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Alden Angline



John Fletcher



S. C. Ray



Roland Leath

Four Carolinians Boast . . .

73 Years of Religious Education Leadership

In a vocation where men and women come and go on an average of every five years or less, there are four ministers of education in North Carolina with a combined record of service in their churches of 73 years, or an average of slightly more than 18 years each.

The men are John Fletcher, Pritchard Memorial Church, Charlotte, 20 years service; S. C. Ray of First Church, Greensboro and Roland Leath of First Church, Shelby, nearly 18 years each; and Alden Angline, First Church, Asheville, 17 years. The churches they serve are among the largest in the state and are recognized widely for their strong educational programs.

How does a man stay year after year in the same place promoting the same kind of program with virtually the same people? Perhaps S. C. Ray who has been with the same pastor, Claud Bowen, for 17 years replies in a manner that would probably get the approval of the other three men: "The ability to get along with people . . . is absolutely imperative in a long ministry. Much of the success of a minister of education's ministry depends upon an effective working relationship with his pastor."

Should Feel "God-Called"

Ray feels strongly that any person who goes into the field of religious education should feel called of God to that service. "God has never called me to preach," he says. "He called me to be a minister of education."

Before coming to Greensboro in October, 1949, he was minister of education at Calvary Church, Jackson,

Miss., the church Dr. Bowen served before coming to Greensboro.

John Fletcher came to Pritchard Memorial 20 years ago just after his graduation from Southwestern Seminary. He has worked with just one Sunday school superintendent — W. T. (Bill) Harris. He also has high praise for the two pastors with whom he has worked—Dr. William Harrison Williams and Dr. James Potter.

See Them "Grow"

"One joy in this work is the opportunity to see young men and women whom you knew as primaries and juniors become church leaders — some even becoming missionaries and preachers," Fletcher says. "The downtown church must continue to improve

its preaching, studying and developing in such a varied manner that it will 'pull in the people' from the residential areas." He credits men like L. L. Morgan, Jimmy Morgan and Jasper Barnette with having a great influence on his life.

At the end of this year, Roland Leath will have rounded out 18 years at Shelby, serving most of the time in the two fields—education and music.

"My main concern has been to discover people with leadership potential and to encourage and help train them to become leaders," he says. "The biggest challenge I have is to adjust to changing attitudes, methods and conditions. Along with trying to perform specific duties in my area, I try to 'fit in' wherever I can help."

"Challenging, Profitable"

Alden Angline began his 18th year at First Church, Asheville, August 1. He came to that position after serving 12 years as a production supervisor with American Enka Corporation near Asheville. After resigning his position at Enka, he enrolled at Southwestern Seminary. Like the other men, he considers "the task of enlisting, training, developing and directing the organizational leadership of the church to be the most challenging and most profitable expenditure of one's time.

"Almost any problem in a program of religious education can be overcome through sufficient, competent, dedicated, informed leadership. It is the means by which the minister of education multiplies himself many times over."

There Have Been Lighter Moments

In their long years of service at their four churches, these well-known ministers of education have had their share of humorous experiences. Alden Angline relates one:

"I instructed the janitor to be sure to clean out the baptistry after a Christmas tableau had been held there during the Sunday school hour. He chose to do it during the morning worship hour. Someone pulled the curtains open and there he stood, frozen, up behind Dr. Crouch who was preaching away."

Saluting Four Specialists With Outstanding Records

MINISTERS OF EDUCATION don't often win recognition for their long service—but there are outstanding exceptions. Four of these men are spotlighted on page 12 this week. John Fletcher of Charlotte, S. C. Ray of Greensboro, Roland Leath of Shelby and Alden Angline of Asheville have served their churches a total of 73 years—an unusual record in a vocation where the length of service is too often five years or less.

It takes a special talent to do education work and all these men possess it to a remarkable degree. The minister of education understands that he is not pastor yet he works closely with the pastor at all times. In addition, he has a constant and direct relationship with church members, perhaps even more than the pastor because of the nature of educational work.

The RECORDER salutes all of the men and women in our state who are serving in this never-easy capacity. Especially do we commend these four men for being such stalwart examples in their profession. Our prayer is that more young people will be influenced by their example and new generations will be raised up to carry on this demanding but satisfying work.