a very real way the dignity and sovereignty of the law of God and they clear the way to the logical submission to the law.” And second he demanded a steady on-going program.

Observations on the Meetings by professors throw light on faculty spirit during these early years. Thus, in 1906, in the *Assembly Herald*, Dr. Clinton Gillingham was careful to note, "These meetings are neither hysterical nor spasmodic attempts to sweep young people off their feet." For the Meetings, he added, "There is always a four-fold preparation: devout, continuous, systematic and cumulative." In the next decade an article by another professor in the *United Presbyterian* revealed that "the most delightful part of the meetings as far as the workers were concerned was to see earnest Christians going after their classmates, roommates, and friends with all the *rational* [italics inserted] enthusiasm of saved young men and women with little emotionalism but with the direct appeals to our religion." The writer followed this avowal of rational low-key enthusiasm with a concrete example of "one of the strongest men" in the freshman class who had resisted the "direct appeals" throughout the night. The next morning the student rose and addressed the President in chapel: "Dr. Wilson, I may not be a Christian but by the help of God, I'm going to be." Within the hour, he turned to plead with other non-Christian classmates. In 1926 came another disavowal of excess emotionalism from the faculty: "It is not the policy of the College to excite anyone in these meetings but simply to get each one to face his or her duty to God." This faculty opinion was affirmed by a student editorial in the *Highland Echo*:

It has been the experience of those students who have attended the February meetings in the past, that no wave of exciting, nerve storm is found in any service. One simple but sincere purpose seems to run through all the services—to show the sanity of living the Christ Life The meetings are not of the ultra emotional type that is so common in many revivals No attempt is made to play upon the emotions [the emphasis being] that faith has its foundation in fact.

Whatever the actualization of the program—a thing which readers will adjudge later—its leaders felt and students confirmed that there was rational restraint and reasoned presentation in the early years.

Such was apparently not always viewed as the case in other contemporary Presbyterian college religious programs. In 1906, the President of Park College having read an article on College Evangelism written by Dr. Wilson inquired, "Is there a valley following the meetings in which the devil gets possession of the students

[as at Park College] . . .? I have almost come to the conclusion that the special meetings for students, if of intensely exciting revivalistic character, are a disadvantage. At any event," he added, "we have discontinued them during the past three or four years. I do not see but that our spiritual life is better without them than it was with them." We do not have Dr. Wilson's response to this inquiry, but one who knew him can hear in the mind's ear firm, fervent words of negative reply.

Faculty not only were expected to support the Meetings but did so enthusiastically in this early period. One professor noted in 1936 that he had missed only one service in thirty-seven years, and that was the night his eldest child was born. Faculty actively engaged in soliciting the non-Christians, serving as guides and elder brothers. One retired faculty member recalls a certain unconfirmed young man in his class whom he had finally decided to approach. While he was searching his mind for an entry, almost miraculously, the young man, who had hitherto been reluctant to become Christian, left his cap in the classroom when the bell rang. When he returned for the cap, the professor engaged him in earnest conversation. This meeting resulted in a healthy conversion and a very active Christian life. This type of story could be repeated over and over.

In the major portion of the Lloyd presidency, assessments of the spirit of the Meetings remained the same as earlier. One observer expressed it this way: "The very fact that everything is explained in such a natural way with deep sincerity and devotion touches the practical nature of the students." For the first fifty years the term "revival" was unabashedly used. As late as 1931 a writer in the *Echo* declared, "We like the word 'revival.'" By the 1950's this word had taken on new connotations. The theme for the Meetings in 1949 was "New Spirit, not old-fashioned Revival." The implication here was that there was a change in spirit. As the reader must agree, on the basis of contemporary assessments in the earlier period, the participants would not have admitted such a change. In 1957, the February Meetings leader, in a four-page *post-mortem* review of the campus religious climate, noted among other criticisms: "The strong tone of pietism that is the more vocal and obvious form of commitment of a certain type of student with the implication that those lacking this terminology and pattern of expression are somehow not quite Christian." From this point on

there was an ever-increasing tendency to derogate the term “re-
vival,” and a shift in spirit occurred, as will be seen when student
response to the Meetings is discussed.

The objective observer at a distance in time would conclude that
in actualization the Meetings fell far short of the stated purposes
and sometimes even seemed to be permeated by a spirit expressly
denied by their leaders. In fact, one alumnus close to the College
for a half century, expresses the conviction that even Dr. Wilson
was much embarrassed by the extreme turn of events taken in some
of the Meetings. Comments penned on the carefully recorded notes
of Dr. Lloyd through the years evidence occasional concern with
the levity or the direction some of the Meetings took. The writer
of this article, who recalls series over the past half century, also
remembers occasional cases of vocal faculty objections to the tone.
The reader can best judge for himself how much of a reality the
spirit sought by the authorities responsible for the Meetings be-
came as we turn now to a reconstruction from the documents of
the past of procedures and programs followed.

“A Man’s Heart Deviseth his Way”

In 1876, students arriving at Maryville College came by means
of horse or railroad, or on foot. In 1976, none of these means of
transportation is used. It is not, then, strange that the vehicle for
delivering the religious spirit has changed over the past hundred
years.

Except for rare Meetings in January, the series has always been
in February. Every day of the week has been used, and every day
except Saturday has been the beginning day. Over this span of
time, Meetings have lasted from four to sixteen days. For a few
recent years, they have centered on four weekends, Friday to Sun-
day. In the early years, twenty-four hours were sometimes spent
in the “Inquiry Rooms.” More recently, twenty-four hours have
sometimes been used for uninterrupted prayer or fasting or all-
night “happenings.” Because of the season, more often than not
the weather has been wretched—“stinky” as a leader in 1949 de-
scribed it. One year ice and snow prevailed the entire time and
temperatures hit subzero, making it especially arduous for stu-
dents, since evening sessions that year were in town. During the
1897 meetings, a storm destroyed the electricity, but oil lamps

were hastily procured and the service continued with little disturbance.

For the first thirty years, services were held in the old chapel in Anderson, moving in the evenings to New Providence Church. Dr. Boardman in the *Delineator* described how, after the faculty and more advanced students had taken their seats, “from one to two hundred preparatory students marched in, two abreast, from the south entry and passed before the platform to their places. Most were 15 to 20 years old, and the majority [were] professed Christians.” This was usually done as the hymn “Onward Christian Soldiers” was being sung. But even if it was not, Dr. Boardman noted, “I have never seen the youthful, hurrying throng, pressing forward to prepare for the future work of the church and the world, without feeling in my own heart the thrill and impulse of the words.” For thirty-six years afterwards, the Meetings were held in Voorhees Chapel. Upon its destruction by fire, morning sessions took place in the alumni gymnasium, evening ones in New Providence, the First Christian and First Methodist Churches and in the Maryville High School auditorium. Since 1954, both services have been held in the Samuel Tyndale Wilson Chapel.²

As a device for handling massive materials extending over a century, let us again focus on four periods: 1877-1900; 1901-1929; 1930-1960; 1961-1975. These dates, except the first, correspond with the presidential terms of office. Occasionally, because of the nature of the topic there will be some overstepping of these borders, but where such is the case, a date will be designated.

Early College Meetings must be seen in the context of many other community “revival” meetings and meetings in other colleges. Local churches in the 1870’s held Fall and Spring Meetings. A meeting in progress in 1899 at New Providence Church adjourned because the College Meetings began that night. The *Maryville Times*, January 12, 1912, reported unusually successful evangelistic meetings of the united churches in town, in which sixty-two businesses signed agreements to close for afternoon sessions

²The first service of the 1896 series was held in Baldwin dining room. This may have been an earlier practice, but conclusive information is lacking.

at 2:30 p.m. Some 750 conversions took place during this and the College series which followed. The tabulations made later indicated 474 conversions in the city meetings which college students were discouraged from attending because of limited space, 96 conversions in the College meetings, 51 conversions in "Colored People's Meetings" and 125 re-conversions. Because space was inadequate 500 people the following year were turned away in a similar city revival. The 1912 union meeting was followed up with a one-day "Echo meeting," its program consisting of secret prayer in the home, evangelistic services in the churches, church services, and a union prayer and praise service at 6:30 in the evening and a "Soul-Winning" service at the Presbyterian Church at 7:00. Even after all this effort, the *Times* reported, "Still 1400 people in and around Maryville are lost."

Other colleges likewise were in those days deeply engaged in meetings of this sort, and, by correspondence, colleges encouraged each other. In 1914 this communiqué was received by the students of Maryville College: "We men of Lafayette College are praying such a blessing for you as came to us last week 200 men making decisions and pledging \$1200 for the work: College life more wholesome than for forty years." When this telegram was read, the six hundred Maryville students rose and gave fifteen rahs for Lafayette. Thus it was in a total atmosphere of nation-wide emotional evangelism that the College Meetings occurred in those early years.

The College Meetings were only one point in a year-long endeavor and total involvement on the part of students and teachers. Planning for the next series began even as the follow-up for the last series was taking place. In 1894, a student noted, "One of the first questions asked a new student is, 'Is he or she a Christian?' There is a sense of responsibility for each other—no hot house pressures or forcing of Christian life, but an atmosphere that encourages Christian Life." When September came, the Faculty met in the music room of the President's home "to forecast in the sacred light of the Sabbath the sacred duties of the coming year and to engage in limited prayer for especial blessing." Every New Year's morning from 1879 to the turn of the century, at least, the College held sunrise prayer meetings dedicating the year to God. Prayer circles were formed early in the year. Student leaders and professors were apprised of those who were non-Christian, and

many of these were converted prior to the opening of the Meetings. Tuesday evening prayer meetings “with the spirit of revival in them” and Bible classes in mid-week in Baldwin Hall were held throughout the year. On Saturdays a missionary meeting was held monthly in the College chapel, and on Sundays at least during 1894 and 1895 a mission band met in the local jail. Very active throughout these years and until its demise in the 1960’s were the YMCA generated by the first series in 1877 and its sister organization created in 1884. Indeed, a large measure of the success of the College Meetings must be attributed to these organizations. Once the climax of the spiritual year was passed in February, both faculty and student groups met to review the Meetings and to encourage and instruct newly confirmed Christians. One might not be far from accurate if he said that, in those days, the College did not come fully into focus for a student until the Meetings arrived.

With this spirit abroad, then, it is not surprising that careful tabulations were kept of Christians and non-Christians. While more will be said of this practice during the discussion of the meetings in the Wilson presidency, we might cite some early figures where available.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Converts to Christianity</i>
1884	35
1892	84
1893	59
1894	82
1895	36
1896	60
1897	41
1898	33
1900	42

These figures are striking when one notes that a large majority of the students were already Christian when they arrived, many of them planning for the ministry. Thus, for example, prior to the opening of the series in which 35 conversions occurred in 1901, of 350 students 15 years and older, 250 of them were professing Christians. Fifteen were candidates for the ministry, and 100 were in the Y’s. The leader of the meetings in 1899 declared, “Skepticism of any kind is unknown among the instructors and scarcely exists among the students.”

To suggest the ways in which the meetings were conducted in

this early period, we turn in some detail to the 1899 series. On Sunday evening, after the first sermons had been directed to professing Christians, "one of the best confessional meetings ever" was held in which more than 100 Christians made earnest confessions. Christians spoke with brevity and simplicity, lamenting their lack of fidelity in religious duties. The final meeting of this series led by Dr. Solomon Dickie was divided into three parts. First, the speaker presented the request by Elisha to Elijah: "I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." He called on those over sixty to say a few words to younger Christians. Ex-President Bartlett, Elder Gillespie (graduate of 1849) and President Boardman responded. There followed brief remarks from a large number of students stating their religious desires. A second service then followed, men and women being separated by folding doors. The leader spoke to the men while an 1894 alumna conducted the women's meeting. In a third session all came together again. The leader asked every Christian to stand. Four or five hundred were reported as present at this meeting.

Every evening after the first three, sessions were held in the Inquiry Room, where earnest students would bring their non-Christian companions and entreat them to become Christians. The Inquiry Room will be discussed more at length when the Wilson era is examined.

On the final day of the 1899 Meetings, February 23, a large number of students accompanied Dr. Dickie to the railroad depot, where he made a "touching farewell address" entitled "Christ Being on the Seashore in the Morning." The students then sang "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" and, as the train bore the leader away, went back to celebrate with an old-fashioned steeple chase "Little Georgie's birthday"—late since observation of it had been postponed because the Meetings were in session. It was customary then, as for many years later, not to permit anything to interfere with the annual Meetings. Even final examinations were postponed a week on one occasion.

The dominant factor in the Wilson administration was the President himself. Nurtured in these services from his youth in 1877, he was the key both to the methods used and the success achieved. Dr. Wilson called the Meetings "Ingatherings of Souls." In 1907 he explained his approach as being perennial, annual and immediate. Each of these steps in planning will emerge as his methods are

delineated below.

At registration students were asked to indicate whether they were Christians. The President then set up interviews with all non-Christians and began his campaign. Rolls listing non-Christian students were given to teachers and leaders of the two "Y's". Dr. Wilson emphasized that the fundamental force of success lay in the teaching staff. Only strong Christians were chosen for the faculty. Among the new students each year, an observer in 1914 indicated, there were usually some 100 who were not professing Christians. By this time, enrollments were growing to peak at about 1000 in 1920. At the end of the Meetings, repeatedly, the leaders could announce that all or almost all students in the College department were Christians. For example, during the second decade of the twentieth century, for four straight years all students in the College department ended their collegiate days professing Christians.

Faculty were expected to engage in prayer and to exhort young people throughout the year. For a while the "elder brother" plan was employed whereby each non-Christian was assigned a faculty member whose duty was to nudge him, if possible, into Christianity. There are extant in the College records long lists of students, their Christian status, and their "elder brothers" among the faculty. Faculty also assisted in the "Inquiry Room." This institution, according to Davidson's *History of the Presbyterian Church in Kentucky* as cited by Dr. Wilson, was the heir to the "Anxious Seat" which Maryville College's first president, Dr. Isaac Anderson, had been the first to establish. It later became popular throughout the United States. Opened the third night of the series, the Inquiry Room was enlivened by Christian friends from the College and from town who would engage non-Christian students "lovingly and faithfully in an attempt to lead them to the Saviour." During one period, townswomen made this task an annual practice, but faculty also participated. Four keynote prayer meetings were held each year—two by faculty and two by the "Y's." These emphasized preparation for the Meetings, and Dr. Wilson's invitation to faculty enjoined them not to "allow anything unless it is providential to keep you from the meeting." Some years, for a month prior to the Meetings, a prayer series was established by the Faculty to run concurrent with student prayer circles which had been operating since the fall term or in some instances since the previous February. Commenting in 1906 upon the success in one dormitory, the pro-

fessor in charge said, "Well, the reason is not hard to find; the Christian boys formed their own prayer circles at the beginning of the Fall term and then tried to live up to their program.

When the Meetings arrived, faculty were assigned to a large number of supporting committees. In 1925 the roster of committees included Order indoors, Order outdoors, Attendance, Publicity, Health, Ventilation, Disinfection, Heating and flag raising, Arrangement for interviews, Cooperation with the speaker, Reception, Music, and Prayer meetings. Dr. Wilson pointed out that even the lowly usher was very important to the success of the endeavor. Ushers were used to intersperse Christian with non-Christian in such a way that the latter would feel isolated from like-minded associates. This made the pressure of the appeal at the climax of a meeting far more effective. In Dr. Wilson's own words, the rationale for this seating arrangement was "to take away support that numbers might give to any opposition and to make it easier for Christians to get access to their unconverted friends during and after the meetings." Young men and young women were seated on opposite sides of the Chapel. Dr. Wilson revealed that it was Kim Takahashi, the active Japanese student of the 1890's responsible for building Bartlett Hall, who suggested this psychology and rationale. Ushers were therefore carefully chosen. Even the janitor in providing "God's pure air" had an important role.

The college pastor after 1917 likewise played a major part in preparations for the meetings. Dr. William P. Stevenson held student interviews and contributed to the gatherings being held in the dormitories each weekday for a month prior to the Meetings. His Thursday morning talks and Sunday vespers for some time before were preparatory to the Meetings.

Once the Meetings were in progress, all other events on the campus were terminated for the duration. In the words of Dr. Wilson, "The line is kept absolutely clear for the Gospel train." Occasionally, since the Meetings came at the time of the term examinations, these were postponed.³ The *Echo* was suspended, as

³There were three terms from 1902 to 1921.

were all athletic events. An *Echo* headline in February 1928 reads "February Meetings give Athletes two Week Vacation from the Court." The ensuing article pointed out that the basketball teams that year had not lost a single conference game vs. such noteworthy opponents as the Universities of Tennessee and Kentucky.

The Meetings always built toward a climax on the last day. Attendance was good. In 1920 required morning attendance, near 1000, was almost equalled by voluntary night attendance, running between 700 and 1000. Each year large attendance was noted though perhaps not as high as in that centennial year.

To suggest the nature of the final evening sessions two accounts will be given, the first in 1916, and the second, in the rather unusual year of 1920. In 1916, Dr. William Thaw Bartlett was the leader. Son of a former president, P. Mason Bartlett, he was closely related to the Thaw family, major benefactors of the College. A graduate of the College himself, he was an appealing figure to the students. He had been a professional baseball player of some importance in the South and had a powerful way about him. On the last full day of the Meeting, according to an account by one of the faculty, Bartlett

made a strong plea for reconciliation on the part of any who, though professing Christians, were stumbling blocks in the way of others by reason of their inconsistencies. . . . Students were apparently dazed at the tremendous import of the appeal, but in moments, first one, then by twos and threes they rose, until scores were on their feet in earnest committal of their lives.

By the night meeting every student in the College department except one had made an open confession including some who had resisted the Spirit during their entire years in college. Friday morning the President dismissed the students for the day. "Just at that moment the last college man arose in his seat and speaking brokenly accepted the Savior." Students lingered on "seeking out and entreating unsaved friends" in the Preparatory department for the rest of the holiday and the next day. At the end of the last service, the Doxology was sung and was followed by "Howie How's for Jesus Christ." Those converted came forward and received pocket testaments. After singing "Blest Be the Tie" and "God Be With You Till We Meet Again" the student body followed the speaker to the station. As the train pulled out, Dr. Bartlett in

the caboose, the students sang "Since Jesus Came into My Heart" and the Doxology three times, as they gave the Chautauqua salute.

While in much the same spirit, 1920 was a somewhat atypical year. That year the authorities with the assistance of Homer Hammontree, gospel singer and graduate of the class of 1909, had secured the services of Mel Trotter, an evangelist of national reputation in a class with Billy Sunday of an earlier date. A traveling salesman, turned drunkard and converted while on his way to suicide in Lake Michigan, Trotter headed the Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago as well as a mission in Grand Rapids and had been instrumental in establishing some sixty-seven other missions. On the team with him were Hammontree and a quartet, "The American Four," along with a distinguished accompanist, "Little Dick Oliver." These had spent twenty months with Allied troops in Europe and claimed part in bringing about 15,000 decisions for Christ among soldiers. The *Highland Echo* was exuberant in its reports of the series. "At one moment the audience would be laughing and in an instant they would be all aglow with indignation and shame at the sins that drag men and women to the depths of hell." The terminus of these Meetings, as in the case of most of their predecessors, was a trip to the depot and the "Howie-how for Jesus," led this time by Homer Hammontree. This event will be explored further when we direct our attention to music.

Endings were always dramatic. In 1917 a reporter noted:

The ice began to break and one by one in quick succession young men and women arose to indicate decisions in response to the leader's appeals. One of the Seniors arose! It was easy now to appeal to others. They followed so quickly and so steadily that the President who had been through forty such campaigns buried his head in his hands and wept like a child.

Confessions were normal throughout the weeks of meeting. In the early years of the century they were written, usually in pencil, on "Big Five" notebook paper or its equivalent. They ranged from contrition for such peccadillos as anger or procrastination to that of a young lady who confessed "I enjoy the company of evil men and do not reject them." Collections of these are in the Wilson papers, often scrawled in childish handwriting. (It was not until 1916 that the 8th grade was dropped from the curriculum and not until 1926 that the Preparatory division was not a part of the College.) Later, at least as early as 1912, decision cards were distribu-

ted to the audience. The card in 1912 read simply: "Trusting in Jesus Christ for Salvation, I do now accept him as my personal savior." The 1916 card read:

Sign up as far as you will go.

Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?
Do you accept him for your personal savior?
Are you willing to give your life to him?
Will you join his Church?

With some variation these cards were in continuous use until the 1960's. Students occasionally asked for prayer in the Meetings as did a third-year student who wrote he had fallen from his Christian duty during the summer. Other students only after much resistance would succumb to the appeal of a worker. In Dr. Wilson's papers there is a note dated 2/21/21 from a young lady: "There's no use. I am sorry and appreciate your interest very much, but I see no chance for myself at present. Sincerely," Appended in Dr. Wilson's handwriting were the words, "Became Christian 2/23/21."

Most often, these exertions by the entire College community led to apparent success. An *Echo* headline in 1921 was not entirely one of a kind: "Forty-fourth Series of February Meetings Reaps Large Harvest: One of the Cleanest Sweeps in the History of the College: One Hundred and Eight Conversions, Three Hundred and Forty-nine Reconsecrations during Eleven Days."

Following the Meetings there was usually a holiday or in the early days a "Snap" sponsored by the Faculty. In 1912 the Faculty announced "Washington's Birthday will be moved forward only a few days. . .It will be a holiday." As in 1899, this National holiday had fallen in the midst of the Meetings. A carefully drawn petition by the students in 1916 was received after the Meetings asking for a holiday on February 29 "since it comes only once every four years and since we want a chance to enjoy snow sports and; whereas, we did not have a snap after the revival as we usually do."

After a snap and/or holiday, the College got down to the serious matter of following up the benefits reaped in February. Bible study groups would be held in women's dormitories. Students would repair to read newly distributed pocket testaments or religious tracts such as Torrey's "How to Succeed in the Christian

Life,” “First Words to Young Christians”, or “Self-Help and Thrift.” In 1912 a Pocket Testament League was formed by 350 men pledged “to carry the New Testament with them.” In 1920, every Tuesday evening was set aside for meetings for converts. A new institution was established to continue throughout the year in which every evening, as the lights-out flashed, each student was to go to a room designated in respective residence halls for a short prayer meeting.

Frequently other programs allied with it followed upon the heels of the February Meetings. For most of these years the Fred Hope Drive was associated with the Meetings. Founded by Fred Hope in 1901 as a result of Dr. Wilson’s talk on conditions of China, this drive collected rather remarkable sums. By 1905 the fund was supporting a student in China (for \$67.60) as well as a worker. By 1925 the students were collecting over \$1500 for this mission fund. After the 1912 meetings, according to Dr. Wilson’s Annual Report to the Board of Directors, “A timely and valuable series of addresses by Professor Shannon, a specialist in the teachings of Christian views as to eugenics and sexual life” was held.

In earlier years there were a number of problems not normally encountered in meetings of a later day. Leaders frequently missed trains or were delayed in their arrival by health and death in families, events which also sometimes forced them to terminate their services early. The student body likewise was not immune to epidemics. Rumors of smallpox frequently sent them scurrying home. In 1918 smallpox broke out. One student was cared for in the third story of Willard Hall, another removed to the College Woods pest house, where he was joined by a third. Compulsory vaccination rules had to be enforced, and the College lost some students by this requirement. In 1911, Dr. Elmore was one week late because of an outbreak of smallpox. On another occasion, a student interviewed by a professor during the Meetings and enjoined by him to “live a life of constant prayer,” was taken ill the next evening with cerebral meningitis. When his volunteer nurse and then a third student, were stricken, more than half the student body in panic went home. With a great deal of persuasion most of the refugees returned for the term examinations, but even then the College lost 53 students for the third term. In 1903 also, smallpox and mumps militated against the success of the Meetings. In 1919 over one third of the student body was stricken by the virulent

flu then widespread. This type of problem was to disappear with advancements in medicine.

In 1929 Dr. Wilson noted an entire change in pace in the Meetings since the closing of the Preparatory department. Their purpose he indicated is now "spiritual uplift of professing Christians." This was to be the primary thrust during the Lloyd presidency. Dr. Lloyd too called attention to changes when he took over. Gone were the former long nights, the separate younger groups and the dramatic endings. Solemnity was the vogue, save when toward the end of the Lloyd era, leaders would sometimes resort to jokes as they said goodbye. On more than one occasion Dr. Lloyd's notes would carry such comments as "No jokes at the end. This is an improvement" or "Both men made responses; good, except when jokes in responses spoiled the services." The last meeting usually consisted of a sermon and a dedication with the signing of commitment cards or by a show of hands, after which the assembly filed out silently without even a musical march as was the practice in ordinary chapel services. Community evangelical services were no longer held at the same season as the College Meetings. Inquiry Rooms were no more. But statistics on conversions were kept and reported until the late 30's to the Committee on College Visitation of the U. S. A. Church in Philadelphia. After that, the College authorities received some idea of student response from the cards turned over to the leaders. Toward the end of the period, even that type of check diminished and was less emphasized. The large number of faculty and student committees continued as did the very active work of the YWCA, YMCA, and Student Volunteer groups. Snaps and holidays were passe, even though, after the last meeting, classes for the remainder of the morning were usually cancelled. Health problems were no longer of moment. Thus there were many changes, all in keeping with the changed religious atmosphere in the larger community.

Some things continued with little appreciable change. The weeks of the Meetings were to be kept absolutely clear of competing events. Athletic programs were scheduled only on Saturday nights "to permit some relaxation." When in the mid-forties Dr. Lloyd noted that county teachers' workshops were breaking up at the time of evening meetings, or that buses to take students to the U.T. artist series were parked outside the Chapel at the time meetings were to begin, these events were enjoined. Attendance during

the Lloyd years remained uniformly high. Morning attendance, which was required, was practically total, while the voluntary evening services usually had between 700 and 1000, reaching over that mark on a Sunday in 1940.

February Meetings were still the great divide in the school year. Plans were made in the spring and following fall. In these plans, Dr. Lloyd, who, like his predecessor, had been converted in the Meetings and had been the very successful leader of the 1928 series prior to his presidency, held the dominant role. He was joined by active Y's. In January, letters were mailed to all "Alumni, Parents and Friends of the College" asking for their support and prayers in the approaching endeavor. Many responded by letters, of which Dr. Lloyd read a few each night of the series.

Typical letters reveal a wide band of prayer circles throughout the world. A widow of a prominent physician wrote: "I cite one instance of annual recurrence. Before and during the February Series he [her husband], spent much time each day praying for the power of the Holy Spirit, going apart during the service hours and uniting petitions with those being offered in the College." A younger alumnus wrote: "I have received assurance from my fellow veterans here that at noon-hour a session of silent prayer shall be faithfully observed during the college meetings, beginning February 9." During World War II, two young army men wrote from France, "Of the many mountain-top experiences that we found in four years at Maryville, none were so real or so lasting as the week of spiritual emphasis. . . . Those experiences remain and take on new meaning as time goes on." Eleven alumni cabled thoughts and prayers from Iran, while a housewife in Texas avowed, "I believe Maryville College is the best all-round school in the country, but with all its good features, I would not exchange the spirit of the February Meetings for all the rest." Finally, there was the letter from a young art student, whose campus interests while in school were decidedly not religious. While working on a Master's degree in 1961, he wrote:

I shall never forget how I scoffed when you read a letter from an alumnus during the February meetings my Freshman year. He had said he would always remember the meetings as the highlight of his 4 years at Maryville, and I remember wondering how this could be, but as of today there is no doubt in my mind that he was right . . .

If it were possible to carry the Spirit of the February meetings

into all the troubled points of the world, from Africa to Europe and Asia and the Americas, mankind would have little to fear from itself.

Unfortunately many of these reactions came only in retrospect, but there is no question that the Meetings made a tremendous impact on Maryville students during this third of a century.

It had been customary in the Wilson era for the President to open the meetings with the first address. The Sunday before the opening day, Dr. Lloyd delivered the sermon at New Providence Church. Meetings began on Tuesday or Wednesday and continued every morning and evening for ten or eleven days, including Monday morning, when there was ordinarily no chapel service. To compensate for this, Friday after the Meetings was a non-chapel morning. Sometimes, as in 1948 and 1949, the day before the Meetings students would conduct days of continuous prayer from sunrise to bedtime, signing up voluntarily for fifteen-minute intervals. Faculty held from three to five prayer meetings prior to and during the meetings, a practice which continued until the late 1960's, when students asked to be included in these prayer meetings for a few years, after which they were disbanded. Mornings and evenings, four students and two faculty led in public prayer each day for the duration. Normally, as in 1947, student participation in leadership of the meetings was high, 140 having assisted that year. Speakers made themselves available for interviews with students on request. In addition, as late as 1940, non-Christians were sought out and interviewed by the deans or leaders. Most of the time, interview schedules were filled.

Special interest groups—Student Volunteers, Y's, the Ministerial Association, dormitories, etc.—had the services of leaders for discussions and forums. The latter were first introduced in 1940 by Dr. Louis Evans and were quite popular with two to three hundred in attendance on most occasions. Especially popular were customary discussions with the leaders on Christian marriage and sex. Dr. Evans also in 1940 introduced student-composed booklets: "Fourteen Prominent Collegians look at Life." Leader for three series over a twenty-five-year span, Dr. Evans was a popular speaker. In the 1950's he was selected by *Life* magazine as one of the twelve great preachers in America, by *Newsweek* as one of the ten top preachers, and by Tau Kappa Alpha Speech Fraternity as Speaker of the Year.

In the last session of each series—as has been mentioned—it was customary to distribute “decision,” “dedication,” or “commitment” cards. These varied from year to year, and leaders used them differently. Until the late thirties, they were provided by the Board of Christian Education of the national church; after that, they were printed locally at College expense. Sometimes the students were asked to keep the card. Other times, cards were collected by the leaders, who customarily wrote each student personally if he had made a commitment for the first time, either to Christ or to full-time Christian work. First-time decisions for Christ declined significantly during this period. Numbering 65, 27, 35 and 40 in the early thirties, they were 2 (1949), 39 (1950), 8 (1957), 9 (1959). Not every year were the cards returned to the speaker and in the later years statistics were not diligently kept, but figures available indicate a decline. In 1961, there appeared to be an exception. Dr. Louis Evans that year indicated that he had received 103 acceptances of Christ, but he added, “Of course many of these had obviously confessed Christ before. . . .or thought they had.” At the same time he reported 68 interested in full-time Church vocations.

Questions asked on cards varied. Quite simple at first, additional options were added until in 1961 there were eleven. Somewhat typical was the card for 1941, which read:

- _____ I will today accept and confess Jesus Christ as my Savior and master and will commit my life to His direction.
- _____ I will renew my allegiance to Christ my Lord and pledge anew my loyalty to his Church.
- _____ I pledge my life to full-time Christian service, as God makes known his will to me.

The customary procedure was to place cards in boxes at the back of the auditorium.

Sometimes the leader would use devices other than cards, as did Evans in 1936. That year, he asked all to close their eyes after each service. He read a verse of Scripture and asked the students who would accept Christ for the first time or rededicate themselves to Him to raise their hands. “Nobody sees but God,” he assured them.

The years 1943 and 1944 were war years and the forty-second Army Air Force Cadets was based on campus. Protestant men were

invited to services, and some came. One problem noted in 1944 was that the services started at 7:00. Soldiers could be out with girls until 7:15; so only twenty-six or thirty attended. The enlisted men would sit together, marching in with their service flag preceding them.

Increasing criticism of the methods used in the February meetings during the late fifties indicated that a new mood was creeping over the campus. Part of these strictures undoubtedly may be attributed to greater freedom of expression. Part may be assigned to a changing profile in the student body. Almost all students were Christians in the early thirties—many dedicated to preparing for Church professions. By 1960, students came from differing and many from non-Christian backgrounds. Campus interests were changing.

Some of those leading February Meetings were also quite critical. The earliest and most negative record of this type of censure came from the leader of the 1957 Meetings in the form of a five-page letter of criticism. Among other things, he criticized the “over-preponderant tone and attitude of a fundamentalist minority.” He said he longed for some “good old fighters” and called for “healthy agnosticism.” He viewed the dormitory discussion with the leaders as the most beneficial part of the series. This leader likewise criticized the “Y” organizations so central to historical success of the Meetings as previously noted. He suggested the substitution of the United Student Campus Christian movement or a similar organization. In 1959, the dormitory sessions became strident. A letter concerning the Carnegie discussion that year expressed concern that the students “shifted the emphasis from the sins of the individual where the preacher was putting it to the sins of the College.” That same year, an *Echo* editorial indicated that the campus was shifting from Christ-centeredness to secularism. Then in 1961, came the very enthusiastic reception by students of Dr. Louis Evans. A new chaplain had just arrived on the campus. Three years later in a letter to a prospective leader and church official, this chaplain recalled his reaction to those 1961 sessions: “[They] had the atmosphere of old type emotional evangelism.” He continued by saying he considered the Meetings “almost frightening.”

Students in 1960 discussed the commitment cards, noting that some of their companions resented this card. They decided that

year, however, that the cards must be of value since so many were turned in voluntarily. But by 1963, virtually no student favored the card, which, as one student expressed it, savored of “signing a contract with God.” Communion, which had been employed in the forties, was substituted for this practice and continues to be a part of the program. Some students in 1965 expressed concern about the embarrassment this communion service held for the many non-Christians among students in attendance. By 1960, also, students were complaining of “too much congregational singing” and insisting that the evening meeting be restricted to one hour.

These negative voices being raised were bell-wethers of changes in procedure that came with the arrival on campus of new leadership—a new president, a chaplain, and dynamic new members of the Bible department as well as an unusually fluid faculty membership during the 1960’s. Coupled with these novelties was a changing student body reflecting new interests and a new religious orientation then abroad in the country and in the Church as well.

“Kaleidoscopic” would seem to be the best word to describe the changes during the administration of Dr. Copeland. The new president was not a newcomer to February Meetings. In 1954 and 1959 he had been the leader. As a speaker he was quite popular and he had a sense of dedication to the religious sentiment which the Meetings represented. Circumstances noted above, however, were to decree new structures, new modes of worship, and a major change in campus response to traditional ways of doing things. The 1962 Meetings were conducted with little change in the format by Dr. Brubaker, who had also led the 1957 Meetings. Students were asked to evaluate these meetings. Their chief complaint was that the series was too long and the speeches were too numerous. The following year a committee of over fifty representing a wide spectrum of campus concerns was organized into the Religious Life and Action Committee. It consisted of the leaders of the student body, the president and vice president of each of the Y’s, class presidents, the *Echo* editor and other representative faculty and students. Noticeable was a growing desire to turn toward topics related to social education and action and away from emphasis on personal religion and character. Race, ecumenicity, war, peace, sex, ecology, and like themes have dominated the Copeland years, as students and faculty have sought to integrate religion and group life. The year 1963 likewise saw the introduction of four counselors

to assist the principal speaker, Dr. Thomas Franklyn Hudson. The speaker still used Biblical themes as he drew from the Parables of the Old Testament, but these were oriented toward the meaning for 1963. This was the year in which the commitment card was abandoned by student desire. Dr. Hudson still addressed the entire campus as had earlier leaders mornings and evenings but the series was shortened to eight days. Youth workers held a series of dormitory meetings after the evening sermons.

The following year, the series was further reduced in time to six days including a weekend. Dr. Lewis Briner and Dr. K. Arnold Nakajama were brought for separate sessions, Dr. Briner the first two days and Dr. Nakajama the last three. Dormitory counselors were again employed—two local ministers, a pastor from Decatur, Alabama, and a popular student leader from Greeneville, Tennessee. The theme that year was “Man in the 1960’s,” and topics developed included social drinking, sex, and cheating. Student response was generally quite enthusiastic. The Editor of the *Echo* devoted much space in the newspaper to the happenings of the Meetings. His editorial said: “The phrase, ‘February Meetings’ normally causes a shudder in those members of the Maryville College family who object to religious emphasis in a week’s dose. This year, however, we find quite a different atmosphere invading the campus.” Again the *Echo* commented on impressions ranging from “O.K.” to “Cool as a Moose.” A freshman said, “They weren’t the awful February Meetings that everyone had told me about; they were interesting.” A new generation had found a new vehicle and were proud of its appearance. Not since that year has the *Echo* devoted so much space in so many issues to this subject. As novelty became commonplace, reports in the paper dwindled to nothing in 1967 and 1968 and cursory announcements in most other years. Of course there were also adverse criticisms. Some complained of “too much sociology” and others of a “lack of real religious emphasis.” Nor did the music satisfy all. “I miss Barry and his piano banging,” commented one girl. The communion service “everyone” agreed was “wonderful.”

The years 1965 and 1966 saw the employment of a principal speaker in the mornings in conjunction with evening panels made up of five and four counselors for each year respectively. In 1965 the panels came after the evening services extending over six days. In 1966 the sermon in the evening was dispensed with, and panels

consisting of the morning speaker and the counselors discussed such topics as the “Twentieth Century Church” and the “Place of Christ in a Christian College.”

The meetings in following years seem to have been related to each other in chain fashion, the linkage being a continuing factor which was joined to novelty. In 1967 the duration of the series was still seven days. Mornings retained the sermons. In the evenings panels gave way to forums as counselors, this year including two recent graduates, devoted time to considering problems of youth in deteriorating urban centers. The activist pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Chicago, the Reverend John Fry, and a University of Tennessee sociologist were on hand for the occasion. The forum idea continued in 1968, but novelty was introduced through substitution of four weekends for the week’s concentration of spiritual emphasis. The Meetings opened with a three-day liturgical art workshop. This concluded with a Vespers speaker. The following week a three-day series with a Friday-morning speech and an evening forum ended in a Vespers service conducted by the primary speaker. Dr. E. Cantelon, assisted by two recent graduates who were now seminarians, conducted this series. Morning and evening speeches on two other days and a forum of four Presbyterian and Reform Church moderators completed the February sessions that year. The four-weekend concept continued in 1969 but shifted to January. Three “CIV” (Community Issues and Values) and Vespers speakers and the Singing Sisters from the Medical Mission Sisters in Philadelphia provided the leadership that year. An ecumenical panel of Protestant, Greek Orthodox, and Catholic leaders joined Dr. Bruce Rigdon on the third weekend.

“The Christian and the State and the Christian and the Church” provided the topics for the January Meetings in 1970. The series was now confined to two days, in which four leaders were on hand for CIV meetings and panel discussions in the “Lantern,” the local name for an informal student gathering place. “Informality” was the keyword of the year. Classes were dismissed, and speakers joined faculty in classrooms for discussions. The Vespers service prior to these two days was given over to a celebration of the “Feast of Lights.”

Informality and “no classes” were carried over into the following year, but a new word had gained currency—“rapping”;

so the four leaders “rapped” on the general theme of “Christianity: Confrontation and Change.” One speaker made his imprint on the student body by wearing a brand new pair of overalls for his CIV presentation. The meetings extended from Thursday through Sunday and, aside from the CIV program, included talk sessions with the speakers, panel discussions, a slide presentation, a folk-rock festival, an all-day retreat, and a final Communion vespers, an event which by this time had become “traditional.” The *Echo*, virtually silent after recent series, voiced considerable dissatisfaction following this 1971 series. The editor objected to its “sociological,” “Do Good,” “humanistic” type of religion and the calling off of classes. He noted the large number of students who had left the campus. *Echo* comments may not always be relied upon as voicing general opinion, however, and those who remained on campus apparently considered their experience rewarding, as a number were in attendance at the retreat in Tremont (the Maryville College ecological center) and the various forums.

Revision of procedures in 1972 brought high praise from the *Echo*, as it devoted almost an entire edition to the Meetings and declared, “The meetings reached new heights through novel devices.” The theme that year was “Worship.” The characteristic phrase might have been “A Happening.” The position of speaker was dispensed with and a “Worship Coordinator” was substituted. Father Geoffrey Skriner, a recent Maryville College graduate and an Episcopal priest, held this position. Entitled “The Struggle to be Human,” this January series embraced such programs as a multimedia and celebration worship; seminars with CIV credit on such topics as “Contemporary Problems in Coaching,” “Do You Have to Belong to a Revolution to Be Human?,” “Ecology, Abortion, and Government,” “Politics and the Free Man.” These seminars—eleven in all—were led by Faculty members. Adjuncts of the meetings included an all-night program on Friday with athletic events, recreation, folk singers, refreshments, the movie *Rachel, Rachel* and the Sartre play “No Exit” with a reply by the English department, “Centuries of Exits,” and a celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Saturday provided another movie, “Only Two Can Play,” inaugurated small-group suppers in the homes of faculty and staff, with liturgies for the home, ending in a kiss of peace and concluded with a country hoe-down. The highlights of

the series were brought together in a January Meetings Vespers in which Dr. Copeland and Dr. Harter provided the leadership. Reaction was enthusiastic. Such comments as "the lack of outside speakers gave the meetings a less stratified approach" or "Through innovation the January Meetings became a more vital force than in several years past." The celebration worship, in which balloons bearing such slogans as "God is love," rated high on evaluation questionnaires afterwards, but the Saturday-night suppers rated the highest. Seminars were attended by seventy-three on Thursday and sixty-six on Friday.

The campus-based leadership for seminars was continued the following year, when the theme was "There is Hope, But. . . ." "This year there was a return to an imported speaker, and dismissal of classes was repeated. Seminars varied, with each department attempting to relate its discipline to Christian and non-Christian hope. A contemporary cantata, athletic events, Appalachian folk music, an art workshop, a work-service project for two hours Saturday afternoon, faculty-home suppers, a country hoe-down, a rock concert and dance, and a Communion Vespers service made up the program. The *Echo* receded into its former scanty comment following the meeting. One writer noted that the students were dubbing the series a "mid-term vacation" but concluded with an "unqualified 'yes'" to the self-raised question "Is there value to January Meetings?" "Those who attend are challenged," he affirmed, "to reexamine their values and are better for it."

Again in 1974, meetings were held from Thursday through Sunday. Classes were again dismissed. The theme this year was "Freedom (Self-Determination)." Dr. John Fry was brought again to the campus to make two CIV speeches: "Take Charge of Your Own Life" and "Ha-Ha-Ha!" and to engage in informal discussions. Athletic events; a country hoe-down; faculty-student-led seminars in the afternoon; the all-night event on Friday, this year, in keeping with the theme entitled "Freedom Night"; a Saturday work-service project, followed by supper in faculty homes and a Sunday Communion Vespers service were repeated.

Pursuant to evaluating committee reports for the preceding three years, the 1975 Committee on Religion and Life recommended the return to a program without dismissal of classes. "Survival: Alone or Together? Christian and Global Consciousness" was the 1975 theme. Two off-campus speakers were brought for

morning and evening speeches for each of two days. The practice of faculty-student-led seminars was continued, but they were reduced to four. Group singing similar to that of earlier years was reintroduced prior to the evening service. (Partly due to insufficient publicity, attendance was less than desirable.) A discussion meeting followed the services. Athletics, two appropriate motion pictures, and a Communion Vespers service concluded the events. An innovation was a twenty-four hour fast symbolizing the need for food for the world. The small number of enthusiastic fasters who participated in this event met at the conclusion of Vespers to participate in a meal together.

In 1960 the YMCA and YWCA were merged with other religious organizations to form the United Campus Christian Fellowship (UCCF). This in turn gave way eight years later to the United Campus Movement. Student religious leadership was passed from one to the other of the organizations, which in sequence played diminishing roles in carrying out the February Meetings programs. In recent years, the UCM has disappeared and the student role in planning for the series is left in the hands of a subcommittee of the Religion and Life Committee of the All-College Council. In 1975, this subcommittee was headed by a student who was most devoted to his task and largely responsible for the program as it successfully emerged.

Trial, error and experimentation have characterized the formats of the last dozen years. As the program is shuffled kaleidoscopically by successive committees, old practices are united with novelties to form new patterns. Students join with faculty in their search for the most attractive and meaningful combinations which will unite religion and life and join academic and spiritual progress into an integrated whole. One who probes deeply may discern earlier paradigms for almost everything done today. An all-night "happening" means more to today's youth than an all-night Inquiry Room. Folk singers' concerts or a country hoe-down serves the purposes of earlier after-the-meeting "snap" socials. There may not be student delegations to the depot and a campus band to wind up the series as in the early 1900's, but there are trumpets and guitar or brass ensembles in the formal evening sessions and sometimes in Communion services. Each age tries to fashion itself anew out of scraps of the past in new configurations, sometimes quite unaware that it is doing so.

“And All Kinds of Music”

Hold the fort, I'm coming,
Jesus signals still,
Wave the answer back to Heaven,
By thy Grace, we will.

See the mighty host advancing,
Satan leading on,
Mighty men around us falling
Courage almost gone.

Hold the fort, I'm coming; etc.

by P. P. Bliss

If, indeed, the message which inspired this hymn by P. P. Bliss was sent from the Maryville College campus as reported, it undoubtedly, along with Bliss's "Rescue the Perishing," was a favorite in the early Meetings. While fragmentary, information is sufficient to reconstruct a probable idea of the part music played in the early years. The piano was the only instrument used in chapel services, though by 1895 leaders were noting the need of an organist. There were also volunteer orchestra and song groups by that time, the quartet being a strong favorite. By 1899, Professor John G. Newman was using *Song of Praise and Consecration* by J. Wilbur Chapman in 1899. That year, the speaker noted he had not "been in [his] room five minutes before [he] heard the stirring strains of 'Throw Out the Life Line' as it was sung by a band of students in another part of the building [Baldwin], and as the train rolled out of Maryville on the last morning the teachers and students joined in a Christian song."

Another song popular in the early days was the "Battle Hymn of the Republic." In 1894, the National Association for the Advancement of Women held its convention on the campus. Julia Ward Howe was present for the occasion and from the platform recommended a modification of the final verse to make it appropriate for peace instead of war. To the present, many Maryvillians sing this hymn with its pacific rather than its martial connotation.

Music played a major role in the conversion appeal. Thus, Dr. Wilson in 1906 could relate the account of a young Kentuckian who "had enlisted for Christ the night before" asking the quartet to repeat a song that had helped him make his decision. As a result of the encore another student gave his life to Christ. In the memorable

1920 meetings led by well-known evangelist Mel Trotter, music was central. That year Homer Hammontree, as he had for some years, headed up the musical team. This consisted of “one of the finest quartets in the business” and an accomplished accompanist, “Little Dick” Oliver, who had traveled with the American troops during World War I. The quartet, “The American Four,” called themselves “Sharks for Christian Work”. For four and two-thirds cents, Homer Rodeheaver had prepared a special songbook for the meetings. It was the pianist, however, who evoked the greatest student response. Numerous *Echo* notations were made on his playing. One, in a somewhat humorous vein, perhaps deserves reproduction. Entitled “How Dick Oliver Played,” the column reads:

Dick Oliver came out and sot down at a big pianner that looked like a three-legged pool table. He started running his fingers over them keys kind of airy like and sort of like he was hunting a place to start . . . I hadn't more'n got my hat when he came down on that old pianner both handed and with a slash that sent chills of music reverberating up and down my spine like an electric shock . . . He did a crosshanded shimmy somewhere in the neighborhood of Middle C . . . The thunder rolled clear down to the bowels of perdition. Now he started fox chasing up the treble cleff till the notes got as fine as sunbeams. After he got them notes clean out of sight, he took a few spasmodic curricules and jazz coaxers, holding every blessed note on that old pianner down at the same time, in jada-jazz i-quivers.

Students of a later age would be able to detect a kindred spirit for “Little Dick” in “Barry.”

Some of the gospel songs sung at this period included “Just as I am,” “I Am Coming Home,” “Almost Persuaded,” “Gethsemane,” “The Land Where the Roses Never Fade,” “The Prodigal Son,” “There’s a Song in My Heart.” In years just prior to this, *Awakening Songs* had been purchased for the occasion, while later special purchases were made of *Revival Gems*.

The year 1921 also placed special emphasis on the musical team. Hammontree, returning that year, brought with him the “Victor Trio.” The pianist, B. D. Ackley, was acknowledged to be “not only a Master at the piano, but . . . a composer of note,” producing hymns such as “If Your Heart Keeps Right,” “I Walk with the King,” and “I Am Coming Home,” all of which were sung in the Meetings. That same year, Mr. James Goddard, called by Hammontree “the world’s second greatest baritone” happened to be visiting

relatives and donated his service to the success of the Meetings by giving a Saturday evening concert. In this performance a high point was reached when he sang "The Golden Bells," sending "a thrill through the souls of the audience."

In those years, music always terminated the Meetings, as the congregation sang "Blest Be the Tie That Binds," "Till we Meet Again," and, after the "Howie-how for Jesus," the "Alma Mater." In 1921, the band under the College director, Mr. Harry Bannister, played at the final session and accompanied the departure of the student body.

The arrival on the campus of the Reverend Sidney E. Stringham in February, 1922, brought a red-letter year. Up until 1953, Mr. Stringham, fondly called "Stingem," led the singing some thirty times and in the early years was a perennial favorite among students. The *Highland Echo* in 1923 noted that he "Worked many miracles on the Hill. Many sang who never had sung during the year." Some of these the *Echo* singled out by name. "No one," it continued, "could go away and say they had not been shown the way to salvation" as voices were lifted in songs such as "Love Lifted Me" or "Back to My Father and Home." Most of the Stringham years saw the use of local pianists, students or faculty.

It became customary for Mr. Stringham to introduce choruses to become the annual theme songs. Such choruses as "Wide, Wide as the Ocean" and "Beyond the Sunset" were employed in the forties. Occasionally Mr. Stringham would venture to compose his own chorus, such as the one in 1943:

There is a joy in following Jesus all the way;
There is a joy in following Jesus everyday;
His love is like the rainbow when earthly skies are grey;
There is joy in following Jesus all the way.

In 1949, Stringham was joined by Henry Barraclough, who had been discovered by Chapman and Alexander and had been their accompanist as a young man. He too was a composer of gospel songs, among which were "Nothing but Leaves," sung by Stringham as a solo that first year "Barry" was at Maryville; "Ivory Palaces"; "We are Going through the Valley, One by One"; and the anthem "Trumpet of God." In 1950, Stringham set his words to Barry's song "Shine, Shine," to provide the 1950 theme song:

Joy, Joy, Joy in the Heart;
Joy, Joy, Joy in the heart;
Serve him today;
Serve him alway;
Serve him with joy every day.

Throughout the entire scope of the meetings until recent years the choir was a key element. Barry endeared himself to the members and they to him. He set up an award for outstanding choir members which has continued to be given each year.

By 1960, as they did in other areas, students began to question the use being made of music in the services. That year they stated that there was too much congregational singing and that the services should be limited to one hour. Mr. Stringham was replaced by John Magill, an alumnus and a Presbyterian minister, who led the singing seven times between 1952 and 1962. Hymns in 1963 were cut from seven to three in the evening services, and students began to suggest that they be permitted to choose their own "good old hymns," a practice that had been followed to a degree in earlier meetings. Maryville's choir director, Harry Harter, provided leadership for congregational singing. This type of singing largely gave way to folk and rock groups such as the Singing Sisters (1969), Blufton College Travellers (1971), the Schillings (1972), and a modern cantata (1973), although it was never totally absent. The choir was used only on special occasions. Where congregational singing was employed, songs were often of the modern or folk type such as "Lord of the Dance," "Comebyar," or "They'll Know We Are Christians." In recent years there has been a growing tendency to interject some of the Old gospel songs such as "Amazing Grace." Instrumental music is currently more in vogue than in the past. Old religious favorites are often rendered on guitar, or as was "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" in 1972, played on the Moog Synthesizer. In 1975, with only partial success, an attempt was made to reintroduce the half-hour congregational singing prior to the evening service. In a sense, save for the reluctance to engage in congregational singing, music used in the February Meetings has come full circle, but with variations on the themes.

“Speaking the Truth in Love”

Leadership during the century of February Meetings has covered the spectrum from evangelistically fervent to intellectually dignified. The one norm sought was dedication to the Christian life. For approximately half a century, eleven leaders conducted the services. Four—Bachman, Elmore, Bartlett and Broady—account for a quarter of a century. Except for Bachman, the “father” of the Meetings, these were Maryville College graduates who had themselves been converted at the Meetings. Five of the seven who led for another quarter of a century were Maryville graduates. Graduates throughout the century have sought to be invited back for the occasion. Some of the initial meetings of the series were led by administration or faculty persons, as was the case for the first four meetings in 1914. Recently less emphasis has been placed on leadership off campus, one year there being no visiting speaker.*

The College has always sought men of stature with qualities which would appeal to youth. Dr. Bachman, pastor of Second Presbyterian Church in Knoxville and founder of the Meetings, was called by President Wilson “Apostle of love and gentleness, loyalty and vision, who like Goldsmith’s village preacher sought to allure to brighter worlds and lead the way.” The leader for eight years over a span of thirty, Dr. Bachman had been a well-known evangelist. His interests according to Wilson were directed “manward as well as Godward.” This is evidenced by the fact that from his meager savings he set up a student loan fund of \$2000 to enable needy students to pay academic expenses.

In terms of tenure, E. A. Elmore held the record as leader. A student worker on Anderson Hall, alumnus of the College in 1875, professor from 1884 to 1888, and later chairman of the Board of Directors, his service to the College ended in 1928. That year it was announced cryptically, “Dr. E. A. Elmore whose turn it was to conduct the meetings this year, died last May.” Even in 1924, the last series which he led, the *Echo* billed him as “advanced beyond the allotted span of life.”

*Names of leaders for the meetings may be found in R. W. Lloyd, Maryville College: A History of 150 Years. For the years since 1969 see Appendix B.

While one comment by students on the general leadership extolled the “quiet, sane methods” of the men, there were other attractions as well.** Dr. W. T. Bartlett and Dr. Louis Evans were set apart because of their powerful physiques and the associations they held with national competitive sports—baseball and basketball respectively. Some, as was the Reverend E. A. Cameron in 1906, were admired for their youth. The comments most in evidence from student writers, however, singled out spiritual qualities as those most admired. In 1904, Dr. Bartlett was praised because “the presence of the Holy Spirit was manifestly present, convicting of sin, and convincing of duty.” In 1965, students themselves helped to lay down norms they desired for a leader; “a man of tried ability to preach to young people; a convincing personality, a clear evangelical belief and message, an intellectual approach, a balance of the intellectual with the emotional and ethical.”

As previously noted, topics and themes of speakers tended to shift over the century from those of personal salvation toward those of social action. As many of the topics and themes as could be found are listed in Appendix A for the readers’ perusal. It was customary during the first half century, when the leadership was rotating each quinquennium, for some of the leaders to repeat their sermons. Thus, Dr. Gillingham, in 1935, president of Tennent College, could write:

It interests me that they [the February Meetings] begin today, for one of the other times they began on February the 5th was exactly 30 years ago today, during my own senior year at Maryville, as this is the Senior year of my twins—a day, Sunday, snow

**The one dramatic exception to what faculty and staff regarded as restrained evangelical methods was Mel Trotter, whose procedures have previously been noted. A 1920 assessment of Trotter’s methods notes his “rapid fire method of jumping from text to apt illustration and back, keeping his audience awake and on tiptoe every minute. He translates the gospel into the vernacular so its meaning is not mistakable. He believes in covering the jail, the streets, the parks and factories.” However, the writer concludes, “There is only legitimate emotional appeal in his sermons.”

a foot deep or deeper and temperatures several degrees below zero. Dr. Elmore was the preacher that year. I can remember yet some of his texts and large parts of sermons on those texts. You [Dr. Lloyd] heard them ten years later in 1915, your senior year.”

The writer then proceeded to prove his statement by reviewing Dr. Elmore’s topics and their contents.

Financial resources for the Meetings came from varied places. Some leaders contributed services freely or for a nominal honorarium. A number of individuals made donations toward expenses as did an anonymous donor in the 1920’s. The Presbyterian Church Board of Christian Education made fairly regular contributions for a number of years. Of \$700 expenses in 1961, \$80 was provided by this board. Dr. Evans that year was paid \$300, while the musicians received \$175 each. Students, too, made their contributions in the form of gifts to the visiting leaders. In 1920, a little over \$207 was collected from the student body. This was expended for

a gold watch—\$50
a wardrobe trunk—\$55
5 gold pieces at \$20 each
cartage for the trunk—\$1
balance to Fred Hope Fund—\$1.41

The most significant donation for the on-going costs of the Meetings came from the Second Presbyterian Church in Knoxville. Close ties to Maryville College have been held by this church since the beginning of both institutions under the tutelage of Isaac Anderson. With the \$3,980 contributed to the Nathan W. Bachman February Meetings Fund, the income from which was to be used for current expenses, financing of the series became easier after 1920. Dr. Wilson expressed his gratitude for this largess with the suggestion that “Dr. Bachman would be made happier, even in heaven, if he heard of that much-needed and most useful gift.”

“Many who Heard the Word Believed.”

Remaining to be examined is the student response to the Meetings. Difficult to summarize, or even to assess, one may safely categorize it as generally favorable, sometimes enthusiastically so; often conflicting; sometimes indifferent; and infre-

quently negative.

Some reactions persist throughout the hundred years. Each generation has stressed its modernity and difference from its predecessors. Each generation has tried to assess and criticize the receptivity or lack of receptivity of its contemporaries. Most of the responses have been couched in terms of the acceptability of the leaders. As leadership has become less important in recent years, *Echo* assessments have become less prominent and in some years have disappeared entirely. Negative responses have become more frequent. Many responses have been reflected in the review of striking phraseology of the speakers, often banalities, which students deemed worthy of repeating. Early editorials and letters were basically favorable while, occasionally, later writers have become antagonistic. This may be explained partially by the greater freedom of expression, bordering on license, assumed by the student newspaper in recent years, as compared with the more faculty-controlled press in the earlier part of the century.

It may safely be said that each generation has viewed itself as unique, modern, and undergoing change. A student in 1905 stated: "Narrowness of mind is disappearing. The character of the class of students has been undergoing a change. . . .The change is a modernizing one, and is resulting in greater mental breadth." The essence of this statement has been repeated monotonously through the years. Integrally related to this opinion was the avowal of most student generations that Maryville College Meetings were somewhat different from most in that they stressed rationality as opposed to emotion-laden presentations. Describing the average reaction to revival as an "emotional spasm mistaken for religion or salvation outlasting revival by a day or two," a 1927 editorial affirms: "Maryville College revivals or February Meetings have an entirely different meaning. No undue emphasis on primitive instincts, though of course, they are involved in all men's actions and behavior" is present. "The appeal throughout the entire series was non-emotional, sensible, and rational." Some quarter of a century later two editorials echo this view. "Many of us are simply repulsed by religion typified in 'sawdust trail,' amen corner,' and 'sing that chorus a little louder, Brother,' but our meetings each year need not be like that. . . .They are relevant to our own day." Again, "The February Meetings avoid 'Cheap Sensationalism.'" In 1961, the same issue of the *Echo* carried letters with opposing

views. One, reflecting the sentiment of the new College pastor (cited on page 30), suggests, “Evangelists such as Billy Graham must encumber their preaching with powerful emotional appeals. . . .but the College student should not require as much emotional bombardment for intellectual stimulation.” Then in indirect criticism of Louis Evans, the speaker that year, the writer called for a leader for the next year “who will treat us intellectually and emotionally as college students.”

In marked contrast to the above view, a student widely known for his intellectual proclivity wrote an open letter in the same issue of the *Echo* to Louis Evans. Because this seems to reflect the wider sentiment as to the speaker for his three visits to the campus, large parts of this letter bear quoting.

. . . We have become perhaps more tolerant of our own college situation, while at the same time developing sensitivity to a much-needed constructive dissatisfaction with personal areas of our institutional lives

Many have said that MC was “ready” for the February Meetings, and thus the gaping pit of their indifference was partially filled. There are others who hold that your [Evans’] presentation style was the striking factor of the meetings: some feel that it was ineffectual or even detrimental, and most others looked on it as the spur to goad us out of complacency. There will be the pure cynics of us, whose lack of ambition will prevent us from plumbing depths more profound than ourselves, any-time; and some or us, the “open minded”—to use your garbage dump metaphor—who have only been tossed on the high waves of togetherness and self-imposed “February spirit” and will just as quickly be left high and dry when the tide goes out. *Ninety-five per cent* of us, though, are in the third, middle-of-the-road category, the two aspects of which are alike: the honest searchers and the honest doubters. But, being constantly turned, these are the most fertile grounds on which that seed could have fallen.

Whatever the reasons for our individual attitudes, your visit had an effect, for once in MC’s life—you uncovered furtive some-things that have been latent a long time. For the first time in years, the entire student body has been moved to a point where they must accept or reject, and has been left with the charge of its own decision: there’s no more room for indifference, because the future of our lives, the college—and more important, the world—is at stake. The point is, sir, that you were one of few speakers on this campus in at least four years who has had much to say at all; about the second or third to relate your word to any existence outside the college community; and the only person of any kind—inside or outside MC—to “challenge” us instead of talking about “challenge” Most outstanding of all, hitherto unmoved faculty and students have awakened to take stock of their

personal obligations; indeed a more conscientious, vigorous relationship between the taught and learned seems essential now. . . .

Now almost no one has been fool enough to think that February Meetingsism implies automatic salvation or reawakening for any of us. There's a sort of natural skepticism in us that would rightly make us resent being used like that, and it's hard to find a better atom-age antidote for a religion that has previously been presented in comparatively medieval terms. . . . Most students and personnel here feel indebted to you for having shown us something of a duty without trying to do it for us. That's unique and even occasionally borders on the inspiring. Thanks a million, Coach.

Evans appeared three times as leader. The occasion responded to above was twenty-five years after his first enthusiastic reception. It is worthy of note that what the new College pastor in 1961 regarded as "the old type emotional evangelism" was assessed by one student to be a reflection of ninety-five percent of the student body's view as a challenge to a "more vigorous relationship between the taught and the learned."

Upon numerous occasions, student editors pointed out that the success of the "Meetings" depended upon the nature of the student body more than upon the leader. A writer in the *Maryville Magazine* in 1914 notes, "If there is one thing on the yearly program which the College authorities stress more than another, it is the 'February Meetings' . . . But a great part of revolutionizing the lives of the students depends upon the Christian student body and the YMCA." Leadership assessment of the nature of students has remained remarkably consistent through the years. The then prevalent opinion of leaders of education as to the nature of students was cited by Dr. Lloyd in 1928 to be that "college youth is but slightly concerned with religion." Assessment by a leader in 1939 was that "students have no purpose in life." A student assessment of his own generation in 1959 was that it was "a growing practice to make fun of God, Christ, and all aspects of worship." Students in 1962 viewing the religious climate on the College campus used such words as "lukewarm," "activity without depth," "self-centered," "spiritual laziness," "academic overemphasis," "too much emphasis on religion, therefore we become stagnant," "too intellectual or pseudo-intellectual," and even complained that "students receive no spiritual experience from exams"! In 1965, the view of the Chaplain was that the College generation was "little concerned with the world issues except race," and that

there was a "too fundamentalist approach in the Bible Department." The editor in 1971 called "contemporary religious activity hardly worth a hill of beans." If, therefore, response did indeed depend upon the nature of the student body, the prospects for success of the Meetings would have been consistently gloomy.

Throughout the period, however, much enthusiasm as to the effects of the Meetings was expressed by students. Perhaps the best way of presenting such response is chronologically. Representative student comments were as follows during the years.

- (1907) "Of all the good things that come to us in Maryville College, we can say that by far the best is the annual Evangelistic Service."
- (1924) "Almost all the students are behind the great movement." "Eternal destinies were made in those days."
- (1928) "His messages are overflowing with good, sound advice and words of truth."
- (1942) "We believe there is no exaggeration in the statement that every student present has been influenced by the messages and personality of Dr. Barbour."
- (1943) "How do you like the Meetings?" Ans. "They get better every day." "Why do we like him more?" "Because we know him better."
- (1944) "I wasn't planning on going at all this year, but they were so interesting, I ended up going to every one."
- (1951) "There is something good intrinsic [*sic*] in the February meetings; what we get out of them depends upon our basic attitudes."
- (1954) "If you go expecting to be bored, you will be bored. If you go expecting to experience spiritual growth, you will experience spiritual growth. . . . Long after we graduate from Maryville College, we will look back with thankful memories to the inspiration of February Meetings."
- (1958) "February meetings to me hold a very high standing. They should never be done away with, whatever is discussed for or against."
- (1960) "We wish to make public the voice of the students both Christian and agnostic who have expressed appreciation for the intellectual and spiritual integrity of the 1960 meetings."

- (1962) "The meetings tend to unite the student body; provide a common commitment for spiritual growth."
 "They attract and change to some extent those students who before refused to respond to a Christian way of life."
- (1964) "One of the girls who was most critical and who made a very bitter speech at the forum, told me [the Chaplain] that the communion has changed her whole outlook on life."

Admittedly selective though these comments are, they reflect the dominant mood throughout the century.

A minority and negative opinion first openly appeared in print during the 1960's. The negativism, voiced privately in a letter from one of the speakers in the late sixties, was submerged for a number of years. In the late sixties a measure of student indifference toward the Meetings followed an initial enthusiasm for novelty and experimentalism in Meetings format. This indifference is demonstrated by the silences of the *Echo* after the conclusion of the series e. g, in 1967 and 1969; normally, up to that time, the *Echo* had conducted extended *post mortems*. Some of this "blackout" of commentary may be attributed to the taking over of other interests, such as the new All-College Council. Some may be accounted for by the fact that classes were dismissed and a smaller number of students participated in the Meetings. Moreover, a more openly secular-minded student body had appeared. The 1970 *Echo* complained that the "meetings interfered with classwork." The calling off of classes resulted in sizable exodus from campus in 1970 and 1971, but in a more enthusiastic group of those in attendance. The editor of 1970 objected to the "sociological," "do good," "humanistic type" of religion on campus. Although most indifference and voiced negativism is to be found in the past dozen years, the dominant expression, even during these years, has been positive and enthusiastic, but this comes from a smaller group of participants.

What of the future of the Meetings? One writer's answer is this:

The future must be shaped by the age in which we live. Things are not as they were 70 years ago. We are no longer shut in by mountains. A new age confronts us—an age of competition. . . of materialism. . . of individualism. We must keep step with the spirit of this age. We must allow freedom of investigation and give men time to think their way to the truth.

“We must keep step with the spirit of this age.” A modernist view? Indeed it was—in February 1892, when Dr. Elmore, leader of the Meetings, expressed it! May these words and the circumstances surrounding them serve as a humble reminder that there were “modernists” in those days too. In Tennyson’s timely lines,

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before.

APPENDIX A

Partial List of Topics and Themes of February Meetings
1898 to Date

1898	1922
Days of Heaven upon Earth (Theme)	Thesaurus of Biblical Wealth (Theme)
1900	1924
The Master Has Come and Calleth Thee (Theme)	Way to Active Christian Life (Theme)
1905	1927
The Master Has Come and Calleth for Thee (Theme)	(A Series of Gospel Sermons)
Come Thou with Me unto My Lot and I Will Go with Thee unto Your Lot So I Came to Kadesh Barnea	1928
1913	Loyal to the Royal in Thyself (Theme)
The Glory of God and the Advancement of the Kingdom Purchased by the Blood of the Only Begotten Son (Theme)	1929
1914	A Challenge to the Great Christian Adventure (Theme)
Restitution for Wrongs Done (Theme)	Adventure of Religion
1915	Price of Christianity
The Master has Come and Calleth for Thee (Theme)	Freedom Among the Lilies
Come Thou with Me unto My Lot and I Will Go with Thee unto Your Lot So I Came to Kadesh Barnea	The Yellow Streak
1918	1930
In the Beginning (Theme)	Duty
In the Image of God (Theme)	Relay Race of Life
1919	I Would See Jesus
What Must I Do to Be Saved?	Many Adversaries
By Faith the Walls of Jericho Fell Down	What Met at Calvary
Create Within Me a Clean Heart	Come Let us Reason Together
Surely the Lord Is in This Place and I Knew It Not	The Lost Christ
1920	A Great Rock in a Weary Land
In the Days of Trouble Pray	Pilate's Denial
Receive the Meekness of Jesus	Hypocrisy
Be Ye Reconciled to God	The Great Question
Use and Abuse of Riches	Let Down the Net
	Wild Beasts of Ephesus
	The City Four-Square
	How Much Are You Worth?
	Great Battles You Have to Fight
	1931
	Right or Wrong: How Can You Tell Which?
	Reverence
	Temptation
	Let No Man Despise Thy Youth
	What It Means to Be a Christian

Keeping the Doors Open
Courage
Power to Finish

1932

Parting of the Ways
The Invitation of Christ, "Come."
A Seeking God
Christ Curing Incurables
Forgiveness
Miracle in a Boy's Heart: Broken Bread
Waste of the World
Body of Christ
Sword or the Cup?
Doors of the Upper Room
Peter Between Two Fires
Broken and Unbroken Nets
Vision of the Risen Christ
He Is Able to Keep
Storming the Fort
Badge Wearers and Brand Bearers

1933

Rich Young Ruler
Making up Your Mind: Your Real
Freedom
Your Name
Jacob and Essau
Holy
Peace
An Idea from God
Companionship
Hearing
A Voice
Seven Words from the Cross
What Is He Doing There?
Lost: Three Parables

1934

Forgetting the Things That Are
Behind
God's Second-Hand Store
Pictures
Seeing the Invisible
God's Four Leaf Clover
We Would See Jesus
Prayer
Peril and Power
She Supposing Him to Be the
Gardener

A Place Where Two Ways Met
Weighed in the Balance
What Must I Do to Be Saved?
I Know Not the Man
The Left-Over God

1935

Friend
Jacob and Essau
The Test of a Friend; Truth, Courage,
Holiness, Love
Dreams
Friendship
Temptation
Friendship with Christ
The Purpose of Life
The Sin of Omission
Freedom
Deepening the Friendship
God is Love

1936

Wanted: A Master
Christ in All of Life
The Game of Life
Rich Young Ruler
Youth and Marriage
Three Words for the Master: Teacher,
Rabbi, My Teacher
Let's Revolt
Christ, Youth, and War
Master of Your Money
It Happened to John
Youth and the Cross
Master of Your Service
What Shall I Do With my Life?
Christ: Master of Conscience
God's Old Ironsides
Master of Your Wills

1937

The Master of Joy
Christ and Our Day
What Does it Mean to Be a Christian?
Christ and the Cross for Today
The Difficulties of Non-Belief
The Stewardship of Life
The Difference Christ Makes
Christian Progress
Christ for the World

One Thing Lacking
Christ's Message to the World About
Sin
What Is Good for Man in His Life?
The Humility of Christ
That Which We Have Seen and Heard,
Declare We Unto Thee

1938

What My Religion Means to Me
What I Believe About God
What I Believe About the Bible
What I Believe About Prayer
What I Believe About Immortality
Coming to Terms With Life
What I Believe About Jesus
What I Believe About Sin and Salvation
Making the Most of Life
The Necessity for Adequate Loyalties
Commanding Us
How Can I Tell That I Am a Christian?
Resources for Living
Making the Minimum Do for Religion
Christ, The Satisfactory Answer to
Man's Deeds
The Intolerance of Christianity
Taking Christianity into Everyday
Living

1939

Christian Faith in a Time of Crisis
(Theme)
Our Place in Christian Faith in a
Time of Crisis
The Place of Christ in Christian Faith
in the Time of Crisis
The Place of the Holy Spirit in the
Time of Crisis
The Place of the Christian Church in
the Time of Crisis
The Tale of Three Men (talents)
The Tale of the Kingdom in Christian
Faith in the Time of Crisis
Two Plus Two Equals Four
Our Complete Savior
Modern Idols
The Place of Christian Faith in the
Time of Crisis: II
Unconscious Influence
Behold I Stand at the Door
Direction of Desire

1940

The Educational Imperative
Youth Begins with Why
The Religion of College
Mores of the Crowd: Who Holds the
Coat?
The Gospel According to You
Lo, I Am with You Always
Rocks of Assurance
I Want it: the Battle of Our Impulses
Tests
The Great Examination
Prayer
The Religion of a College Man
How Christians Believe

1941

The Unshaken Realities (Theme)
The Gospel for the World
The Questions Christ Put to Men
Gone with the Wind
The Overcoming Life
The Peril of Unconscious Failure
Christ's Questions
His Cross and Ours
The Question which Shocks Us: "Man,
Who Makes Me a Divider and Judge
Among You?"
Except

1942

The Reproducible Experience of Jesus
(Theme)
How Did Jesus Develop Means of Personal
Power?
What Do You Believe to Be True About
Life?
How Can We Overcome the Things That
Keep Us from Power?
Getting Above the Crowd Level, Out of
the Jungle
On Being Misunderstood
What Christianity Can Do for Character
On Facing Trouble
Charting a Course for the Future
Little Man: Big Problems
Facing Success
Pull Yourself Together
What Kind of Religion
Overcoming

Great Works Shall You Do

1943

Pursuit of Happiness: Important
Matters of Religion & Life (Theme)
Silent Harps
Have You the Courage to Be Different?
When a Man Talks to Himself
God and the Ordinary Man
On Making Your Faith Your Own
God at the Door
Who Would Have Thought It?
Secret of a Happy Home
The Conquest of Doubt
Christ's Interpretation of Discipleship
Some Confessions of a Past
Do You Want to Get Well?
The Secret of a Christlike Personality

1944

For Such a Time as This
Faith as a Trust
Faith as Truth
Platform of the Kingdom
The Program of Jesus
The Goal of Jesus
What Is Pearl Harbor?
Two Men Who Took the Way: Columba
and St. Francis
Four Johns: Chrysostem, Calvin, Knox,
Edwards
Our Unrecognized Allies
Answering the Ultimate
The Eleventh Commandment
Behold, I Stand At the Door and Knock

1945

The Mission of Christ (Theme)
Reveal the Truth
Retrieve Men in Moral Contusion
Revolutionize Life's Objectives
Redeem the Passions of Man
Revise the Mathematics of Religion
Receive the Talents of Men
Rectify the Loyalties of Life
Recall Runaways from God
The Fraction of Life
Stockpiles and Crisis
Christ as a Builder of World Order

Pioneer of Life
Companionship with Christ
Masters of Circumstances
The Gamble Magnificent
Stumbling Blocks to Salvation

1946

Business of Living: Questions We Have
a Right to Ask (Theme)
The Longings of Man
Made Alive
Growing Up and Building Up
The Business of Being Alive
Complete Commitment
Ye Shall Be Witnesses of a New Order
That's for Me
He is Able
The Morning after the Night Before
How Can We Keep Christ?
Why Worship?
Can We Have the Mind of Christ?
Can We Find the Will of God?
What Shall I Do When Life Shoves Me
Around?

1947

How the Gospel Relates to the Individual
Life (Theme)
Trying to Live in an Empty Room
Jesus and the Man in the Street
The Place Where all Spiritual Victories
Are Won
The Unpardonable Sin
Pilate's Dilemma
The Cross
A Reasonable Sacrifice
No Divine Imperative
How the Gospel Relates Itself to the
Christian Community
When Christians Read History
The Urgency of the Time
Elijah's Lesson
The Church's Strong Foundation
The Kind of Church Christ Wants

1948

What Do You Want Out of Life?
Four Great Facts
Keeping the Faith

To Whom It May Concern
 Truth at the Cross
 Some Inconvenient Convictions
 Are You Honest About It?
 Life's Biggest Question
 Yoking Yourself with Christ
 Marks of a Christian
 Basic Requirement for Satisfactory Living
 Inadequate
 Place of Christ in Our Personal Relations
 Meeting the Measure of the Stature
 What's Your Trouble

1949

“Living Power of the Living Christ”
 (Theme)
 Jesus Christ the Same, Yesterday, Today,
 and Tomorrow
 The Living Word
 Prayer
 The Living Christ and History
 The Touch of Christ
 The Choice Before Us
 The Call
 Speaking Face to Face
 With or Against?
 Power of Christ for the World
 The Gift of Joy with Christ
 Power for Present Problems
 Friendship: Human and Divine
 Power of Christ for the Problems of Man
 Christ's Call for Sacrifice Begins Faith

1950

Are You Wanting Happiness?
 Have You the Courage to Be Different?
 Your Declaration of Independence
 In the World but Not of the World
 The Glens of Gloom
 He Profits Most Who Serves Best
 For Those Who Feel Their Limitations
 Our Choice of Life Work
 God Is At the Door
 The Pleasures of Being a Christian
 The Parable of the Last Son
 One Request God Will Not Refuse
 On Making God a Last Resort
 Are You Morally Passing the Buck?
 How God Treats a Repentant Sinner
 The Elder Brother

On Getting Rid of a Dragon

1951

Days of Decision (Theme)
 Born to Receive
 Something Hidden
 To Whom Shall We Go?
 Born to Give
 New Lives for Old
 What Do I Get Out of It?
 By the Renewing of Your Life
 Finding a Vital Faith
 Remember Jesus Christ
 I Am Four Monkeys (Four Aspects of
 Life)
 Life Is a Laboratory
 What Good Does It Do to Pray?
 The Christian's Destiny
 Finding the Will of God
 Marriage Is for Maturity

1952

The Set of the Soul: Night, Sin and
 Salvation (Theme)
 Who am I?
 Who Is God?
 Who Is Jesus?
 Job: The Problem of Suffering
 What Jesus Can Do for Us
 A Colony of Heaven
 Prayer
 Immortality and Everlasting Life
 Remember Lot's Wife
 You Are Living in an Unchanging World—
 His Hands
 Amen
 The Christian Vocation
 You and Your Enemies
 The Necessity for God

1953

The Gospel: Christ in Relationships
 (Theme)
 The Power to Become
 The Gospel According to Enemies of
 Christ
 The Power in the Cross
 Voices for God
 The Power of Prayer

The Power of His Resources
The Power of the Living Christ
Follow Me
Relationship of Gentlemen and Ladies
Relationship Between Old and New

1954

The Purpose and Power of Life: Honest
Answers to Honest Questions (Theme)

Power Over Powers
Power of Cooperating with God's Laws
The Cross and the Crossroads
Power of God's Directing
Power of God's Concern
Power of God's Love
Power of Surrender
Shall I Turn the Other Cheek?
Does It Pay to Be Honest?
How May I Have a Mature Faith?
Can a Christian Sin?
What Color Is a Christian?
What Is Christian Marriage?
How Can I Know God's Will for Me?

1955

Tyranny of the Herd
When a Man Comes to Himself
The Secret of a Christian Personality
Begin with Yourself
Is Yours a Second-Hand Religion?
Man Is Heaven-Starved
Why Not Try God?
God Is At the Door
When One Feels His Limitations
This Business of Being Christian
Is It Worth What It Costs?
Ye Are The Branches
Ye Are My Friends
Ye Are the Salt of the Earth
Ye Are the Light of the World
And Ye Shall Be My Witnesses

1956

The Set of the Soul (Theme)
Who am I?
Who Is God?
Who Is Jesus?
What Is Sin?
What Is the Church?

What Is Immortality?
What Is Faith?
Who Is God's Enemy?
How to Have a Happy Marriage
Only God Is Great
The Robbery
God's Friends
The Deadly Sin of Accidie
What Is Judgement Day?
You Are Living in an Unchanging World

1957

The Danger of Becoming a Christian
The Danger of Being a Christian for the
Wrong Reasons
The Danger of Daily Encounter
The Danger of Faith That Pretends
Religious Faith or Discovery
The Danger of Crucifixion
The Most Dangerous Word You Can Hear
The Church As a Threat to Society
Do You Love Me?
Putting Your Faith Through College
The Seven Deadly Virtues
Juke-Box Religion
What Do the Miracles Mean to Modern
Man?
God and Color
The Christian Doctrine of Sex
The Will of God for Your Life

1958

In Search of the Uncommon Man
There Ought to Be Some Changes Made
Three Ways to Nowhere
Love and Marriage
Man of the Years
Our National Health
The Satellites and You
Preparation
About Our Faith
God Is What You Believe In
What Is a Christian?
Life's Greatest Question
Three Theological Questions
Positive Protestantism
The Faith and the Future

1959

By-life of Belief (Theme)

I Believe in God

I Believe in God's Revelation

I Believe in Jesus Christ as Lord

I Believe in Jesus Christ as Savior

I Believe in the Holy Spirit

I Believe in the Forgiveness of Sins

I Believe in the Resurrection and Life
Eternal

I Believe in a Creed to Conduct

The non-Conformity of Conscience

Hot and Cold Blooded Sins? the Rebel
Within Us

The Meaning of Baptism: Sprinkled by
the Spirit; Dunked of God

Progress with a Christian Purpose: What
is Christian Education?

Pertinent Prayer

Power Over Powers

Knowing God's Will for My Life

Circling Around Religion

1960

Your Faith and Your Life (Theme)

Christians Must Be Unpurchasable

God is Not Unknown

Our Hope for Years to Come and For-
ever

Life's Events and God's Providence

From Separation to Reunion

The Primary Purpose of Prayer

On Living Before and After you Die

Believing by Doing

On Recommending Your Religion

Whom God Hath Joined Together

When Work Becomes Worship

Where Is God's Dwelling Place?

A Tough Mind and a Tender Heart

Why the Cross

The Changing and the Changeless Church

This Thing Called Love

1961

Your Tomorrow

Do You Really Believe?

Prayer: Do You Care?

Your Profession

Christians in a Vacuum

The Church: Old Ironsides

Three Cheers

Are You Good Soil?

Is your Religion Real?

Test of Behavior

Love Not the World

Test of a Creed

The Rewards of Being Christian: Is it
Worth It?

Marriage: Duet or Duel?

1962

Not to Live Long but Well

What Christ Can Do for You

1963

Themes: Parables of the Old Testament
and Meaning for 1963

A Christian's Creed

1964

Man in the 1960's (Theme)

1965

On the Nature of Love

The Second Sexual Revolution

1966

The Twentieth Century Church

The Place of Christ

The Christian College

1967

Rapid Changes and a New Burst of
Freedom

Loss of Identity and New Styles of Life

The Erosion of Authority of Respon-
sibility

The Failure of Belief and the New
Theology

1968	Student Life Styles in a Changing Society
The Meaning of Faith in Our Time	1972
1969	The Struggle to Be Human (Theme)
World Church and Christian Unity (Theme)	1973
1970	There Is Hope but. . .(Theme)
The Christian's Relation to His Nation and Church (Theme)	1974
The Christian and the State	Freedom (Self Determination) (Theme)
The Christian and the Church	Take Charge of Your Life
	Ha! Ha! Ha!
1971	1975
Christianity: Confrontation and Change (Theme)	Survival: Alone or Together: The Christian and Global Consciousness (Theme)
Panel: Role of a College in a Changing Society	1976
	Who Speaks for Man? (Theme)

APPENDIX B

Leaders of February Meetings, 1970-1976*

1970	Dr. Edward Brubaker	1972	Father Geoffrey Skrinar
	Mr. Ray Nott		
	Dr. Bruce Rigdon	1973	The Rev. Beverly Asbury
	Dr. George Webber		
1971	Mr. Feliciano Carino	1974	Dr. John Fry
	Dr. C. Samuel Calian		
	The Rev. Mr. John G. Gatu	1975	Dr. Clinton M. Marsh
	Dr. Daniel B. Wessler		Dr. George R. Edwards
		1976	Dr. Phyllis Tribble
			Dr. Patrick Henry
			(Mr. Norman Cousins spoke to the theme in March)

* Leaders prior to 1970 may be found in R. W. Lloyd, Maryville College 150 years, 1819-1969. Only the off-campus leadership has been listed here. These were years of many campus-led seminars.

