

ROBERT W. ANDERSON—A BRIEF SKETCH OF HIS LIFE

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Robert (Bob) Wayne Anderson was born August 7, 1937, and grew up in Shannon City, Iowa, with his parents and two sisters.¹ There he attended one-room country schools. Years later, when his church in Tacoma, Washington, completed the building for its Christian school, Pastor Anderson was able to secure the school bell from one of his schools, and it now sits atop the building, ready to be used to start the school day in its new location.²

In 1956 Bob was converted to Christ under the preaching of the Rev. David Otis Fuller. He attended Sterling College in Kansas, and then transferred to Shelton College in New Jersey, earning his B.A. there.

Bob enrolled in Faith Theological Seminary in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, in order to prepare for the gospel ministry. While studying at Faith, he attended the Bible Presbyterian Church and sat under the preaching of Dr. Carl McIntire. It was there at the Collingswood church that he met a young lady, Nancy Titzck, who was later to become his wife.

While a student at Faith, Bob attended the convention of the International Council of Christian Churches in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, in 1962. Bob actively supported this agency and its associated churches and missions for many years as a pastor, even traveling and speaking on a month-long mission tour of South Korea in 1969.

After his graduation from Faith in 1963, he was called and became the pastor of the Bible Presbyterian Church in Maryville, Tennessee.³

In 1965 he attended the convention of the International Council of Christian Churches in Geneva, Switzerland. There, near the Reformation Wall with its statues of Calvin and the other Reformers, Robert proposed to Nancy and they became engaged. They were married in Collingswood on September 2, 1966.

Just six months later, in March 1967, the young minister was called to become the pastor of the historic Tacoma Bible Presbyterian Church in Tacoma, Washington. This church had come out from the Presbyterian Church USA in the 1930s, had been one of the larger Bible Presbyterian churches throughout the years, and had consistently and generously supported the

¹ We thank Robert's wife Nancy Anderson for supplying most of the details for this article, as well as the photograph of her husband.

² The school children sign up in advance for the privilege of ringing the bell.

³ It was there that I first met Bob, in the summer of 1964. I was a part of the Highland College summer gospel team, traveling with Dr. Robert Kofahl. Bob cooked a breakfast for our team in his bachelor apartment, delicious Swedish pancakes! He also played one of his favorite stereo records for us—the sounds of steam and diesel locomotives passing by.

agencies of the denomination.⁴ He and his new bride moved across the country to take on this work.

For thirty-seven years Robert Anderson served as pastor of the Tacoma Bible Presbyterian Church. During those years his consistent preaching and ministry bore much fruit in the lives of the congregation, and blessed other works as well. Bob's biblical, Reformed preaching and teaching through the years is arguably the greatest human cause for that church's present dedication to the doctrines of the Reformation.

In 1971 he was deeply involved in the founding of Heritage Christian School, which now includes kindergarten through grade eight. Over the years at Heritage thousands of children have been well taught in biblical and Reformed doctrines, as well as in the important academic subjects. Presently Heritage is the only Christian school in America sponsored by a Bible Presbyterian church.⁵

Bob was and still is very active in the Northwest Presbytery of the Bible Presbyterian Church. In 1969 he helped found and then, for most of its early years, directed the annual summer presbytery youth camp near Kalispel, Montana. He has never missed a camp since, except one year in 1976, when he was attending the ICCC convention in Nairobi, Kenya.⁶ In addition, he frequently has traveled to preach in vacant pulpits throughout the presbytery, and to strengthen and encourage his fellow ministers.

In 1978 he was honored by his brethren in ministry to be elected and to serve as moderator of the 42nd General Synod of the Bible Presbyterian Church. Another highlight of his life and ministry was his Holy Land trip, taken in 1982.

Later, in the summer of 1982, Pastor Anderson and the session of the Tacoma church invited John Battle, Ron Bergey, and Chris Lensch to come to Tacoma to begin a new theological seminary in the Northwest, to meet in the spacious church building. This had been a desire of many in the church for years, to sponsor and support complete Christian education, from kindergarten through seminary! As a result, Western Reformed Seminary was established in Tacoma, being incorporated in 1983. For many years, until his retirement, Robert Anderson served on the board of the seminary, and he was one of its strongest defenders and supporters.⁷ Under his leadership the church labored and gave sacrificially so that the seminary could get off to a good start. Through the years the Tacoma church has continued to house the seminary.

When the Presbyterian Missionary Union was formed in 1985, Robert Anderson served on the organizing committee. He encouraged our sister denomination, the Independent

⁴ For a history of the beginning of the Tacoma church, see David C. Sinding, "Roy Talmage Brumbaugh: Bible Presbyterian Pioneer in the Northwest," *WRS Journal* 11:1 (February 2004): 8-15.

⁵ Heritage's website: <http://www.heritagecs.net/staff.html>.

⁶ One job is typical of his heart for service. Every year, in addition to all his other tasks, Bob is the one who personally mashes all the potatoes for dinner for all the campers.

⁷ I remember vividly one late afternoon, after we had first moved to Tacoma, that our doorbell rang. There at the door was Bob Anderson! He was dirty and tired after an exhausting day of physical work. He had cut and hauled firewood for our wood stove, and presented us with a truckload of it on our driveway. Such acts of generous labor are typical of him.

Presbyterian Church of Kenya, when he was the graduation speaker for Faith College of the Bible in 1996.

Pastor Anderson retired from the pastorate in November 2004. However, he continues to be active in ministry. He recently returned from a 2½ -month preaching trip in Australia, and more such trips are envisioned.

Robert Anderson's sermons are consistently well-prepared, biblical, and theologically oriented. He normally types out all his sermons ahead of time, but delivers them from notes and memory. It would be profitable for his sermons to be collected and published. Some of his sermons can be found in the Minutes of the various synods of the Bible Presbyterian Church.⁸ He also has written several articles in the *WRS Journal*,⁹ and publications for Fundamental Presbyterian Publications.¹⁰

Bob Anderson has through the years, in one way or another, touched the lives of thousands of people. He has served the Lord humbly and faithfully, through good times and adversities. The Lord has used him as a positive force for His church. He is an excellent example of the true pastor/theologian.

⁸ These are noted in the article by Earl Brown in this issue of the *WRS Journal*.

⁹ "A Short Biography of Charles Hodge" 4:2 (August 1997): 9-13; "Andrew Melville: Lion of Scotland" 3:2 (August 1996): 42-46; "A Lament" (a look at Lamentations in the light of the terrorism of 9/11) 9:1 (February 2002): 25-29.

¹⁰ "A Bicentennial Remembrance—Charles Hodge" (1997), and "Infant Baptism" and "Marring of Marriage" (2004).