

Class Prophecy

I returned to the hotel late that evening and was surprised to find a letter waiting for me. It was special delivery and had been mailed two days earlier. It bore the mark January 18, 1969.

Thinking it only some business correspondence, I stuffed it into my pocket and went wearily to my room where, after a short while, I opened it. It read:

Dear Fellow Graduate:

If it is possible, we request your presence at the Gibson Hotel Auditorium on January 20, 1969 at 7:30.

Truly yours,

Rev. Eugene Stapleton

The letter was rather vague and that coupled with hearing from Gene Stapleton after nineteen years, rather confused me. I couldn't imagine what might be so important and why me. I was pleased, however, since my work allowed me to travel a great deal and thus gave an opportunity to investigate the matter more fully. The unexpected message aroused my memories and as I lay in bed I thought back of my old gang of '50, of Dick Beyer, Harold Back and Robert Cullen, of William Manning and Larry Kilgore. We had had lots of fun. Presently my thoughts faded into sleep filled pleasantly with dreams of high school days.

Next morning I arose early in order to pack and make plane reservations. The trip to Cincinnati was but a few hours so I had no fear of arriving too late. The plane, in fact, was ahead of schedule and I found myself at Greater Cincinnati Airport in plenty of time.

I reached the Gibson Hotel about seven o'clock where, to my surprise, I found many of the old Woodward Graduates. None knew any more than I, so all we could do was mill around discussing the possibilities. Finally Eugene Stapleton appeared and explained the purpose of our meeting.

It seemed that in recent years Cincinnati had become more and more in need of an institute for its orphans and underprivileged children and that Gene and several others who had gone into church work and social work had made plans for a William Woodward Youth Foundation, which would greatly relieve the situation. The group already active toward establishing this foundation consisted of Charlotte Condia, Director of Religious Education and Youth Work, Ruth Reynolds, recently back from a missionary journey to China, and a committee from the social welfare of Gwendolyn Finney, Anna Holmes, Hattie Sims and Marie Twyman. The help of more Woodward graduates was needed, however, and thus this meeting was called.

There were about fifty of us at the first session and there was unanimous approval of the plan.

Of course the job was tremendously big and we could only hope to lay the groundwork and get things started. Eugene presented a tentative outline of his plans and work. Committees were immediately formed. A great deal of money was needed so the campaign was to be necessarily on a grand scale.

The first step was, of course, advertising. As the head of that department we chose Steve Reynolds, now a radio and T. V. personality, to handle all publicity through those mediums. He was even able to secure a T. V. show for our purpose. Working with Steve were David Thomas and Marvin Burkett, both top-notch reporters on the Enquirer. As an additional novel type of advertisement, we called on Norma Cuzzort and Charlene Lewis to prepare a short dramatic skit in pamphlet form concerning our cause. Directly related to the advertising was our art and mechanics departments. Arthur Page, who had acquired fame as a medical illustrator for the Encyclopedia Britannica, and Henry Yee, political poster designer, headed the poster designing section. Gene Fryer and the firm of Marvin Grizzard, Willie Rinehart, Printers Inc., volunteered their services as poster printers.