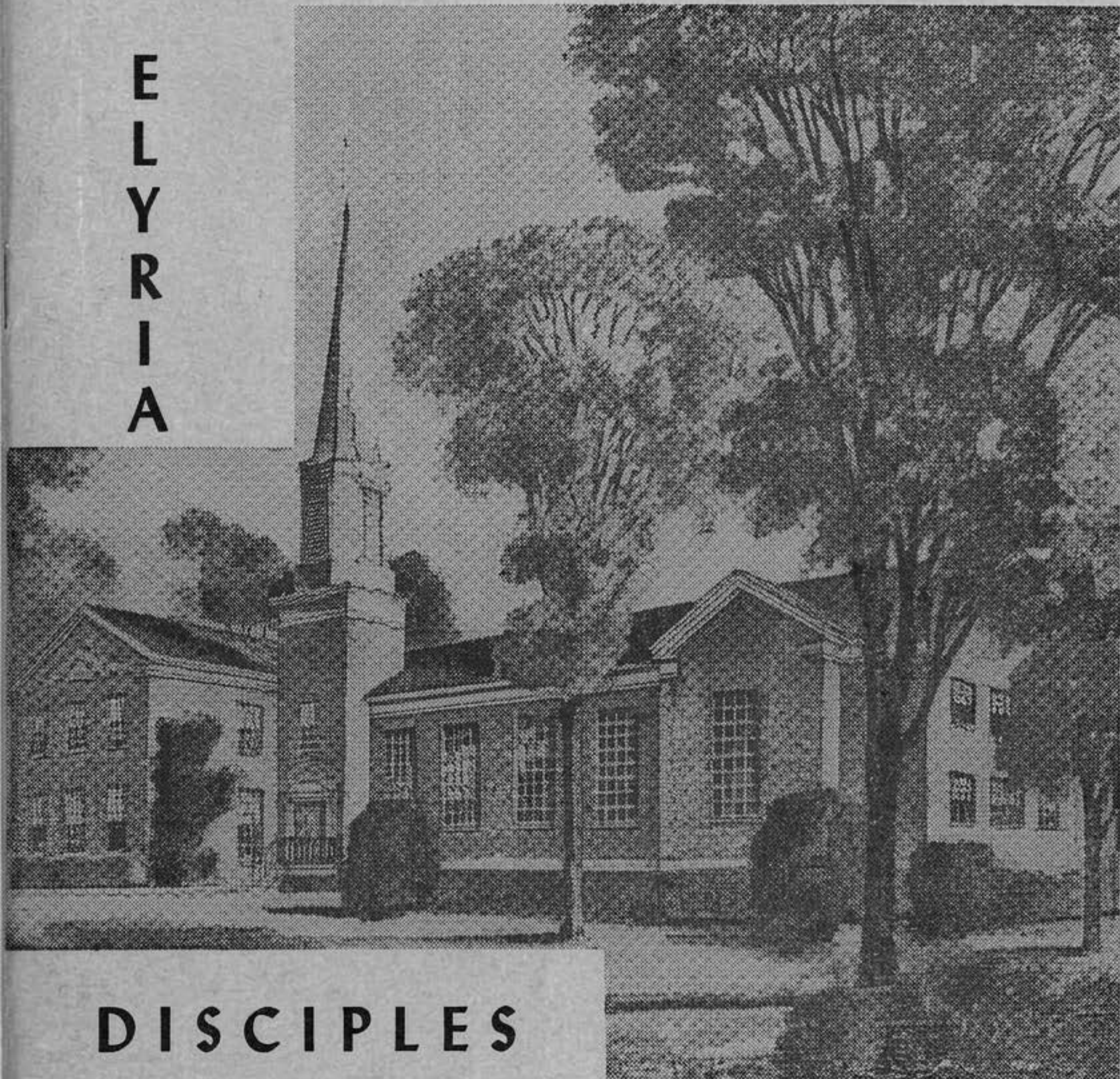


E L Y R I A



DISCIPLES

by Henry K. Shaw

The story of the Disciples of Christ in Elyria, Ohio, from pioneer days to the present, and published to commemorate the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the present congregation in Elyria, 1881-1956.

ELYRIA DISCIPLES

ELYRIA DISCIPLES

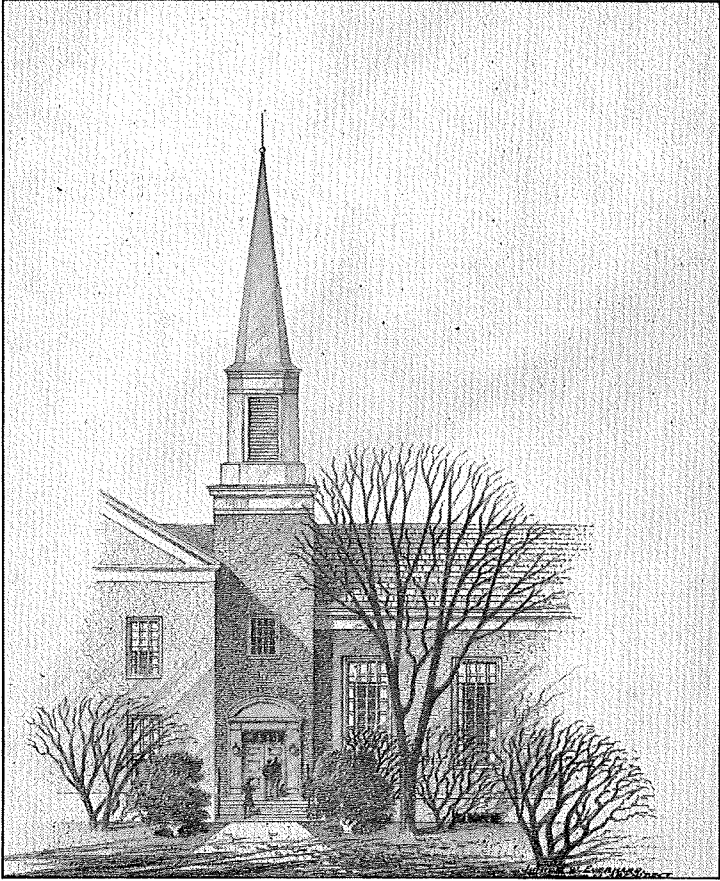
THE STORY OF THE DISCIPLES
OF CHRIST IN ELYRIA, OHIO

By HENRY K. SHAW

*A Seventy-fifth Anniversary Publication
of the Washington Avenue Church of Christ*

1881

1956



To the five consecrated Disciples

James T. Robinson

Dr. A. C. Moore

Raymond Haven

Sheldon Streater

Jacob L. Tucker

who in 1880 had a vision of a great church in Elyria and the courage to act on their faith by the outright purchase of a meetinghouse for a congregation not yet organized, this booklet is appreciatively dedicated.



HENRY K. SHAW

P R E F A C E

When plans were being made for the laying of the cornerstone of the new Washington Avenue building, there was discussion concerning what should be placed in the metal container. A history of the trials, struggles, and achievements of the church were thought to be of primary importance. In accordance with this idea, data was collected and a manuscript of this nature prepared. It was read at the last service in the old Second Street Church and then placed with other memorabilia in the cornerstone. The manuscript was never published.

This historical manuscript served as the basis for the present publication. New material was added, some corrections were made, the story brought up to date, and a number of photographs included to illustrate the text.

It is hoped that this booklet will be pleasing as well as a helpful and informative souvenir of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Washington Avenue Church of Christ.

HENRY K. SHAW

Elyria, Ohio

November 1, 1956

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1. The first part of the document
describes the general situation
of the country and the
state of the economy.
It also mentions the
main problems that
the government is facing.

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describes the measures that
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to solve these problems.
It also mentions the
results of these measures.

3. The third part of the document
describes the future plans
of the government.
It also mentions the
challenges that the
government is facing.

I

FORGOTTEN PIONEERS OF A FORGOTTEN CHURCH

In 1829, twelve years after the first settlers came to Elyria, two youthful Baptist preachers who had been influenced by the religious views of Alexander Campbell, were preaching in this small community. This was one year prior to the formal separation of Baptists and Disciples at Austintown, Ohio, and a period of widespread skepticism and bigotry on the frontier. These free-lance preachers were Matthew Clapp and Sidney Rigdon. Clapp was a brother-in-law of Alexander Campbell and the son of Judge Clapp of Mentor, Ohio. Rigdon, who didn't stay with the Disciples for long, is better known for his connection with the Mormon movement.

At this time, Clapp was challenged to a public debate in defense of the faith. His challenger was Joel Tiffany, who is described as a shrewd, accomplished, and eloquent attorney. Tiffany later wrote many legal books as *Tiffany's Code*, *The Law of Trusts and Trustees*, etc., hence, was an able opponent. Following this debate, which was probably the first of its kind in the Elyria community, Tiffany is reported to have said, "That is the last time I will ever stand in opposition to the Christian religion."

Three years later in 1832, other ministers of the Disciples made their appearance in Elyria. They were A. B. Green, William Moody, William Hayden and R. Jones. A congregation was formed with forty members among whom were Herrick Parker, H. Reddington, Ashael Parmley, and Dr. Butler. Judson D. Benedict, Lorain County prosecutor, became one of the early converts. He left the bar to preach the gospel in 1838, becoming the first life work recruit of the Elyria church.

These were the days when Andrew Jackson was President of the United States, a period of high political feeling. During the winter of the organization of the Church of Christ in Elyria, the Oberlin Colony



OLD COURT HOUSE WHERE SERVICES WERE HELD

and College had its inception, the Black Hawk War was being fought in the West, and a cholera epidemic raged on the frontier.

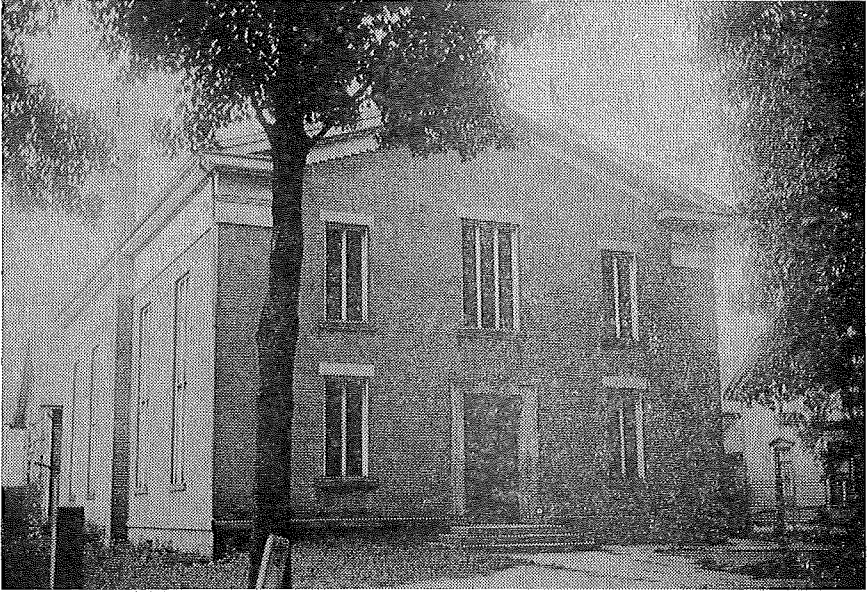
That this congregation was in existence for some time is substantiated from many sources, though the existing congregation has no actual record of this church. When Henry Howe, Ohio historian, visited Elyria in 1846 he noted the presence of five churches. One of these was the Church of Christ. Alexander Hall's religious census of 1847 lists the Church of Christ in Elyria and names Dr. N. H. Finney as pastor. A city directory of Medina, Elyria, and Oberlin, published in 1859, gives the account of a "Campbellite" church which held its meetings in the Court House with R. Jones as pastor. A. S. Hayden, president of Hiram College, who wrote the first published history of the Disciples, gave a description of the planting of the first Elyria congregation, in his book, *Early History of the Disciples in the Western Reserve*. From this evidence and from references in other sources, there is no doubt as to the actual existence of this first church even though it apparently was not known to the founders of the second congregation. Because of deaths and removals, however, the congregation ceased to be active after 1865.

II

ESTABLISHING THE PRESENT ORGANIZATION

Fifteen years after the pioneer congregation ceased to exist, a second or permanent organization had its beginning. In the Fall of 1880 it was pointed out to Disciples attending the Yearly Meeting at North Eaton that there was no Disciple church at the county seat town of Elyria. This was the year when Disciples were quite conscious of their mission because one of their preaching brothers, James A. Garfield, was a candidate for the Presidency of the United States. People were naturally curious about Garfield's religious views and were making inquiries. Through justifiable pride in their new status, the Disciples, basking in Garfield's sunlight, were establishing many churches throughout the land.

Feeling deeply on the matter, a self-appointed committee of five men: James T. Robinson, Dr. A. C. Moore, Raymond Haven, Sheldon Streator and Jacob L. Tucker, took the situation in hand. There was an abandoned Methodist church building at the corner of Second and Chapel Streets, built in 1851, available for purchase. A stone chapel which once served as a school house was in the rear of the building and was connected with the property. The committee purchased both these buildings for \$1,100 in cash. Next, they arranged with the Ohio Christian Missionary Society for the support of a mission preacher in Elyria. Then they got in touch with W. C. Allen who was deputy clerk in the Common Pleas Court, asking him to call a meeting of all known Disciples in the vicinity five days before Christmas in 1880. At this meeting, Allen spoke for the committee and explained its proposals. Briefly, if they would organize a congregation they could use the meetinghouse and the Ohio Society would give partial support of a minister. The challenge was accepted and committees were chosen at once to arrange for finances, renovate the old buildings, and obtain the necessary new furnishings. When T. D. Garvin, the new minister preached his first sermon in Elyria on February 13, 1881, the congregation was ready to accept its responsibility.



DISCIPLE MEETINGHOUSE AS IT LOOKED IN 1880

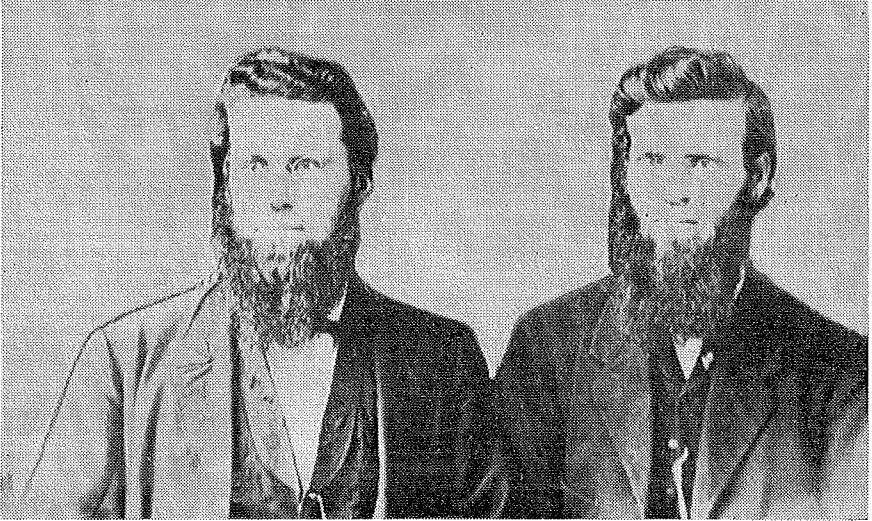
It is very likely the community didn't give much thought as to the permanence of the new venture nor did it expect the church to meet with much success. But then they didn't know T. D. Garvin! If they thought he was a novice at organizing churches they soon found they were mistaken. Garvin had started several churches, had been a newspaper editor and college president and was a man of wide experience and scholarly attainments. Had the Ohio Society not been supporting the work, such a man as Garvin could not have been secured. He received much opposition from the clergy of some of the Elyria churches but did not respond to their attacks. Garvin soon took a leading position among the ministers of the town. One of his first business transactions was the purchase of land on the west side of Lake Avenue. Garvin Street still bears his name.

When T. D. Garvin came on the field he arranged for a charter membership Sunday, had a baptistry built and started an evangelistic meeting.

The Charter Membership Roll was opened March 13, 1881. The church was constituted with the reading of the church letters of those who would be charter members. T. D. Garvin and his wife presented letters from Columbus. The North Eaton church had granted letters to William D. Mead and wife, Jeremiah Van Wormer and wife, James Warnock and wife, George D. Ogden and wife, Stanley M. Parmley and William P. Dawley. The Flannery sisters, Maggie and Rose, together with Owen Phipps and his wife brought letters from Lorain. Henry W. Houghton and wife presented letters from Hamilton, Missouri. Amos R. Webber and wife had letters from Hinckley, Ohio. Wellington, Ohio, was represented by Mary White, and Mrs. Emma McNeal had a letter from Cleveland. W. C. Allen was received by statement.

The Ladies' Aid Society was organized the same day with Mrs. Matilda Mead as president. The ladies served their first church dinner that evening in the stone chapel. The last president in office when the Society united with the Women's Council was Mrs. Emma Kuthenrither, a loyal worker. The Missionary Society was formed as an auxiliary of the Christian Women's Board of Missions on May 6, 1881. Mrs. Myron F. Penfield was first president.

As the weeks passed, many were added to the roll of the church. At the end of the first year there were seventy-two members. By this time the congregation was fully organized with T. D. Garvin as minister, Mrs. John Lantsbury playing the wheezy old parlor organ, W. C. Allen leading the singing and Stanley Parmley as Sunday school superintendent.



T. D. AND J. H. GARVIN AS THEY APPEARED IN THE 'EIGHTIES

Thirty-one members were added in 1882; forty-six in 1883; fifty-nine in 1884; thirty-five in 1885, and fifteen in 1886. When T. D. Garvin resigned in June, 1886, there were 204 members. The last year of his pastorate he was frequently absent from his pulpit.

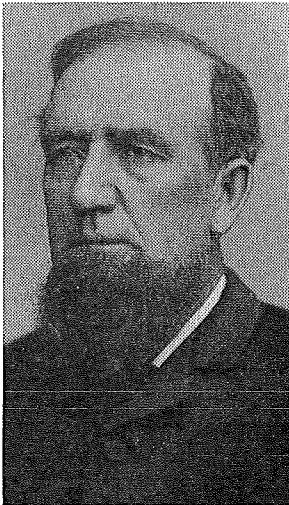
Wishing to have full title to the meetinghouse and chapel, the congregation incorporated April 19, 1883. The property was then transferred from the original owners and the mortgage paid off in three years.

The burning of the mortgage was a big event in the history of the church. A surprise party was announced and all members urged to attend. Only a few knew the real purpose of the meeting. When all had arrived, Stanley Parmley brought out a large pan and held it high so its contents couldn't be seen. He then declared in a serious voice, "In this pan is an old fellow who has made us a lot of trouble the past three years." Then gingerly picking a folded paper from the pan he continued, "Here's a varment that did his best to eat the church. What shall we do with him?" A boy sitting in the front row spoke up, "Better cremate him!" At this signal a torch was applied to the paper and the troublesome mortgage was no more. As the fire burned high, W. C. Allen sprang up and started the hymn, "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow."

III

THE CHURCH EXPANDS ITS INFLUENCE

When T. D. Garvin closed his Elyria ministry in 1884, the church called his brother, James H. Garvin, to take his place. The salary then was \$900 per year. James Garvin was not the outstanding pulpit man and administrator that his brother was, but he had many other fine qualities. He was deeply spiritual and well known for his excellent pastoral work. This was what the church needed. Mrs. T. D. Garvin had died two years before and the church needed a pastor's wife. Mrs. James H. Garvin was a talented musician and much sought after as a private voice instructor. She was able to help the congregation in many ways.



D. C. H. HANSELMAN

James H. Garvin also stayed with the church for four years. He was followed by D. C. H. Hanselman. Because of impaired health, this pastorate was short, extending from 1888 to 1889. Hanselman had attended Bethany and Hiram colleges. For several months between Hanselman's pastorate and the coming of E. W. Allen as minister, guest preachers supplied the pulpit. Herbert L. Willett was one of these. Willett later became a distinguished Bible scholar and writer, known throughout American Protestantism. Errett Gates, another University of Chicago scholar also supplied in Elyria at that time. Robert Moffett and Alanson Wilcox, both state secretaries of the Disciples were interim preachers as was E. J. Teagarden and E. D. Murch. The last named man entered the ministry by

way of the Elyria church. J. W. Jenkins was also a supply preacher and

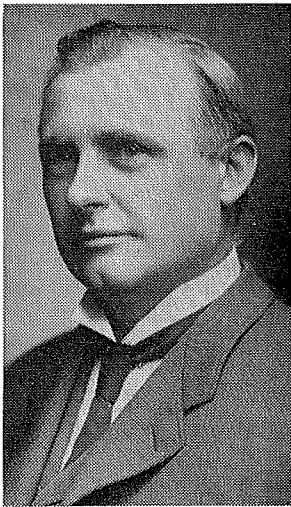
Jessie Brown Pounds, the hymn writer, preached on several occasions.

Edgar W. Allen, an Elyrian by birth, became minister starting October 5, 1890. The son of H. N. Allen of Elyria, he was a graduate of Hiram College and the University of Chicago. After he left Elyria he had a long successful career in the ministry, returning in 1933 to serve as interim pastor.



EDGAR W. ALLEN

assisted in getting an education at Hiram College by the generosity of James T. Robinson, slept in the tent at night, painted illustrative charts, ushered, and did personal work.



S. H. BARTLETT

With the coming of aggressive S. H. Bartlett as pastor in 1893, the church took new life. Bartlett came to Elyria directly from graduation at Hiram College. Several revival meetings were held during his pastorate, not only in Elyria but in the surrounding communities. His schoolhouse meetings in rural communities drew many people into the Elyria church. Under his leadership and with the assistance of James E. Hawes, well-known song evangelist, a tent meeting was held on the west side of the city. Harold Bell Wright, who later became famous as a novelist and who had been built in 1895. Lightning had destroyed the spire of the old Second Street church and rather than rebuild it, the insurance money received was put into the west side project. The west side mission was originally started because people living there had difficulty in getting down town, especially in the winter months. When transportation facilities became available, the west side Disciples came to the down-town church and the chapel was sold to the Congregationalists. The west side mission project ultimately developed into the Lake Avenue Congregational Church. The money received for the sale of the west side property was used for remodeling the Second Street building.

About this time the idea of a mission at La Porte was developed. The churches at North Eaton and Elyria cooperated in this venture and in 1894 a building was erected there. The La Porte mission was a going concern for many years. As in the case of the west side mission, when transportation facilities improved, La Porte members started attending church at Elyria and North Eaton and the La Porte outpost was no longer needed. Many of the best workers in

the Elyria church came into the fellowship by way of the La Porte mission.

The temperance movement, which at that time meant total prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating beverages, was beginning to come into general popularity about the turn of the century. The Elyria church supplied two wheel-horses for the Anti-Saloon League in the persons of A. R. Webber and S. H. Bartlett. Bartlett was present and assisted at the organization of the League in Oberlin, and became president of the Elyria League which was the second to be organized in the nation. The first public address in America on behalf of the Anti-Saloon League was made by A. R. Webber in the old opera house, now City Hall. During this period the churches frequently held union Sunday evening meetings, but only for the prohibition cause.

In 1893, the Busy Bees, forerunners of Christian Endeavor and the youth program of the Elyria church, were organized in the stone chapel. The young people helped S. H. Bartlett and James E. Hawes in the west side meeting and raised money for the La Porte mission. The first president of this group was Jennie E. Davis. Miss Davis later volunteered for missionary work in China under the Christian Women's Board of Missions. She died within three months after arriving in the Orient. The young people held meetings each Sunday afternoon, studied the lives of missionaries, promoted a program of reading good literature and kept the church supplied in flowers.

During the early 'nineties there was a major economic depression, called a "panic" in those days. "General" Coxey's army of unemployed marched on Washington in 1894. The advance made by the Elyria church in this critical period in the nation's history is probably due to the leadership of young Bartlett. Robert G. Ingersoll, widely known agnostic, once lectured in the city. Bartlett sat in one of the front seats and took notes. He then announced through the newspapers, "Hear the other side!" As a result of meeting the challenge the church was filled to hear what Bartlett had to say. After three years in Elyria, he was called to lead the work of the Ohio Christian Missionary Society through a critical centralization program.

IV

THE CHURCH EXPANDS ITS BUILDING

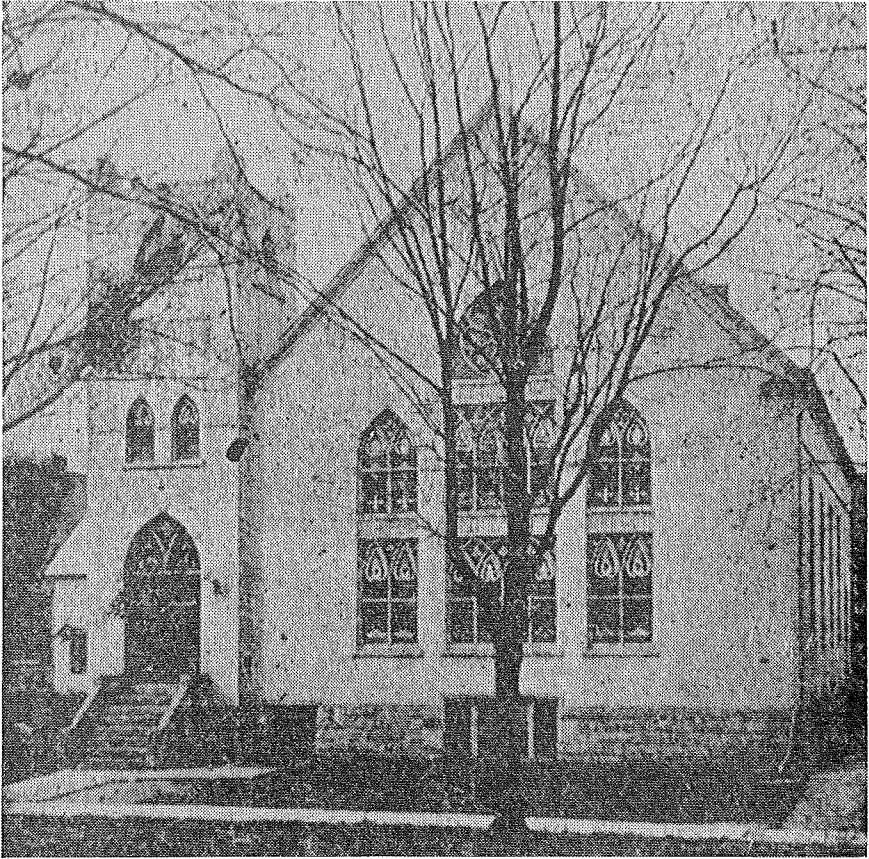
By this time the members began to think that improvements ought to be made on the old building. This was in accord with the views of



AMOS TOVELL

Amos Tovell who preached his first sermon in Elyria on March 25, 1896. Tovell was a Canadian and thirty-five years old at the time. His academic preparation had been made at the University of Toronto and Hiram College. Prior to entering the ministry he had been a school teacher. During the Tovell pastorate a basement was excavated under the old building, an addition was made on the Second Street side so that the sanctuary would be separated from the Sunday school with two huge sliding doors, an inclined floor was installed, a new pitched roof was placed over the old, the balconies on the east and west sides were removed, a tower with a street entrance was placed at the front, changes were made on the chancel, and new heating and lighting equipment was installed. The total cost of this expansion program was \$6,000. Believing the stone chapel in the rear of the church, remembered now as a tin shop, would no longer be needed because meals could be served in the new basement, it was sold for \$1,300 to help pay for the new construction. E. V. Zollars, president of Hiram College, re-dedicated the church on January 22, 1899.

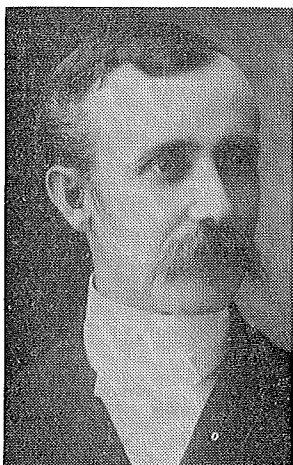
This was an era of high political feeling with the terrible panic still fresh in the memory of the people. The signs of war were also in the air. The battleship Maine had been blown up in Havana Harbor. Appar-



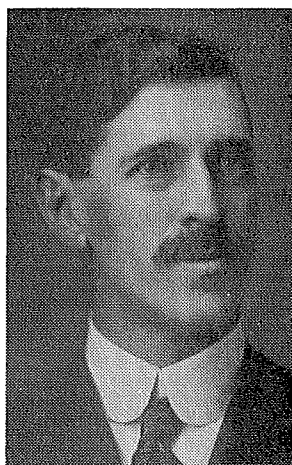
THE BUILDING AS IT APPEARED AFTER THE FIRST EXPANSION IN 1898

ently these things didn't deter progress for in 1897 E. C. Davis held an evangelistic meeting in the church and the following year one was conducted by Robert Moffett. The necessity for increased giving for the building project made it difficult to meet current expenses for the records show that on Sunday, October 1, 1899, "Brother Webber occupied the entire time of the morning service trying to raise sufficient funds to pay Brother Tovell."

J. C. B. Stivers, a Kentuckian and a College of the Bible graduate, was called to Elyria from a pastorate at Missoula, Montana, to succeed Amos Tovell. The new building program may have caused dissention in the church for the records state that after coming to Elyria from Montana for a trial sermon, Stivers was employed as a result of a vote of twenty-nine for and thirteen against him. The Stiver's pastorate continued for but one year and his place was taken by J. A. Egbert, who had just been graduated from Hiram College. The work in Elyria must have discouraged Egbert because after serving one year he entered another profession. His Elyria sojourn was not unrewarding, however, for



J. C. B. STIVERS



J. A. EGBERT

when he left he took with him his bride, Josephine Comings, daughter of Elyria's school superintendent.

About this time, Ellen M. Maddock, who had joined the church during T. D. Garvin's pastorate, was commissioned by the Christian Women's Board of Missions as a missionary to India. She served the board from 1899 to 1909, the year of her death. So the first two foreign missionaries who volunteered from the Elyria church, died on the mission field. Mary J. Maddock, Ellen's sister, went to India in 1909, primarily to look after her ailing sister. She remained in the service until 1911.

John P. Sala had a significant pastorate with the Elyria church from 1902 to 1910. Like Bartlett, he was interested in the temperance movement, which was pleasing to A. R. Webber. Though Webber was a Republican and Elyria a Republican stronghold, the efforts of Webber and Sala on the local political level turned Elyria Democratic by nine votes for the sake of temperance.

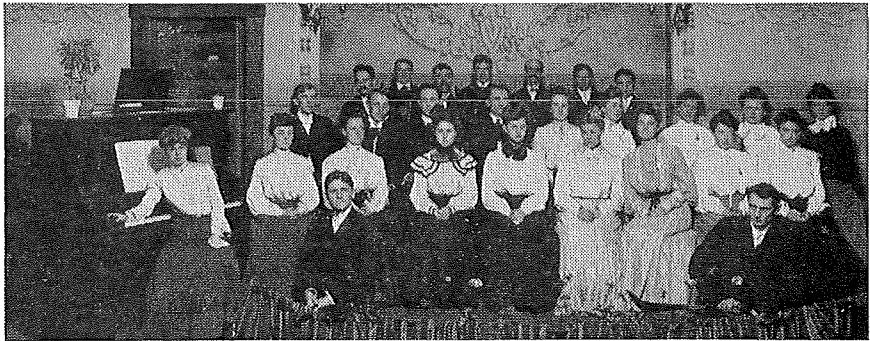


JOHN P. SALA

The year 1909 was a big one for the church. The first Mother's Day was observed then. Also, the church was host to the Thirty-Fourth Convention of Ohio Disciples. Most of the convention assemblies were held in the Congregational church but the Methodist ladies served the meals. Following a men's rally, when the subject of course was temperance, two hundred Disciple men marched around the square singing "Onward Christian Soldiers."

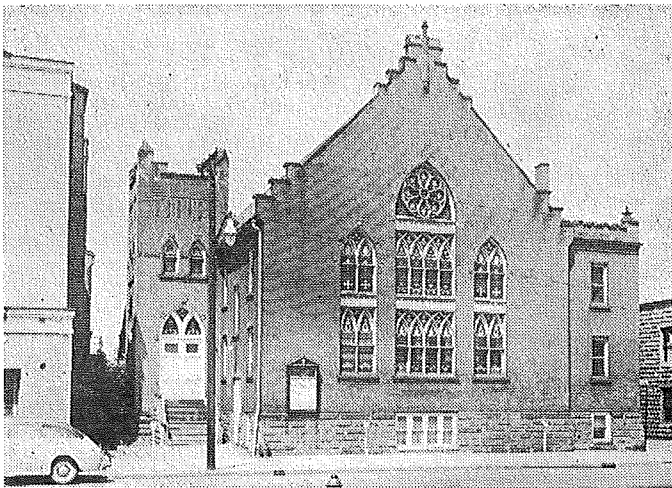
To this time the church had produced missionaries but wasn't very strong in its financial support of the cause. Sala's ministry pointed up better stewardship in missionary work and local contributions were substantially increased.

The church grew in membership and prestige during the Sala pastorate. As early as 1903, plans were made to expand the building again. Sala wanted the church to buy the lot immediately west of the building where the abandoned Rialto theatre once stood, but the board thought it was a poor investment. If they had paid the required \$1,200 for this lot it would have been possible to expand the building in that direction and keep the tower entrance and front of the church as it was. Then the theatre could not have been built there where it overtopped and dominated the church building.



THE CHOIR IN 1905

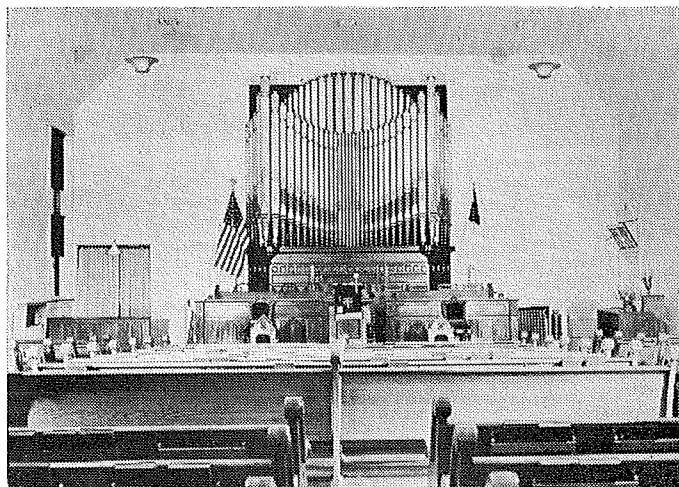
The church could not escape the necessity of further expansion. So the next year a second extension was made to the old building. This time an addition was made to the front which used all the available space between the building and the sidewalk. An extension was also made on



SECOND STREET BUILDING AFTER THE SECOND EXTENSION

the Chapel Street side. These extensions made room for a pastor's study with a classroom above, a large room on the first floor level which opened into the auditorium, a balcony with adjoining classrooms and more room in the basement. This expansion program cost the church \$3,500. Though it provided more rooms it destroyed the beauty of the building and caused many traffic bottlenecks in the interior. Whereas before, the tower projected from the front of the building as an inviting entrance, now it was recessed, making the entrance difficult to find. When the theatre was built next door it made the situation much worse.

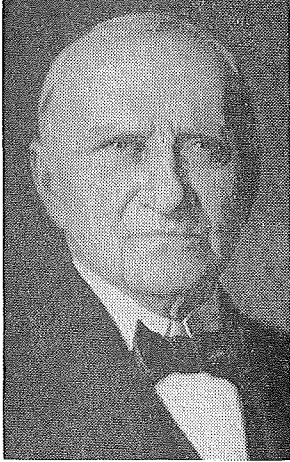
In 1907 the chancel was extended and the baptistry moved to one side. This crowded the sanctuary so that only ten rows of pews could be accommodated in the main room. It did, however, provide space for a pipe organ. An ingenious method of obtaining an organ without paying much for it was discovered in the generosity of Andrew Carnegie who gave half on a two thousand dollar instrument. At that, the church could raise but one hundred dollars on its share so William Howland advanced 900 dollars without interest so the instrument could be obtained. The organ was installed and served faithfully for forty years, the last ten on borrowed time! Two silver goblets were used in the communion service until 1907 when the congregation became germ conscious and bought multiple cups and trays.



INTERIOR VIEW OF REMODELED SECOND STREET BUILDING

Evangelistic meetings were still popular then for in 1905 James Small held a meeting; in 1908 one was held by E. E. Violette, and in 1909 H. Newton Miller kept the revival spirit kindled.

A. R. Webber brought prestige to the church in the early years of the twentieth century. He was elected to the Congress of the United States. Not many congregations had this distinction for one of their



AMOS R. WEBBER

members. Wholeheartedly convinced of the necessity for national prohibition, Webber introduced the first prohibition bill ever presented to the Congress. The White Ribboners were with him down to the last woman, and on St. Valentine's Day, 1906, he led a procession of 1,800 W. C. T. U. ladies to the steps of the nation's capitol to besiege the legislators and pressure them into voting for his measure. The lawmakers proved adamant, however, and the Webber Bill lost out. Because of his popularity he was chosen president of the 1906 Disciple State Convention. When he arose to make a speech on this occasion, the delegates all stood and gave him the Chau-tauqua salute.

George B. Ranshaw was minister of the Elyria church from 1910 to 1914. He had traveled extensively, was middle-aged, and had business experience. In addition to being a graduate of the College of the Bible he had also been graduated from the Law School of the University of Cincinnati. For the most part, the church to this time had not been very successful in interesting business and professional people in its program. Many thought that Ranshaw was qualified and able to do just this thing. Ranshaw tried to do this and apparently met with success in serving the community. Ranshaw

believed in the City Manager system of local government and took the initiative in promoting its adoption. His campaign was not successful with the voters.



GEORGE B. RANSHAW

Mrs. Ranshaw was also civic-minded. She was instrumental in organizing Parent-Teacher associations at McKinley, Hamilton, Jefferson and Franklin schools. Her interest in the public schools was rewarded with an appointment to the Elyria City School Board.

Ranshaw wanted to improve the standards of the Sunday school and he set up the first Sunday School Institute (teacher-training program) in the city in 1910. E. W. Thornton was called to lead in this work. During the Ranshaw pastorate the duplex envelope system for church and missionary support was instituted. He was also responsible for a well-edited weekly church paper.

After leaving Elyria he went into general brotherhood work as corresponding secretary of the American Christian Missionary Society.

V

BETWEEN TWO WORLD WARS

Edgar B. Buffington, Ranshaw's successor, had a different type of program. Though probably not as able a man as Ranshaw, he was the kind of a minister to which the church was accustomed. It must have



EDGAR B. BUFFINGTON

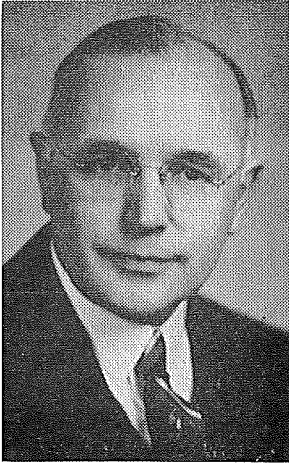
been discouraging to start a ministry with a congregation \$1,200 in debt on current expenses, for the dollar was worth much more in those days. World War I was beginning in Europe, but Elyrians weren't much concerned. It was too far away from their thinking at the time. The Christian Endeavor Society was very active, having thirty-seven members. The young people were frequently entertained in the Buffington home. Paul Andress, a life work recruit of the Elyria church, now a missionary educator for the United Christian Missionary Society, was an active Endeavorer at this time. The choir, under the leadership of Hugh Newson, achieved distinction, but the pipe organ even then often refused to cooperate with the chorister and is said to have often let out unexpected screeches and howls. The church membership was listed at 450 persons. Of these, 160 were contributing members.

Many persons still known to the congregation were active at this time. Both Theodore T. Robinson and Arthur Robinson took their turns as chairman of the board. Arthur Robinson also was treasurer; Mrs. Strickler, financial secretary; Ira Wissinger, missionary treasurer; and J. A. Riley, clerk. It appears that this was an era of good feeling and

harmony in the church, though the period is not marked by any spectacular achievements. Buffington resigned September 4, 1918 to accept a war-work position in Washington.

The Nettie Finch Webber Club was organized in 1916 as the Pollyanna Club for women. Apparently the "Pollyanna" glad book was its inspiration and members were encouraged to play the glad game. Mrs. A. R. Webber was advisor and was known as Aunt Polly. When she died in 1931 the club honored her by changing its name to the Nettie Finch Webber Club. The group enjoyed many social activities, raised some money for a building fund, sent cheer packages to crippled children, shut-ins, and soldiers, sponsored an annual mother-daughter banquet and did Red Cross sewing. They began as an organization of young women but as the membership was limited and there were few resignations, they were soon the mothers and grandmothers of the church. Therefore, they formed a youth auxiliary in 1926, called the Ta-Wa-Si Club. This was also a limited membership organization following the pattern of the parent group. Miss Florence Stetson has been the "big sister" of this group since its beginning. The Nettie Finch Webber Club eventually united with the Women's Council when it was organized, though out of respect to A. R. Webber it maintained nominal existence until his death.

W. L. Burner had a fruitful ministry of nine years with the church, serving from 1918 to 1927. His academic preparation was made at



W. L. BURNER

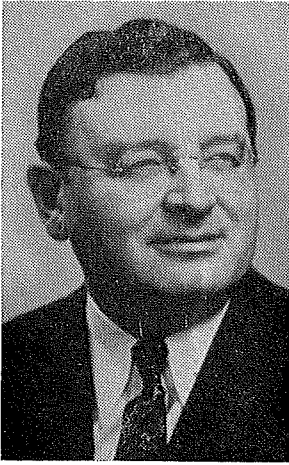
Lynchburg and Transylvania colleges. He came to Elyria directly from Matanzas, Cuba, where he and Mrs. Burner had served a five-year term under the Foreign Christian Missionary Society. Mrs. Burner died during his Elyria pastorate. Burner was thirty-four years old when he began his work in Elyria. Known as a "calling" preacher he kept in touch with the congregation by frequent home calls.

A building fund was started during the Burner pastorate in 1924. E. W. Baird was treasurer of this fund and the work was carried on by his wife after his death. Mrs. Baird looked after the accounts faithfully and remained in this office until the new building was erected and all bills for construction paid in full. Mrs. E. W. Bowland also was a long-time financial secretary of

the congregation. For years she opened the church envelopes each Sunday, made a record of all gifts and banked the offering. Before her death she had trouble with her eyes and her husband helped her each week with the work.

Mrs. Ruth Schwaegerle was working in the church office at the time of Mrs. Bowland's death and consented to take over this work as

financial secretary. She has continued faithfully year after year since 1950, being reelected at each Annual Meeting.

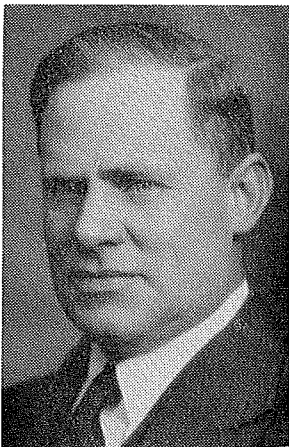


WILLIAM C. FOWLER

During Burner's pastorate, Paul Andress who was church organist, and William Dexter Strickler became life work recruits. Dr. Andress chose the missionary field and Dexter Strickler the pastoral ministry.

William C. Fowler was the second Canadian to serve the Elyria church, starting his pastorate in the fall of 1928. He was educated at Phillips Bible Institute and Bethany College. Probably the most significant feature of his work in Elyria was a community Bible class for men. This group met in a local theatre on Sunday morning and often the attendance was in the hundreds. After Fowler left, the class dwindled in numbers and finally disbanded.

The idea of a new building project was instituted in the middle 'twenties. A site was selected on the west side of East Avenue between Temple Court and Third Street where the Chronicle-Telegram building now stands. One lot was purchased in 1924 and another in 1929, providing a site 165 by 132 feet in size. There were two large houses and a filling station on these lots. When the great depression of the 'thirties arrived with reduction in incomes, financial losses and much economic distress, the prospects of a new building were blighted. Building costs were low but the East Avenue properties were covered with a mortgage and there was no surplus in the building fund with which to start construction. These two properties were income producers, however, and rentals went a long way toward finally clearing them from indebtedness.



WILL FOSTER

Fowler resigned in 1935. After a few months of interim preaching, Will Foster of Mt. Vernon, then forty-five years old, was called to the pastorate. Foster also had attended Phillips Institute at Canton, Ohio and Bethany College. Prior to his Mt. Vernon, Ohio, pastorate he had served several years as field agent for the Anti-Saloon League. His experience along this line enabled him to gain national publicity when he was made foreman of the Lorain County Grand Jury. Under his leadership the jury made some startling discoveries, resulting in several indictments. Foster also had a talent for religious plays. Encouraged by their minister, a dramatic club presented some outstanding plays at this

time. Foster became ill in the spring of 1940 and never recovered. After his passing, the board drew up resolutions which credited him with being especially gifted in speech and song. The pulpit Bible, now in use on the lectern in the new church, is a memorial to Will Foster.

Feeling the necessity of building church contacts, helping in special projects and getting better acquainted with one another, twenty-two women formed the Christian Women's Club on December 9, 1938. Membership was extended to women of the church or to women not members of another church. After the forming of the Women's Council in 1943 the club disbanded as a church-connected organization.

VI

FACING NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

George Townsend of Ravenna served as interim pastor following the death of Will Foster and until the arrival of T. J. Mattingley. Mattingley was a College of the Bible graduate with former Ohio pastorates at Ada and Coshocton.



T. J. MATTINGLEY

He was installed at the Annual Meeting in January, 1941. By this time the nation was very close to active participation in World War II. The depression of the 'thirties was giving way to more prosperous times and the demand for war goods was providing more employment, speeding up production and improving the economic situation. Mattingley was a young man and when in 1942 the need for chaplains in the armed services became apparent he felt it his duty to respond to the call. Thus, his pastorate in Elyria was short, lasting only twenty months. During the war he served in the India-Burma area with the rank of Captain.

Wayne Burdue, active member of the Elyria church and ministerial graduate of Bethany College, also entered the chaplaincy at this time. During World War II he saw service in Europe. Once, on a furlough to Elyria he initiated the project of collecting pianos for his training camp. At one time the church basement was filled with pianos. Some twenty of these were shipped out and eventually were taken overseas with American contingents. One marked with a gift plate was discovered in an army camp in England.

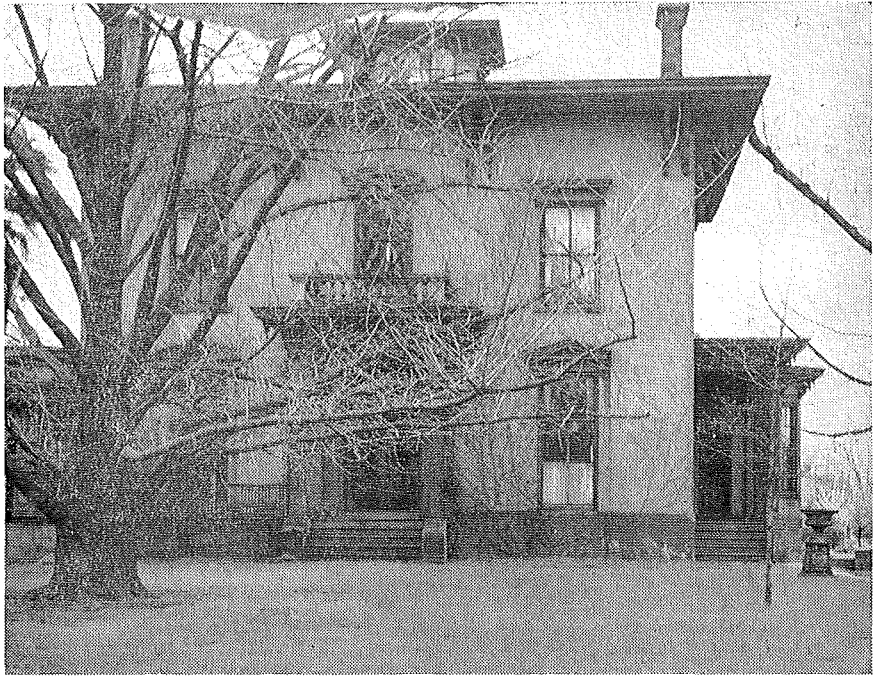
At the conclusion of hostilities, Burdue chose to remain in the service and was sent back to Germany as a chaplain with the army of occupation. His wife, De Ette, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Wilson of the Elyria church, went to Germany with him and their son was born there. Eventually the Burdues returned from Germany and Wayne was stationed on the west coast. He was among the first of those sent to Korea when the conflict started there. In December, 1950, he was reported missing in action. His death was not confirmed until several months later. Memorial services were held for Chaplain (Major) Burdue on December 21, 1953.

Henry K. Shaw was called to the church as minister beginning January 1, 1943. The first few years of this pastorate were colored by the terrible war. Some 175 young men and women, connected with the church or its auxiliaries, were called into military service. Nine young men, most of them church members but all either sons or husbands of church members, made the supreme sacrifice. They were: Robert Alheit, Melvin Bates, Leonard Waldron, Clyde Shatto, Gilbert Kyer, Ronald Findlay, Carl Gleason, Armand Ensign and Wayne Burdue. Memorial services, conducted it seemed all too often, were deep reminders of their loss. Many of the service men were reported missing in action from time to time, causing great grief and anxiety. Some spent time in enemy prison camps. The Elyria church was represented in every branch of the service and her young men and women went all over the world. A special committee did an excellent job in keeping in touch with the service personnel, but even the best efforts were inadequate. There was great rejoicing when the boys finally came home.



THE MEN'S CLUB

Because work was plentiful and wages high, the church income increased tremendously during the war and post-war years. In 1943, the indebtedness on the East Avenue properties was finally cleared and the church was free from debt for the first time in twenty years. Giving to the building fund then began in earnest. By this time it was realized that the East Avenue site was not adequate. Another congregation had purchased a site directly across the street, there was already a church a few doors to the south and another a few doors to the north, and it seemed that another building in this vicinity would only serve to contribute to the problem of too many churches in an already congested area. A search was made for a good building site close to the center of



THE SHARP HOUSE, NOW THE EDUCATIONAL UNIT OF THE CHURCH



HOMEBUILDERS CLASS

the city yet large enough to provide for future expansion and off-street parking. The fortunate purchase of three and one-half acres of land on Washington Avenue, known as the William Graves Sharp home, seemed the answer to the dreams of the congregation. The body voted its approval at the January 31, 1945 Annual Meeting. Steps were then taken to sell the East Avenue properties. When this sale was completed, the money was applied to the Washington Avenue purchase and considerable was left over for the building fund. The changing of building sites was to the advantage of the congregation because it provided a larger site on which to build the new church, ample room for off-street parking, and a house which was remodeled for an educational unit, saving at least \$100,000 in construction costs. The shift in sites provided a \$15,000 favorable cash balance for the building fund. It was a providential transaction. Though members were anxious to build at once, they were prevented by war-emergency restrictions and lack of sufficient capital.

Beginning in 1943 several new features were added to the program of the church. A weekly news bulletin that has had continuous existence since its inception, was started. The old Second Street building was completely redecorated and the first full-time custodian was employed.

Perhaps the most significant act, other than the purchase of the Sharp property in this period, was the formation of the Women's Council, now known as the Christian Women's Fellowship. This was not easy to accomplish because of sentimental attachments to women's groups already in existence. It was thought, however, that the women's work should be coordinated and unified. This would eliminate duplication of efforts and reach more women with the total program of the church. The Ladies' Aid Society, the Nettie Finch Webber Club, the Missionary Society and the Christian Women's Club disbanded to make way for the new organization. The Women's Council then assumed the indebtedness, obligations, service projects and assets of the other groups. It had its origin in a mass meeting of all church women in April 1943. The program, illustrated by a blackboard talk and a model future council meeting impressed the women and after much discussion it was decided to organize on the council plan. Mrs. Henry K. Shaw was president the first critical year. The first group meetings were held July 15, 1943.

In 1944, the sum of twelve hundred dollars was received from the George Ingersoll estate. This gave impetus to the growing building fund. Kenneth Young, an Elder in the church who had become a student at Cincinnati Bible Seminary was ordained that same year. Mrs. Will Foster, widow of a former minister, engaged in religious work at this time as a special minister to transients living in war-production centers. She worked under the auspices of the United Christian Missionary Society. The church ordained her on April 28, 1946 and she served the church at Deer Lodge, Montana, several years before returning to Elyria.

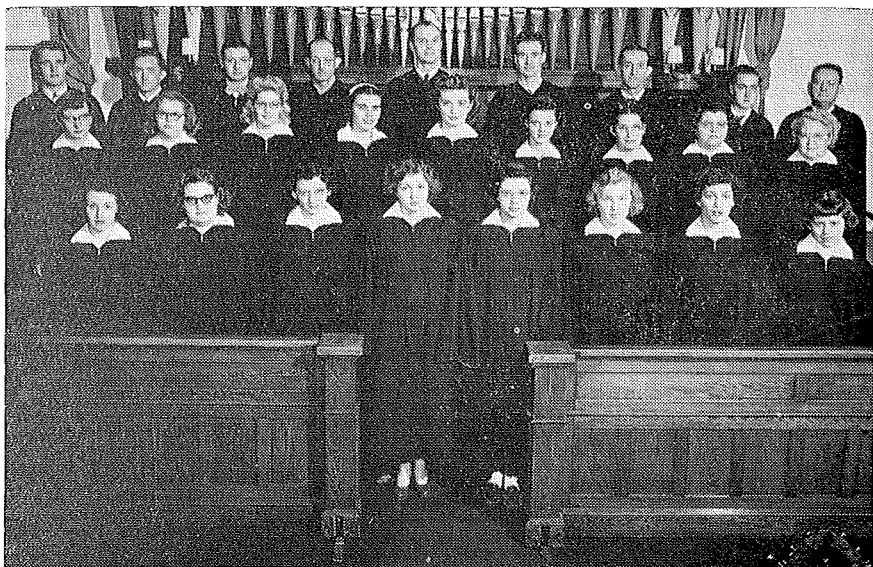
Clare E. Short was church organist for a number of years. When he resigned his place was taken by Mrs. Edna Tutthill. Mrs. Jeanne Meng accepted the post as church organist on November 12, 1944. In 1952 she started working with youth choirs. Russell Dunford resigned as choir director in 1949 after serving in this capacity for twelve years. He was succeeded by Oliver Shubert. The church is indebted to all these musicians for their years of splendid service.



INTERMEDIATE DEPARTMENT IN 1951



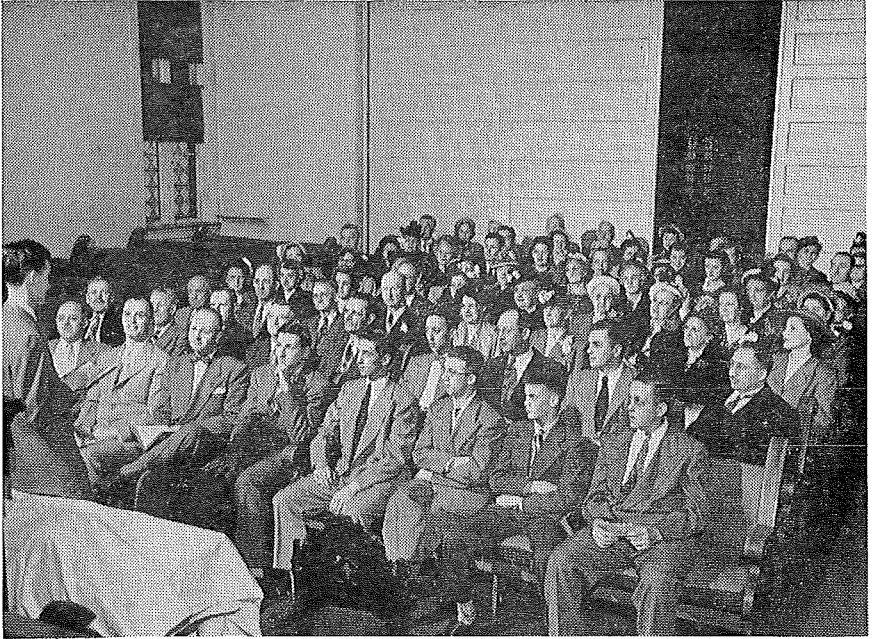
PRIMARY DEPARTMENT IN 1951



THE CHURCH CHOIR IN 1951

In the fall of 1944 the first major building fund drive was instituted. C. A. Gibbens, chairman of the building committee, headed up this drive. It was a \$50,000 campaign which netted \$35,493 in cash and pledges. Since this was a home-force campaign and somewhat of an experiment with raising capital funds, and as there was little assurance of a new building in the near future, the results were thought to be very good. Junior W. Everhard, Cleveland architect, had been working with the building committee for some time, but he was not officially engaged for the project until 1946. The East Avenue properties were sold January 7, 1946, leaving the church with about thirty-six thousand dollars in cash reserves, several thousand dollars in pledges and a new building site free of indebtedness on Washington Avenue. There was discussion at the time about selling the Second Street building but it was decided to defer this action until there was assurance of the construction of a new building. This too, proved later to be a very wise decision.

In the years between 1946 and 1950 the church purchased visual aid equipment costing \$600, started a Chi Rho fellowship for Intermediate youngsters, started a nursery for pre-school children to be used during church worship, and purchased a new electronic organ costing \$4,000. The new organ had its initial test at the funeral of A. R. Webber who died in February, 1948, at the age of ninety-six. Webber was the last surviving charter member of the congregation. By strange coincidence, the original pipe organ had been used the first time at the funeral of his first wife! The year 1947 was a good one for the church from the standpoint of evangelism. Through a thorough visitation program that had been preceded with a training institute and assisted by seventeen ministers from near-by Disciple churches, some seventy-one new members were added to the church. In November, 1948, the building committee gave the architect the green light on the working drawings of a new building.



ADULT ASSEMBLY IN SECOND STREET BUILDING



JUNIOR DEPARTMENT IN 1951

VII

FROM BLUEPRINTS TO BUILDING BLOCKS

The building committee desired a style of architecture that would be appropriate for Washington Avenue, fit the building site, express the religious views of the Disciples of Christ and at the same time be functional and beautiful. Georgian Colonial seemed to be the best answer.



TYPICAL CAMPAIGN REPORT MEETING



COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN FOR THE \$100,000 CAMPAIGN

An expression often heard, was "It must look like a church." The committee wanted an edifice that would look like a church now and a hundred years from now. The first plans showed the sanctuary running perpendicular to the street. This posed the problem of whether the chancel should be on the east or west side. Either way created problems of exits and entrances. It was finally decided to place the sanctuary parallel to the street with a tower entrance between the two buildings. This solved the problem very effectively. The committee also agreed that in the event of the scarceness of funds the basic construction features of the building should not be cheapened but some construction left for a future date. No expense was spared to put quality into the building though some frills were eventually eliminated. The large building blocks, reinforced concrete floors throughout, the heavy steel framework, the steel-reinforced concrete roof slabs and the expensive tile on the roof bear evidence of the fundamental soundness of the building.

Special committees were formed to assist the architect in his plan-

ning. Trips were made to examine many new buildings to study kitchen arrangements, class room space, new building materials and to get ideas. Many very valuable suggestions were made by the people of the church. Several hundred dollars had to be spent at this time just for preliminary preparations as for land surveys and test borings.

The cost of construction was mounting by the month at this period. It was thought prices would surely soon level off and even decline and that it would be wise to delay actual construction. It was soon apparent that as fast as new money was received for the building fund it was absorbed in advancing prices for labor and material and the congregation might actually save money by building as soon as possible. The committee decided to let the congregation give its answer as to whether or not to start construction by the manner in which it would support a capital funds drive. The people agreed to this decision and voted on April 30, 1950, to engage the services of a professional fund-raising organization for a six-week campaign. Bruce Alexander, local attorney and church treasurer, was asked to head the drive. The sum of \$86,000 in cash and three-year pledges was received. The building committee and trustees accepted this as a vote of confidence in the program and hastened to clear the way for action. This meant some speedy minor changes in the drawings and the selection of a contractor. The contractors were all busy at the time and prices were going up so fast that it was impossible to get a firm bid on the project. A cost-plus arrangement seemed to be the only one possible. This led to difficulties in borrowing for the construction loan, but was the only alternative.



SAM FINDLAY, THE MINISTER, AND JUDGE FINDLEY, THE "BIG GIFTS" COMMITTEE, PRESENTED WITH A "VICTORY" CAKE

Three plans or courses of action were presented to the congregation. The first plan involved an expenditure of \$200,000; the second, \$225,000; and the third, \$250,000. The question was not one of quality but of how much building should be done at the time. On November 11, 1950, the congregation voted for plan two which would build the sanctuary complete but leave the remodeling of the educational building for a future date. It turned out later that this amount would not complete the sanctuary and much more money was needed. For the most part the building committee was still reluctant to build. The members took their responsibility seriously and didn't want to involve the congregation hopelessly in debt. It seemed better to wait a few months until there was more cash on hand or at least until it could be determined if people were going to pay their pledges.

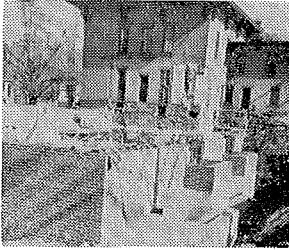
The question of to build or not to build was never settled on the basis of financial ability. It was determined by the Korean War. When that conflict had its beginning people were afraid of a repetition of World War II restrictions on new construction for non-defense use. It was thought if the construction program started, even if only the footers were laid, then it would be possible to continue. Another factor in the matter was the steady rise in construction costs. The feeling was that if the building were not erected soon, prices would soar so high in the future that a new building would be impossible. These were the matters that were discussed in the congregational meeting in January, 1951. The congregation voted to proceed at once with the building program.

A contract for construction was signed with a local contractor. He was to act as general contractor and to employ and supervise the subcontractors. Under the terms of the contract, all bills for labor and material, plus the contractor's percentage on the same, were to be paid each month. It was hoped that the congregation would be able to occupy the building by Christmas.

The move was justified by future national events. If the church had waited until May 4, 1951, it could not have built at all except by special government permission. Knowing there would be a shortage of all critical building material; the steel, hardware, plumbing, copper sheeting, etc., were ordered at once and stored as received. This meant that this material had to be paid for at once. Since much of it couldn't be used for several months it created a financial problem.

At the beginning of construction there was only \$54,000 in the building fund. J. D. Funk was chairman of the board at this time and Ralph Carr succeeded him in office in February. The contract with the architect called for his general supervision during construction. Francis Biddinger was employed as Clerk of the Works during construction to represent the church and the architect with on-the-job supervision. Mrs. E. W. Baird who had been Building Fund treasurer for many years, continued in this capacity and wrote the monthly checks throughout the entire program. Edward Schwaegerle, who had become secretary of the fund in 1947 when Ted Owen, former secretary, moved to Cleveland, continued with this work until the building was completed, all pledges in, and the building fund closed out. This work became complicated as time passed and special gifts were received for special purposes and

many separate accounts, both savings and checking, were held at the banks.



BEGINNING
CONSTRUCTION

The Second Street property was sold in March, 1951, with the privilege of occupancy for one year and the removal to the new site of all material from the old building that could be used in the new one. With a new building started and the old one sold, the die was cast and there was no turning back. It was thought that with the cash already on hand and that which would be received in unpaid pledges, plus the amount received on the sale of the old building that the work could be completed as per plan with borrowing between fifty and sixty thousand dollars.

By May, 1951, the foundation was in and the walls up to the first floor. There was considerable waiting for the "I" beams for the first floor but these were installed in June. Labor was scarce and no more than four bricklayers were available for the project. On July 22, 1951, the cornerstone was laid with appropriate ceremonies. A copper box in which was placed the usual material for such occasions, was enclosed in the corner. Dr. Paul Fall, president of Hiram College, was the speaker. It was a pleasant Sunday afternoon and the large crowd present enjoyed the occasion.



OLIVER SHUBERT'S "CORNERSTONE" CHOIR

A financial crisis really came in September, 1951, when available cash was depleted. Some \$56,000 was still due on pledges which had several months to run. \$25,000 was yet available from the old building. Though the committee knew these were sound assets, bills could hardly be paid with promises. It was costing \$650 a day to continue the work. In the meantime, construction costs were running thousands of dollars over the original estimates. Negotiations then started for a construction loan. Technicalities delayed the receiving of this loan and the building committee spent many sleepless nights trying to figure out the problem. When a generous contributor offered to match, dollar for dollar, additional gifts above those already pledged, it helped to turn the tide. The double-duty dollar campaign netted \$9,000. By September, 1951, the outside walls were high enough to support the steel roof trusses and the building began to take form.

A moving and salvage committee was appointed in January, 1952. This committee had the responsibility of moving all building material, furniture and other salvage from the old building to suitable places of storage.

The construction project was delayed again because it was impossible to get the concrete slabs for the roof. The reinforcing steel rods in the concrete was a priority product. These delays were really beneficial because they slowed down operations and allowed more precious time for the raising of money. The mortgage loan was not secured until March, 1952.

During the construction period, attention was not entirely focused on the new building program. Every attempt was made to carry on the normal work of the church. The electronic organ purchased in 1948 was not satisfactory. The manufacturers replaced it in 1951 at no cost to the congregation. A new Constitution was adopted on May 20, 1951. This instrument was the result of many weeks of study by a special committee and was prepared with the idea of an expanded and more functional organization in the future. The congregation had been known as the Church of Christ except for three years prior to this time when the name had been changed to First Christian Church in conformity with the trend in the Disciples brotherhood. For the most part, the new name was not preferred by the people of the church. The new Constitution provided that the congregation should be called the Washington Avenue Church of Christ after moving into the new quarters.

The youth choir program had its inception in March, 1952. The Bethany Choir was first to be organized by Mrs. Jeanne Meng. In the fall of 1953 she organized the Seraph Choir and in January of the next year the high school choir had its beginning. The Bethany Choir was divided in 1955 into separate choirs for boys and girls. About this time much interest was aroused for a bell choir. After practicing with plastic bells with some success, it was decided to purchase a set of church hand-bells from the Whitechapel Bell Foundry in England. The bells did not arrive until April, 1956, but a new group called the Bell Ringers was ready to work with them. Mrs. Meng was made director of youth music in the fall of 1955. The music program then reached young people from the Primary Department age through high school. All choirs were fully robed and a large number of adults, choir mothers and others, helped with the program.



THE NUCLEUS OF OUR FIVE YOUTH CHOIRS



DEMOLITION OF SECOND STREET BUILDING

Though it was not possible to use the new building, the old one had to be abandoned. Final services were held in the old church on March 16, 1952. Appropriate farewell ceremonies were observed. The church flags, pulpit Bible, communion ware, etc., were given into the custody of responsible persons who led the procession out of the building. The building, used almost one hundred years for church worship, was finally abandoned. Members returned to it only to salvage the flooring, radiators, boilers and other usable items and to remove all the pews and furniture to the old barn on the Washington Avenue property. In a few weeks the new owners had the old structure completely torn down.

This left the congregation without a church home. The First Congregational Church generously offered the use of their building on Sunday afternoons. Church and Sunday school were held there for several weeks. As Easter approached, the need for a Sunday morning meeting place became apparent to hold the congregation. The new auditorium at Ely school was then obtained. Easter services on April 13th were well attended. The congregation used the school for several weeks. During this time the church office was set up at the parsonage, Oliver Shubert's choir practiced at the county school office and other church meetings were held in homes.

The first meeting in the new building was a mother-daughter party in fellowship hall on May 8th, held in lieu of the usual banquet. Then volunteer workers carried the old pews from the barn to the basement, cleared a pathway through the mud and rubbish and made the basement presentable for the first church service on May 11, 1952. The event was a memorable one and people began to feel that at last they had a church home again. The entire program of the church and Sunday school was carried on in this one basement room for several weeks.

Realizing that if the building would be completed the people would have to do much of the work themselves, a volunteer work program began in earnest in May, 1952. In order to obtain a loan to complete the sanctuary to the point only where it could be used - not finished by any means - a new construction contract with a lump-sum figure for specified work had to be drawn up. By agreement with the lending agencies all income received on pledges already made had to be applied to this loan. No regular funds were available for the driveway, walks, parking lot, clearing up the rubbish around the building, landscaping, interior decorating, woodwork finishing, furniture or improvements to the educational unit. Any work outside of the specified features covered by the loan had to be financed by special gifts over and above the regular building fund. Under provisions of the new contract the congregation would have just the shell of a building but everyone was grateful for that much. For a while the situation seemed hopeless and it appeared to some as if the project would have to be abandoned and the congregation disbanded.

The church received the resignation of Ralph Carr, board chairman, with regret in November, 1952. He was compelled to give up this leadership because of his health. His place was taken by his son-in-law, Dr. Robert Stevenson. Dr. Stevenson continued as chairman until July, 1954.

The building committee and church members determined that in spite of all obstacles the church should be finished. Though this was a

difficult period it was a happy and rewarding one too. Because of a special gift it was possible to tile the floors of the sanctuary. This gift also provided for the re-ordering of pews and chancel furniture, cancelled some time before. The Community Thanksgiving Service was held in the sanctuary on the morning of November 27th. Volunteer workers labored nearly all night the night before to get the room ready. The church was filled at this service and the community seemed to be very much pleased with the new building. However, even then, there was no wood trim in the sanctuary, no baptistry, no painting had been done and the educational unit had not been remodeled. By December, as a special project financed by special funds, the sanctuary was completed and altar equipment purchased.

The congregation also rejoiced at this time that one of its young women, Marilyn Laver, had completed her training in religious education at the College of the Bible and had been called as director of religious education at a Toledo church.

VIII

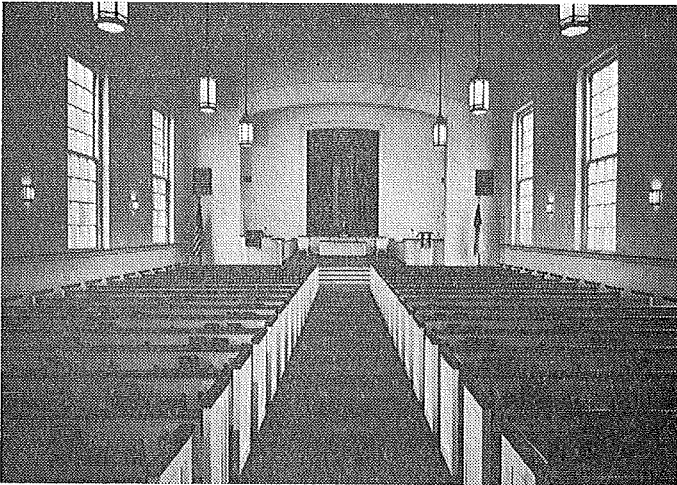
A DEDICATED BUILDING AND A DEDICATED PEOPLE

Though no money was available to remodel the educational unit, it was necessary to use these rooms for the Sunday school. Structural changes were needed, the ceilings in all the rooms needed to be re-plastered, the paper on the walls was hanging in shreds, the floors were in bad shape with many loose and missing boards, there were no lighting fixtures, the main stairway was unsafe, the window panes were loose and needed to be re-set, and there was dirt and filth everywhere. Most of the building had not been occupied for years. Volunteer workers gave these rooms a temporary but not very thorough housecleaning. Rooms in which one could look up into the room above or down into the room below couldn't be kept clean any length of time. It was not a very happy situation for the Sunday school. There was no money for these repairs and the church was not permitted to borrow any for this purpose, nor could the money being received in the building fund on pledges be allocated to the Sunday school unit. The only solution seemed to be to raise new money and finish the educational rooms on a do-it-yourself basis.

Rather than doing a hit and miss patch up and repair job, the building committee decided to concentrate on finishing completely one area at a time. The logical place to start was on the ground story and with the rooms being occupied by the youngest children. Therefore it was decided to remodel the east wing first. The old barn was full of scrap iron brought from the old church. This and other scrap metal around the premises was sold by the committee. The trustees authorized the minister to sell all salvaged material possible and turn the money received into a special fund. The pews from the old church brought nine hundred dollars. The Dorcas Class also made a substantial gift to this fund. Finally there was enough money on hand to plaster the rooms, make structural changes, and put in plywood subfloors. Then volunteer workers went to work and removed the old paint from the woodwork; painted the walls, ceilings and trim, and laid asphalt tile floors. This took several weeks with from

eight to ten persons working every night, but the results were very satisfactory.

The success of this first venture inspired the people to work toward completing the entire ground story by the time of dedication. A special gift of several hundred dollars made this financially possible. It took four months for volunteer workers to finish the first floor of the building. This work experience was one of the happiest fellowships in the history of the congregation. Men, women and children had a hand in it. Business, professional and shop people shared alike in the work. Lunches, prepared by the Women's Fellowship groups each evening between eleven and twelve o'clock, were happy occasions. The gift of fluorescent lighting fixtures worth three thousand dollars, made it possible to provide ample lighting for every room. By the time the church was dedicated in April, 1953, the entire ground floor was completed; including the chapel with chapel pews and lectern, the parlors, beginners and nursery departments, office area, halls, and the women's rest room in the basement. One hundred twenty-five different persons donated manual labor for this project.



INTERIOR VIEW OF NEW SANCTUARY

The date of the formal dedication of the church was set for April 26, 1953. Dedication events were a thrilling experience. They included preparation of a souvenir dedication booklet, speeches, a dedication dinner and a new financial campaign. Dr. Dwight E. Stevenson of the College of the Bible and Rev. Rolland Shaefer of the Board of Church Extension were the principle speakers. The morning service attracted 450 people, the afternoon dedication brought an attendance of 750 persons with overflow audiences in the chapel and in the basement, and 350 people returned for the evening program. The financial campaign brought over sixteen thousand dollars in cash and ninety day pledges, most of which was already committed to the bank to repay the loan.

People were anxious to complete the second story rooms of the educational unit but this work couldn't be started until enough had been

received on the Dedication Day financial drive so that the thirteen thousand dollar note at the bank could be paid. By the end of September the bank loan was reduced to six thousand dollars and the Board of Church Extension loan stood at thirty-seven thousand dollars. It wasn't until the end of 1953 that it was financially possible to embark on another phase of the building program, the finishing of the second story educational rooms. The cost of this project - even with the use of volunteer labor - was six thousand dollars. New ceilings were needed throughout, some walls had to be plastered, plywood floors had to be laid and covered with asphalt tile, wall paper had to be removed as well as all the old paint on the woodwork and the entire area repainted. The work took several weeks but when it was finished some three thousand more square feet of space was available for the Sunday school.

When the children moved into these sparkling, newly finished rooms everybody was happy except for one thing. The shabby, broken-down furniture from the old building seemed out of place. New tables and chairs were needed but their purchase had to be postponed for some time. There was still more construction work and remodeling to be done. The church needed a baptistry. Those desiring to be baptized had to be taken to the Lorain Christian Temple for services. A space had been provided on the south side of the chancel and the plumbing roughed in, but two thousand dollars was required to install the baptistry properly and finish it in ceramic tile. This amount included the finishing of the rooms at the rear of the baptistry too. When the amount was received in extra gifts the work was completed. The baptistry was put into good use at once and forty-two adults and young people were baptized at the first service on May 23, 1954. The concrete floor in fellowship hall was hard to keep clean so it was decided to put down asphalt tile. Twenty volunteer workers undertook this task and finished it in one day.

The summer of 1954 witnessed two more of the church young people being ordained and entering full-time Christian service. Rutherford B. Shumaker, who had graduated from Bluffton College, was already ministering as a licensed preacher. He wished to continue his graduate studies while serving in a pastorate. After examination by a special committee of the State Society and endorsement of three congregations, he was ordained by the Elyria Elders on May 5, 1954. Jane Ann Riddle, who grew up in the Elyria church and left it to go to Texas Christian University where she received the A.B. and M.R.E. degrees, was ordained at Tucson, Arizona, June 27, 1954, where her family had moved in the meantime. The need for a church paper with more complete coverage was felt at this time. Since the minister now had more time to devote to it, the project seemed feasible. The Sunday bulletin then became *The Spire*, published in a new format and sent weekly to the homes of the church families. In July, 1954, Edward Schwaegerle became chairman of the church board. He served until 1956. The building fund campaign had been closed out by this time and he was able to devote his energy toward establishing an extended church program as provided by the new Constitution. This was an era of "shifting gears" from the raising of huge sums of money and remodeling the educational unit, to emphasis on the program of the church.

Construction work was not quite completed, however, because nothing had been done to the rooms above the baptistry and they were

needed by the Chi Rho department. There was a great increase of young people of the intermediate age now attending church school. In addition, quarters were needed for high school youth for a class room and by the boy scouts for their headquarters. When sufficient funds were on hand in February, 1955, the last major project began. By this time, the church members for the most part were weary of volunteer labor but a few brave souls persevered and the mission was accomplished. Work progressed slowly and intermittently so final results were not obtained until January, 1956. The last project provided an assembly room and two class rooms for the Intermediate department, a class room for the young people, a club room for the scouts and a recreation area.

Scout troop 103 was happy to move into new quarters. The troop had its origin in 1924 in the old building. Prior to World War II it was a flourishing organization under the leadership of Rolland Higgins and later under S. M. Shively. When Jack Ryan became scoutmaster in 1950, the troop was reduced to one boy. For several weeks the two met weekly for a scout meeting in the furnace room of the old church. In time more boys were recruited until it became an outstanding organization.

During the construction period, most of the church income had to be channeled into the building fund due to the desperate situation in finances. There were no funds available for janitor service or office help. The minister kept the building operating during the week and the deacons came in on Saturdays to get it ready for Sunday services. This was the situation for about two years. It was soon possible to obtain part-time office help and a system of volunteer hostesses was set up. Women of the church with office experience volunteered to give one afternoon a week to the church. This was a great help to the program. In 1953 a full-time custodian was employed.

New furniture for twelve new class rooms was obtained by using the Rally Day offering for this purpose and by special gifts. Over one thousand dollars in gift money was received. The new furniture included seventeen tables, 150 chairs of various sizes and kinds, blackboards, and steel storage cabinets. As the furniture could not be purchased at one time, each department received an equal share of new equipment with each order. The new furniture and other equipment in the educational unit represents an expenditure of over two thousand dollars.

The Christian Women's Fellowship accepted the responsibility of providing furniture for the church parlors, buying new folding chairs and tables for Fellowship Hall, and outfitting the church kitchen. They raised money primarily by serving dinners to various groups. It took a good many dinners to raise seven thousand dollars but three years of hard work finally accomplished the purpose. During this time the women kept up their missionary, benevolent and church obligations.

During the years 1953 to 1956, thousands of dollars over and above those pledged and received on formal financial campaigns were received. Volunteer labor that saved the church several thousand dollars was donated, and the church income for missions and current expenses increased substantially. By January of 1956, the church was free of all debt at the bank, there was a comfortable balance in the current expense treasury,

and the mortgage loan with the Board of Church Extension was reduced to twenty thousand dollars. While the church was reducing its indebtedness by thirty-five thousand dollars plus interest in this period, it was making property improvements at the same time which required a cash expenditure of twenty thousand dollars plus the value of the volunteer labor.

These figures do not take into account the many gifts received by the church in the way of material and equipment - gifts paid for directly by the donors - amounting to nearly eighteen thousand dollars. Among these gifts were: religious paintings for all the rooms, furniture for the church parlors and pastor's study, kitchenette equipment, chapel benches, sun screens for the sanctuary windows, baptismal robes and robes for four youth choirs, new hymnals, altar ware as cross, candelabra, communion set, offering plates and flower urns; sink and cabinets for sacristry, the public address system, organ chimes and echo speaker, furnishings in the ladies lounge, fluorescent lighting fixtures for the entire educational unit, steel kitchen cabinets, folding tables and chairs for Fellowship Hall, the cornerstone, drapes for the entire building, coat hangers, flower pedestals, mechanical snow plow, incinerator, steel fence across the rear of the property, post lanterns, new furniture for the entire educational unit, recreational equipment, lawn furniture, a set of English hand bells, and a tape recorder. Large items in the building construction that were obtained as special gifts above that pledged to the building fund were: driveway and parking lot, entrance pillars, all concrete and black top walks, veneering the Sharp house to match the new building, the pews, communion table and pulpit furniture; the tower, construction costs of finishing the interior of the sanctuary, the parlors, the chapel, baptistry and adjoining rooms, the second story rooms of the educational unit, and landscaping. The large special gift items, last mentioned, amounted to over a hundred thousand dollars.

The above mentioned gifts made by members, for the most part were made anonymously. This is significant and a credit to the unselfish stewardship of a great number of people.

The project is not yet finished. In the near future the twenty thousand dollar mortgage must be liquidated, the parking lot must be enlarged and finished in black top, the grounds in the rear of the building must be landscaped and a parsonage must be built.

In 1943 the congregation owned its Second Street property worth fifty thousand dollars and a building site on East Avenue valued at thirty-two thousand dollars though encumbered with a debt. There was no money in the building fund and no surplus in the church treasury. As the congregation entered its seventy-fifth year in 1956 it had a new building on a three and one-half acre site, valued at four hundred fifty thousand dollars with a total indebtedness of twenty thousand dollars. In the five year period from 1951 to 1956, the church increased its financial assets by four hundred thousand dollars.

Looking back, any sensible person would see at once that this is not the way to build a church. The building costs should be known in advance, there should be a firm bid to cover the cost of construction in order to make a bank loan available, the amount of the long-term mort-

gage that the congregation could afford and the availability of such an instrument should be known in advance, building should not begin until there is enough cash on hand to guarantee continuation of construction until the mortgage loan is received; and an additional cash surplus should be available for contingencies such as landscaping, walks, insurance, and the purchase of new equipment, furniture and furnishings. Above all, the hazards of a major do-it-yourself remodeling and renovation project should not be chanced. The building committee and trustees would not recommend that any other congregation plunge into such a major building project with such limited resources, but at the same time they are glad they took the risk of faith.



EXTERIOR VIEW OF NEW BUILDING

Under pressure, and with God's help, sometimes the impossible can be accomplished. At least this is what happened at the Washington Avenue Church of Christ. The fellowship of common sacrifice and working together welded the members to a single purpose and nothing could defeat them. The church had probably reached its peak of usefulness on Second Street. It could not have advanced further in that situation. In fact, signs appearing on the horizon indicated the church was not even holding its own. The new project saved the church, opened new doors of service, and proved that when faith is strong, great victories can be won.

APPENDIX

THE CHURCH ORGANIZATION, 1956 - 1957

STAFF

Minister	Henry K. Shaw
Youth Worker	Seth Slaughter
Director of Chancel Choir	Oliver Shubert
Director of Youth Choirs and Organist	Jeanne Meng
Assistant Organist and Secretarial Assistant	June Chambers
Custodian	John Rowland

GENERAL BOARD OFFICERS

Chairman	Warren Wallace
Vice Chairman	James Collier
Treasurer	Bruce Alexander
Missionary Treasurer and Financial Secretary	Mrs. Edward Schwaegerle
Clerk	Miss Bess Hobbs

ELDERS

	Jack Ryan, Chairman	
Francis Biddinger	Clyde Bartlett	Jack Ryan
J. S. Montgomery	Edw. Schwaegerle	Earl Walsh
Clarence Grandstaff	Cecil Garrett	C. A. Gibbens
	David Wainwright	

DEACONS

	Richard Wainwright, Chairman	
Sam Findlay	Don Hange	Warren Wallace
Lloyd Worcester	Adelbert Knapp	Folden Alheit
Gerold Grandstaff	Bruce Alexander	Ford Brown
Herman Dull	Roger Williams	Stanley Crandall
Arthur Miller	W. H. Chambers	Paul Schwaegerle
James Collier	L. E. Haglund	John Varga
Harry Wells	Walter Gehrke	Ray Yost
Gerald Six	Harold Parks	Bruce Boehler
Don Prentice	Richard King	Ray Brunger
John Mansfield	Encil Anderson	Allen Day
William Williams	Gerald Laver	Dr. DeWitt Harrison
Harold Rickel	Louis Higgins	Oliver Shubert
Richard Wainwright	Glen Brouse	Lee Prentice
H. J. Ryan, Honorary	Levi Baker, Honorary	Tom Robson, Honorary

DEACONESSES

	Miss Doris Edwards, Chairman	
Mrs. Wm. Williams	Mrs. Stanley Crandall	Mrs. Cecil Garrett
Mrs. Ted Robson	Mrs. Marge Mallow	Mrs. Roger Williams
Mrs. Mae Gwin	Miss Doris Edwards	Mrs. L. E. Haglund
Mrs. Joe Hochenedel	Mrs. Wm. McDivitt	Mrs. Harry Wells
	Mrs. Deane Burns, Honorary	

TRUSTEES

	P. C. Robson, Chairman	
Bruce Alexander	Fred Meng	P. C. Robson
Cecil Garrett		Edw. Schwaegerle

HEADS OF ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMITTEES

Christian Women's Fellowship Mrs. Edward Schwaegerle
 Christian Youth Fellowship Barbara Mansfield
 Chi Rho Fellowship David Garrett
 Scoutmaster Jack Ryan
 Troop Committee Chairman Phil Kaiser
 Chairman of Choir Mothers Mrs. William Williams
 President of Chancel Choir Mrs. J. S. Montgomery
 Christian Education Committee Clyde Bartlett
 House and Grounds Committee Fred Meng
 Nursery Committee Mrs. Paul Schwaegerle
 Flowers and Decorations Mrs. Myron Ensign
 Baptisms Mr. and Mrs. Encil Anderson
 Financial Committee Fred Meng
 Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Committee Dr. R. W. Stevenson, General Chairman

SUNDAY SCHOOL ORGANIZATION, 1956 - 1957

Superintendent Mrs. Marge Mallow
 Secretary and Treasurer J. D. Funk
 Assistants Rolland Higgins, Gerald Six

NURSERY

Superintendent Mrs. Ray Brunger

KINDERGARTEN

Superintendent Mrs. Edward Schwaegerle
 Teachers Mrs. De Witt Harrison, Miss Doris Edwards,
 Miss Deanna Drennan, Mrs. Roger Williams

PRIMARY

Superintendent Mrs. John Hand
 Teachers and Assistants Mrs. Joe Papenbrock,
 Mrs. Frank Papenbrock, Miss June Chambers, Mrs. Allen Day,
 Mrs. Willis Krugman, Mrs. Lloyd Worcester, Mrs. Paul Whit-
 ney, Mrs. Russel Sage, Mrs. Sheldon Porterfield, Mrs. Gordon
 Higgins.

JUNIOR

Superintendent Miss Joyce Meredith
 Teachers Warren Wallace, Jack Ryan, Dr. DeWitt Harrison

INTERMEDIATES (Chi Rho)

Superintendent Mrs. Cecil Garrett
 Teachers Dr. Robert Berkebile, Mrs. E. R. Laver, Richard Weller

TEACHERS OF ADULT CLASSES

Homebuilders Mrs. Henry K. Shaw
 Happy Multiples Gerald Laver
 Dorcas Earl Walsh
 Men W. H. VanOster
 High School Seth Slaughter

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