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A PAGEANT OF THE CHURCH

Eleanor B. Forman & Mabel E. Stone

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A PAGEANT OF THE CHURCH*

ELEANOR B. FORMAN AND MABEL E. STONE

PROCESSIONAL HYMN: The Church's One Foundation.

PROLOGUE

Worship Among the Hebrews

Scene: In the Temple at the hour of morning sacrifice. Priests and Levites gathered about the altar with the people in the distance.

Music: Psalm 24 chanted.

EPISODE I

The Apostolic Church

"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

Scene 1: Paul preaching to a Gentile city.

Place: Outside the gates of Lystra. (Paul and Barnabas worshiped as gods. Timothy is called.)

Scene 2: Agabus binds Paul.

Place: Near the gates of Caesarea. (The price of apostleship.)

Scene 3: Paul before Agrippa.

Place: The Judgment Hall of Caesarea.

Music: "Hear us, Thou that broodest."

INTERLUDE I †

Confronting the City with Christ

"Turn the city's churches inside out to reach the people."

Place: A city street of to-day showing the entrance to a tent church.

(Paul was a city man and we who would give Christ to the city must love it as he loved it.)

Music: "Where cross the crowded ways of life."

EPISODE II

The Early Church

"I plead with you therefore brethren, by the compassions of God, to present all your faculties to Him as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to Him."

Scene: The birthday of Tarcisius.

Time: The year 260 A. D.

Place: One of the tiny chapels of the catacombs without Rome.

(The story of little Tarcisius is one of the many from which the devotion of life and service in the early days of the Church's history shines clear through the ages with its radiant joy in the Life that has conquered death.)

Music: "The strife is o'er."

*The complete book of the pageant is to be published by and may be purchased from the Publication Department of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association, 600 Lexington Avenue, New York City. Price 25c.

†Published as an example of the use of music and pageantry in religious education. The plan outlined permits of great freedom in amplification. The interlude is in each case the attempt to show that phase of the modern church which has grown out of the historic church as presented in the preceding episode.

INTERLUDE II

The Call of the Church To-day

"Ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Place: A college campus where a group of girls are discussing what they will do after college.

The Spirit of the Church enters and pictures the need of the world for God. One by one, thoughtfully or impetuously, eagerly, or with lingering, but always with joy at last, they answer.

Music: "Rejoice, ye pure in heart."

EPISODE III

The Beginning of the Church in Britain

"That they may know the mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Scene: The founding of the monastery of Iona by St. Columba.

Time: 563 A. D.

Place: The shores of Iona near a Pictish village in the early morning.

(Here St. Columba founded the monastery that was to become a great missionary college of signal influence.)

Music: St. Patrick's Hymn.

INTERLUDE III

The Founding of an American College for the Education of the Clergy

"—May they teach as Thou Thyself hast taught them, hand on the gifts which Thou Thyself hast given, rule well Thy people—"

Place: A school room in a New England town.

(The scene is based on records of the founding of Yale and Harvard—"that the ministry might not become illiterate when those who had come from the mother country should lie in the dust.")

Music: "Christ is made the sure foundation."

EPISODE IV

The Medieval Church

"Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit."

Scene 1: St. Catherine of Siena.

Time: 1375 A. D., when the popes had exiled themselves for years at Avignon, leaving the Church torn by the rebellious Italian cities and blackened by unbelievable greed and sin within herself.

Place: A small room, high above a narrow street in Siena, where the tanner, Catherine's father lived.

Here Catherine spent most of the thirty-odd years of her life and from here were sent many of her letters to peasants and kings, popes and hermits, carrying the flame of her unconquerable faith. It was mainly through her letters that she sought to nerve the popes to lift the Church from the sin which

was agony to Catherine and to establish it in purity and humility. Most of her letters were dictated to Neri di Landoccio, a young Italian noble, her disciple and secretary.

"She had given her all to the Church—her courage, her patience, her audacity, her constancy. She had been racked by the sins of the Church and her pain had expressed itself, not in desertion but in service."

Scene 2: St. Francis of Assisi.

Time: In the 13th century near the close of St. Francis' life.

Place: Outside a village at sunset—among the simple folk that Francis loved.

"Out of his grief he snatched the material of that spirit which has made the word 'Franciscan' synonym of that pure, simple joyousness which one finds in the lives of little children and among the pure in heart."

Music: "For all the saints."

INTERLUDE IV

The Good News Still Preached on the Open Road

"He who holds his life dear is destroying it—
He who makes it of little account will keep it forever."

Time: The present.

Place: A cottage on the Labrador, visited in the long journeys of the mission doctor.

(A young medical student with the mission doctor, questioning the need of "throwing his life away in such a place" finds his answer in the lameness of a little boy.)

Music: "For all the saints."

EPISODE V

The Church in Reformation

"And He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. 'Of such is the Kingdom, He said.'"

Scene 1: Martin Luther teaching little children to read the Bible.

(Luther was the earnest champion of the principle that no child should be denied the training in the rudiments of education heretofore given only to those who were to enter the Church.)

Music: "Ein Feste Burg."

Scene 2: Wesley preaching to the country people by the roadside.

(Wesley taught the Church how to bring the Good News to the everyday man and woman.)

Music: "Love Divine, all love excelling."

INTERLUDE V

The Modern Church Educating Its Children

"Suffer the little children to come unto Me."

Scene: A modern Sunday school with its worship, study, and expression.

Music: "Little Lord Jesus."

EPISODE VI

Bringing the Church to America

"One the object of our journey, one the faith that never tires,
One the earnest looking forward, one the hope our God inspires."

Scene 1: Planting the cross in northern Michigan.

Time: June, 1671. The Jesuit mission to America.

Place: The shores of the Sault Ste Marie.

Music: Jesuit hymn, "Vixella Regis."

Scene 2: The landing of the Pilgrims.

Music: Doxology.

Scene 3: The Franciscans in California.

Time: The Feast of St. Joseph, March 19, 1770.

Place: San Diego, the site of the first mission.

(How Father Serra, a Franciscan monk, dreamed of taking the Good News to the "Gentile Indians" of California and by his faith brought his dream to pass.)

Music: "Sancte Deus."

INTERLUDE VI

Foreign Missions of the Church

"As a man has received the gift, so let him minister the same one to the other."

Scene: The tent of a medical missionary.

Music: "Jesus shall reign where e'er the sun."

EPILOGUE

The Task of the Church

"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

(The Spirit of the Church, face to face with the yet unfinished task of the Church—to bring the Kingdom of God to a world torn by war, class hatred, and useless waste of life and strength, and weakened by unrighteousness—shrinks back in dismay until she sees the Church as the body of those who, from Pentecost until now, have gone forward fearlessly to victory, knowing "one hope, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of us all.")

Music: "God is working His purpose out."

RECESSIONAL HYMN: "Lead on, O King Eternal."

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NOTABLE CHURCH BUILDINGS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL PLANTS

*St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal.....Cedar Rapids, Iowa
First Congregational Church.....Winnetka, Ill.
Pilgrim Congregational Church.....Cleveland, Ohio