Blake Urges Church Union

By RICHARD BEST

Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., discussed the problems of his plan for American Christian union in the Rice Chapel last Wednesday evening.

His 1960 proposal for union between the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and the United Church of Christ has not only met with favorable and sustained response, but representatives of the four bodies are now “exploring the possibilities for reunion.”

THE CENTRAL problems of reunification, Blake asserted, are three-fold: the real importance of reunion on Christian grounds; the size of the new church; and the difficulty of union between evangelical and catholic understandings of unity.

In his talk at Rice, Blake concerned himself chiefly with the first and third problems.

With regard to the necessity of reunion on Christian grounds, Blake pointed out that the churches must not think of absorption of other bodies, nor of opportunities for power politics. Reunion would mean the enrichment of all groups and would “expose to the world the unity of Christ.”

THE ECUMENICAL leader also noted that there is more agreement on central doctrines than the average Christian would believe.

Real difficulties would occur on the proposed “unification of ministries,” but Blake insists that both evangelicals and Anglo-Catholics should agree that in such a church there will be different opinions as to what Christ has done.

IN THE UNIFIED church there would be equal emphasis on word and sacrament. The bishops would be “pastors of pastors,” simply dressed, and not ecclesiastical lords.

The reason for the emphasis on Anglo-Catholics, a “minority group in a small aristocratic church,” is that they hold the key to a Protestant-Orthodox Rapprochement.