

Ernest E. Logan

THE CHURCH THAT

KEPT ON BEING BORN AGAIN

A History of First Presbyterian Church

of

Pittsburgh

1773-1997

by

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First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh

Pennsylvania

1966-1981

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INTRODUCTION

The story is told of a Jewish woman wonderfully converted to faith in Jesus Christ. Her friend, who introduced her to the Savior, suggested she begin reading the Bible. "Begin with the Gospels," she encouraged. The new Christian did this with delight and great spiritual benefit. Having completed her assignment, she asked her friend to recommend a book on the history of the Christian Church. Asked the reason for her special interest the convert replied, "I'm curious to know when it was that so many Christians started to become so unlike our Lord."

It was a startling answer to a simple question. Yet, there it stands and with it stands a challenge for all of us to do better so that we might be more like our Lord. Moreover, it introduces us to a foundational principle of our Christian faith; God uses people who sometimes do not reflect His Son as well as they should. That, in a nutshell, is the story behind the church that is the focus of this book.

Twenty-five years ago, on the occasion of the bicentennial of the founding of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, an official history of our church was written by Ernest Edwin Logan. At that time Mr. Logan was a member of our ministerial collegiate. Mr. Logan's work, called *The Church That Was Twice Born*, proved to be highly popular in the intervening years. It is a great story well told. Thousands of copies of that book were distributed and have traveled to the four corners of the earth. It was researched and written as only one of Ernest Logan's skills in language and history is capable of doing.

In the quarter century since that first edition was published many changes have taken place not only in our church but in our city, our nation and our world.

Pittsburgh has undergone a renaissance. Our city, once famous for steel, is now famous for medicine, computers and higher education. Its population has declined by approximately fifty percent. Our society has changed dramatically as well. People now live in the suburbs. Computerization has taken over more tasks in the home and workplace than many people ever imagined when the first volume was written. The evidence of these and other changes is seen everywhere. With all that, the foundation and message of Pittsburgh's "First Church" remains unchanged: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8) With all these changes and this one unwavering constant guiding our church, it seems fitting for an updated history book to be produced.

That is the reason for this new book. It tells the story of people. They are a well-intentioned people who aspire to be like Jesus but who often fall short. The First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh is nothing if not a people who live with confident hope that God uses ordinary men and women working together to do great things that advance His kingdom. We are not always good people, but we are always God's people. As you read through these pages we hope you will do more than read accurate and well-researched historical data. We trust you will also find encouragement and hope in

realizing what God does with flawed vessels. More than that, we hope you will see the hand of the Master here and that you will be reminded again of His gracious mercy and boundless love. "It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture" (Psalm 100:3).

Words cannot describe how delighted I am that Ernest Logan, the author of the earlier volume, now retired and living back in his native Ireland, consented to write this updated history. I know no one better trained nor more gifted to do so.

An honors graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, where he received both Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees in history and political science, Mr. Logan also earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree at New College in Edinburgh, Scotland and a Master of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. To Ernest and all who assisted him in bringing this new book to fulfillment we owe a great debt of gratitude.

I know no better way to conclude this introduction than to quote one of my predecessors, Dr. Robert J. Lamont, when he concluded the introduction to the original volume twenty-five years ago:

"If it is true that 'a good book is the best of friends the same today and forever,' then read on and let this friendship begin."

Soli Deo Gloria!

Robert Leslie Holmes, Minister
First Presbyterian Church
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Reformation Day 1997

FOREWORD

This book is a condensation, a revision and a continuation of my former two-hundred year history of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, entitled *The Church That Was Twice Born*, published in 1973. This volume has been given the title *The Church That Kept On Being Born Again* for obvious reasons. The Pickwick Press was gracious enough to grant free use of the copyright of the former history which has been frequently used for the first section of this work.

The writer of this history follows the tradition of scholarly Presbyterian historians in refusing to rely on oral tradition for evidence of the birth of a church, and relies only on such evidence as is supplied in authentic written records of a Presbytery, stating that it has taken a group of Presbyterians under care by providing supplies for them or, better still, by accepting them as being under care of a minister of their appointment. On April 14, 1773, Donegal Presbytery meeting at Middle Springs, Donegal, Pennsylvania, accepted the ministries of the Reverends McClure and Frisbie to Pittsburgh and began to provide supplies for Pittsburgh when the ministers would return East. The evidence for this is in the official minutes of Donegal Presbytery.

The angle of view has been somewhat altered from that of the previous history. This is due to the fact that the writer has been granted to this present time a total of thirty-seven years to study First Church. Of these years, six were spent as minister in Avalon, Pennsylvania; fifteen years as associate minister of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, from 1966 to 1981, during the pastorates of Drs. Robert J. Lamont, John H. Huffman, Jr. and Ernest J. Lewis; followed by twelve years as interim pastor at St. Andrew's in Sewickley; and since April 1994, in semi-retirement, in Groomsport, County Down, Northern Ireland. During the more than a quarter century which has elapsed since I was associate minister at First Church, I have been able to ponder and research at greater depth the influence of the laity, both men and women, on the amazing history of this congregation. The past three years of my life have been largely given to the task, taking up large portions of my days and nights. Many of these days were spent in Donaghadee Library where the staff always welcomed me and gave help when needed. Photostatic copies of the resources for both histories lie in the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and references can be found in the notes of *The Church That Was Twice Born*. I would urge readers who would wish to know more of the Pre-Revolutionary history of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh to read the early pages of *The Church That Was Twice Born*. This volume of the first 200 years of First Church can be found in the church library.

As was stated in the large 200-year history and as is stated again in this continued history of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, an account of the congregation's foreign missionary involvement has not been sufficiently treated. This involvement has been so extensive that to encompass it fully would require in itself a further history. We are, however, happy now in being able to refer the reader to the recently published seventy-page guide to present First Church missionaries and supported missionaries.

I have put an asterisk at the names of men who were founders or early members of First Church and a double asterisk for [other] notes at the bottom of the page. In *The Church That Was Twice Born* I used a very unusual and loose form of paragraphing, sometimes using a single sentence as a paragraph to highlight and emphasize. The intention was to give a magazine style to the work and to discourage readers from simply reading the first and last sentence in a paragraph. Unfortunately, I omitted to explain this very unorthodox style. In this revision and continuation of the history I have endeavored to use normal paragraphing.

Serious scholars using this work may discover references for the first 200 years under the chapter headings at the end of the previous volume entitled *The Church That Was Twice Born*. Copies are in the Church Library, the University of Pittsburgh Library, the Carnegie Library, the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania located in the Senator John Heinz History Center, and the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Library. Most of the major universities of the United States and Great Britain were offered and accepted copies of the history of First Church. For the last three ministries and the beginning of Dr. R. Leslie Holmes' ministry I have used the session minutes to which the minister and the session very kindly granted me access. Mr. Walter Seigfried, long-time clerk of session, has been a great help. Letters, newspaper articles, personal acquaintance with events, etc., provided additional historical facts.

Other valuable sources of information were the official publications of First Church in magazine and newsletter form. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude in this matter to Ms. Dorothy Smithyman who gave me every copy of FPC News over the last twenty years, meticulously preserved in order, with permission to keep and use them in any way I wanted. Without this gift I would not have tried to write this new history. I also wish to thank my friend Shirley Starrett, the church historian, for her help when I needed additional information, her proofreading and her many valuable suggestions. To Mrs. Dorothy DeVaty, my former secretary and friend for thirty-seven years, I owe an enormous debt of gratitude. She was a member of the First Church staff from 1976 to 1987. For the past three years she has become my honorary secretary and—with her computer and typewriting skills, encouragement, understanding and an unlimited amount of typing and retyping from my almost illegible handwriting—she has made the production of this work possible.

I owe a further special debt of gratitude to my boyhood friend, Dr. Charles P. Robshaw, who was my fellow-student at St. Andrew's College (Preparatory) School, Trinity College, Dublin, and Edinburgh University. When he was senior minister of East Liberty Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh and when I was minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Bangor, Ireland, he facilitated, under God, my coming to Avalon Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, as pastor in 1960. Later, in 1966, he recommended me to First Church as associate minister. Dr. Robshaw was the principal proofreader and my consultant as I wrote this history. Dr. Robshaw moved to Bloomington, Minnesota, just as I finished the book. He did the final proofreading, but is not in Pittsburgh to do galley-proof work, so Shirley and Dorothy kindly undertook this task.

I would like also to thank my very dear friend Dr. R. Leslie Holmes and the Boards of First Presbyterian Church for inviting me to write the present quarter century of the history of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.

Finally I would like to thank Muriel, my wife, whose meticulous memory and recall enabled her to identify events, people and places which I could then easily research and verify.

Ernest Edwin Logan

November 11, 1997

PREFACE
TO THE
PRE-REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

of
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH
PENNSYLVANIA

The pre-Revolutionary history of First Presbyterian Church spans a time period from the sermon preached by the Reverend Charles Beatty (Chaplain to General Forbes) the day after the fall of Fort Duquesne November 25, 1758, to the sermon preached by young Mr. John McMillan as a licentiate on Sunday September 8, 1775, the day before Captain John Neville seized Pittsburgh for the American patriots.

This period includes the resident ministries of the Reverends David McClure and Levi Frisbie who arrived in Pittsburgh August 19, 1772, and culminates in the authentication of their Pittsburgh ministries when they were temporarily taken under care of the Donegal Presbytery and therefore their work became validated. This occurred April 14, 1773, at Middle Spring. Thus the church was recognized as a congregation with an officially accepted ministry. When the two ministers left Pittsburgh the Donegal Presbytery continued to send whatever supplies it could up to Sunday, September 8, 1775, when Fort Pitt was seized by Captain John Neville for the Revolution. From then, supplies had to be halted till renewed April 13, 1784, when application for such supplies was now made to the newly created Redstone Presbytery, itself largely an outcome of the McClure-Frisbie Pittsburgh ministry.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

JONATHAN PLUMER,
A FIFTEEN-YEAR OLD BOY WHO WAS TWICE-BORN

The spiritual history of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, *The Church That Kept on Being Born Again*, began in the heart of Jonathan Plumer,* a fifteen-year-old boy in New England, during the Great Awakening in that area in the 1700's.

George Whitefield, a Calvinistic minister, was conducting revival services in Newburyport, Massachusetts in September 1740.** Jonathan's father would not allow his children to attend; however, Mrs. Plumer decided to go and coaxed her husband into allowing Jonathan to accompany her as an escort.

At the meeting Jonathan Plumer experienced a spiritual awakening which was to make Jesus Christ the lodestar of his long and exciting life and indeed the lodestar of the lives of his descendants for over two hundred years. His prayers are still influencing First Church and its ministries up to the present day. Few laymen or ordained men can have left such a stamp on the history of a congregation.

As a fairly young man Jonathan Plumer joined the British Army under the command of General Braddock. The army marched towards Fort Duquesne, situated on the forks of the Ohio. Coming up from the river bed, some miles out of Fort Duquesne, Braddock's army was ambushed and almost destroyed by the Indians. Some escaped; among them was George Washington. The young soldier from Newburyport, Jonathan Plumer, was also a survivor.

Later he rejoined the British Army and again marched on Fort Duquesne, this time under General Forbes. The latter was more cautious than Braddock. He halted his army at Ligonier. There the army built itself a fortress as all territory to the west of Ligonier was held by the Indians and French. Eventually Forbes marched westward with great caution towards Fort Duquesne, expecting an ambush by the Indian or French troops at any moment—only to find Duquesne deserted, having been fired by the fleeing French.

The next day, November 26, 1758, on the ruins of Fort Duquesne, the first Thanksgiving Service to be held in Pittsburgh was conducted by Charles Beatty,** General Forbes' Chaplain. As it was an official occasion, it can be safely assumed that Jonathan Plumer was present. We do know that he was now granted land in the village

** See *A Prophet with Honor*, by William Martin, William Morrow and Company, Inc., New York, pp. 34 and 35.

** Charles Beatty was trained by the great New England revivalist William Tennent, Jr.

and on this tract, a short distance from the present Butler Street, he erected a log cabin, where his first son George was born.

As time went by Mr. Jonathan Plumer started a saddle-making and a brickmaking business in Pittsburgh. He soon acquired a farm eighteen miles to the west in "The Long Run," so called because it was a good day's horse ride from Pittsburgh. In a short time Jonathan Plumer became a man of considerable wealth and influence. He remained a staunch born-again Christian and in his family (which became numerous) the life of religion was zealously maintained.

George, his first born, later became an outstanding elder in First Church, studied divinity and became a minister. Another son, Thomas, left a legacy to First Church with which to endow a mission Sunday School in the suburbs. Under Judge Porter and others this Sunday School later became the Sixth Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. William Plumer, Jonathan's other son, was to become one of First Church's most respected elders in Mr. Steele's day and played a large part in the congregation up to Dr. Scovel's time. His direct descendant, Dr. John Plumer, was a highly respected elder at the First Presbyterian Church's Bicentennial during Dr. Lamont's pastorate.

CHAPTER II

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S CHURCH AND THE BEATTY-DUFFIELD MISSION, 1761-1766

In the little village of Fort Pitt, by 1761, a church school was established. James Kenny, a Quaker merchant, who moved into the village, tells us in his journal "the school-church is on ye hill without (outside) ye fort. . . ." He says that the schoolmaster, "he being a Presbiterant," conducted the services and the people and children of different "Principels" attended. The hill was probably "Grant's Hill," which was later leveled to form Grant Street. In 1762 the church was an established institution with steadily increasing attendance. The writer, however, does not claim this as the beginning of First Church. He only acknowledges the establishment of a congregation when this congregation is actually under the jurisdiction of a Presbytery providing a ministry or supplies, as he has stated in the Foreword.

Then, in 1763, Pontiac, the great Indian Chief, struck. Only three fortresses survived, one being Fort Pitt, but the area for hundreds of miles around became a depopulated wilderness and even the village, alongside the Fort, was destroyed. This war also led to the end of all the settlements within an area as far as Shippensburg. Thus ended the first regular Presbyterian services conducted in Pittsburgh village by the schoolmaster, "he being a Presbiterant."

During these disastrous times the Reverend Charles Beatty, Forbes' chaplain, who had preached the first Thanksgiving sermon in Pittsburgh, went to Scotland, England, and Ireland to raise money for distressed frontier inhabitants and for a mission to the Indians.

In a sense Chaplain Charles Beatty was returning to his homeland for, as a fifteen-year-old boy in 1729, he had emigrated with his widowed mother from Northern Ireland to Pennsylvania. He became peddler, packman, scholar, and Presbyterian minister and eventually chaplain to General Forbes.

In May 1766 Beatty was appointed by the Synod of New York and Philadelphia to go on a mission to the Indians. The Reverend George Duffield* was to act as his associate. Duffield was, like Beatty, from Ulster and was of Huguenot-Ulster stock.

They arrived in Fort Pitt on September 5, 1766, and were invited by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland chaplain to the Scottish forces, James MacLagan, to be his guests at the officers' mess. On Sunday, September 7, Charles Beatty preached in the forenoon at the Fort; Mr. Duffield at the same time preached to the people in the village outside the Fort; Mr. Beatty then preached to the people in the village in the afternoon.

In other words, two Presbyterian sermons were preached that day in the Village of Pittsburgh, something that had seldom, if ever, happened in any Western Pennsylvanian village in the past, and that was not likely to occur there in the near future.

The mission to the Indians was not a success but again on the way home from the mission the ministers preached in Pittsburgh. This time they aimed their main evangelical thrust at the Village of Pittsburgh and not the Fort. If the London edition of Beatty's journal is correct, one result of their mission was the conversion of one unnamed Pittsburgher.

CHAPTER III

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH IN APRIL 1773

The next development which was to result in the founding of First Presbyterian Church as a legitimate congregation under the authority of the Donegal Presbytery came in the year 1772, when Eleazar Wheelock,* the founder and president of Dartmouth College, a man of immense missionary zeal which was a consequence of the New England revival, felt led by God to send two missionaries to the Delaware Indians in Pennsylvania. Thus, in the Summer of 1772, the Reverend David McClure* and the Reverend Levi Frisbie,* two New England ministers who had been ordained by an Ordaining Council, set out on the seven-hundred mile trip to Pittsburgh, intending to make the town their center for a mission to local Indian tribes on the Muskingum River in Ohio. They had the official backing of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia** and were financed by Scottish Presbyterians. It will be noted that all the main early founders of First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, came from New England. Again, it is emphasized that all would appear to have been influenced either directly or indirectly by the George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards revivals. This appears to be true of Jonathan Plumer, the Reverend Charles Beatty, Eleazar Wheelock and of George Duffield and Levi Frisbie, all of whom came from this awakened area and whose zest and enthusiasm breathed life into the Pittsburgh area, long before the Great Western Awakening swept through the country districts of Western Pennsylvania with the arrival of the Redstone ministers.

We can follow the exploits of the two ministers through McClure's detailed diary, written in the Pittsburgh home of Aeneas Mackay,* and also in Frisbie's graphic letters written from McThey's Tavern, Pittsburgh. The significance of these papers was realized in the middle of this present century when they were discovered by Dr. Macartney's great friend, the Pittsburgh historian, Dr. William McKinney.

We have detailed descriptions of both horseback ministers from their contemporaries.

David McClure was a double-chinned man who had the complacent look of one who took life easily. This was far from being the case as his body was muscular and he was of an eager, energetic disposition. First and foremost, however, David McClure was a vibrant evangelist.

Levi Frisbie, McClure's associate, was a man of light complexion, of average height, and of somewhat corpulent figure. He had a ready pen and a gift for improvisation.

** Underlining mine.

The journey was a tiring one. Mr. Frisbie was a very sick man for most of the seven-hundred mile trip. The two ministers climbed the steeper slopes of the Allegheny Mountains by the simple expedient of holding on to their horses' tails. The last night they churned their way up the mud banks of Bushy Run and obtained shelter from a rainstorm in a cabin where they were almost eaten alive by vermin. Seven miles from Pittsburgh Mr. Frisbie's horse tired so they walked most of the remaining journey. This was the final indignity.

The arrival of the two reverend gentlemen on August 19, 1772, baked in mud, their faces and hands swollen with fleabites, both leading their horses and one man obviously ill, was the sensation of the day in Pittsburgh. Quickly the story went around the little village. David McClure tells us in his diary that:

Jonathan Plumer,* the born-again Christian, noted for his kindness and ridiculed for his Christian faith, heard of it, sought out the two men and did all he could to help them, bringing them into his home.**

The military physician declared that Mr. Frisbie was unfit for an arduous journey to the Delaware Indians, near New Castle, Pennsylvania so McClure ventured alone on two occasions, only to find that the Moravian missionaries were doing a successful work there.

The Moravian missionaries suggested that the real mission should be aimed at Pittsburgh. Pittsburgh, they seemed to suggest, needed the gospel more than the Indians! There was no doubt whatever on the truth of that statement.

Back in Pittsburgh McClure found that, under what was obviously Mr. Plumer's encouragement, Levi Frisbie had set up an itinerary of preaching on Sabbath mornings to the people of the village of Fort Pitt and in the evenings conducted service in "The Long Run." In Pittsburgh and Long Run Mr. Plumer had his main business interests and it is significant that in these two places church work was now established. In fact, a church building had already been built in the Long Run, the first such Presbyterian building for many years west of the Alleghenies, probably built as a result of Jonathan Plumer's efforts. During the week Mr. Frisbie preached in the settlements around Brownsville which later led to the founding of Redstone Presbytery. Frisbie's itinerary, in fact, marked its beginnings.

McClure and Frisbie now made a division of labor, Frisbie continuing his ministry in the village of Pittsburgh and Long Run, staying during the week at McThey's Tavern which, because of the behavior of its patrons, he renamed in his correspondence the "Gates of Hell." This title was prompted when on Christmas morning drunken brawlers from McThey's, where he stayed, celebrated the day by discharging guns and pistols in the air and making rest and sleep nearly impossible.

McClure set up his headquarters at Aeneas Mackay's* home where family prayers were conducted mornings and evenings. This Scotsman was a friend to all

** *David McClure's Diary*, New York Knickerbacker Press, 1899, pp. 53 and 54.

ministers of Christ. In his house McClure set up an itinerary in the region of Ligonier and Brownsville which later became the nucleus of the Redstone Presbytery. Apart from a short exchange with Frisbie when he was ill, McClure followed this itinerary for the rest of his time in the Pittsburgh area.

By April 1773, the sustained preaching of Frisbie and McClure over a period of eight months began to show results. That month the missionaries made their way to the Donegal Presbytery meeting at Middle Spring. It was a hazardous and spectacular trip. Once, on Laurel Mountain, they faced a pack of wolves. "The sun shone bright on their winking eyes. They had long bushy tails and the hair on their bodies (was) a light grey." On another occasion they encountered widespread fire in the mountains, "as we rode along the margin of the fiery element (we) saw ourselves hemmed in by flaming mountains."

On April 14, 1773, David McClure and Levi Frisbie, having been examined at considerable length as to their beliefs and personal faith, were "cheerfully" admitted as temporary members of the Donegal Presbytery. This action authenticated their ministry to Pittsburgh, where they were both in residence, and to Long Run; it also established legally these two churches as congregations having now a valid ministry recognized by Presbytery. The congregation of Long Run still exists today. It joined with nearby Bethel Church in the 1970s to form Christ United Presbyterian Church, Irwin. It had no connection with Beulah Presbyterian Church, a much later recognized congregation established in October 1784 by Redstone Presbytery over eleven years after the founding of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh by the Donegal Presbytery and six months after Pittsburgh's reestablishment under the Redstone Presbytery. Bethel on the other hand was a congregation with an early authenticated history which met in the Miller family home in South Park, sometime before 1779 when the congregation built a log cabin church in South Park near Bethel Park Road opposite its present site.** The congregation of Pittsburgh, which had enjoyed the resident ministry of two ordained Presbyterian ministers, Frisbie and McClure, from the summer of 1772 through the winter and spring of 1773, was told at this meeting of Donegal Presbytery that no supplies were currently available and that it would continue to be serviced as in the past by McClure and Frisbie. So both of these men continued residing in Pittsburgh, Frisbie preaching on Sundays in Pittsburgh and Long Run, McClure during the week accepting responsibility for the settlements which, as previously stated, later became the Redstone Presbytery. They exchanged responsibilities briefly for a period in the winter when McClure developed a bad chill.

The two ministers left Pittsburgh and returned to the East in June 1773. After their departure, the Donegal Presbytery was most liberal in directing supplies to Pittsburgh as recorded in its minutes. The supplies were probably made up, at least in some cases, of young licentiates as was the case with Dr. John McMillan, the last supply to preach in Pittsburgh the day before the advent of the Revolution there.

On October 14, 1773, Mr. McPhearin was instructed by the Donegal Presbytery to preach at Fort Pitt on the third Sunday in November.

** Susan K. Schmeichel from the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, December 30, 1995.

In 1774 Vance and Black were sent to preach in Fort Pitt.

In 1775 there appeared to be a remarkable concentration of preaching there. McKnight, Slemons, Farquhar, King and Linn were all instructed to preach in Pittsburgh by Donegal Presbytery.

Then on Saturday, September 9, 1775, came John McMillan as a young licentiate. He [supplied and] preached at Pittsburgh on Sunday, September 10, 1775.

The following day, Monday, September 11, 1775, the Fort was occupied by Captain John Neville.* This he did as leader of the Revolutionary forces of Virginia. Neville would hold it for the patriots and was to remain in Pittsburgh for the remainder of his life. He would become a trustee of the First Presbyterian Church when it was reorganized after the Revolution by the newly-formed Redstone Presbytery, April 1784. Neville was originally Episcopalian and in later life returned to the church of his fathers. The Neville-Craig window in the present sanctuary of First Church is in memory of Neville and his son-in-law Isaac Craig,* a Presbyterian from Ulster and also a founding member of First Church.

Pittsburgh was now caught up in the Revolutionary War, and there would be no ministerial supplies for a considerable time as indeed was the case with similar newly-recognized congregations all over the soon-to-be "United States of America." With the sons of the Revolution at the battlefield there were no men available to run the local churches. Women ran the worship services which often took the form of prayer meetings for their soldiers and for victory. As the Revolutionary War wound down, the Scots-Irish farmers began to move back to their farms in the Redstone area. As a result the Synod of New York and Philadelphia created the Redstone Presbytery whose first clerical members were: the Reverends John McMillan, James Power, and Thaddeus Dodd who gathered on September 19, 1781, at Pigeon Creek for its first meeting. The presence of hostile Indians made it impossible for Joseph Smith to attend until the second meeting of the Redstone Presbytery.

Dr. Edward B. Welsh in *The Presbyterian Valley*, pages 66 to 68, traces the religious heritage of practically all the early members of the Redstone Presbytery. ". . . in every case these frontier missionaries in the Upper Ohio Valley were spiritual sons or grandsons of Reverend George Whitefield and Reverend Gilbert Tennent . . ." He especially notes one man who played a vital part in the Redstone Revivals as Joseph Badger whose boyhood home was Newburyport, also the home of Jonathan Plumer. In fact, under the pulpit of the old Presbyterian meeting house in Newburyport, Whitefield's body lies buried to this day.

Dr. Welsh says that a comparison of the sermons of Whitefield, Edwards, Tennent and Samuel Davis of the Great New England Awakening with the sermons of the Redstone Revivalists McMillan, Macurdy, John Anderson and Thomas Marquis reveals remarkable similarity in matter and method, proving both to be sons and grandsons of that Great Awakening. The same could be said of the early Christian evangelicals of Pittsburgh; i.e., the Reverend Charles Beatty, layman Jonathan Plumer and family, the Reverends Duffield, McClure and Frisbie. They were all early sons of

the Great Awakening. Under the labors of the Reverends David McClure and Levi Frisbie, while stationed in Pittsburgh, Redstone Presbytery had what might conceivably be regarded as a premature "birth" for, although the official structure of the Presbytery had yet to be raised in 1781, the foundations were already set in 1772 and 1773 when these two ministers preached in Pittsburgh and Long Run and set up an itinerary to the South and to the whole Brownsville area.

Until the day after the young licentiate, John McMillan, preached in Pittsburgh it certainly looked as though Pittsburgh could be what she was later to become—the center for revival in Western Pennsylvania. However, the Revolution and the surge of returning war-embittered and materialistic veterans ruled that out. But God's purposes are never frustrated, only postponed. The congregation, formed under the Donegal Presbytery on April 14, 1773, endured but only under Dr. Herron did it become "surprised by joy" and awakened to its new birth and evangelical mission. Then in the glory of that joy and awakening First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh in 1833 sent its sons and daughters out to endeavor to awaken the American West and the world. This was its early "romantic" missionary movement comprised of young men and women in newly married pairs or as single persons who accompanied them. Thus the prayers of Jonathan Plumer, the first Great Awakening disciple from New England to reside in Pittsburgh, received their first glorious fulfillment.

PART TWO

CHAPTER IV

THE REVEREND SAMUEL BARR,
THE CHURCH WITH THE CALVINIST MINISTER, 1785-1789

There is no room, in this brief history and condensation of *The Church That Was Twice Born*, to give an account of the people of First Church during the Revolution except to say that in the main areas of the Revolutionary War there were the men of Pittsburgh led by Aeneas Mackay and John Gibson. They fought gallantly until, as it ended, a young boy called Ebenezer Denny** was one of those chosen to plant the American Flag on the height of the Yorktown battlements. The Revolution also turned many American patriots into temporary Presbyterians, as the Revolt was not only against King George, but also against the Episcopal Church of which he claimed to be the Head. Among these are some of the Nevilles,* the Gibsons,* and the Butlers,* all from southwestern Pennsylvania. However, the great preponderance of men associated, either at that time or later, with First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh were Presbyterians by birth.

Dr. Macartney lists over fifty officers** in the Colonial and Revolutionary armies who were linked to First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh. Nearly all were buried in the First Church cemetery.

A previous chapter of this work showed the foundation of the congregation of First Church to be inspired by revival encouraged by ministers from New England. Unfortunately after the Revolution the rebuilding of First Presbyterian Church was to be carried out largely by persons grossly secular and theologically unsound or by those unwarmed by the fires of revival. The former were from the battlefields of the Revolution, the latter from Northern Ireland where a very formal Calvinistic orthodoxy prevailed.

In the early 1780's after the war, these hardened war veterans—men who had survived the desperate years of armed conflict; men who had been threatened with a hangman's noose; materialistic men, with a lust for property and power; men whose Christian faith had been an early casualty in the war—proposed to settle down in Pittsburgh. They prepared, as a military enclave, to follow their hard-bitten military leaders; the former generals, colonels and chaplains.

The leader of this battle-seasoned group of former military officers was ex-chaplain Hugh Brackenridge* who, having had apparently imbibed the universalistic and unitarian theology of his French allies, proposed an ecumenical church for Pittsburgh

** He later owned a home and a very large estate in Ligonier, Pennsylvania, which became First Presbyterian Church Camp.

** Underlining mine.

which would be served by a unitarian minister who, as Brackenridge put it, "dressed in black cloth and with sedate and dignified presence would restrain the disorderly in the town." There were plenty of the latter. The minister would in effect be a puppet chaplain controlled by the military hierarchy.

What they found themselves encumbered with was the Reverend Samuel Barr, a tough little red-haired Ulster-Scot from Londonderry, Northern Ireland. He was a Calvinist of the Old School, neither suited to please the military hierarchy of Pittsburgh nor the revivalist Redstone Presbytery. However, at first Brackenridge was pleased with the cultured, precise, business-like divine and sponsored him.

Already, on April 13, 1784, at the fifth meeting of the Redstone Presbytery, Pittsburgh had applied for a supply for the fourth Sabbath of August. This, of course, meant a continuance of the residential ministry of McClure and Frisbie in 1772 and 1773, which had been officially recognized by the Donegal Presbytery at that Presbytery's meeting at Middle Spring April 14, 1773, and the Donegal Presbytery's ministry of supplies up to the Revolution which followed. Those who applied thought then that they were starting a new congregation. The fact was that the brash, new ex-military group knew nothing of the minutes of Donegal Presbytery and of the founding of the congregation by the Reverends McClure and Frisbie in 1773, and the continuing supply ministry.

In the *Centennial Volume of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*, Dr. Scovel states on page 138, "Another of the early members well known in business life was Colonel Samuel Scott. Through him the tradition reaches us that the first preaching and first celebration of the Communion in 1784, and thereafter until the church was built, were held under the trees near the spot afterwards deeded to the church." This seems most likely though there is no written evidence as this writer demands. A further confirmation of this likelihood is the fact that according to the Pittsburgh Gazette the congregation erected the log cabin church by August 1786, a year and one month before the ground on which it was built was deeded to the trustees by the Penns.

Just before Christmas on Friday, December 17, 1784, Arthur Lee passing through Pittsburgh noted that there was neither priest, chapel nor church. He would not know that a group of nominal Presbyterians, (under John Wilkins apparently), had applied to Redstone for supplies and thus reestablished a Presbyterian congregation in Pittsburgh which met probably in a home on Sunday or, in good weather, under trees.

By now Mr. Jonathan Plumer was spending a good deal of his time in Long Run where he had a farm. He came back to reside in Pittsburgh some time later with his family. He held parties with his sons and daughters, inviting local young people and striving to win the neighboring youth for Christ. He prayed over and over again that God would fulfill in First Church His prophecy in the book of Joel 2:28, where God promised: ". . . I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy . . ." This is a key prophecy in the Bible leading to the founding of a Spirit-filled Church on the day of Pentecost after the Resurrection.

In years to come this basic and oft-repeated prayer of the saintly old layman, founder of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, was to be fulfilled in an extraordinary manner.

By 1785, Brackenridge had a bill in the Legislative Assembly at Philadelphia asking for the incorporation of a religious society in Pittsburgh. On April 14, 1786, when the bill was called up, it proved to be a bill to incorporate the "Presbyterian Congregation," in Pittsburgh under the care of the Reverend Samuel Barr. At the time the bill passed, the title "Presbyterian Congregation" was accepted.**

Mr. Barr traveled east on September 24, 1787, and from the Penn heirs, (John Penn and his cousin, John Penn, Jr.) received a parchment deeding two and one-half lots of the old Indian burial mound for the nominal sum of five shillings to the Reverend Samuel Barr and the ten trustees of the Presbyterian Congregation of Pittsburgh. The deed was somewhat belated as the Presbyterians, under the leadership of John Wilkins* (after whom Wilksburg is named), had already built a log cabin church on the site by August 1786.

On July 2, 1787, Samuel Vaughan stated in his Journal that Pittsburgh had "150 houses and a Presbyterian meeting house with near 400 men." Incidentally, at that time nearly all the church-going population of Pittsburgh attended First Church. At this point began the ministry of the Reverend Samuel Barr.

The little group of Presbyterians in the Bullock Penns, later Pitts Township, still later Beulah, made application to the Redstone Presbytery for supplies at the October 1784 meeting of Redstone Presbytery, six months after Pittsburgh applied to Redstone and over eleven years after the Donegal Presbytery (on April 14, 1773) had authenticated the resident ministry of David McClure and Levi Frisbie in Pittsburgh thus recognizing First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh as a properly constituted congregation.

Mr. Barr resided in Pittsburgh, preached there to a large congregation and rode out to Bullock Penns (present day Beulah) in the afternoons to preach to a much smaller one, according to Samuel Vaughan's Journal.

Though the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh was never spiritually aggressive under Mr. Barr, this minister, with Mr. Brackenridge, became creative to an astonishing degree. Together they pushed forward the formation of Pittsburgh Academy which later became the Western University of Pennsylvania and later still the University of Pittsburgh. In addition, Mr. Barr with Stephen Bayard* and Hugh Ross,* was appointed to form a committee to build Pittsburgh's first market house which expanded into the focal point of Pittsburgh's trade. In 1788, when Allegheny County was formed, Mr. Barr's name was second on the list of those requesting it; and in the first Court of Quarter Session to be held in the region the entire bench was composed of people of First Church.

** It should be stated that First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh has in its possession what would appear to be an extremely early membership roll, with the names of men who joined the church in its early days, recorded and inserted into what appears to be an even earlier short list of names like General James O'Hara which go to its infancy.

Mr. Barr also taught the children the Bible and Shorter Catechism. His Sunday School was one of the first real Sunday Schools in the United States, as we know such Sunday Schools today. The Raikes [so-called] Sunday Schools in England and later in this country were mainly devoted to the general education of the poor on Sundays, using the Bible as textbook, and being mostly served by paid teachers.

Stephen Bayard* married Elizabeth, the sixteen-year old orphan daughter of Aeneas Mackay. His ashes remain to this day in the vault of the present First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. He named Elizabeth Town which he founded after his wife.

It would be pleasant if it could be recorded that the "Jonathan Plumers" or dedicated laymen had multiplied, but such dedicated Christianity only applied to that saintly man's family who stayed with the congregation as committed Christians and whose descendants appear intermittently in its history as elders and teachers for two centuries.

Most of the other lay leaders made grave charges against Mr. Barr, their dedicated minister, to the effect that he had not preached regularly and that he had collected money in Philadelphia and not accounted for it.

Eventually, Samuel Barr, a first-class amateur lawyer and cross-examiner, neutralized the charges and uncovered a mean and clumsy conspiracy on the part of his accusers. They admitted that they had padlocked the church to keep Mr. Barr out and had accused him of fraud so that they could get rid of him without paying the salary which they owed him.

Finally, Mr. Barr accepted a call to Christiana Bridge Church in Delaware, one of the finest and oldest Presbyterian Churches in the country. He remained there for the rest of his life. First Church possesses the manuscripts of three of its first ministers' sermons. They deal with Sabbath observance and are, as one would expect, tightly-knit, well-reasoned and logical.

There was a hiatus of eleven years between the conclusion of Reverend Samuel Barr's ministry and that of the Reverend Robert Steele. During this time First Church was in the hands of a most capable layman—acting as unofficial minister. This was Judge Alexander Addison who had been licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Aberlour in Scotland. He had applied for ordination to the Redstone Presbytery and though refused was permitted to preach, so he became First Church's trained and licensed but unordained minister. He was Pittsburgh's first judge and one of her greatest and Redstone Presbytery could hardly do much about the situation. Under his leadership the citizens of Pittsburgh resisted the Whiskey Rebellion against the United States' government. However, large numbers of laymen in the Redstone Presbytery were involved in the rebellion. The miscreants were later refused Communion by their courageous Redstone ministers until they confessed and repented of their sin.

An important achievement of Judge Addison was the introduction of hymnbooks to First Church. At least some of these apparently contained hymns of Isaac Watts.

CHAPTER V

THE REVEREND ROBERT STEELE, THE MINISTER WHO COULD ONLY TEACH, AND THE CHILDREN WHO COULD CERTAINLY LEARN, 1800-1810

However, the First Presbyterian Church was soon to have a minister after its own heart though not after the heart of the Redstone Presbytery which took its time in agreeing to his appointment. The new minister, The Reverend Robert Steele, was born in Ballykelly, in the County of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, the same county from which his immediate predecessor had come.

After the success of the American Revolution, led in part by patriots such as Patrick Henry and the Reverend J. Witherspoon, both of Scotch-Irish extraction, a number of frustrated Presbyterians in Ireland and their clergy decided to join with their Catholic neighbors in revolt against the English penal laws; these laws would allow neither Catholics nor Presbyterians to send their sons to college in Ireland, or to own more than fifteen acres of land. The rebellion failed and a number of Presbyterian ministers, including the Reverend Robert Steele, were tried by courts-martial but before sentencing was pronounced, Reverend Mr. Steele escaped with his wife and baby to America. Possibly his great popularity with people helped. He had a genius for friendship and because of this popularity the local authorities were slow to arrest him.

Mr. Steele may never even have known that after leaving Ireland his name was stricken from the lists of Synod and Presbytery on the grounds of treason. Probably his colleagues in Ireland had their tongues in cheek when they took this step. Nevertheless, in the old minutes of his church session, the Presbyterian Church of Scriggan in Londonderry, and in the minutes of the two Presbyterian Synods of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland the decision is definitely recorded.

Certainly the extremely proper and precise Redstone Presbytery knew nothing about this matter when it accepted a testimonial of his good standing as a gospel minister from his former congregation in Londonderry.

Mr. Steele was a very complex man. He had developed a certain moralistic way of preaching, laying stress chiefly on right behavior. His sermons were mostly uninspiring. He seemed to be unable to let his deep, personal piety be a part of them. When speaking at funerals or dealing with people in a crisis situation it was just the opposite. He could always comfort, help and inspire.

The Reverend Robert Steele's work in First Church pleased the military party, but apparently there was a group of fervent believers now resident in Pittsburgh, the product of the revivals sweeping the countryside, who were dissatisfied. These people stated that they liked and respected Mr. Steele as a man but they petitioned the synod to let them form a new congregation, as they wanted "to receive the immediate benefit of a

Gospel ministry." Thus Second Presbyterian Church was founded. There were now two congregations in Pittsburgh. This second congregation wished to return to First Church in Dr. Herron's time but such a union would have made the congregation unwieldy so instead the two began to work in very close concert. This twin-like relationship continued as long as Second Church existed.

In Mr. Steele's time, however, the Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh was the evangelical congregation, and the First Presbyterian Church was the society church—the place to go if one wanted to belong to the "social set." In First Church were the ex-generals and the whole military hierarchy, the wealthy traders, people with such names as O'Hara,* Denny,* Wilkins,* Craig,* Bayard,* and of course their ladies and sons and daughters. First Church socially had "arrived."

So a log cabin church would no longer serve! A new church must be built! Thus came about the second building known as "the Brick Church," on Wood Street. Land once owned by the Reverend Samuel Barr was purchased and a new edifice 50 feet long by 44 feet wide was built. Pledges from the wealthy congregation trickled in slowly—very slowly indeed! Soon the congregation was in debt for \$1,500 and the workers and other creditors were demanding payment.

A lottery with tickets at five dollars each with a first prize of \$800 was instituted. The minister's sons turned the wheel. The lottery was a failure! A second and bigger one was tried. It was a disaster! Paying the workmen their wages in lottery tickets did not help! No one knew how many lottery tickets were sold or who received prizes. A state inquiry was to be set in motion, but the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh's "Lotterygate" was hushed up or else people simply lost interest!

In 1809 Major Ebenezer Denny remembering the prayers and counsels of his pious mother in Carlisle, along with Walter Lowrie and other good laymen from First and Second Presbyterian Churches, began a "Moral Society" in the Court House on Market Street. It met with contempt and opposition from the majority in Pittsburgh and had to close. This was one of the first examples of the Raikes Sunday School plan put into action in America.

At 4:00 A.M., on March 22, 1810, a bitterly cold morning when the temperature was sub-zero, a fire broke out on Wood Street and seemed likely to destroy a whole row of houses. Mr. Steele—true to his kindly and gracious character, hurriedly half-dressed in shirt and trousers—carried water from a hole cut through the ice on the Allegheny River. He caught cold as a result of this exposure during the bitter weather. Though gravely ill he insisted on collecting money for the now homeless people and shortly thereafter died, probably of pneumonia, leaving a wife, three boys and two girls. General O'Hara** permitted his widow to use his former house in the King's Orchard and the congregation helped to provide for the family.

** See *The King's Orchard*, by Agnes Sligh Turnbull. An excellent historic novel about Pittsburgh, its First Church, and General O'Hara who was one of the founders of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.

The church itself was now bankrupt and on the brink of disaster which was avoided since God had already engaged in an amazing planting that would surely bear a harvest. The planting was, under God, the work of the gifted and extremely complex Mr. Steele. As already stated he was a man of deep personal piety and conviction which he found difficult to express in the pulpit; to compensate, he had one remarkable talent. That talent was to be used, under God, to make him a midwife in the rebirth of *The Church That Kept on Being Born Again*. Though a poor preacher of the gospel, he was a brilliant teacher.

This gift, which Jonathan Plumer and Mr. Barr also cultivated, Mr. Steele exercised in a superlative manner. It would later be exercised by a multitude of laymen and laywomen in the First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh.

As a teacher, Mr. Steele was a born genius, far, far ahead of his time. God had worked "in His mysterious way," through the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland, the Courts-Martial, and the threat of a hangman's noose to bring him to Pittsburgh, to use his talent.

Mr. Steele, toward the end of the year 1800, while still only a stated supply of the congregation, opened a Sabbath School which ran for an hour-and-a-half each Sunday, between morning and afternoon services. From the pulpit he urged members to encourage their children to attend. The program included "Bible reading, memorizing the Longer and Shorter Catechism, prayer, exposition of Scripture, and a systemic oral instruction in faith and conduct." He had a kindly, familiar and conversational way of teaching. When Dr. Billy Graham was a child, a training after the nature of Mr. Steele's curriculum was his diet. Incidentally, Dr. Graham's parents were former Presbyterians from Northern Ireland.

It is no wonder that the teaching of Mr. Steele was of immense influence in the lives of the younger generation of lay persons in Dr. Herron's congregation and became the daystar of revival. This minister was sowing spiritual seed, and doing it, layman fashion, as a Sabbath School teacher! Children would be the first to profit from it.

At the Centennial celebration of First Church in 1884, one of the key speakers, Dr. William Speer, pointed out that it was possibly these children of Dr. Steele's Sunday School who helped in the movements of revival in Dr. Herron's time. The writer of this history after extensive research found this claim to have much validity.

One other event took place in Mr. Steele's ministry in First Church which must be recorded. He played no great part in it at the time but the large number of the children who attended his Sunday School class (of whom twenty-two can be identified) were influenced by it and were to make evangelism their own field of mission. The event was the historic formation of the Synod of Pittsburgh in First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, in 1802. On its first Board of Trust appeared the name of William Plumer, son of Jonathan Plumer. This Synod immediately constituted itself as the Western Missionary Society and began an aggressive program of Christian Evangelism to the Indian tribes in the West. The first six meetings of the Synod took place in First Church.

The Board of Trust which this Synod appointed at its first meeting to run missions both "local" and "foreign" (the latter in the sense that they ministered to the Indians as well as whites) was "the germ and model" of all subsequent Presbyterian Missionary boards of the Presbyterian denomination. The children of Mr. Steele's Sunday School and their successors were to give it their hands to work and their feet to march on its missions to the ends of the earth.

CHAPTER VI

DR. FRANCIS HERRON, THE MINISTER/EVANGELIST AND THE LAITY WHO WORKED TOGETHER FOR THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST, 1811-1850

Dr. Francis Herron, aged thirty-seven, who now came to First Church as its third minister, was born in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. He was of Scotch-Irish parentage, probably from the Covenanting Herron family of Rathfriland, County Down. Many great people came from this small town of Rathfriland, among whom had been the Craigs* of Pittsburgh.

Dr. Herron came to a church in sad decline. Materialism, fashionable follies, gambling, heavy drinking, and profanity, had made Pittsburgh the "Vanity Fair" of Western Pennsylvania. First Church was not merely a reflection of the city's materialistic life; it seems to have been the pace-setter.

Spiritually the church was a "drop-out." Few bothered to attend public worship and those who did regarded religion as a form rather than a force. Those who had a care for Jesus Christ were trying to form a live congregation, as in the case of the Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, but without apparent numerical success.

Finally, the congregation was bankrupt!

To this church came Francis Herron, one of the most dedicated evangelists, one of the most competent businessmen, one of the ablest organizers ever called by God to serve a Christian congregation. He was also a man of tremendous physique, but mingled with the muscle and brawn and driving energy there was an innate kindness in him which was utterly disarming and which is always one of the essential ingredients of a great minister.

As has been already stated, the church was bankrupt; now the Sheriff of Allegheny levied against the church lot and building, putting them up for public auction. Dr. Herron attended with the concurrence of the Trustees and bought all of the property for \$2,819. The superstitious gamblers of Pittsburgh, who had probably won most of the town's money, must have feared to bid against the minister or his church, in case it "would turn their luck." With inflation rampant, the minister was able, later, to sell a small portion of the land for \$3,000. The debt was paid, and the profit went into the church treasury.

In his preaching Dr. Herron was far ahead of his peers. With short stabbing sentences and searching questions that penetrated the soul, he opened up the human heart as skillfully as a surgeon of this modern century might lay bare the arteries of a man's physical heart with his scalpel. He exposed sin, let its guilt penetrate, leaving the listener's nerves raw. Then he preached Christ as the healer of a pernicious disease.

Listen to his staccato sentence!

"If you have never confessed and forsaken your sins, you are still unpardoned; you are still under the power and dominion of sin, and as such are far from God and love your distance from Him well . . . sinned you have—condemned you are—and without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repentance unto life—perish eternally you will."**

But when Dr. Herron preached Jesus, his voice became tender and gracious: "How transforming to feel a dark disordered mind opening to admit the light and the shining of the heavenly day. How precious Jesus appears to you when, by His Blessed Spirit, He settles the cloud that bewitches your understanding, and removes the veil of darkness from your hearts."

Let us hear him also address the repentant backsliders: "Let us learn wisdom and skill, like able generals, from defeat—though spoiled in some slight skirmishes, let us not be discouraged—but renew the contest, more humbly indeed, but not with less determination."

The amazing thing is that, though extensive revival was not to come until 1818, it had already begun when in 1813 a layman (of the stamp of Jonathan Plumer) called William Lecky, a member and trustee of the church, gathered the children of the poor into his wagon shop opposite the church for a Sunday School. He enrolled Eliza Irwin, (a former pupil of Dr. Steele's Sunday School) as a teacher. Shocked at such innovations, many of the still materialistic church members arraigned Lecky before the Session. "Let him go on with his teaching, something will come of it," said Dr. Herron. And no one could gainsay Dr. Herron.

Thus, Mr. William Lecky and Miss Eliza Irwin, later Mrs. Alexander Semple, were the first lay Sunday School teachers of First Church. Miss Irwin was the first woman lay-worker. She was far ahead of her time but thousands would follow her. Already Jonathan Plumer's prayers were being answered in the person of this young girl.

Soon the Sunday School of the layman, William Lecky, and the laywoman, Eliza Irwin, was meeting in the session room and some of the children began to attend Church services. Mr. Lecky brought a number of them in to sit in his pew to hear Dr. Herron preach. Several became fine Christians. This was the first real break in the hard crust of Pittsburgh—the work of a layman and a very young laywoman.

The main thing to be noted in this Sunday School was the introduction of the hymns of Isaac Watts by Miss Eliza Irwin who had been carefully instructed by the Reverend Robert Steele in memorizing from the Bible, the Longer and Shorter Catechisms, prayer, exposition of Scripture and a further systematic oral instruction in faith and conduct. Furthermore, Eliza had become enthralled with the evangelistic hymns of Isaac Watts who wrote "I'm Not Ashamed to Own My Lord," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "O God Our Help in Ages Past," "Joy to the World," and "Jesus Shall Reign." This was the diet of revival and of missionary enterprise.

** Underlining mine.

It would seem that the catalyst that helped, under God, to transform the young people of First Church into an evangelizing and mission-oriented group (even before major revival occurred) was the importation of the New Hymn Books under the leadership of Judge Alexander Addison, containing not only the Psalms of David, but also the hymns of Isaac Watts. Eliza Irwin had treasured her copy before 1813 and used it from then on in the Lecky-Irwin Sunday School.

Among the twenty-two identified members of Mr. Steele's large Sunday School who became a vital force in the revivals under Dr. Herron was Rebecca Johnston (Mrs. William Eichbaum). As a very old lady, she attended her church's celebration of its hundredth anniversary in 1884. There she proudly displayed her hymn book to all and sundry. It was stated on the flyleaf that the hymnal had been given to her on January 1, 1814, seventy-one years before for attending Sunday School in Mr. Steele's day. The hymnal was Mrs. William Eichbaum's prized possession.

In 1816, three years after the Lecky-Irwin Sunday School had commenced, even Dr. Herron and Dr. Elisha P. Swift, of Second Church, could only count on one layman and six laywomen (from a prayer group started by Mother Irish) to join them in a prayer meeting. After the prayer meeting had been going for eighteen months, in 1818, Dr. Herron was told by the session that "the extravagance of prayer meetings could not be endured, and a stop must be put to these meetings at once." They were regarded as "Methodist Extravagances."

Dr. Herron said bluntly that the prayer meetings would not stop; they would go on. This was the pivotal point. Soon a new sense of the love of God in Jesus Christ was embracing the congregation and people were being touched by the Spirit of God in a new way. The newly committed were not all "Johnny-come-lately Pittsburghers." Many were from the fashionable ranks of society. Mrs. Mary Carson O'Hara and her daughter, later to become Mrs. Harmar Denny, were among the first of these. The O'Hara and the Denny families became a spiritual lay-force in the congregation continuing until recent times. So, fourteen years after one layman, William Lecky, and one laywoman, Eliza Irwin, had introduced their Sunday School with its evangelical curriculum, revival came to First Church. It came like a sunburst.

For years Dr. Herron had prayed constantly that God would breathe life into the dry bones of formal religion. In 1827 he preached on the text beginning "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of years . . ." Several people walked out in a huff at this kind of evangelical preaching, but on that night revival began. Weeknight meetings were crowded. It was a wet and inclement winter, but the meetings went on and on. People squelched and groped their way along the muddy pavements by the flicker of light from sperm oil lanterns. Nothing could stop them! The church was packed night after night!

At Communion on the second day of January, fifty-five persons united with the church, thirty-five of these on profession of new-found faith. At the March Communion twenty more were received. In 1832, further revival came to First Church and 114 members were added to the congregation. Conversion among young people in the Sabbath School was a feature of this renewal.

After the 1827 revival Sabbath School work simply exploded. The William Leckys and the Eliza Irwins kept multiplying. The Sunday Schools of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh helped to found foreign missionary societies. The superintendents and young men and young women teachers, as they grew a little older, became a world evangelizing force whose work in China, India, Africa, Korea (especially the last named) is one of the great hopes of the world today.

A tally was made after the 1832 revival and it was found that under the auspices of First Church there were now twelve Sabbath Schools scattered through the city and its surrounding suburbs with 1,212 scholars and 121 teachers—and this at a time when the total membership of the congregation was 422 members. The staff were all members of First Church, including the seminarians who had joined the congregation. They were now in full membership and often acted as superintendents of its multiplying Sunday Schools. In other words, well over one out of every four members was a Sabbath School teacher and men and women engaged in the work together. By the beginning of Dr. Scovel's ministry in 1866 almost every one of these Sunday Schools had become a local congregation set in the urban and suburban areas of Pittsburgh. All looked to First Church as their mother congregation. Many testified to this fact at the First Church Centennial in 1884. Since 1825, First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh had its own independent Sabbath School organization, its Board of Managers, its own constitution, and its own teacher-training classes (established in 1831): one for men, led by Mr. Joseph Pollock and one for women, conducted by Mrs. Harmar Denny, wife of the distinguished federal congressman.

The known members of Mr. Steele's Sunday School (all the names, we know, except the minister's two sons were girls) had now become the fine middle-aged Christian women of the Church who taught in its Sunday Schools and organized its mission enterprise. After the 1827-1828 revival, the spirit and fire spread into the lives of their children and a kind of mission fever broke out among the young people. A new group of girls and a group of young men took the place of the children of Mr. Steele's Sunday School. The future is always with youth.

Revivalist ministers were by this time delivering thrilling and challenging appeals for deeper commitment to advance Christ's Kingdom. As a result of the 1827-28 revival, the children of First Church came under the compulsion of this challenge at an impressionable age.

In 1829 a group of schoolgirls from First Church began what was to become the organized women's work of the denomination. Their names were Mary Jane Craig, Hannah Laughlin, and Susan Irwin, later joined by Mary Herron, Mary Denny, and Isabella Craig. First they made pen wipers and sold them for mission projects. Laughed at, they called themselves the "Mite" Society. Nevertheless, Isabella Craig, a born promoter, put their work in a basket and peddled handmade articles from door to door—an extremely daring act for a young lady in the early 1800's. They raised thirty dollars for Reverend William M. Thompson as he set out for missionary service in Syria. These girls, as they grew older and reached adolescence, were consumed with a passion to go out to the American Indian mission field, or to the far corners of the world for the Christ they loved and served. But how? Girls could not be missionaries! That was a man's job!

So First Church girls were left to dream dreams and see visions, with the old men of the congregation, just like the lay founder of their Church, Jonathan Plumer, when the days of his high adventure were over. No one realized then that in their hearts Jonathan Plumer's prayer was about to result in a further realization.

With the establishment in Pittsburgh of the Western Foreign Missionary Society in 1831 by Dr. Elisha P. Swift, Dr. Herron and Mr. Harmar Denny, enthusiasm for foreign missions soared. Some newly-adopted sons of First Church caught the enthusiasm. Wells Bushnell, for instance, had been converted, aged seventeen, under Dr. Herron. He was now a seminarian. Like him, many of the seminary students who had been caught up in the revival of 1827, officially joined First Church and became its Sunday School Superintendents at a time when the Church had twelve Sabbath Schools. Now, trained as home missionaries, they were ready to accept the challenge to foreign service.

These young men were now answering the prayers of Jonathan Plumer and were ready to preach Jesus, not just in Pittsburgh, not just to the Indian tribes of the Western states, but to the ends of the earth. Soon there began an exodus from Pittsburgh to far off places of these courageous young, born-again ministers. The boys went, but by God's grace, few of the girls ultimately were left behind.

William Cowper said "God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform, He plants his feet upon the sea and rides upon the storm." Sometimes God does just that and sometimes He doesn't! Sometimes He moves in a very gentle and natural way.

He moved in a very gentle and beautiful way when Mary Jane Caldwell (stepdaughter of John Hannen, the beloved disciple elder of First Church) and herself one of the original "Mite" Society members, fell in love with Reverend Joseph Kerr. They married and set off as a husband-wife missionary couple to work with the Wea Indian Tribe in the American West. Nancy Henderson, another First Church girl, formed a team with them. Nancy must have been one of the first-known single laywomen missionaries.

God moved again when Mary Jane Caldwell's half sister, Eleanor Hannen, fell in love with and became the wife of Reverend Wells Bushnell. With two other born-and-trained First Church girls, they also formed a team to go West to the Wea Indian Tribe. The Wea Indian Tribe received seven of the finest young people of the First Church revival.

The romantic saga continued since, when men and women in the same church fall in love with Jesus Christ, they often fall in love with each other. In the case of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh this "natural law of hearts in love with Christ" led to one of the great romantic migrations in mission history. Soon First Church had missionaries all over the world. Susan Irwin, an original member of the "Mite" Society,

** The Hannen family and their two girls from First Church had later moved across the Allegheny River to establish a new congregation on the North Side. They were both brought up and trained in First Church and its Sunday Schools.

married Reverend J. S. Travelli, and they went as missionaries to India. Some of the men went alone; if accompanied by their wives, the names of the latter are unknown. The Reverend and Mrs. Albert O. Johnson were martyred at Cawnpore. John Cloud became a martyr in Africa. James Wilson, another First Church superintendent, went to Ludhiana in India.

At the end of May, 1833, John Lowrie and his wife Louisa sailed for India and Ludhiana. He had also been superintendent in two First Church Sunday Schools. Voyages in those days were especially hard on women; his wife died in November. John labored on with William Reed, another Western Seminary graduate, and his wife in Ludhiana till their health broke down, so the three missionaries set out to return home. Mr. Reed died on the voyage. John Lowrie later became Secretary of the Board for Foreign Missions for the whole denomination but always retained his love for and connection with First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.

The most famous of all First Church's romantic martyrs for Christ was Cornelia Brackenridge who joined the congregation at the age of thirteen and grew up to be one of Pittsburgh's most famous socialites. The sophisticated Cornelia encountered Jesus Christ and gave her life to Him. She married Reverend William Speer in 1846. He was another Sunday School superintendent member of the congregation. They also felt the call and sailed for China as another husband-wife team. Cornelia was with child on the perilous five month journey. The confinement broke her health and, on April 16, 1847, she died at age twenty-four, and was buried in Macao Cemetery. Her exciting personality left a tremendous mark on the people of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh and on the city. Her last words were, "I am willing by God's grace to suffer, recover, or die." Her husband, Dr. William Speer, became one of the most famous missionaries of the denomination and later Secretary of the General Assembly's Board of Education. He wrote the history of First Church's Sunday School.

During Dr. Herron's ministry the young people of the church prevailed on the minister to form a choir; later a bass viol was introduced to the church and later still a small stringed orchestra was formed.

In 1884 when the church celebrated its hundred-year anniversary, Dr. William Speer, Secretary of the General Assembly's Board of Education, gave two impressive addresses in the Church to which he belonged and where he had met his lovely young wife about forty years previously.

After the first revival in 1827, others followed in 1832, 1840, 1841, and 1843. Soon the congregation became too large for one man to serve adequately so Dr. Herron called his leaders together and arranged for a dozen of the most competent and dedicated to found the Third Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. Dr. Herron was blessed with a large number of outstanding elders.

Mr. Francis Beer had endured hardships of frontier life. As a young man he had come into Pittsburgh from the country dressed in tow clothing. He was ashamed to be so unsuitably dressed for worship, so he would sit on the stone steps where he could hear the service, and then leave before the congregation came out. He loved First Church and

when his situation improved became a Sunday School teacher and an elder, serving twenty-five years. Towards the end of his life when asked his opinion on church policy he replied: "It has been a little dark with me lately; but I know this, anyhow: Whatever's for Jesus Christ, that I'm for." In those days the poor in Pittsburgh endured much hardship in cold winter weather with no fires. Mr. Beer left a substantial financial legacy to help them, the Beer Coal Fund, which has operated to the present day.

Mr. Francis G. Bailey born in Ballywalter, County Down, Northern Ireland, worked along with his brother-in-law, Alexander Laughlin, and became a successful businessman, joining First Church in 1824. His heart was warmed by the Revival of 1827. He went to live in East Liberty, along with the Reverend John Joyce, an evangelist assistant to Dr. Herron in the Revival of 1827. The Reverend John Joyce, appointed by Presbytery for this purpose, and Mr. Francis Bailey together led the formation of the East Liberty Presbyterian Church despite strong opposition from the minister and congregation of Beulah. When objection was made by the latter to Presbytery that there were few Presbyterians in the area, Mr. Bailey replied: "There are plenty of people . . . and we expect to have them converted, and then we will make a church." The Reverend Joyce and Mr. Bailey persevered and canvassed the community, and East Liberty Presbyterian Church was established. Of the founding members of the congregation, one-half of the membership was from First Church and one-quarter from her sister congregation of Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. The others were from Bethany and McKeesport Presbyterian Churches and the Associate Reformed Church of Pittsburgh.**

In 1841 Mr. Bailey returned to Pittsburgh and almost immediately was reinstalled an elder in First Church. Sometime afterwards, Western Theological Seminary was established in Pittsburgh by the Synod of Pittsburgh, rather than Cincinnati, due to Dr. Herron's casting vote. Mr. Bailey became one of its directors and president of its trustees. In 1850 he and his friend, Mr. Beer, retired and spent the rest of their lives in the streets, lanes and alleyways of Pittsburgh serving men and women, rich and poor, in Christ's name. Mr. Bailey prayed in every household of the congregation once a year. His wife was Mary Ann Dalzell, daughter of John Dalzell who had been, like the Reverend Steele, implicated in the 1798 Ulster Rebellion. He was a brother-in-law of Alexander Laughlin, one of First Church's other great elders.

There is little doubt that the greatest elder of all was the Honorable Harmar Denny, member of Congress, who had married Elizabeth Febiger O'Hara, daughter of General James O'Hara and Mary Carson O'Hara. Harmar was Dr. Herron's dearest friend. The offices held by him are too numerous to mention. He was president of the Synod throughout its existence. Harmar Denny and his wife along with the Schenleys donated twenty-four acres of land to be the site for West Penn Hospital and led a group to provide the money to furnish it.

The two Laughlin families were originally from Northern Ireland and both with sons named after their fathers, Alexander and James. The Laughlin families appear again

** See the large book entitled *East Liberty Presbyterian Church* compiled by Georgina G. Negley, A.B., for East Liberty Presbyterian Church, published by Murdoch, Kerr & Co., 1919, Pittsburgh, pp. 17 and 42.

and again in the history of First Church as Sunday School superintendents, philanthropists, and founders of attractive public libraries, one in Aliquippa, the other in Ambridge. President Clinton spent quite a while in the classical library building in Ambridge on his visit to Ambridge in 1993. He visited this library as one of the most beautiful buildings in the United States.

We have already recorded the work of the sons of Jonathan Plumer, George, Thomas and William.

Dr. Herron's later years were quiet and peaceful. Much of his time he spent fishing in the rivers. His memorial is one of the oldest and most cherished treasures of First Church and stands near the door of the present sanctuary.

CHAPTER VII

DR. WILLIAM PAXTON, THE CHURCH WITH THE BRILLIANT ADVOCATE FOR JESUS CHRIST, 1851-1865

William Millar Paxton at age twenty-seven became the fourth ordained pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh. Early in life this young man had decided to study law. He was a born advocate with an almost uncanny gift for logical thinking and rhetoric which he exercised first as a law student, then through fifty-two years of ministry and finally as a professor of Homiletics in Princeton University. He was a "prince of preachers." Dr. Paxton prepared his sermons as an old-time lawyer prepared his briefs, walking up and down his study. It was, however, a very small study.

Under Dr. Paxton's leadership the third church building was erected. It was also on Wood Street. The pulpit was designed to match as closely as possible the dimensions of Dr. Paxton's study where he could pace back and forth, delivering his sermon as he had prepared it without the use of notes. Thus he could address, eye to eye, every member of the congregation. He set up an hourglass at one end of the very large pulpit before he began to preach and timed himself for a full hour of preaching.

The dimensions of the central pulpit in the present building were copied from it and, therefore, duplicate those of Dr. Paxton's pulpit and study almost a century and a half ago. The hourglass and the hour-long sermon, however, are not duplicated.

Tragedy struck Dr. Paxton soon after his arrival in Pittsburgh when his young wife and baby died in childbirth. Later he married Caroline Sophia Denny, a descendant of the Wilkins, Dennys and O'Haras.

During the Civil War the men of First Church were deeply involved in the field of battle and the minister used his logic, rhetoric, and fiery passion in the Union Cause. In one great Community Meeting, held in First Church, \$50,000 was raised for the Sanitary Commission.

Dr. Paxton's health and that of his young son were at this time jeopardized by the awful soot and smog of Pittsburgh and the Paxtons had to move to the prairie lands of Minnesota. After his recovery, he became the minister of the First Presbyterian Church, New York. Later, he was elected Moderator of the General Assembly. He attended and was one of the keynote speakers at the Centennial celebrations of First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, in 1884. When Dr. Paxton died in 1906, Woodrow Wilson, then President of Princeton University, took part in his funeral service.

Perhaps Dr. Paxton was almost too brilliant a preacher for any church. He was so successful that the laity may have felt overawed by his tremendous gifts and powers. It is possible that they left the work of the Kingdom too largely to him.

After Dr. Paxton left, the congregation seemed to decline fairly rapidly, though there had been revivals during his ministry, encouraged by his predecessor and elderly friend the unflagging evangelist Dr. Herron. Ministers of the type of Dr. Herron who were strong evangelistic preachers and gifted organizers seem to have suited First Church better than brilliant preachers.

CHAPTER VIII

DR. SYLVESTER SCOVEL, THE GREAT ORGANIZER OF LAITY OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF PITTSBURGH, 1866-1883

In the last quarter of the year 1865 the Session became very concerned indeed for the future of the congregation. Several factors foreboded trouble. The first great exodus from the central area had begun. Pittsburghers were moving out to the boroughs in increasing numbers. Other residents, nevertheless, were certainly coming in to take their place. Many young men were drawn into the city's heavy industry but very few of them were Presbyterian. Many were not interested in religion. Also, after the close of the Civil War, large numbers of black people from the South, the freed slaves, were crowding into the city, without jobs and definitely impoverished.

What was to be done? The First Church was in an existential crisis with the emphasis on the first part of the word—"exist." The session instituted weekly prayer meetings, beseeching God to send a man who could help them meet this hour.

They found one, Dr. Scovel!

The new minister had a most interesting link with First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. Dr. Scovel and his wife were both brought up in a Sunday School under the superintendency of William Plumer (son of Jonathan Plumer), an erstwhile elder in First Church under Dr. Herron in 1829. Mr. Plumer had later moved to New Albany, Indiana where he had become a devoted church worker and Sunday School superintendent.

Dr. Scovel was the ideal man for the call for, although a fine preacher and evangelist, he proved to be supremely a man of vision, an organizer, and a leader of men, like Dr. Herron. During his pastorate Dr. Scovel introduced the idea of a yearly text to set the goal for the ensuing year. Also, he instituted a program of readings which would enable members to read through the Bible once a year.

He also introduced the custom of an "Annual Sunday Sermon Review," like the President's State of the Union Address. In this sermon he gave an inventory of gains, losses and future involvements. It was the intention that every fifteenth year there would be a fifteen-year review. The annual review sounds almost like a stockholders' meeting! Perhaps this is the way it should be, provided the Holy Spirit is recognized as the Chief Executive, and the minister and laymen and laywomen of the church the Board of Directors. The stockholders who would be greatly enriched, though as yet they were quite unaware of their good fortune, were the vast multitudes of young men and boys and of black individuals migrating from the South who were teeming into Pittsburgh, seeking work in its vast industrial plants.

A strategy was developed to seek out the young men. Ebenezer Cook and Thomas Power Day, leading members of First Church, became the leaders of the

Y.M.C.A. which was formed after the Moody Revival. The Y.M.C.A. even had a branch in First Church itself. A Young Men's Union was reactivated as part of the congregational program of the church.

In a continuing review of the city's needs, another group was recognized as being in need of help, the already mentioned black people. The General Assembly's "Committee on Freedmen" first met and was organized in First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. A national report in 1888 to Assembly stated: "Among those consulted, it was found that only ministers and elders from Pittsburgh and its vicinity would agree to undertake the work." A quarter of a century earlier, liberal and social activist churches had hastened the War for Emancipation. Now they had largely ceased to care for the black brethren who were in their midst. Unfortunately, it seems that this attitude was typical as is often the case with purely social activists.

First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh and her daughter and granddaughter churches—all Bible-centered congregations—now led the way in social work among the unchurched, the immigrants and the black community. Much of the work was achieved through the Women's Christian Association which was organized by Dr. Scovel on November 28, 1876, to act as an auxiliary to the pastor and officers of the church. This group of laywomen raised the money, clothed Sunday School children, visited, prayed, ran libraries and organized social meetings. Monthly meetings were held to accept reports and to sew for the poor and for charitable institutions and hospitals. They did much of the practical work under the brilliant leadership of the aristocratic young Miss Matilda W. Denny of the famous Denny family. She reorganized the whole women's work of the congregation in this period of her youth as she was later to reorganize the whole life of the church during Dr. Maitland Alexander's pastorate in her old age.

This lady was not merely the greatest laywoman of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh; she was the greatest organizer of all, including the ministers. Dr. Scovel, however, was not far behind her. With her help, Dr. Scovel divided the city into six or seven districts, putting a deacon in charge of each. The deacon, with two women from the Women's Christian Association, formed a committee of three to serve the district. In addition, two women were appointed to each district to encourage new members to become involved in the church's mission.

At the beginning of his ministry Dr. Scovel had initiated a program of lay evangelism to be led by a city missionary, the idea being to use both men and women to carry out mission work in the church's districts. Mrs. E. F. Denny promised \$1,000 a year towards the missionary's salary, while several gentlemen subscribed a total \$300 a year to rent a house for him. The Reverend S. C. Faris became the first city missionary and with him served Miss Ellen McNutt. Their salaries were paid by subscriptions. Their work had a tremendous influence in later years on First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. It set in motion, under the approval of the congregation, a series of events which led to the development of still one more daughter-congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. This congregation, the Central Presbyterian Church, came back to the mother church later and brought with it a good-sized membership

including some of the finest lay leadership a church has ever enjoyed—in 1903 Elder W. F. Dalzell and in 1914 Elder George R. Auferheide.**

These two gentlemen were of very high caliber and soon became leaders of the congregation; Mr. Auferheide was one of the leading elders in the church at the death of Dr. Macartney. He was instrumental, under God, in bringing the Reverend Doctor Robert J. Lamont, as a very young man, to First Presbyterian to succeed Dr. Macartney.

Another concern of Dr. Scovel was Sunday School work—always an indicator of the spiritual life of the congregation—because it is essentially lay work. At this time Sunday School work was no longer confined to children but was intended for parents and other adults.

Dr. Scovel, in 1871, established a Minister's Bible Class for young people. He consolidated groups of children still adhering to First Church in the outlying school areas where many of First Church's old Sunday Schools had now become churches in their own right much to the joy of the minister and people of First Church. A senior department was organized in the Sunday School and the rest divided between intermediate and infant departments.

The superintendent was James Laughlin, Jr., an organizer after the stamp of Dr. Scovel. A target of 1,200 pupils was set. The main agency was to be diligent visiting by teachers. Many teachers were working class people who labored a six-day week, from early morning to late at night. To be a Sunday School teacher as well took nearly all their spare time. At this period First Church once more approached the incredible ratio of greater than the one-to-four teacher-student ratio which had existed after the 1827 revival in Dr. Herron's ministry.

In 1876 revival again broke out in The First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. It was chiefly among the young, as in 1832: (1) because of excellent Sunday School work, (2) because the adults were mostly already committed to Christ. About this time First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh became again the largest congregation in the Pittsburgh Presbytery.

The Women's Foreign Missionary Society was under the Presidency for over a decade of Mrs. H. G. Comingo, the former Isabella Craig, the daring young missionary-minded door-to-door school-girl peddler. The work of the Women's Missionary Society overflowed into children's work and soon there were six bands of children, after the stamp of Isabella Craig, raising money for missions—although in less spectacular ways than their former role model.

Miss Anna K. Davis, daughter of Elder Robert S. Davis, became a missionary, teaching in a girls' school in Tokyo, Japan.

** It will be realized that Dr. Scovel gave great responsibility to this Women's Christian Association. It did much of the work for which the Session would be responsible, especially in visitation.

In 1881 a Sabbath School chapel was built on Wood Street at a cost of \$24,000. It had an auditorium which looked like a small church. There was a large pulpit with plaques on either side containing the Ten Commandments. The building became a vital center through the rest of the century for youth involvement in the Kingdom.

Before Dr. Scovel left to become President of Wooster College, Ohio, he wrote a 259-page *Centennial Volume of the First Presbyterian Church*—half of it an excellent history, half Centennial Sermons. At that time the Journals of Kenny, Beatty, and McClure, and the letters of Frisbie had not been researched and so the Pre-Revolutionary history of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh was largely unknown to him. It was therefore, believed that the church began with the supplies from the Redstone Presbytery on April 13, 1784. Hence the "Centennial" Volume and celebration of that milestone took place in April, 1884.

One great weakness in Dr. Scovel's history is that he plays down his own work and involvement. Thus it was not actually recognized, until the previous history was written in 1973, that he was—along with Dr. Herron—the other minister with great organizing skills in the first century of the church's history. Dr. Scovel conducted at least one significant revival. The church needed only one (and that among the young people) since revival was continuous during his ministry which was under the influence of D. L. Moody. Through Moody's inspiration the Y.M.C.A. became a major factor in First Church life.

Dr. Scovel along with the Reverend Dr. John Gillespie of East Liberty Presbyterian Church organized the Shadyside Presbyterian Church contributing an almost equal amount of foundation members from their congregations, with only four from other churches.

While thousands fled to the suburbs, these simple Christians, lay people—men and women, old, middle-aged and young—by faith endured and worked and died (often as a result of their sulphurous environment) as seeing Him who is invisible. Though their names are recorded on no page of this or any other history, they glow in the Annals of the Kingdom of God in Christ.

CHAPTER IX

DR. GEORGE TYBOUT PURVES, THE CHURCH WITH ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT PREACHERS, 1886-1892

In 1886 there came to Pittsburgh Dr. George Tybout Purves, one of the greatest orators of the age. Born in Philadelphia, of Scottish ancestry on his father's side, while his mother was a Kennedy of Northern Irish Antrim descent, he entered the University of Pennsylvania and appears to have won practically every prize in oratory offered by the University. He was also a prize man in philosophy and Greek. In Princeton he was the best preacher in his class. In First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh his great preaching ability made an astounding impression, achieving what was said to be "one of the triumphs of the modern ministry."

In the early 1970s the writer of *The Church That Was Twice Born* met a young policeman** in Bangor, Northern Ireland, who was able not only to name Dr. Purves, but even to give his initials of G. T. for George Tybout. "However did you know the name and initials of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh's preacher?" asked the astonished minister. "I have read Dr. Purves' book of sermons," said the young policeman. So widespread was, and still is, the fame of Dr. Purves!

Multitudes crowded into First Church: young people, judges of the courts, lawyers, doctors, teachers, working-classes. The preacher was small of stature, but his sermons seemed to illuminate the Bible, fire the heart and challenge the soul.

"What Think Ye of Christ?" was the text of one of his many great sermons. In it Dr. Purves said: ". . . that Christ tests a man's character, as would a magnet amongst a pile of mixed iron and wood particles, the iron will cling to the magnet and the wood will remain unmoved. Thus you discover not only the power of the magnet but also the character of the materials amongst which it is held."

So, he claimed, Christ tests a man's moral character. Your attitude to Christ judges you. When you answer the question, "What think ye of Christ?" you test and judge yourself.

"You cannot parry the question. It is God's home-thrust. You must answer it someday, if not now, then at the judgment day."

"What think ye of Christ?"

** Formerly a member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Bangor, County Down, Northern Ireland, he is now Professor Robert Rodgers, MA, M.Ed., BD, M.Theol., D.Theol., working in a university in Hungary having earned his five degrees since leaving school at fourteen years of age when the writer was his minister.

It is apparent that he had something of the preaching thrust of Dr. Herron but he had not his organizing ability. What First Church needed as the century began to ebb was not so much a brilliant orator. It needed a preacher-organizer ministry of the Herron-Scovel pattern. As happened also when that other great orator preacher, Dr. Paxton, left First Church, so when Dr. Purves left, the crowds departed with him.

CHAPTER X

DR. DAVID BREED, THE CHURCH WITH THE MINISTER OF THE GREATEST POTENTIAL AND THE GREATEST FRUSTRATION, 1894-1898

With the call of Dr. David Breed in 1894 First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh found what it needed. His parents, in their youth, had been very active in the congregation before moving out to Oakland. There, their son was born. David's mother had sung in First Church choir and his father was an officer in the Sunday School.

David Breed was an incredible genius who attended the University of Pittsburgh until he was thirteen and one half years old. He left, as he realized that his teachers were treating him as a prodigy and went to work in his father's business. Later he took up his college career again at Hamilton College, Clinton, New York, and received more honors there than anyone before him.

Unfortunately, he came to First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh at the most difficult time in his life. He had scaled a ladder to the ceiling of the sanctuary of a church where he was serving when the ladder slipped and he fell. As a result he seemed mortally injured. He recovered and served in the ministry for some time before being called to First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh where he suffered a relapse. Before his relapse he had already begun a wonderful reorganization of the Church, uniting with it Central Presbyterian Church.

However, with his ever present physical disability, he was continually frustrated. After four years he received a call to a professorship in Western Theological Seminary, which he accepted. He became one of the seminary's outstanding teachers. He died when over ninety years of age. He and his wife kept their love for First Church all through their long lives. Mrs. Breed became one of the best leaders of women's work the congregation ever had. His niece, Miss Emma Zug, became a youth leader and pillar of the church till her death at over ninety years of age. Dr. Maitland Alexander credited Dr. Breed with having begun the work of reconstruction of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh before he himself came as minister.

Lay leadership was greatly encouraged under Dr. Breed's ministry. After David Robinson died, Mr. John W. Chalfant had become president of the Board of Trustees. He was an organizer of the People's National Bank, a founder of West Penn and Allegheny General Hospitals and a director of Dixmont Hospital. After his death, came William A. Robinson, Charles E. Speer and Harmar D. Denny in various leadership positions. This legacy of wonderful elders was to play a dynamic role in the achievements of the next great ministry.

Unfortunately, after these two short ministries, First Church congregation was in much the same condition numerically as it had been after Mr. Barr, Mr. Steele, Dr. Paxton and Dr. Purves left.

It was in danger of disappearing. It now needed to be born yet once again.

CHAPTER XI

DR. MAITLAND ALEXANDER, THE CHURCH WITH THE MINISTER AND LAITY WHO DREAMED DREAMS AND REALIZED THEM TOGETHER IN CHRIST, 1899-1927

In 1899, the last year of the nineteenth century, the congregation called Dr. Maitland Alexander, pastor of Harlem Presbyterian Church, New York to be its minister.

It would appear that the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh had surely passed the zenith of its power and influence. Under God, ministers like Herron and Scovel had experienced revival after revival in an inspired apostolic succession. Scovel, the versatile, had reprogrammed the congregational work and First Church had become again, numerically speaking, the largest church in the Pittsburgh Presbytery. Purves and Breed, by inspired preaching and by God-given love and graciousness, had kept loyal to its central core a congregation now relocating in its suburbs.

When a minister retired or accepted a call to another church, the session sought the leading of the Spirit of God and never called a man until it was absolutely sure that the choice was in God's will—insofar as its members could ascertain that will. There were, however, no long vacancies.

The evangelical succession in First Church had been maintained through such laymen as Jonathan Plumer, Aeneas Mackay, Harmar Denny, Francis Bailey, the two Alexander families, John Hannen, Robert Beer, John Snowden, David McKnight, David Robinson, Ebenezer T. Cook, John Thompson, John W. Chalfant, and Charles E. Speer, and through women like Mary Carson O'Hara, Eliza Irwin, Mrs. William P. Eichbaum, Mrs. Harmar Denny, Susan Irwin, Isabella Craig, Mrs. Cornelia Brackenridge Speer, and the young Miss Matilda Denny. Some of these people possessed remarkable business and administrative ability and, in all cases, a simple but profound love for Jesus Christ and His cause.

In 1899, the minister called to the service of First Church, Pittsburgh was peculiarly matched to the challenge of a disintegrating church entering a new century. The new minister of First Church possessed a combination of executive talent, oratory, charm and tireless energy. Maitland Alexander was a man who always thought big, saw visions, and had the capacity and determination under God to transform his dreams into reality.

The religious outlook for downtown Pittsburgh was not bright, however, nor for the survival of First Presbyterian Church. The other congregations almost all saw the handwriting on the wall; the letters were large and clear—and they spelled out the word "EXODUS." In fact the word "EXODUS" was used in newspapers to describe the movement of many members of center-city congregations, out of what would later be

known as the Golden Triangle, toward the suburbs. This was the trend around the turn of the century. Congregations could sell their sites for inflated prices, buy a new site where the homes of the people were and thus have money to build a modern and enlarged church. Several relocations to the east of the city and to the South Hills occurred.

For the First Church of Pittsburgh, changes would need to be made if the dream of Maitland Alexander was to be realized. The physical fabric of the dream would involve the construction of a central cathedral-like church where the city's spiritual life could find its focus, necessitating a greatly enlarged sanctuary, a full-sized basement, an adequate number of classrooms, a cafeteria service, rooms for recreation, arts and crafts, and a well-staffed nursery service. "Do great things for God; expect great things from God," was Maitland's motto.

The emphasis in the new church would be on a continuous program running every day of the week and almost around the clock. The church's mission would be focused on where the people were, and would relate to them in their nearby business and commercial enterprises.

Dr. Maitland Alexander had several great factors working for him besides his own inspiring personality and the church's traditional links with the city. One was the gifted group of elders and trustees of First Church—men experienced in spiritual and temporal affairs. Their names were mentioned in the previous chapter. It was a rich inheritance for a young minister. A further factor in his favor was that in 1896 he had married Madelaine F. Laughlin, the Laughlin heiress.

Maitland Alexander, even with his great talents, found his first years difficult. Many of the daring and revolutionary ideas formulating in his mind seemed unrealistic to the trustees of the church. So for the first two years of his ministry, Maitland Alexander set aside ample time to make personal friends with the men and women who formed the lay (human) power-structure of the congregation—the Speers, Mr. Samuel Ewart, and most of all, the ultra-conservative Miss Matilda W. Denny who, like all her ancestors, was willing to back progressive ideas provided it could be proved to her that they were genuinely progressive and not merely novel. Matilda W. Denny had a healthy skepticism of novelty for novelty's sake but an intuitive gift for seeing hidden possibilities, if the proposals had genuine merit.

In his twenty-fifth anniversary sermon Dr. Alexander records his debt both to the congregation and to Miss Denny:

My best friend during those early days was Miss Matilda W. Denny. Miss Denny represented the ultra-conservative element in First Church. I soon found out, however, that Miss Denny's ideas were not only progressive, but that, having given her confidence, she backed it with her influence and her money. How much the church of today owes to her, will probably never be realized . . .

A worn and tattered leather notebook was found by the writer of this history among some old church records. It gives us opportunity to understand the magnitude of

that debt. The reader of the detailed notebook realizes that, while to Dr. Maitland Alexander belonged the vision of a new type of evangelical and socially oriented ministry, much of the practical planning found its origin and thrust in the down-to-earth mind of Miss Matilda W. Denny and the Woman's Work Society which she had gradually created. Very often a minister dreams dreams, but it takes practical, down-to-earth women to realize them. Her main idea was to recruit young people into the life of the church by setting up a program appealing to their interests.

The organization of the Woman's Work Society was meticulous. At the first meeting, Pittsburgh was divided into nine districts. Two of these areas were to be under the direction of a Miss Fleming (Miss Denny's companion), acting "for Miss Denny." The other seven districts were under the care of paired members of the women of the church, who were the district organizers and recruiters. Thus she reviewed and revised the program she had instituted in Dr. Scovel's day.

The attempt to involve the youth in the program of First Church was a most successful venture. The work among boys became the Boys' Club, while the girls were enrolled in a sewing school which eventually had a kindergarten department. Out of this organized outreach to youth also came, in time, the Boys' Brigade and their camping program which continued as the First Presbyterian Church Camp when the Boys' Brigade program proved no longer appropriate.

Closely written pages record the work up to 1905 when the new sanctuary and facilities were opened. Although the entries in the book continue until 1907, Miss Denny had before this date already accomplished her main mission which was to reorganize youth in the congregation.

After the opening of the new building the groups were multiplied and enlarged. But the labors of this gifted lady had established patterns and guidelines for the church's continuing evangelical mission to youth. Up to this period young people had been largely recruited for foreign mission projects and temperance promotion. Now the development of the whole child was taken into account, physical and spiritual.

Some manuscripts folded into the minute book appear to be heart-to-heart talks given by Miss Denny to the children. She had a passion for cleanliness which was one of the few effective ways to fight germs and disease in her day. She emphasized that "cleanliness was next to Godliness," promised new dresses as first prizes in her "school," and quite bluntly told the children that they could become members of the sewing school only if they would submit to a vaccination against smallpox. For those who were willing to comply she had a nurse ready to administer the vaccination.

Miss Denny had a pleasant, intimate way of speaking to the children. Her script becomes somewhat distressing, however, when she described the ravages of smallpox on its victims.

In spite of her pragmatic outlook on life, or maybe because of it, Miss Matilda W. Denny was a deeply spiritually-minded woman. Her favorite passages in the Bible were those which depicted God as Shepherd: the Twenty-third Psalm, showing God

going before the sheep; the tenth chapter of the Gospel according to Saint John, describing Jesus as the Good Shepherd. In her love and care Miss Denny showed herself a true shepherdess. She believed that the best way to produce a good flock was to nourish and tend the lambs.

In 1900 several women of the congregation saw a need and met it. They noticed a number of young mothers wheeling their babies in buggy carts up and down Oliver Avenue, then known as Virgin Alley. These young women seemed to have little aim or object except to "air" their children, though the atmosphere of Pittsburgh, at the turn of the century, was not calculated to do much to improve the health of babies.

One day these mothers were invited to bring their children into the church and attend a service at 2:30 P.M. Seven women responded, accompanied by five children. They were given a hearty welcome. No one worried if a baby cried or a child was somewhat noisy. After a missionary talk, refreshments were served. Thus began the Mothers' Club, which was to become an outstanding institution in First Church for a century.

By 1902 the day for the realization of the dream of Dr. Maitland Alexander had already dawned. And what a dream that was! The idea of a great central downtown church ministering to men and women in their daily environment, amid shops, offices, banks and business houses was nothing new. Many churches had tried it and often had ended up as Christian welfare institutions, with a token religious service on Sunday morning.

Dr. Alexander wanted greater things for First Church and the boards of the church, when they understood this, began to back him. He laid down three principles for the reconstruction of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh:

First, let the church be the church. Never let her substitute for mere social services, her own God-inspired radical and evangelical conviction that the Kingdom of God can only be built with the living stones of redeemed and recreated lives.

The preaching of the gospel would be a priority. Every activity—spiritual, social, and promotional—would find its authority in the Bible, speaking through the preacher to the souls of men and women. The love of God for sinners, the presence of God in men's lives, and the power of God to deliver from sin—those great redemptive facts would be simply but authoritatively proclaimed from the First Church pulpit.

The second objective would be that First Church should never become a one-class church, drawing its strength and membership from only one stratum of society, whether the rich or the poor, the intellectual or the uneducated, the employers or the working class.

The third principle would be to link social services closely to the religious life of the church. The social work would be the outcome of the congregation's relationship to Jesus Christ, not an appendage to it.

I record the vital points of the various speeches given by Maitland Alexander as they establish, in gracious and precise words, the guidelines of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh past, present, and in the future.

As Dr. Alexander put it:

If the day should come when, as minister or people, we shall forget this source of power; if we ever forget the road to Calvary; if Pentecost should only be the story of two thousand years ago, and not a continually recurring experience . . . our power will be gone. The temple may stand but the mysterious presence of God will be missing . . . The artistic adornments of this church will yet delight the eyes, but the light that shines through these windows upon the worshippers will be the light of earth and not of heaven.

The great changeover envisaged by Dr. Alexander was not only to retain the power of the pulpit, but to add to it an evangelical missionary outreach to every stratum of society and to every area of activity in the expanding city's life.

This dream of Pittsburgh as a City of God seemed an impossible one to everybody but to God, Maitland Alexander and Matilda Denny.

Space is not available in this history to give an account of the building of the new church on the original site, its present position on the Indian Burial Mound; the removal of the bodies of the revolutionary leaders from the cemetery (many to the present crypt in the church basement) and a description of the new building; a detailed account of the programs for children, youth, young women, young men, couples and older people; the physical training; the intellectual programs, art, music and missionary programs; the revival meetings as a result of the Billy Sunday campaign; the Bible classes, the sewing classes, the indoor-outdoor clubs, the men's and women's groups; the unemployment department; the lectures on religious and economic topics—except to say the suite of buildings was used almost continually, like a busy bee hive, from Sunday morning till Saturday night. Perhaps one of the most significant developments of the church's activities did not take place in the building itself but in the camping program which the church inherited from the now defunct Boys' Brigade and which was to become a vital part of the church's outreach to the city.

We must refer the reader to those pages of *The Church That Was Twice Born* (pages 133-161) which may be obtained in the Church Library.

Meanwhile the building of the new sanctuary was rapidly taking place. We must again refer the reader to pages 135-150 of *The Church That Was Twice Born* for an account of the removal of the bodies of Indians, Revolutionary War heroes and other historical figures to Allegheny Cemetery, Homewood Cemetery, the Episcopal cemetery and the present crypt; the search for a supposed treasure chest; and the building of the massive new cathedral-like church.

The grounds of the historic estate Friendship Hill, formerly owned by Albert Gallatin, on Highway 166 about three miles north of Point Marion and a mile south of Geneva, became the first camping site used by the Boys' Brigade. The stone for the building of the church also came from this estate, which was at that time owned by Charles E. Speer, president of the Board of Trustees, and chairman of the Building Committee. It was transported to the site of First Church on barges, then on carts pulled by dray horses and was given freely by Charles E. Speer. No money was raised from the congregation for the new structure, though the materials were all pure whether stone, wood or marble. They were given gratuitously and the money for building was derived from a business deal for the leasing of portions of church land. Samuel Ewart gave the Stern of Jesse window and Jacob Painter, Jr. gave the central pulpit, while the baptismal bowl was the one donated by Mrs. James O'Hara, a piece from her silver tea service, which is probably two hundred years old.

On Palm Sunday, April 16, 1905, the new building was dedicated. Dr. Maitland Alexander preached from I Kings VIII: 56, 57, and 58. He said in the course of his remarks:

... History, and particularly history like that which has been made by this church, is of peculiar power. Like the old family swords made dear by what they represent in patriotism and sacrifice ... the history of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh is her dear possession ...

A new church untrammelled by historic associations, or precedents, may plan her course ... without restraint or inspiration other than that furnished by herself ...

The old church, amid memories that gather about her, listening to the voices ... of the past, is controlled, animated and inspired by that heritage ...

Dr. Alexander concluded his address with these words:

... We dedicate this church, and with it ourselves, anew and afresh, to Almighty God; to His worship and service, to the cause of His Kingdom, to the salvation of the men and women of this great city, through the Cross of Christ.

We dedicate it to the care of little children and the comfort and consolation of the aged. We dedicate it as a refuge for all the storm-tossed, a shelter for the shelterless—as a great rock for rest for the weary, and as a stream for refreshment for the thirsty. And this we do for Christ's sake, "who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life as a ransom for many." Among whom we pray we may all at last be found.

The Sunday School membership rapidly approached the thousand mark while the Women's Missionary Work, established long before with the beginning of the Mite

Society, found new life and impetus. Many gifted people were members of the congregation, but the business of the church itself was conducted by very ordinary people of limited means. They worked as teachers in organizations, brigades, choirs, societies, associations, Scouts, Camp Fire Girls, schools, bands, Bible classes, and in gymnasiums. They worked as in Scovel's day, often in the most appalling atmosphere of a smoke-filled city which was regarded by many in those days as "A City of Dreadful Night," a city where the lamps had to remain lighted all day. They worked with the joy of Jesus in their hearts and in their souls. They kept the faith!

A valuable addition was later made to the sanctuary. Up to 1915 the Painter Pulpit was the only pulpit in the church. On Easter Sunday 1915 there was dedicated in the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh what most surely must be one of the most decorative and graceful pulpits in an American church. This addition was given, as Dr. Alexander expressed it, "as a memorial to Mary McMasters Jones."

We close the first-half of his ministry with some of Dr. Alexander's words when dedicating the Mary McMasters Jones Pulpit on Easter Sunday 1915 to the service of future generations.

It makes a great difference what any pulpit stands for in a Church ... I charge you, the members of this Church, to see to it that when my work has been finished in this Church, that no man shall ever stand here as its minister who does not believe in and preach an inspired and infallible Bible, a living Christ who is God, and the Cross and shed Blood, the only way of everlasting life. Let no graces of speech, executive ability or power, charm of diction or literary equipment obscure the paramount qualification for a minister of this Church, namely that he shall be true to the Bible, to all the standards of the Presbyterian Church, to the Deity of God's only Begotten Son and Salvation through His Precious Blood alone.

The year 1915 marked the end of the first period in the ministry of Maitland Alexander and in this year his early ministry in First Church was climaxed by his election as Moderator of the General Assembly held that year in Chicago.

World War I would soon engulf first Europe, then the world. As the war intensified, Dr. Maitland Alexander and the First Presbyterian congregation became more and more deeply involved. Families soon had husbands or sons in the Army. Three hundred men of First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh had borne arms before the war was over. Eight sons of the congregation died on the battlefield before the Armistice.

A great deal of the second part of Maitland Alexander's ministry was carried out during the war and its aftermath. His Noonday Talks to the steel workers, ship builders and munition workers, for whom he used the term Industrial Soldiers, were in constant demand in the daily American Press and in Europe. They played a vital part in the war effort.

Finally, he went to Europe to work as an organizer for the Y.M.C.A., while Dr. William A. Jones (the only associate called to First Presbyterian Church until 1966 in Dr. Lamont's time) took Dr. Alexander's place in First Church until he returned to serve out the rest of his ministry. Dr. Jones later wrote the biography of Dr. Alexander.

Dr. Alexander played a major role in the creation of Allegheny Hospital as one of the city's greatest hospitals, and which along with Presbyterian, West Penn, St. Margaret's, and St. Francis would ultimately turn Pittsburgh into a premier world medical center.

Drs. C. W. W. Elkin and Hirsh Wachs in the *History of Allegheny General Hospital* wrote in 1969 of the opening of the second hospital:

... the new hospital was opened in 1904, due largely to efforts of the Reverend Dr. Maitland Alexander in raising funds for construction." They also state that, as President of the Board of Directors, Dr. Alexander influenced the family of William H. Singer in 1915 to found the William H. Singer Memorial Research Laboratory of Allegheny General Hospital.

The Women's Auxiliary of the hospital, called originally "The Ladies' Society," had a large number of the First Church members on its founding roll including Mrs. John W. Chalfant, Mrs. Harmar Denny, Mrs. Alexander Laughlin, Mrs. Maitland Alexander and Mrs. B. F. Jones. The last-named family would continue to play an increasingly vital part in the affairs of Allegheny General Hospital as the years went by.

When, in 1936, Allegheny General Hospital dedicated their third hospital building, known as "the Skyscraper Hospital," it was Dr. Maitland Alexander who presided as President of the Board of Directors of the Hospital.

Many other members of First Church played a vital role in the establishment of "the Skyscraper Hospital." A key man was Henry Chalfant whose father was one of the incorporators of the original hospital in 1882. Henry Chalfant was largely instrumental in acquiring the new site of three acres. Part of it was the site of his own family mansion and through him the rest of the land was acquired for the hospital site for nominal sums.

The building of the hospital, however, was brought to a halt by the depression, and for six years it stood incomplete. Mr. Chalfant and the Mason family eventually stepped in and gave much of the money for completing the building and encouraged the circle of their friends and industrial acquaintances to provide more money. A key person from First Church who made a substantial contribution was Mrs. Alexander Laughlin, Jr., who paid for most of the private maternity department, all of the public and semi-private maternity rooms, as well as other facilities. It was reckoned that much of the original cost of six million dollars was provided by the Alexanders, the Chalfants, the Laughlins, the Joneses, the Robinsons, and the Riddles.

As already stated, West Penn Hospital, one of Pittsburgh's other great hospitals, was built on land one-half of which was provided by Mrs. E. F. Denny whose wealth also

helped to furnish it. One of its surgeons at the time of the Bicentennial of First Church was Dr. Frank T. Herron who was a direct descendant of Dr. Francis Herron, third minister of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.

First Church had played a vital role in the establishment of Pittsburgh as a commercial center under Dr. Barr and as an industrial center under General O'Hara, Dr. Herron, and later under the Jones and two Laughlin families with their enormous steel plants, so in the latest twentieth century drama of Pittsburgh, when it became one of the world's great medical centers, First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh played a major role.

**DR. CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, THE CHURCH WITH
THE GREAT REPORTER FOR HIS
LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, 1927-1953**

Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney, unlike any other newly called pastor of the church, had a nationwide reputation before he came to the congregation, having been moderator of the General Assembly in a year when the Presbyterian Assembly was front-line news in national and, indeed, world newspapers. He was born September 18, 1879, in the little town of Northwood, Ohio, where his father was a minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, a covenanting body with rigid Calvinistic and conservative beliefs.

Dr. Macartney went to the University of Wisconsin. Here he began to exhibit his gifts as an orator in intervarsity debates and here he took his degree. After a year of travel in Europe, Clarence Macartney became a reporter for the *Beaver Times*. Here, with his already graphic style in writing, he gained added lucidity and a taste for strong titles and headlines. He always had an inclination toward the ministry and eventually found himself as a seminarian in Princeton Theological Seminary. After his first pastorate in Paterson, New Jersey, Clarence E. Macartney was called to Arch Street Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

In 1924, at Grand Rapids, Michigan, the stage was set in the General Assembly for a dramatic and highly publicized confrontation between conservatives and liberals. William Jennings Bryan nominated Clarence E. Macartney for moderator, and the latter received 464 votes to 446 for his opponent. Dr. Macartney thus became one of the youngest moderators of the Assembly in its history. So, when called to First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, the new minister was recognized as a standard bearer and doughty champion for conservative Presbyterianism. He was also a confirmed bachelor.

Dr. Macartney used dramatic titles, and preached in serial form—yet made each sermon a self-contained unit. His sermons were carefully and purposefully Bible-oriented. Indeed, his plan was to let the Bible speak for itself in the language of the twentieth century; he simply strove to highlight texts and passages of scripture with word-painting and inspired imagination which never strayed from the spirit of the Word.

With the coming of the Depression in the 1930s, great multitudes of poor and indigent people began to come to First Church and its minister for help. The church was able to do much to relieve those in distress during this unhappy period in the nation's history. Miss Helen Dany and Miss Madge Anderson carried on an especially Christ-like ministry of caring and helping.

In 1929 the congregation celebrated the centennial of its missionary societies, looking back to 1829 when the three school girls, Mary Jane Craig, Hannah Laughlin,

and Susan Irwin, started to sell penwipers at five cents apiece to their schoolmates and were dubbed the "Mite Society" by a teacher.

By 1929, almost a quarter of a million dollars had been raised by the women of First Church. Their 1929 budget was \$8,000—and that in a time of grave financial depression. By 1924 the Foreign Missionary Society of First Church had built three missionary homes in Peng Yang, North Korea, a country in which First Church had a special interest.

While there had been a female "Cent" Society in First Church as early as 1818, it was the "Mite" Society which was the real pacesetter for foreign missions. This group was a pioneer example to the whole Presbyterian denomination and led to the raising of substantial sums of money for the overseas work in the women's work and missionary societies. Without these societies foreign missions would have been much less effective. With them the Presbyterian denomination enlarged its efforts to evangelize the world.

It should be noted that the country of Korea, where both the men and women of First Presbyterian Church invested much of their time and talents and money, now has the largest Presbyterian Church in the world. It has its own foreign mission outreach. Many of its members have emigrated to America; and with its large families and strong evangelistic emphasis, it is rapidly becoming a major element in the Presbyterian community.

In 1931 the General Assembly met in Pittsburgh to honor the city which had been the birthplace of the Western Foreign Missionary Society. The formation of this society had been a joint effort of the First and Second Presbyterian Churches of Pittsburgh. It was, in fact, a mother and daughter affair.

The first president of the Western Foreign Missionary Society was the Honorable Harmar Denny, ruling elder of First Church. Dr. Swift of Second Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh who gave his life to the work was corresponding secretary. Dr. Francis Herron was chairman of the executive committee. The 1931 meeting of the General Assembly in Pittsburgh was therefore a memorable one.

It was inevitable that Korean life and culture should become part of the background to that meeting of the Assembly. A Korean village mill was built by the men of First Church, with a patient mule driven round and round to provide power. Young people appeared dressed in Korean clothes, specially imported by the missionaries home for the Assembly. Korean carols were sung. As highlight of the Korean emphasis, a Korean wedding was held in the Syria Mosque.

The camp at Indian Creek, a legacy from the defunct Boys' Brigade, continued to flourish during the summer months in much the same manner as it had during Maitland Alexander's ministry—Camp Barr for boys, Camp Almono for girls. The capacity of the camp was about one hundred, the young people sleeping in tents. Swimming took place in the creek. That the camp fulfilled its purpose that year of leading young people to deeper involvement can be gauged from the reply of a junior to the question: "What does Camp Almono do for you?" She said: "(I) take home from

Camp Almono the thought to live a happy and simple life like Jesus did when He was ten." After Dr. John Bell's death, Dr. Frank R. Bailey took charge of the work of the camp. The church was fortunate to have a gifted medical doctor in this position for there were obvious health hazards in the first two camps during a prolonged period of flooding. Dr. Bailey supervised both Indian Creek and Somerfield camps and later on during its early years, the camp at Ligonier.

It was during Dr. Macartney's ministry that the Men's Tuesday Noon Club began to meet officially in the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh on November 4, 1930. The club had a prior history. The founding of this Tuesday Noon Club was not the work of a minister, however, but rather that of a group of laymen. We must refer the reader to *The Church That Was Twice Born*, pages 178-179, for a full record of the beginning of "Tuesday Noon." With such leadership and devotion of laymen and ministers, the ground floor of the main sanctuary was soon fairly well filled. It was not until Dr. Lamont's day that the church and the galleries were packed and the chapel held a large overflow.

An era was passing away and, as if to underline this fact, came the deaths of some of the most gracious and devoted leaders of First Church.

The trumpets must have been sounding loud and long on that other shore at the end of the 1930-40 decade.

Trumpets of a very different kind were sounding, and feet set on a very different goal were already marching in Europe. The air-raid sirens were screaming as the Nazi armies were goose-stepping across Europe. Hitler's new age of the braggart and blitzkrieg, the concentration camp and the crematorium, had dawned—the miasma of it was spreading across the far horizons. On December 7, 1941, came the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and the United States was at war.

However, First Church had already provided two motor kitchens to the Church Army in England. Already it had ministered through the bomb blitzes, serving devastated areas in Middlesborough, Bristol, and London. The name "First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh" was spelled out on each of the two motor kitchens in small but distinct letters. Before the war ended three hundred members, men and women, were in the armed services—eighty-five commissioned officers, 116 non-commissioned officers, and ninety-nine other serving members.

One of the focal points for the young men and women who came back from the beaches of Normandy and the islands of the Pacific was the new camp site. The Wiley Byer's farm, damaged by the floods of the late 1930s, was used for five seasons. Dr. Frank Bailey was particularly anxious to get a first-class site. The following year it was announced that the trustees had bought the Henry S. Denny estate, two miles north of Ligonier, at a very reasonable figure. The property (since then extended) was 180 acres, some level bottom land, some open rolling country, and much forest. On the site was a barn, which could be used as a recreation hall. This farm formerly belonged to Ebenezer Denny, the boy chosen to plant the flag in the Battlement of Yorktown at its

surrender. It is therefore peculiarly fitting that almost two centuries later his estate should be used to train the young people of the church he loved.

The special feature of the new camp site was the large Denny summer home which became known as "The White House." Women of the church provided furnishings and rugs; thus the White House was to be a joy to all campers for a quarter of a century. One feature was not new. That was the (30 by 100 feet) dining hall which was transported from the Wiley Byer's Farm and reconstructed on the new site. It is still in use in 1997. Later an area was excavated beneath it for a porch.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wick carried on a dedicated ministry to lonely people in state institutions, and salvaged many, especially (the) young women prostitutes who found themselves in trouble in the police courts. Mr. Wick who died at the age of 102 years was still a member of First Church after the Bicentennial.

In the early summer of 1948 Dr. Macartney became seriously ill and was absent from the church and pulpit for almost a year, not returning until May 1949, when he preached one of his most famous sermons, "I Went into Arabia." During this time Dr. Macartney began to realize that his physical health was seriously impaired.

Soon after the onset of his illness he suffered a further great bereavement when his great friend, Dr. Frank R. Bailey, passed away. Shortly after Dr. Bailey's death his son, John Logan Bailey, was elected to the Session, and would, like his father, play an important role in the leadership of the congregation of First Church in the years ahead.

Now, for Dr. Macartney, the winter season was far advanced. His delight was unbounded when on his twenty-fifth anniversary as pastor of First Church the congregation, with the permission of Geneva College, refurbished his old family home, Fern Cliffe, restoring it to its former beauty.

It was to Fern Cliffe that he retired in 1953. It was here he wrote his last books. It was from here, on February 19, 1957, that the bachelor minister, Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney, who loved to travel in the steps of his Master, set out to meet that Master in person.

DR. ROBERT J. LAMONT, THE CHURCH WITH A MAN IN CHRIST
SEEKING MEN AND WOMEN TO WORK FOR CHRIST,
1953-1973

On Wednesday evening, June 10, 1953, at a congregational meeting presided over by Dr. Macartney, Mr. George R. Aufderheide said that the committee, having traveled extensively, now had a unanimous selection for its new minister in the Reverend Robert J. Lamont of the Presbyterian Church of Narberth, Pennsylvania.

The calling of Reverend Robert J. Lamont to First Church was a remarkable choice; this thirty-four year old man of limited experience and training was being invited to take the place of one who was possibly the most gifted minister in the history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. A number of elders resented his coming and at least one leading elder left the church. However, most stayed to become part of a great ministry. One of these who lived to be one hundred years of age confessed to the writer that, though at first opposed to the young minister, he now thought there was little to choose between these two great men, but if all their gifts were added together perhaps Dr. Lamont was the greater of the two.

Dr. Lamont, born in Philadelphia, April 12, 1919, was one of the youngest pastors ever called to First Church. His father, James Lamont, was an Orangeman from Northern Ireland. From his father Robert Lamont inherited rugged determination, forthrightness and a realistic approach to life.

Robert Lamont's mother, Marie Rambo, was born in Northern Italy and belonged to that earliest of all Protestant churches, the Waldensian Church of Italy. From his mother the son inherited a deep sensitivity to the Kingdom of God, a personal love for Jesus Christ and an understanding that in God's Son all God's people, Protestant and Catholic, can find a shared experience which transcends lesser differences.

Robert Lamont was married to Edna Kathryn Weisner, a young woman, beautiful in person and nature, who had grown up with him in the Olney Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia. Edna, because of her wonderful commitment to the Spirit of Jesus Christ, was to become, as the years passed, one of the most dedicated and effective ministers' wives in the denomination.

One very remarkable outcome of Dr. Lamont's ministry, up to this time, and indicative of things to come, was that thirty-four young people, men and women, had already gone into the full-time Christian service from the congregations where he had served. It is to be noted that Dr. Lamont regarded as equal young men and women in God's work. This was unusual in evangelical circles at that time when the major emphasis seemed to be on male ministry.

The most decisive ingredient in the makeup of the new minister was faith in Jesus Christ and in His Spirit to transform and transcend any human situation. Obviously the minister in First Church would need to be one who would develop flexible programs to meet rapidly changing times.

One other fact became evident as the months went by. This young man was developing a real love for his adopted city of Pittsburgh. Robert Lamont prayed that this tremendous concentration of life might become, not just a Golden Triangle of political, financial, and social power, but a Golden Triangle under God. Furthermore he prayed that God would use the church to which he had been called, to that end.

On his first Sunday morning his sermon was entitled "The Heart of the Gospel for the Heart of the City," and his text was I Corinthians 2:2, "For I determined when I came among you to preach nothing but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." He said in that first sermon:

Late one night John Wesley knelt at his bed, rose from his prayers, picked up his pen and wrote in his journal: "I came to the city and offered them Christ."

John Wesley could do no more. Under God, I hope to do no less.

Thus began in the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh one of the great ministries of present-day America.

Dr. Lamont's gift as a preacher lay in his unique way of presenting the Gospel and in his intellectual honesty. Like Dr. Herron, that model for all preachers, Dr. Lamont used good, basic Anglo-Saxon words, avoiding the polysyllabic jargon loved by so many so-called communicators—a Latinized English calculated either to confuse, to put people to sleep, or both. There was a personal quality in his preaching, obviously the result of his own soul-searching, which really gripped the human heart.

Early in his ministry Dr. Robert J. Lamont had a concern for the public relations of the church. In September, to his great delight, KDKA, the Westinghouse broadcasting station, offered an opportunity—to give broadcasting time free as a public service.

In 1954 one of the first concerns of Dr. Lamont was to begin a building expansion program. In the fall of that year a building program was presented to the people of First Church, by which part of the church would be renovated and a new four-story building would be added to the chapel.

He presented his proposed building-fund program and, by February 1955, he was able to announce that the people of the congregation had pledged over \$235,000 and had paid in cash almost \$100,000 towards the Building Fund. Under these happy circumstances it was possible to break ground almost at once.

The construction began in April 1955, and the dedication of the half-million dollar new extension took place on Wednesday evening, April 11, 1956. Raymond F.

Hoffmann, chairman of the building committee, presented the keys of the new building to George R. Aufderheide, president, and William P. Witherow, vice-president.

Thanks were expressed for two valuable memorials: the Minister's Study, to be known as the Frank R. Bailey, M.D., Memorial Study, given by his wife, Helen Logan Bailey; and the Church Cafeteria, to be known as the Charles Arthur Brooks Memorial, given by his wife, Cloyde Woodward Brooks. Among other advantages, the expansion program would increase seating capacity in the sanctuary by two hundred and provide additional space for Sunday School classes, offices and various activities.

In the basement the primary department had renovated quarters with folding doors and acoustically treated tile. An attractive new nursery was provided for babies and small children.

A large kitchen was equipped in stainless steel. The cafeteria was enlarged and could now accommodate three to four hundred people and serve one thousand meals an hour. New rooms were built also under the walk between First Church and Trinity Cathedral. The recreation room with the bowling alley was renovated. This whole area could become an extension of the cafeteria and, with the use of both facilities, banquets could be given for 450 people.

A lounge on the ground floor was a continuation of the chapel under the balcony. Here the congregation could meet for refreshments, conversation, and fellowship. Here also could be held wedding banquets and receptions for new or retiring ministers.

Shortly after Christmas 1967, an anonymous layman of the Tuesday Noon club offered funds to have all the interior stonework of the church cleaned. It had become covered with dark residue of the city's previous smog. At a cost of over \$20,000 a crew of six men worked for three months and as Easter approached an almost magical transformation was achieved. The black stone turned to a soft, creamy biscuit color which literally glowed with warmth and light; it was again understood why that particular stone from Charles Speer's Friendship Hill estate had been chosen for the sanctuary. Now could be seen, in their original beauty, the intricate stone carvings, the scrolls, the birds, and the varied hand-carved patterns—no two alike. The eagle, the butterfly and the dove, delicately carved in stone on the front center of the Painter pulpit, are especially appropriate, symbolizing the protecting care of the Father, the resurrectional life of the Son and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. That Easter of 1968 seemed to bring the springtime of Friendship Hill estate right into the sanctuary itself. For the congregation it was an unforgettable experience!

The minister shared many characteristics with Dr. Maitland Alexander, but perhaps the most obvious one was the gift of conveying a sense of gaiety and relaxation to a large audience of men. Possibly a [common] sense of humor and extrovert boyish fun were factors. For this reason the Tuesday Noon service was a special half-hour in the week for both the preacher and his hearers. The Tuesday Noon Club began to overflow into the balconies and chapel.

The service was informal, yet challenging. Many a man facing business losses, domestic tragedy, or impaired health was saved from despair, even suicide, through its ministry; but, better still, many such found in Jesus Christ both the strong Son of God and a Man for men who could give mastery and victory in spite of the inevitable problems and tragedies of life.

The success of the Tuesday Noon Club depended not only on the minister but on the members and their involvement in friendship and personal evangelism.

One of the founders of Tuesday Noon, and known affectionately as "Mr. Tuesday Noon," was Edward C. McCabe, its secretary for twenty-six years. For a quarter of a century he tramped the streets of the city, rode elevators, made friends with receptionists, always with one goal in mind, men for Tuesday Noon. To him it did not matter whether he found them in the executive suites at the top of skyscrapers or in the basements among the maintenance men.

By 1957 the membership of the Tuesday Noon Club was 2,400, representing thirty-two denominations, seven hundred churches, fifty-five business and professional groups, eighty-six office buildings and stores. The attendance reached a thousand or more. Sometimes the sanctuary, its galleries and the annex were packed.

Under Dr. Lamont, large numbers of young men and young women began to go into Christian service both at home and abroad. At first a trickle, then a stream, training for full-time service; some were sons and daughters of members of the boards of the church; some came from very humble homes.

The 1963 winter issue of First Church Life magazine listed twenty-seven young people from First Church in training for full-time Christian service. The 1967 fall issue had twenty-six.

The future for the congregation, however, was not bright, as many young families were moving out to the new and far-distant suburbs in the North and South Hills.

At this time adult education under the capable direction of the Reverend Mr. Jack Chisholm became an important part of First Church activity. It was decided to enroll the congregation in the well-known Bethel Bible Series. This proved to be a vast but most spiritually profitable undertaking and, by the spring of 1970, three hundred adult students were crowding into First Church on Wednesday nights.

The Sunday School attendance continued to increase and soon the Sunday School enrollment was approaching a thousand. This achievement, together with the three hundred attending the Bethel Bible Series on Wednesdays, represents the best record ever achieved in the two centuries of the history of First Church. Meanwhile the crowds continued to pour into First Church on Sundays as well as Tuesdays, filling the main sanctuary and overflowing in large numbers into the chapel, while the women attending Thursday Noon filled most of the sanctuary.

The year 1964 marked half a century since the church had bought its first permanent camp site and begun its boys' and girls' camping program. It was felt that the time was therefore appropriate to review the whole camping program. The challenge was that the Camp had become a critical part of the First Church home mission program. Mr. Gordon Fern, the business manager, stated in 1967 that, of the 850 campers in the program of 1966, only 250 were from First Church. The same pattern continued into the early sixties. The church had now a wide-spread evangelical mission to the youth of Greater Pittsburgh.

A camp fund was opened and pledges requested. With a suggested ten-dollar-a-month pledge (or multiples thereof), the response was excellent. As the money required for a new lodge was either paid or underwritten, it was possible in the bright autumn sunlight of Saturday, October 14, 1967, to break ground.

This million-dollar-plus project included a Dutch Colonial lodge (160 feet long by 40 feet wide) two-story plus basement; a pavilion (102 feet long by 48 feet wide) for outdoor sports in wet weather; a chapel; and an Olympic-sized swimming pool. All ages took part in the year-round program.

At 4:00 P.M., Saturday, June 22, 1968, came the opening ceremonies for the new lodge. Miss Bertha Reis, Girls' Camp director, cut the ribbon. Mr. John Logan Bailey, Clerk of Session, whose father Dr. Frank R. Bailey had obtained the estate from the Denny family, also took a prominent part in the ceremony. A complete description of the camp and its work is to be found in *The Church That Was Twice Born*, pages 217-223.

The Mothers' and Thursday Night Women's Clubs were run by the retired schoolteachers and twin sisters Elsie and Bertha Reis for several decades and, during the summer, they ran the girls' camp with amazing success.

First Church people were also working with the Youth Guidance Program, linking up troubled youth and their families with men and women who were specially trained to become their friends in Christ. Mr. Ernest Frederick, a member of the congregation, was at this time a field director of this agency.

One member gave much of his life to the free dispensary program of one of our large hospitals. Another gave his time to visiting patients and showing concern and Christian helpfulness. A third headed an enterprise to apprentice black youths, commencing with a few dozen and later working with hundreds. A woman gave over two thousand hours of voluntary service to a metropolitan hospital.

The list could go on indefinitely, for every one of the 2,400 members of First Presbyterian Church was committed to a personalized ministry for Christ, either taking up one in the congregation or developing one for themselves as a witness to Christ. Most members took this commitment very seriously. It was interesting, as a minister, to hear them work out their programs of lay involvement in mission. Some were most novel and refreshing!

The women of the church also stood in that energetic and evangelical succession. The Woman's Work Society, founded by Dr. Scovel, headed up the program, supervising the Thursday Sewing Group, the Wednesday Afternoon Mothers' Club, the Thursday Noon Club for Women, the Thursday Night Club for Business Women, the Friday Night Girls' Club, the Girls' Camp, and the Nursery. The Women's Missionary Society, which met on the second Friday of the month, carried on the tradition of the Mite Society in raising money for missions. The whole area of women's work was a close-knit, efficient organization.

In the second half of the 1960s it was evident that in Pittsburgh, as in other cities across the nation, monstrous problems were breeding.

On March 12, 1964, the Pittsburgh Post Gazette reported that, when addressing a luncheon of the Pittsburgh Rotary Club, Dr. Lamont had excoriated the refusal of any group to accept responsibility for making downtown Pittsburgh an area fit for young people. Strip-teasers, off-color movies, and obscene literature were exploiting young people and making them emotionally sick.

The minister of First Church returned from the 1969 Assembly more determined than ever to meet the problems of Pittsburgh with the power and passion of the Cross of Christ . . . "the heart of the Gospel for the heart of the city."

About this time he wrote:

First Church is more committed than ever to the relevance of Evangelical Christianity in the heart of Pittsburgh. Like the Master "who steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" where the action was, First Church is determined to seize every opportunity for witness in this great industrial metropolis.

A fresh generation was growing up now and the youth culture was changing. Many young people had been won for Christ through the potent ministry of the church or the camp. Many had either been converted at the Greater Pittsburgh Crusade of Dr. Billy Graham in 1951 or had rededicated their lives to Christ at that time.

One young man, Terry Davis, had every appearance of a "hippie." He attended First Church regularly. Some dear Christian folk spoke to him about spiritual things, only to find him one of the most Christ-committed and Christ-informed persons they had ever encountered. In spite of his straight long hair and steel-rimmed glasses, those of us who knew him loved him dearly. He later married a beautiful young lady who looked as unlike a hippie as he resembled one. It was he who first interested the church in a coffee shop, and with the Reverend Bob Letsinger spear-headed the Christian hippie movement in Pittsburgh.

It was noted that this generation was peculiarly venturesome and energetic in the affairs of the Kingdom, and it had a strong love for Jesus whose name it delighted to mention.

Dr. Lamont recognized this venturesome Christianity and, while some decried the length of the new generation's hair and the distressingly violent colors of their attire, he noted rather the length of their outreach for Christ and the vividness of their witness.

A number of these young people had a dream of a coffee shop or, better still, a store with a built-in coffee shop and record mart, which would provide a gathering place for the "now" generation and at the same time be a focal point of witness for Jesus Christ. A decision was made to rent a building as a joint venture with the men of the Pittsburgh Experiment, and Robert T. Letsinger with his wife and family moved to Pittsburgh to spearhead the new ministry.

The property obtained for the project was 112 Smithfield Street which, at the turn of the century, had been a fire station for horse-drawn fire engines. The stables were still part of the building and there was plenty of equipment, including a brass firemen's descent pole, to authenticate it as an original fire station.

Four students who met with Mr. Letsinger and the Reverend Paul Everett, Director of the Pittsburgh Experiment, gave this new First Church organization the name "The Pittsburgh Power & Light Company." The name fitted into the then prevalent youth culture and, as Robert T. Letsinger summed it up, ". . . It's also a symbol. The reason we're here is to make known the power of Jesus Christ who can change lives; and where there's so much darkness and confusion today, we hope to bring His light."

The first floor of the Pittsburgh Power & Light Company was a Victorian-style soup and sandwich restaurant. A huge "powerburger" had been created to satisfy the hearty appetites of students at a price they could afford. Once a week the Pittsburgh Power & Light Company became a full-scale coffee house with live music and a Christian message presented through modern media. "The key is low, the atmosphere is NOW, the message is clear and the food is good . . ." The budget for the first year was estimated to be \$67,000.

Public prayer was often offered in the sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church for the work of the Pittsburgh Power & Light Company. After one such prayer, a rather bewildered gentleman from New York—who happened to be the president of Consolidated Edison, a huge utility—said to Dr. Lamont, "This is the first time in my life that I heard a minister pray for the blessing of Almighty God upon a public utility. If you do this regularly, I think I will transfer my letter."

After some years and when the Pittsburgh Power & Light Company fulfilled its mission to the flower children, who had begun to disappear in large numbers from the streets of Pittsburgh, the coffee shop closed. Terry Davis and his beautiful young wife went into training to be officers in the Salvation Army. With its strict discipline, that body differed much from the "Jesus Movement" of the 60's, but Mr. and Mrs. Davis were people of its spirit in Christ and willingly adapted.

It would be utterly impossible to provide a complete list of young men and women who went into full-time service at this time. The multitude of receptions for

them on Sunday evenings during Dr. Lamont's ministry might have become a problem if such occasions had not been a joy for all concerned.

However, two ministries are especially noteworthy for countless reasons. One was that they both were carried out by young unordained women. One was that of Jean Spahr who, later on at her silver anniversary as teacher in the Latin America School of Cartagena, Colombia, paid tribute to Dr. Lamont as the pastor who under Christ had inspired her ministry. Miss Linda Connors is another. She worked with the Hmong people of Thailand. She is a young woman with a tremendous love for her Master whose letters to the congregation continue to be a blessing and a challenge.

In 1973 Dr. Lamont announced his retirement, to the great sorrow of his congregation.

Yet the occasion was also a joyful one because Dr. Lamont's ministry was closing in the year when First Church was celebrating its Bicentennial and its minister would be still present to lead. This would ensure a climactic ending to a great era. Dr. Lamont stressed the note of joy and celebration. Many exciting things took place in the year 1973.

The organization of this event under the minister and boards of the church was meticulous. Brooches, pins, cuff-links and other souvenirs were created, bearing engravings of First Church.

To help celebrate the bicentennial year of its foundation, the history of the church was written by the Reverend Ernest E. Logan, associate pastor since 1966; its title was *The Church That Was Twice Born*. Mr. James N. Kilpatrick, a first-class dramatist, wrote a play entitled These Reverend Gentlemen directed by a professional producer, Jill Wadsworth. Several professional actors played the leading parts. They were helped by a number of excellent amateur actors from the congregation and the play ran for a week to crowded audiences. A television feature film was made by television station Channel 11 based on the history, the play, the young people's musical presentation under Jill Wadsworth and David Pressau, and other features of the Bicentennial. These Reverend Gentlemen won the 1973 Television Executive's Award which was presented to television station WIIC, Channel 11.

A banquet was held in the Hilton Hotel, attended by members and guests of First Church. The Honorable Peter F. Flaherty, mayor of Pittsburgh, was one of the guests of honor and the keynote speaker was Dr. Billy Graham, longtime friend of Dr. Lamont.

Later in the year a gathering was held in the church to say farewell to the minister and his wife and family, to thank God for his ministry and to invoke God's blessing on his new ministry as president and chief executive officer of the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund.

We cannot list the lay leadership of First Church through and after Dr. Lamont's time as many of the finest are still alive and it would be unfair to pick and choose, except where they have been involved in some important addition to church programs.

One such occurred when Bob and Mary Friedrich founded the Labor Day Retreat in 1970, a very successful annual weekend retreat at the camp to engender commitment and renewal for the winter's work.

Soon after Dr. Lamont moved to Philadelphia, his very efficient secretary, Mrs. Virginia Van Kirk, who served for 19 years and had become very much a part of the whole organization of the church, retired.

CHAPTER XIV

DR. JOHN H. HUFFMAN, JR., THE YOUNG MAN OFTEN CALLED "THE PRESIDENT'S MINISTER," 1973-1978

On November 1, 1973, Dr. Robert J. Lamont was succeeded by a young minister, aged 33, John A. Huffman, Jr. He had been the minister in Florida's Key Biscayne Presbyterian Church and, like Dr. Macartney, had received a great deal of nationwide publicity before he came to First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.

These were the Nixon Years, the end of the Vietnam War era. John had preached many times before the President and his family, who sometimes attended his church in Key Biscayne where they often vacationed. Indeed, at the end of the Vietnam War, President Nixon had invited John to conduct the nationwide Thanksgiving Service.

During the Watergate Crisis, John was regarded by some as the President's minister. In fact, at a very critical point in the crisis, Richard Nixon and his entourage turned up without warning at the Key Biscayne Presbyterian Church when John happened to be preaching on the subject of "Repentance." This caused a sensation nationwide as the next day the press interpreted the sermon as a personal injunction to repentance from the minister to the President, in light of the Watergate Crisis. It was, in fact, not so intended as the sermon happened to be the last of a pre-planned series.

A major influence on John Huffman's life had been Dr. Sam Shoemaker—famous preacher, writer and lecturer of Calvary Episcopal Church in the Shadyside section of Pittsburgh—who encouraged John when he was studying at the Wilson School of Public Affairs to go into the Christian ministry. Later, as assistant minister at Marble Collegiate Church, John served under Dr. Norman Vincent Peale.

Previously, to finance his studies for the ministry at Princeton Seminary, he had teamed up with his friend Werner Burklin and together they had gone into the travel business. During this period of his life John gained an international vision and had meetings with Prime Minister Nehru Ghandi in India, King Hussein of Jordan and President Madame Chiang Kai-shek of Formosa, now Taiwan.

While in Key Biscayne, Florida he wrote a book, *Pot and Other Things*, the first of a number of his publications.

In Key Biscayne John conducted a three-hour-open-line radio talk-show on WIOD and WAIA, Miami, dealing with callers' personal problems. He also co-hosted a weekly phone-in television show with Father Donald Connolly of the Archdiocese of Miami. This program followed similar lines.

When he was leading study groups around the world, John met an extremely attractive young lady called Anne Ridgeway Mortenson who was traveling through

Formosa on her way to Cambodia to teach English there. They were a well-suited couple and married in 1964.

Anne was a member of First Hollywood Presbyterian Church, California where she had been influenced by Henrietta Mears, the founder of the Gospel Light Curriculum and dynamic director of Christian Education at First Hollywood Presbyterian Church. John and Anne had two daughters, Suzanne and Carla. Another daughter Janet was born while they were in Pittsburgh and baptized in First Church.

When he came to the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, John came dedicated to a strong professional ministry directed to the "whole person" which would involve a team ministry, with concentration on lay participation centered in a player-coach relationship, using the talents of the various members of the congregation. An article summing up the situation on John's arrival appeared in a later Winter edition of First Church Life.

Before John came, many of us wondered how anyone could possibly fill Dr. Lamont's shoes—one of the Lord's most gifted preachers of all times. Dr. Lamont spoke such words of beauty, poetry and spiritual depth, he often lifted us so close to heaven, we could almost see the angels coming. We loved it! Who could fill his shoes? No one!

Dr. Huffman was the first to admit he wasn't going to try to do that. He had his own shoes to fill—his own style. He forced us to open our eyes and take a closer look at the hard and difficult reality around us. Then he opened the Scriptures and told us what God would have us do in the world and in our relationships.

John was a highly disciplined man who exercised in the early morning in all seasons by strenuous running. He also had his personal priorities well-established when he arrived in Pittsburgh: Jesus Christ, first; Anne, his wife, second; his children, third; and his vocation, fourth.

What he practiced, he preached. He called this Christian formula a "Biblical/Relational life-style." It would require tremendous discipline and self-sacrifice and could only be carried out in a covenant relationship with God.

John in his ministry laid tremendous emphasis on "the Covenant," which meant: (1) committing one's life to Jesus Christ as Lord, and (2) being a Christian in the family. To this theme he addressed much of his pulpit preaching, laying great stress on family relationships, the high calling to Christian fatherhood and motherhood, redeemed love between spouses and the mending of fractured relationships in all areas of life. He introduced frequent altar-calls, even in the morning service. Many responded.

World War II, along with the Korean and Vietnam Wars, had brought in an aftermath of drugs, divorce and lowered standards of living to the U.S.A., such as few wars before. John addressed himself to these issues, fearlessly, frankly and vividly.

Some of the congregation thought he could have been a little more reticent in dealing with sexual sin but soon came to realize that to deal with such matters in a general way was not very effective and that John's approach was to hit the target directly.

At this period of his ministry John was working for his doctorate of ministry degree at Princeton Theological Seminary and was involved in the very latest techniques in Christian counseling, much to the enrichment of his pulpit ministry and to the profit of the congregation.

Dr. Huffman laid tremendous emphasis on being alone with God through personal daily devotion. Also at this time a program of reading the text of the complete Bible once a year was offered to the congregation by associate Woody Strodel, as in Dr. Scovel's day. Prayer and even fasting were recommended, not only for the staff but also for the congregation. Divine healing services were held on Sunday nights monthly.

John followed through carefully to reinforce his emphasis on young families; he set up a Covenant Group of twenty young men from the North Hills, Fox Chapel, and Upper St. Clair and met with the group every week during the time he was in Pittsburgh.

Anne Huffman met with a similar group of young women from the South and North Hills. As many members lived at a considerable distance from the Church, neighborhood studies in the homes of members built up the fellowship of the congregation to a remarkable degree.

During Dr. Huffman's ministry the outreach of First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, was extended. To the famous KDKA Radio Ministry John added his own Television Show on WIC/NBC Television Channel 11, designed to probe the ethical and spiritual dimensions of live guests. It was called "The John Huffman Show," and the television station took responsibility for all the cost. The program ran in prime time as a monthly special. Guests were carefully designed to be from all walks of life: politicians, judges, prostitutes and included even the atheist Madeline Murray O'Hare.

To this outreach of television John added a printed sermon ministry. His sermons were printed in pamphlet form, and mailed to the 5,000 who requested them. He was to continue this method of outreach with ever extended coverage to the present day. Dr. Huffman had the rare gift of dealing with difficult issues with sensitivity and intelligence and often dealt with subjects which in the past had been avoided by other preachers—subjects such as homosexuality, cremation, divorce, all types of pornography and abortion. Also he took a firm stand on the various controversial questions which arose in the denomination. He tackled everything!

A further outreach of his ministry was in the area of ecumenical relations. He worked with foreign mission stations in Ethiopia and other parts of Africa and met with world leaders. On one occasion he traveled to Rome and spent two weeks there as a guest of the Vatican. John especially felt that this relationship would encourage the outreach of the Presbyterian Church in one of the major (Protestant and Roman Catholic) cities of America. Dr. Huffman encouraged tours to the Holy Land, of which he had extensive knowledge since his seminary days in the travel business.

One of John's major contributions to the First Church life was to strengthen lay leadership. He charged the Session to take the responsibility of making all major First Church policy decisions concerning programs, benevolences, outreach, mission and worship. Each elder was to become involved with a group of senior citizens or residents in homes for the elderly. Unfortunately the physical boundaries of the congregation were so vast that it was hard for the eldership to deal with this program adequately. There were about 140 such elderly members scattered over an area of hundreds of square miles to try to visit after each of the regular Communion Services.

During Dr. Huffman's ministry the Preservation Fund was established which raised half a million dollars to preserve and maintain the church building. Many major alterations were made in the distribution of office space and the improvement and availability of rooms. The business administration office was moved up to the third floor. The entire building was rewired.

In 1975 a group of members from First Church accepted the sponsorship of a Vietnamese refugee family. This was the family of Dr. Khai Van Nguyen. It was an extended sponsorship as the doctor had to go through a long list of medical and language tests. It was announced about three years later in the First Church publication for the summer of 1978 that Dr. Nguyen had been accepted at St. Joseph's Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island, as an intern.

During their stay at First Church all the members of the Nguyen family accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and in 1974 were baptized and received into the Christian Church. This missionary effort was a very intimate piece of work, carried out by some of the elders and their wives together with other members of the congregation.

Dr. Huffman established a task force to study the institutional programs of the congregation, dividing the assignment into three main categories: congregational programs, institutional programs, and benevolence programs.

The Task Force pinpointed where the power lay in the congregational structure, with a very surprising result. This discovery was one of its important achievements as it revealed that in contrast to most congregations in the General Assembly, First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, had put an extraordinary amount of power into the hands of the women of the congregation.

The significance and details of this discovery by Dr. Huffman's task force will be made much clearer in the next chapter which concerns the very heated controversy which was current in the United Presbyterian Church concerning women elders in the whole denomination.

A major issue arose at this time. This was the question of ordination of ministers who were professed homosexuals. This policy Dr. Huffman, the boards, and congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh opposed strongly, both in Presbytery and the General Assembly in a controversy that was of long duration and which still continues.

In his last year (1978) as minister of First Church, Dr. Huffman was elected "Man of the Year in Religion" by the Junior Chamber of Commerce as Dr. Lamont had been before him. This formed a fitting climax to his ministry in Pittsburgh and was an indication of the esteem in which the city held him.

Shortly after receiving this honor, Dr. Huffman resigned on September 16, 1978, and accepted a call from the large and important Presbyterian congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Newport Beach, California, where his ministry continues to expand.

A NECESSARY CHAPTER ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The introduction of Civil Rights and the prohibition of discrimination—especially in race, relationships and between male and female—becoming part of the law of the United States of America, inevitably led to great controversy and many changes in the whole Christian church. The General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church could hardly ignore this transformation in the country.

However, the United Presbyterian Church did not have much trouble in the area of racial discrimination; her record in this matter was excellent. The situation was the same in First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh.

In the very early days of Dr. Francis Herron's ministry, one of the Sunday Schools was attended mostly by black children. In living memory the only qualification for membership in the First Presbyterian Church was and is to have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. First Church had no difficulty in accepting people of other races, including Africans, Indians, and Asiatics. Nor was objection raised when black men were appointed to the Board of Trustees and Session.

With regard to the status of women, First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh was in an anomalous position. Though she would not have women elders until the time of Dr. Ernest Lewis' ministry, yet for two centuries First Church had led the whole denomination and possibly the Christian church in America in encouraging born-again women to positions of leadership, experimentation and innovation in the work of Christ's Kingdom.

One does not wish to be repetitious but Mr. Steele's two dozen young girls were instrumental, under their leader Eliza Irwin, in igniting the first revival under Dr. Herron. The gifted born-promoter Isabella Craig and the Mite Society helped pioneer and set in motion the task of raising funds for foreign missions by the women of the General Assembly.

After these young women came the large teams of women missionaries from First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh—some as single women like Nancy Henderson and her unmarried girl friends. Other First Church girls went abroad as missionary wives, including the two missionary martyrs Cornelia Brackenridge and Louisa Lowrie.

Dr. Scovel relied heavily on the work of women in his drive for renewal which turned First Church from a declining institution into the largest congregation in Pittsburgh. He organized the Women's Christian Association in 1876, to act as auxiliary to the pastor and officers of the church. He also had a trained laywoman on his staff, Miss Ellen McNutt, who worked in cooperation with the city missionary of First Church.

In Dr. Maitland Alexander's day, as was noted in the earlier part of this history, Miss Matilda Denny structured one of the greatest evangelistic and social programs in American church history.

From Dr. Scovel's time to the present, the women had consolidated their organizations into the Woman's Work Society.

As already indicated, when Dr. John Huffman came to the congregation one of his first acts was to establish a task force to examine the programs of the church and who was responsible for them. This is the finding recorded in the Session minutes (p. 3362B):

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROGRAMS

THE THREE GROUPS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL THE CHURCH'S PROGRAMS ARE THE MINISTERIAL STAFF, THE SESSION, AND THE WOMAN'S WORK SOCIETY.** CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN THOSE GROUPS AND THE TRUSTEES IS A FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENT FOR EFFECTIVE STEWARDSHIP.

As the Woman's Work Society was yoked with the Session, it was clear that a significant part of the power was in its hands.

While the Trustees organized the temporal and the Session the spiritual affairs of the church, in recent years the paid staff of First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh had increased to over 70 persons, almost 80% of these being women. The cafeteria alone had a staff of two dozen women. The Thursday Night Club for Women under a volunteer retired school teacher, Bertha "Bud" Reis, had a staff of a dozen paid instructors, many of them women. The Girls' Club had women instructors. In the church organization there were women secretaries, bookkeepers, women on maintenance staff and in the nurseries. There was a paid woman organist and there were remunerated women choir members. There was also a multitude of women volunteers. First Church Life edition of the Spring of 1979 pictures eleven women with an average volunteer service span of fifteen years, each spent working for the church.

So it was small wonder that while the all-male Session and Board of Trustees held the ultimate responsibility, they relied to a considerable degree on the insight and guidance of the Woman's Work Society in this enormous undertaking. The Woman's Work Society members included Miss Zug (Dr. Breed's granddaughter), Mrs. Erma Hollis, Mrs. Louise Lauer, Mrs. Jean Davis and Mrs. Ruth Davis, all first-class organizers and businesswomen.

There were other women exerting great power in the church. There was the late Miss Helen Wilson whose boys' class had grown into a class of adult men and who now along with their wives formed the largest Bible class in the church. An extraordinary

** Underlining mine.

large number of elders were members of this class. Miss Wilson was in fact teaching the ruling elders themselves which certainly seemed to be an anomaly in the Presbyterian Church of that day.

It must, of course, be remembered that First Church, while in the practice of giving a large proportion of its leadership power to the women of the congregation, was a very conservative body and strongly opposed to possible movements in the denomination which seemed to compromise on such issues as abortion on request, laissez-faire attitudes to sexual morality, the ordination of practicing homosexuals or the taking of stances on controversial political issues such as the support of political radicals in certain foreign countries.

Because of their conservative tradition, many in the congregation were extremely suspicious of anything that appeared to be a departure from the Constitution and the Westminster Confession. This fear of change in the direction of liberalism was strong and the idea of giving the status and title of elder (ruling or teaching) to women seemed to be very liberal, despite the fact that First Church for almost two centuries had led the denomination in recognizing and dignifying their commitment to Christ by giving them significant leadership in congregational affairs.

Now, however, it was not a question of leadership; it was the title of Elder, either ruling or teaching.

Let it also be stated that all the recent ministers and associates, from Dr. Robert J. Lamont's time on, favored the ordination of women.

CHAPTER XVI

DR. ERNEST JAMES LEWIS, THE CHURCH WITH MR. GREATHEART FOR A MINISTER, 1979-1982

Following the dissolution of the pastoral relationship of Dr. Huffman by the congregation on September 16, 1978, the First Church Life publication for the New Year of 1979 reported that the nominating committee was asked to sketch the qualities they were seeking in a new senior minister. Two qualities were stressed: (1) Preaching Ability and (2) Vision. By vision it was explained that, "They desired a man who would provide wise, strong and Godly leadership in a variety of situations—a person to encourage, as well as admonish persons within a church of varied evangelical interpretation and expression." To obtain such a minister would be very difficult. Nevertheless the sketch provided an almost perfect profile of the minister, Dr. Ernest James Lewis, who was ultimately procured and called by the congregation September 30, 1979. Little was it realized at the time how much encouragement and admonishment would be required from him or how much vision, stamina and fiber the new minister would need. The ministry of Dr. Ernest J. Lewis, being less than three years, was destined to be the shortest in First Church history but it was one of the most crucial, significant and creative.

Dr. [Ernest James] Lewis was an exemplary preacher and a brilliant expounder of the Word; a man with a wonderfully boyish sense of humor who could appeal to men as few others. He was a beloved pastor whose kindness and friendship quickly endeared him to the whole congregation. Of Welsh ancestry, he exemplified the best qualities of that great nation.

Difficult decisions had now to be made by the congregation regarding women elders, both ruling and teaching. The ex-marine, now Doctor of Divinity and gifted minister and preacher did not hesitate. Without his forthrightness and without his decisiveness, First Church might have procrastinated and drifted into congregationalism.

Dr. Ernest James Lewis, the new minister of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, was born in New York. He was a graduate of Wheaton College and Princeton Seminary, where he received his Bachelor of Divinity and Master's degrees. He received his Doctor of Divinity degree from Presbyterian Pikeville College and a Doctor of Letters degree from Oklahoma City University. He had served in Haddenfield, New Jersey; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Cincinnati, Ohio; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Evanston, Illinois. He served in the United States Marine Corps in World War II. Dr. and Mrs. Lewis (née Jean Brown of Woodbury, New Jersey) were married in 1948. They had three children, a daughter Kathryn, aged 21; a son Michael, aged 19; and a son Stephen, aged 17.

Perhaps the most unusual event in the coming to First Church of Dr. Lewis was in the sending of a letter to the congregation of First Church from the congregation which he was leaving:

November 30, 1979

To: The First Presbyterian Church at Pittsburgh

From: The First Presbyterian Church at Evanston

Subject: Ernest J. Lewis

PITTSBURGH, we send him to you with full hearts. His going will leave a big, empty space in our lives individually, and in the life of this church . . .

PITTSBURGH, we send him to you with our blessing and all our love, for he is very dear to us. If ever there was a man who daily walks with God, this is that man. We wanted to keep him, heaven knows. But there is a reason for your calling him to Pittsburgh and for his acceptance of your call. We may see it only darkly at this moment, but in faith and trust we, too, accept the call as God's will for him and for us.**

We know that Ernie is special, and we thank God for the nine years that he has been with us . . . We know we couldn't keep him forever.

So, Pittsburgh, we send him to you with joy and tears. Take good care of him for your sake; for our sake; for Christ's sake.**

Few ministers can have received such a tribute from the congregation they were leaving. In the sequence of the next three years it might be well for the reader to ponder the sentences underlined by the writer of this history. In the light of later events, it can now be seen that there was a reason for God calling him to Pittsburgh, darkly foreseen by his beloved people in Evanston.

The first major step in Dr. Lewis' ministry was welcomed by the congregation. It was the setting up of a diaconate. The problem of organizing proper attention for shut-ins, hospital patients, new members and lonely people scattered over an area of a couple of hundred square miles—by an associate helped by the very gifted retired minister Dr. Melvin L. Best—had become impossible. The congregation must become involved.

So, soon after his arrival Dr. Lewis, with his business perspicacity and military organizational background, saw the need for a diaconate of ordained men and women. As early as April 21, 1980, he had a Session committee present a job description for a Board of Deacons. As fully worked out later in the bylaws, the Board of Deacons was to consist of a minister and 30 deacons of qualified men and women, regardless of race, ethnic origin, disability, marital status or age. The deacons would deal with the needy,

** Underlining mine.

** Underlining mine.

the sick, the friendless, those in distress because of unemployment; give counsel; comfort the bereaved and provide transportation.

The diaconate of dedicated men and women became the down-to-earth practical mission of the congregation, just as did the first diaconate of the Christian Church as described in the early chapter of Acts. As the June issue 1982 of First Church News expressed it, quoting Dr. Lewis nearing the close of his ministry at First Church: "This new board is already acting out the love and care for persons so essential to the body of Christ, and so difficult otherwise to experience in such a large and scattered flock."

The whole program of the diaconate is carefully and meticulously worked out in the session minutes and occupies many, many pages. Furthermore, the deacons themselves, like their prototypes in the New Testament, kept evolving new patterns of ministry and evangelism in a most stimulating fashion long after Dr. Lewis' departure.

Possibly the main reason for God's calling of Dr. Ernest James Lewis to Pittsburgh had to do with a distinct trait of his character. Anyone looking at the photograph on his Installation Bulletin or the oil painting of him placed with those of previous ministers on the railings of the chapel gallery will see a man with a very strong face. Dr. Lewis was strong! As well as a tremendous training in the winsomeness and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ was his experience in the United States Marine Corps in World War II. This was to fit him both to anticipate and to deal with difficult situations and emergencies as they arose. First Presbyterian Church Pittsburgh now had a Mr. Greatheart for her new minister and she needed such a man for the confrontation and handling of difficult situations.

There were two burning questions awaiting solution: (1) the question of women elders and (2) the ordination of women to the ministry. Some elders and laity accepted such ordinations. The majority were very much against them. The congregation was in a quandary. The new minister according to Assembly law must be willing to accept the ordination of women if he were to be installed.

Dr. Lewis told the writer how this fact came up when the nominating committee questioned him. One man, Mr. Herbert Henderson, was an Ulster Scot by birth who, being strongly conservative, probably did not relish the idea of women elders at all, but true to his Derry background he held that once a Presbyterian church assembly voted "yes" the vote should be accepted. Mr. Henderson had apparently done so somewhat reluctantly but now it was the law of the Church! Dr. Lewis later said of Mr. Henderson, head cashier of the Pittsburgh Mellon Bank, that he suddenly looked him straight in the eye and said, "Young man, do you believe in women elders?" Dr. Lewis replied that he did and immediately thought: "This is the key question and I probably won't be coming to First Church." "Well," said elder Herbert Henderson, "it's good you do, young man, because the Assembly has decided we must have women elders and if you didn't believe in them we could not consider you for the job."

The fact was that when Dr. Lewis was installed in First Church and answered questions put to him in the service of installation, he was in honor bound to accept women ruling elders and teaching elders if it were assured that any woman was called to

such a ministry. To him, as to his modern predecessors, this was no problem. The issue, however, was critical for the congregation's future. First Church could either remain a congregation in a connectional church or go out on its own as an independent unit.

This was a step that even the great conservative Dr. Macartney during the modernist controversy, a major issue of debate at that time, would not take.

It fell to Dr. Ernest Lewis to put the question of women eldership to the congregation. One of the difficulties was that not one of the women of the church was willing to let her name go forward for nomination; each felt that she had plenty of responsibility in the congregation as things were.

However, equality of the sexes was now the law of the land and women eldership was now the law of the United Presbyterian Church. Something had to be done so a few of the lady members of the congregation were persuaded that it was in the interests of the congregation that they should allow their names to be proposed for a congregational vote.

Several were so persuaded and the outcome was that Mrs. Barbara Franzen, leader of the Young Women's Bible Class, was ordained as the first woman elder of First Church on February 15, 1981. Others later followed in her footsteps and it was soon realized that womanly tact, discernment and finesse were valuable assets to the Session; in fact, so much so, that before long Mrs. Martha Smith, a gifted businesswoman, was elected Clerk of a Session largely composed of men.

Dr. Lewis exercised great tact and skill in all the negotiations with those who favored and those who opposed the action and the change went through, imposing a great strain on the minister but without any great dislocation in the congregation. One can see that behind all the human elements in the situation lay a great work of Christian charisma, promoted by the Holy Spirit. This was Dr. Lewis' major achievement under Christ, but it was not the only one.

Again, Dr. Lewis noted that for years the ministers of First Church carried a heavy load of pastoral counseling of individuals, often more in the psychological than the spiritual area. It had also been a dream of Drs. Lamont and Huffman to meet this growing need. Dr. Lewis had received a commitment during the course of his discussions with the pastoral nominating committee of the possibility of such a service.

A committee was formed to study the matter, relying on the experience gained by Mrs. Lewis as a counselor in Evanston and the professional experience of Mrs. Dunbar, a psychologist and member of First Church.

The service was finally set up to include:

- (a) Individual, marital, family and group counseling
- (b) Specialized referrals
- (c) Training sessions for groups in the church to meet special needs
- (d) Short-term support groups

Any deficit under \$35,000 for the first three years would be met by the congregation.

Another tremendous task of Dr. Lewis was the introduction of a complete system of bylaws for the congregation on October 11, 1981. Up to now there was great uncertainty about church government and responsibility for policy in the congregation.

The whole organization of First Church was confused. It began, as a corporate body, formed by the business magnates of the time—the Quaker Penns. They thought in terms of a business company run by business executives, and wrote into the Constitution as the main executors a Board of Trustees, conforming to the law of Pennsylvania for corporate bodies. First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh was Pittsburgh's first corporate body long before United States Steel Corp., Westinghouse Electric Corp., etc. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) requires that its government should be in the hands of a group of spiritual leaders, of ruling elders presided over by a called-of-God teaching elder or minister. In First Church sometimes one group predominated, sometimes the other. When the elders padlocked the church to prevent the entry of Mr. Barr in 1788, they were clearly the ruling body in the church. When Dr. Huffman made search, he found the Woman's Work Society working together with the elders and trustees and sharing responsibility with them.

By the 1970s a new group now had great influence. This was the large ministerial staff. Dr. Alexander had one associate. Dr. Macartney had one assistant minister. But now there were about seven or eight ministers serving the church. Dr. Lamont and his successors were very open to their counsel and advice at the regular staff meetings each Tuesday afternoon.

Once again, with his impressive organizational skills, Dr. Lewis had a committee draw up bylaws which finally covered many pages in the minutes of the Session dealing with every aspect of the Church's life. It was a massive work but clear, precise and comprehensive.

To quote Dr. Lewis, "For those sensitive enough to perceive, we have made some very significant changes in style and direction of ministry. Our staff itself has modeled for you a supportive community of trust and love. Even the bylaws symbolize care to establish order and structure and provide for your participation in leadership guided by the Holy Spirit."

In May 1981 Mr. and Mrs. Philip H. Smith presented the new Christian and American flags now hanging in the chapel. They were given as a memorial gift to the church in honor of Martha's grandfather, Harmon Bradshaw.

Another addition about this time at the strong request of Dr. Lewis was the introduction during the church service of a confession of sin and an assurance of pardon.

Dr. Lewis had another dream for First Church. It was to have as the focal point in the sanctuary a Cross. On June 27, 1982, such a Cross was dedicated to the Glory of God. It became a reality thanks to the gracious giving of Mr. and Mrs. Philip H. Smith,

the Thursday Night Club, the Mothers' Club and friends of the Clubs. Mr. Donald O'Neal, who was responsible for the design of the Cross and supervised the project, shares his thoughts with us:

The Chancel Cross represents the culmination of careful and prayerful preparation . . .

The first considerations were fundamental in nature. The large wooden doors would often be the background against which the Cross would require suspension from the stone arch. At times, such as when the doors are opened during Sunday service, the Cross would need to be open or transparent to avoid obscuring the stained glass window on the Oliver Avenue side. It would also need to be equally attractive from the chapel looking towards Sixth Avenue. The material must be metal—silver in color to harmonize with the grey stone and to contrast with the dark wood . . . The style is Celtic, echoing the Presbyterian logo, and chosen for its pleasing shape and proportions . . . The Cross is ten feet high and five feet wide and weighs two hundred pounds. The Cross arms are twenty-two feet above the floor . . .

The Cross has become a focal point for the many people who slip into our sanctuary for prayer during the week. It is my deepest hope that you will find this a pleasing aid to your personal worship in the years to come.

Christ's atoning work was emphasized throughout Dr. Lewis' ministry. His sensitivity to our proper standing before God brought about the confession of sin and assurance of pardon in our worship service, based upon Christ's death and resurrection.

The Cross was dedicated on Dr. Lewis' last Sunday in First Church, June 27, 1982, and stands as a reminder that the confession of sin and the assurance of pardon can only come through the Cross of Christ. The Cross keeps Christ's atonement central in all worship in First Church whether at Divine Service or in private devotions throughout the week. Dr. Lewis left many great legacies to First Church. Perhaps this was the loveliest and it was very much in keeping with the vision of Dr. Herron and the theological outlook of First Church down the centuries.

The most formidable and crucial task Dr. Lewis had carried out was the acceptance of women elders by the congregation. An almost equally important but not so formidable a task was the introduction of deacons, as this set in motion a chain of happy events which took place in his ministry and continued for the decade since including such improvements in ministry as: the development of the Walk-In Ministry and the lay-pastoral ministry training classes to refine it; the alcohol and drug rehabilitation programs and the strong support for Bethlehem Haven, a downtown shelter for homeless women.

The tremendous strain of the past few years had adversely affected Dr. Lewis' otherwise extremely robust health and led to some temporary heart problems. His

farsighted congregation of Evanston had felt "only darkly" that he had been called to First Church and had accepted that call for a special work. It was now clear what that special work had been and that it had put a tremendous strain on his person, which possibly only an ex-marine of the United States could cope with. That work had been carried out efficiently and well; now Dr. Lewis felt he should seek a new ministry, and at a special meeting of the congregation in the sanctuary February 7, 1982, he asked with regrets (and was granted permission equally regretfully) to have his pastoral relationship dissolved, to be effective June 30, 1982, giving the congregation five months to seek a new pastor.

The love the congregation had for him was reflected in the large attendance at his last Communion Service in First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh when over 800 persons were present in spite of all the upheaval and dislocation over women elders.

On January 1, 1983, Dr. Lewis accepted a call to be executive director of the Presbyterian Congress on Renewal to be held in Dallas, Texas, November 12-16, 1984. This next work he completed with equal success before receiving a call to the large First Presbyterian Church of Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he served with great acceptance for many years, being later joined by the Reverend James P. Longstreet, until recently a minister in First Presbyterian Church Pittsburgh, as his associate.

It is impossible to give much indication of the importance and influence of the work of the laymen and laywomen since the recent ministries from Dr. Macartney's time on, as many are alive and would not wish their contributions to be singled out. But let it be clearly understood that the secret of the multi-born First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh lay not in the brilliance of either its ministers or laymen, but in the work of the Holy Spirit blessing whatever they tried to do together in the name of the dear Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XVII

INTERIM

JUNE 30, 1982-APRIL 4, 1984

After Dr. Lewis left, First Church faced troublesome times even with excellent leadership from her staff in charge. The Reverend William F. Burd was in charge of staff, the Reverend James P. Longstreet was moderator of the deacons and the Reverend George H. Goodrich, Jr. was camp director.

It is an undeniable fact that many Presbyterian churches were going through great strain and turmoil at this time. There was an attempt on the part of the denomination to introduce a race and gender quota system into the boards of the congregations before they had time to digest the radical changes of recent years. In Pittsburgh, in addition, there were some very great local problems.

Mr. Philip H. Smith, Chairman of the Long-Range Planning Committee, presented an interim report to the Session in the fall of 1982. As one of the leading businessmen in Pittsburgh, he was extremely knowledgeable about the city and gave reasons for concern regarding the situation insofar as the city and its downtown congregation were concerned. Mr. Smith dealt with the unemployment situation. Besides the general depression in the country was the movement of the steel plants to other countries, especially to Asia. This meant the pensioning or loss of jobs of thousands of workers and much management staff. Pittsburgh was greying and its congregations with it. The physical environment of the city was itself changing. This was especially true of the area around First Church. Roadways were being torn up and great ravines dug in them to accommodate the new underground transport system. Soon things became so bad that it was only with great difficulty that the members could make their way into the Church on Sunday morning for worship.

With the resignation and leaving of Dr. Lewis, the pastoral staff was unsettled and it was nearly two years before the vacancy was filled, a situation which is always most perilous especially for a downtown congregation.

These were the days when the churches all over Pittsburgh and its suburbs were collecting groceries to feed those families whose bread-earners, many of them church members, were out of work.

The Roman Catholic churches were also feeling intense pressure and dioceses were closing down churches, or amalgamating them, much to the distress of the congregations. Also, many young people were leaving Pittsburgh for California's Silicon Valley; the Carolinas, especially the Raleigh/Durham areas; and for Northern Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; and Texas.

There was also a further exodus from the city. Despite Route 79 having long been completed, there had not been a linkup of Route 279 to the heart of the city; now

there was such a linkup and enormous masses of people were moving out to the North Hills with its industrial parks, its recreational facilities, and its fantastic new malls which provided unlimited parking, air conditioning and a new style of city-country living.

Before he left First Church, Dr. Lewis had begun the task of cleaning the church rolls which was many years overdue, even before he came to the church. During the two-year vacancy which ensued, many members left and a continuation of the process of roll-cleaning—after the vacancy and during the first year of Dr. Thielemann's ministry—revealed a tremendous loss of membership during the interim period.

First Church was about to face an even more difficult situation than she did after Dr. Paxton's leaving. Then, young men were crowding into the city and, although not Presbyterian, many seem to have been won into the church through its youth work. Now young people were leaving and few young people coming in.

CHAPTER XVIII

**DR. BRUCE WHEELER THIELEMANN,
THE MINISTER WHO REJOICED IN THE MULTIMEDIA,
1984-1993**

The congregation, realizing the critical situation, was loath to issue a call until they were sure it had a man who was tremendously gifted. In Dr. Bruce Wheeler Thielemann it called to First Church one of the most brilliant ministers in America.

On Sunday, February 26, 1984, the Reverend Dr. Bruce Wheeler Thielemann accepted the call to become the thirteenth pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.

Mr. Thielemann, who grew up in Mt. Lebanon, was a graduate of Westminster College in New Wilmington, Lawrence County and of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary in East Liberty. Ordained in 1959, he served First Presbyterian Church of McKeesport, Pennsylvania, and Glendale Presbyterian Church, Glendale, California, before becoming dean of the chapel at Grove City College, Mercer County.

In ten years at Grove City beginning in 1974, Mr. Thielemann solidified his reputation as a premier preacher and built close relationships with many students.

By 1984 Dr. Thielemann had fulfilled many speaking engagements and traveled to sixty nations.

The pulpit committee had stated that it was seeking a man who, among other achievements, was a gifted preacher. They certainly had discovered such a man in their new minister. There is no doubt that Dr. Thielemann was one of the greatest preachers and one of the most gifted orators of his time in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Even as a very young man it was noticed that, often when Presbytery was lethargic or bored with the long wrangling debates of the sixties and seventies, as soon as Bruce Thielemann rose to speak the atmosphere changed to one of interest and anticipation. He had often previously preached in First Church and it was noted that when he did so people were slow to leave the Sanctuary after the service, and there were always many young people present. Both are signs of gifted preaching.

Dr. Thielemann was a big man and in the pulpit his very physical appearance created an impression of strength and solidity. He had a gift for choosing the right words and creating word pictures and drama!

** From Obituaries Pittsburgh Post Gazette. Bruce Thielemann, Presbyterian Pastor, by Ann Rodgers-Melnick, Pittsburgh Post Gazette Staff Writer.

Dr. Thielemann was a man of very strong will and determination with a mind that always welcomed the large scenario, sometimes a larger one than most congregations could handle. Also, once he made up his mind on a course of action he considered right, he pursued it with relentless tenacity and determination. He was a perfectionist who found compromise difficult. He laid great stress on the media, especially on radio and television, seeing them as a means of promoting the Gospel and fulfilling the church's mission to modern society. The preaching of the Word was paramount and everything else in the congregational program was subsidiary. The difficulty was that, during the almost two-year vacancy, the congregation had lost much numerical and financial strength and needed careful upbuilding before it could embark on expensive programs.

A little over a year after Dr. Thielemann's installation the 197th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), meeting in 1985 in Indianapolis, Indiana, had under its elected moderator, Dr. William H. Wilson, made some interesting pronouncements. This was to be one of the few Assemblies in recent years where liberals and conservatives worked together in harmony and the meeting was to exercise an immense creative influence on the social policies of Dr. Thielemann's ministry in First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. He himself quoted extensively from its minutes in the ensuing First Church magazine as follows:

Reaffirmed: Abortion is always a moral dilemma to be undertaken with great care.

Reaffirmed: Life is ultimately and only a gift from God.

Uneasy About: Abortion which seems to be elective only as a convenience or to ease embarrassment.

Statement: Abortion should not be used as a means of birth control and we are affirming our strong support for viable alternatives to abortion.

Churches are urged to provide materials to enable pastors and other counselors working with those who are making decisions about how to deal with unwanted pregnancies.

Dr. Thielemann then states that one of the more interesting talks was that given by Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon. "He considers prisons to be warehouses of human waste . . ."

Another point the Senator had made was that valuable skills are being warehoused in retirement homes which exile elderly citizens from the mainstream of our society. "Where," Hatfield asked, "are the stewards who can develop innovative systems to challenge and excite these fertile minds?"

These challenges of the 197th Assembly were accepted by the minister and people of First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh and became a major part of the social

action program of the congregation during the new ministry. They continue to be so to this day.

This ministry was and is a call to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a gospel of sins forgiven through His death and resurrection and of renewal through His Holy Spirit. In practice it was to be the recovery of men and women and young people and children from the warehouses of human waste—whether unborn children, prisoners in jails or nursing homes, discharged and jobless employees, unhoused vagrants, rejected adolescents, unwanted drug addicts. The aim was to set the prisoners of sin free and to proclaim a year of Jubilee in Jesus Christ, God's Son.

This was an ambitious and adventurous program, but the equipment was already there to deal with it in an eager enthusiastic band of deacons, a strong body of gifted trustees and a rejuvenated Session.

These challenges would be met, as in Dr. Alexander's day, not just by social action but by the preaching of the Cross and the power of the Holy Spirit.

The first challenge was that of unjustified abortion. This had long been a grave social problem. Abortion was no longer being merely used to save a mother's life or in cases of rape or incest to save the victims from trauma. It was becoming a substitute for birth control and a means of discriminating against male or female fetuses to suit the desires of parents.

In this matter, however, there was some disagreement among Christians. Many of the liberal presbyteries and congregations supported a policy of elective abortion. Pittsburgh Presbytery was among those who promoted a woman's right to choose between birth and abortion. First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh differed and petitioned Presbytery in the matter. The struggle between First Church congregation (supported by several others) and Presbytery was intense and of long duration. Dr. Lowell Meek, associate minister, played an important part in leading this struggle. The strange thing is that Dr. Thielemann was more liberal in his approach to this issue, tending to lay somewhat more stress on the right of women to choose and in his preaching trying to balance the good points on each side.

Eventually the result was a compromise whereby First Church took the assignment of being the resource center in Pittsburgh to provide women, at its site in the heart of the city, with counseling on alternatives to abortion.

The rest of this evangelistic social program, which the minister set up as a result of the 197th General Assembly and the words of Mark Hatfield, continued to expand and develop during Dr. Thielemann's ministry.

During his nine years at First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, Dr. Thielemann was a man with a serious health problem. He had been a patient in Mercy Hospital with heart problems and had undergone heart surgery before he came to First Church. In the early part of his ministry this problem recurred and it kept on recurring until his retirement and his death in 1994. Dr. Thielemann had, however, very

fine and energetic staff members in Dr. Lowell Meek and later on in his other associate, Dr. Arthur Helin. Miss Marilyn Koch, Dr. Thielemann's secretary during his tenure at First Church, was most proficient in her job and able to meet his high standard of workmanship.

It was, therefore, decided to lighten the preaching schedule of the senior minister. To this end the Tuesday Noon Men's Club and the Thursday Noon Women's Club were combined. The united service unfortunately was not a success and a decision was made to discontinue it. Another weekly service, The Wednesday Noon service, was historically a continuation of the old Wednesday night prayer meeting begun by Dr. Herron and the minister of Second Church and one elder and Mother Irish's prayer group which led to all the earlier revivals. Held on Wednesday night, it was later combined with the Wednesday Noon services which enabled people to attend by daylight. This weekly service was also discontinued. The elimination of all the noon services was a great blow to the public relations of First Church and its mission to the city business centers. Some years previously the men's noon service brought well over a thousand men into the church at noon on Tuesdays and was attended by magistrates, lawyers, doctors, businessmen and working people, all worshiping as one great family of brothers. The women's Thursday service had a somewhat similar clientele of fine businesswomen and both services were recruiting grounds for membership. However, the decisions enabled the minister to concentrate on the Sunday service and took a considerable weight off his workload.

The social work continued without remission. There had always been close ties between First Church and the Pittsburgh Experiment. This group carried out a fine ministry to the unemployed. Now, when Bill Hawthorne, Chairman of Unemployment Anonymous, announced that they had lost their headquarters due to the relocation of the Y.M.C.A., First Church offered its cafeteria and it became their meeting place on Tuesdays at noon.

Meanwhile the members of First Church played a large part in the excellent work of Bethlehem Haven—a shelter for homeless women operating at Smithfield United Church on Smithfield Street—as they had done since its establishment by the very enthusiastic work of the Roman Catholic Sisters aided by all the downtown churches.

The Pittsburgh Recovery Center for the poor, the homeless and the addicted began in 1989 when Jim Mihalke, a longtime member of First Church and a volunteer with its Walk-In Ministry, became aware of the desperate situation of many who came to the church seeking help. The Recovery Center was thus established and supported by the Downtown Ministerium, a cooperative agency representing the downtown churches.

These were desperate days in the Golden Triangle for, as a result of the Civil Rights Act, hundreds of patients in Mayview State Hospital (not legally certified) discovered they could discharge themselves. Many did so and took to the streets, joining the homeless multitudes.

The crash of the Stock Market on the 19th of October, 1987, together with the departure of the steel industrial giants from Pittsburgh, led to hunger, unemployment,

homelessness, and vagrancy. To meet these needs First Church, like other congregations, introduced a Food for the Hungry program to provide parcels of food for poor families.

Many of the homes of Pittsburghers were in bad repair, sometimes because the tenants were old people who could not make their own repairs and lacked funds to pay for them. Many of these people were widows or single women. To meet this need two groups were formed in First Church: the first group was called "Mr. Clean" whose objective was to help people get their homes cleaned when the work was too much for them; the second group, "Mr. Fixit," was formed for the purpose of undertaking small jobs, replacing windows, and doing other needed repairs.

First Church also cooperated with Breachmenders, founded on May 10, 1980, to provide housing assistance and youth-employment training in the Oakland area. The home owners would pay for the materials for jobs, and Breachmenders would supply the labor free of charge.

As part of its concern for youth, especially students, First Church worked with Coalition for Christian Outreach, Inter-Varsity Fellowship and P.R.I.S.M. (Pittsburgh Region International Student Ministries). The congregation continued its strong support for Youth Guidance which had been one of its main interests for many years, latterly under the leadership of John Guernsey, a First Church member. As already stated, First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh had worked and continued to work in conjunction with the Pittsburgh Experiment in all its social programs.

During Dr. Thielemann's ministry, great strides were made in bringing First Church into line with the new age of computerized business organization and multimedia communications. In the office the Altos system was outdated and no longer could be serviced. The new system (a mixture of Apple Macintosh and I.B.M. Compatible) was ahead of its time. With this system, the whole work of business administration was streamlined.

The greatest change came about at this time through the use of the multimedia. As stated, this was Dr. Thielemann's dream. In the 1986 September issue First Church News announced that First Church would enter the world of television. Dr. Thielemann recommended that the church enter a three-year commitment of \$150,000 for this purpose. This led to the foundation of First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh media ministries. This new venture was directed by Daniel Joseph Gremba. He had been studio manager of the American Television and Communications Corporation in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. The multimedia communications system of First Presbyterian Church under his direction included KDKA radio, 10:05 P.M. Sunday; C.T.V. television channel 40, noon Sunday; T.C.I. cable access channel 9 (City of Pittsburgh), 4:00 P.M. Friday, 11:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. Saturday, and 11:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. Sunday, viewed daily on the closed circuit television systems of Allegheny General Hospital. The cassette tape ministry was also the responsibility of this ministry of communications which now had an international outlet.

In 1988, starting on May 1, "The First Presbyterian Hour" was introduced on Sundays from 12:00 to 1:00 P.M. on WPCB television channel 40, Pittsburgh's Christian

television station, and its satellite station WKBX television channel 47, Johnstown/Altoona.

One great benefit of television broadcasts was that they provided a ministry to the shut-in "prisoners" referred to by Senator Mark Hatfield at the 197th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Now they could see the service as well as hear it and some viewers applied for membership in First Church. It was decided by the minister and Session that though unable to attend in person they could be received if they expressed their faith in Christ and commitment to His Kingdom.

Television also extended the First Church's evangelistic ministry to prisoners in the penitentiary, where for years the Sunday night KDKA First Church radio ministry had been one of the most popular programs of the week. Thus, First Church carried out another ministry to prisoners shut-off from the world.

One of the last acts of Dr. Lewis before he left First Presbyterian Church was to establish an organ fund, as the existing organ built at the beginning of the century and rebuilt by Dr. Aneurin Bodycombe during Dr. Lamont's ministry was rapidly deteriorating. It had also become a hazard, having caught fire no less than three times.

An organ committee was set up early in Dr. Thielemann's ministry. In 1986 the Session approved its recommendation to purchase a new pipe organ from the Cassavant Frères Organ Company in Montreal, Canada, and also the purchase of an electronic organ for temporary use in the sanctuary. The sale of the existing organ was approved.

There was great excitement in the congregation when organ #3643 arrived on May 15, 1988, at the church. Many members of the congregation watched its delivery that day, and again on May 28, for about seven hours on each occasion. Parts and pipes were carried from a tractor trailer through the front door of the church. The voicing and tuning of the pipes took place during July and August but had to be postponed for a while owing to high humidity that summer. The organ had 4 manuals, 54 stops and 74 ranks (4,950 pipes). At this time Mr. Philip Aley was the church organist.

It should be noted here that few congregations, least of all Presbyterian, had a record of nearly 170 years of instrumental music in church services. Unfortunately, a few years previously, a sale was held to clear the church building of unwanted objects of furniture, and an extremely old bass fiddle found in the vault was sold. This was quite likely the large bass fiddle used in Dr. Herron's day; if so, it was fitting that it had shared many years in the church basement beside the crypt which contained the ashes of many veterans of George Washington's army, men who had later rejoiced in its tones and were now entombed in the vault with it.

The inaugural organ recital was held in the sanctuary on Friday evening, December 16, 1988, at eight o'clock as a Christmas special. It was noticed that now, at least, a portion of the Willet window could be seen from inside the church.

About this time some difficulties arose within the congregational leadership. Perhaps the most important factor in this state of affairs was that there was a concern

over priorities. The enormous multimedia program was proving to be much more expensive than originally estimated and it appeared that it was going to be impossible to meet the cost of the television and the camp programs combined.

One of First Church's most cherished institutions was its camp. It had carried out an impressive evangelistic and Christian service to training the youth of Pittsburgh and especially the youth of First Church. In the seventy-fifth anniversary year it was noted that fifty-seven young men and women, now full-time missionaries, ministers, counselors and church leaders, had been trained there. Dr. Thielemann and some church leaders wanted to sell the camp. The Session and most of the congregation did not.

A task force was appointed to study the issue. It met twelve times between April and September 1989 with the chosen professional advisor, Dr. Kathryn Herdrich of Centerpoint Management from New Lenox, Illinois. The conclusion of the Task Force was that the ministry of Ligonier should be viewed as a mission of the congregation, having a historic validity. For seventy-five years this ministry had existed and had spread beyond Pittsburgh to several states and beyond racial and denominational lines. It had supported Christian faith and values learned at the camp, with a daily lifestyle. The recommendation was put forward that the lodge/conference center should be maintained to provide a "consecrated place" to be used for Christian growth, fellowship and sharing and for the physical refreshment of old and young where they could be presented with the claims of Christ and be built up as believers along with their families in a natural setting of beauty. It was recommended that the Ligonier ministry be incorporated in a new charitable corporation with a board of directors and an executive director and all income and profits to be used for the furtherance of the organization.

Dr. Thielemann, in a letter to the Session, expressed his strong disagreement with the findings. He maintained that the church did not have the money, staff or time required and that every aspect of the First Church program would have to be compromised. He claimed that exciting worship with emphasis on strong preaching, effective advertising, a varied and attractive Christian education program and a dynamic small network were most important. He stated that only 7 percent of new membership came from the camp.

Much debate and dialogue ensued. The Session pointed out that while membership had not significantly increased since the slump, which occurred during and after the near two-year vacancy, it recognized that the excellent quality of the senior pastor's preaching was probably the single factor most responsible for the present health of the congregation.

Eventually, on September 8, 1991, at a special congregational meeting elder Miriam Seigfried made a proposal to accept the recommendation more or less as already stated. The motion was seconded and carried. It was not long before Dr. Thielemann with good grace came to accept the wisdom of the decision. Near the close of his ministry he wrote in the First Church News that, among his blessings, the Ligonier Camp and Conference (now a separate corporation, owned entirely by First Church) was presently overcrowded with a waiting list!

During the debate on the camp Dr. Thielemann had laid emphasis on the part played by the Sunday School in recruiting new members and carrying out the church's mission. As a result the Session decided to set about the reconstruction of the basement as a Sunday School Undercroft. The old bowling alleys were removed and five completely furnished children's classrooms were installed. In addition there was a new area with superintendent's office, lockers and other conveniences.

During the last years of his ministry, Dr. Thielemann's health continued to deteriorate even more rapidly. His doctors forbade him to enter hospitals where he might easily catch infection. His energies were greatly depleted. Dr. Kleinschmidt, one of Dr. Thielemann's attending physicians, presented a detailed description of his patient's physical condition and his course of treatment. It was his opinion that Dr. Thielemann's medical condition required a reduction of his current level of employment obligations. Dr. Thielemann presented a recommendation and request to the Session for the hiring of an executive pastor, and that he himself be relieved of all duties except preaching and assisting the Session in a search for the said executive pastor. Session approved the request and a search was commenced.

A job description was prepared. The new appointee would have the title Minister/Director and work under the authority of the senior minister and Session to initiate, coordinate and direct the total church program, with the exception of four areas: worship, denominational responsibility, acting as spokesperson on behalf of the church to the city and the county, and moderating session. A candidate was chosen and at a special meeting on Sunday, July 1, 1990 the candidate, Dr. Robert A. Veitch, was duly appointed by the congregation.

In 1986 Thuy, a daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Khai Van Nguyen, came to study as a freshman at the Beaver Falls campus of Pennsylvania State University. She had come to the United States with her family, sponsored by First Church. The whole family had been baptized later on profession of faith. Now Thuy came back from Larned, Kansas, where her father was a physician at the veteran's hospital and she became again a member of the congregation.

During the past few ministries many wonderful laymen and laywomen have carried out devoted ministries and then, as the Salvation Army puts it, were "Promoted to Glory." One, Mr. Logan Bailey, former clerk of session, was the son of Dr. and Mrs. Frank Bailey—the Doctor having acquired the camp site from the Denny family for First Church and his wife, Helen Bailey, who later gave the present senior minister's study. Logan was one of the most gracious and Christ-like personalities one could possibly meet. You always felt after you met him that you had a new insight into the character of America's greatest president, Abraham Lincoln. Mr. Logan Bailey died June 5, 1989.

Another such layman was John B. Nelson, D.D.S., who died January 13, 1983. By that time he had given twenty years to using his profession for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom and the relief of poor, suffering humanity. He worked freely full-time for foreign missions from the day he reached sixty-five years until his death—the last seven years with the Brother's Brother Foundation under Dr. Luke Hingson. He and his wife Mabel checked and packed over fifty cases of dental equipment. Where there was

earthquake, fire, flood or some other major natural disaster, there he went. The number of inoculations he took part in giving with an air syringe was astronomical: in Bolivia one-quarter of a million to combat infectious disease, one-half million after an earthquake; in Nicaragua one-half million after a devastating hurricane. When asked why he did it, he replied in the words of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the man he loved next to his Lord and Savior: "It is not enough merely to exist, you must do something for your fellowman for which you receive no pay."**

On June 12, 1983, at the Sunday School picnic at Ligonier, the wooden outdoor pulpit in the "Chapel in the Pines" was dedicated to John and Peg Waugh with a plaque engraved with their names.

John Waugh was a truck driver who had been seriously injured and disabled in an accident while still fairly young, and he was pensioned by his firm. John may have been disabled as a trucker but he had tremendous energy, as had his wife Peg, so they gave the rest of their lives to serve as volunteers in First Church. Peg served in the Girls' Club as leader and teacher and both of them worked at the camp where John's energy and enthusiasm sparked the groups there for eight years. The weekends often saw them there as host and hostess and friend of the church youth.

Due to his ill health Dr. Thielemann's ministry, apart from his representation of First Church in public and convenorship of the Session, was now largely confined to his multimedia ministry on Sunday.

There arose now a further difficulty. When Dr. Thielemann came to First Church he found that the congregation had a tremendous loss of membership due to the long vacancy of two years after Dr. Ernest Lewis left. As a result Dr. Thielemann was greatly concerned that this would not happen again, so at his call he had arranged that he would announce and ask the congregation and Presbytery to accept his resignation two years before he would actually leave First Church and retire. This gesture was kindly and well-meant, and typical of Bruce's thoughtfulness, but it was a disaster for First Church. Even though the congregation would have two years to seek a minister, no minister could officially commit himself during that time. Worse still, few potential members would wish to join a church with a partly disabled minister in charge for the next two years, whose retirement had been announced and accepted and when, no matter how great a preacher he might be, they had no idea of who would succeed him.

There is no doubt that Dr. Thielemann's television program was a success. He was, as already had been stated, a brilliant orator and preacher and had a commanding presence. His television audience had extended far beyond the bounds of Greater Pittsburgh. A difficulty was that the further it extended the more expensive its production and distribution became. Even television services such as Dr. Schuller's and Billy Graham's evangelistic campaigns were finding the cost of television programs hard to meet, as were churches with many thousands of members.

** See manuscript of Dr. Nelson's ministry in the First Church library, a very exciting document. One of his very noteworthy patients was Dr. Uns, one of the few men to climb Mt. Everest's West Slope.

Television costs were becoming prohibitive for all but the favored few or those who used hard-sell tactics to raise money from viewers. The old idea that a church with a highly successful television program will have a crowded sanctuary was proving untrue. It had been true of radio programs where listeners could only hear, but with television there was little incentive to attend church in winter when temperatures fell below zero or when they were over ninety degrees in summer, especially when one could see and hear on television better than was possible even in the front seats of the sanctuary. Naturally attendances were drastically reduced in spite of Dr. Thielemann's tremendous gifts. This non-attending factor applied also to First Church's own membership and attendance dropped. All of this led to a significant decrease towards the end of Dr. Thielemann's ministry.

However, during the last two years before Dr. Thielemann retired and in spite of his weak health he promoted some excellent programs in First Church. A most successful venture during this period was the Building Missions Bridges Campaign for which the congregation raised \$50,000. Twenty-five thousand dollars of this amount were to go to Dr. Douglas A. Dunderdale's campaign in Eastminster Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, for its newly opened William and Mildred Orr Compassionate Care Center. This Center was established to meet the needs of frail, elderly persons. The other \$25,000 provided an Afro-American evangelist to work among Afro-American males in the Hill District.

A First Church campaign for the reconstruction of a ward for the Central Hospital in Enongal, in Southern Cameroon, Africa, raised over \$30,000, slightly exceeding its target.

On April 1, 1993, Dr. Thielemann's two-year-postponed retirement was accepted by the Session and congregation and later ratified by Presbytery.

As he retired Dr. Thielemann was informed by Mr. Mark Galli, Editor of Preaching Today—the largest tape service for clergy in the world—that more of his tapes were being purchased by participating clergy than those of any other American clergyman. Mr. Robert Black, Executive Director of the "Chicago Sunday Evening Club," the largest ecumenical radio ministry in our nation, said that Dr. Thielemann had made more preaching appearances on their program than had any other clergyman. Finally, Prentice Hall had just published *The Complete Handbook of Model Sermons* and pulpit work by Dr. Thielemann was selected for inclusion in this volume. In the article which gave this information and announced his retirement in First Church News January 1993, it was also stated that "he looks forward with a continued sense of purposefulness. Already his calendar is filled with engagements he has accepted in churches, colleges and conferences from Florida to Minnesota and West Virginia to California. Two publishers have invited him to write books."

Sad to say Dr. Thielemann's busy schedule was never to be carried out in this world. His ill health and heart trouble finally took their toll, and he who had many honors and degrees and a gifted ministry graduated to a higher calling January 6, 1994.

**DR. R. LESLIE HOLMES, THE MINISTER WHO STROVE TO
LIFT UP CHRIST AND BUILD UP PEOPLE**

1993-

At a special meeting of the congregation on Sunday, December 13, 1992, Dr. Robert Leslie Holmes was elected as the fourteenth pastor of the congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.

In an open letter to the members, the pastoral nominating committee had unanimously recommended Dr. Holmes. The committee stated that Dr. Holmes' motto is "Lifting up Christ and Building up People." They also stated that they knew they were led by the Holy Spirit and were sure they were directed in making the call. They noted that their long search had involved identification of future goals of the Church, detached self-examination, and careful consideration of over 130 dossiers.

In recent years the General Assembly and the Presbytery have insisted that during a vacancy there be careful identification of the problems any particular church would face and the desirable goals to which a new pastor should aim. In the case of Dr. Ernest Lewis the pulpit committee—having faced the problems of that time—stated that besides preaching ability they desired a man ". . . to encourage as well as admonish persons within the church . . ." The Pastor Nominating Committee which advised the call of Dr. Thielemann had stated that it was seeking a man who, among other achievements, was a gifted preacher. That would be the critical factor in his call.

In 1992 the pulpit committee, in presenting the name of the candidate to the congregation, stressed the fact that in his previous charges "Dr. Holmes' ministry had produced numerical growth in membership and five major building programs costing millions of dollars." Obviously Dr. Holmes' gifts as a pastor and especially as a fundraiser were major considerations in the committee's choice of him for minister.

A very urgent problem was the current physical condition of the church building, and both committee and candidate accepted this fact as paramount.

The congregation also needed a gifted evangelical preacher to succeed a man in the tradition of Dr. Thielemann. In this regard Dr. Leslie Holmes stands high in the lists of First Church preachers. He is a deeply spiritual man with a compelling love for Jesus Christ which reflects itself to those with whom he comes in contact and which shines like a beacon from the pulpit when he preaches. His degrees in university and seminary specializing in psychology, theology and spiritual counseling fit him to be a man "to lift up Christ." That same training—added to his charm of manner and simply amazing gift for remembering names and faces—also fit him, with God's help, for a pastoral ministry of "building up people." The writer once asked Dr. Holmes how he acquired such a facility for remembering names, and found his secret in the matter was continuously

praying for his congregation and naming them individually before God in prayer. First Church now had what her recent ministers had sought to have on the staff—a minister who has degrees in Christian spirituality, counseling, psychology as well as in the arts and theology.

Another problem at the church was membership. The session report for the year ending December 31, 1992, listed First Church as having 1,031 members, with the largest attendance at Communion for the year 1992 (being on February 23) totaling 477. The church school enrollment Sundays and weekdays, including teachers, adults and students, totaled 310. There were ten infant and three adult baptisms during the year. Additions on profession of faith numbered twenty-five and by certificate of transfer six. As will be seen by the difference between the numbers on the membership roll and those attending Communion, the membership roll would probably be in need of cleansing.

Dr. Holmes was born, brought up and educated in Northern Ireland. He took classes in Queen's University, Belfast, with a business career in mind. He was the first pastor in two centuries since the Reverends Barr and Steele to have a Northern Ireland upbringing. In 1955 his parents and their son Leslie at the age of nine years moved to Finaghy, a suburb of Belfast, and became members of Lowe Memorial Congregation, Finaghy. In the previous year of 1954, on December 2, the writer and his wife, Muriel, had been married in this church where Muriel had been one of its first babies and later honorary secretary to the minister, teacher in Sunday School, and a leader in all of its youth organizations, including the junior section of the Boy's Brigade for nine- to twelve-year-old boys. The church had a wonderfully gifted minister, Dr. Alfred Martin, later a Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

In 1967 Dr. Holmes emigrated to the United States of America two years after marrying Barbara (née Marshall), a gifted young woman who was well-fitted to be his wife. Her deep spirituality would be a blessing to the women of First Church. They had two children: Gary, born shortly before they left Ireland, who is now a dentist living with his wife Catherine in Georgia; and Erin, born in 1968, who with her husband, Michael Eby, also lives in Georgia where she is employed with Delta Airlines.

Dr. Holmes earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1975 in Psychology and Sociology at the University of Mobile (Alabama). He achieved his Master of Divinity degree in Theology in the Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, and his Doctorate of Ministry in 1984 (Christian Spirituality/Counseling) at Columbia Theological Seminary in Georgia.

Dr. Holmes had participated in numerous world ministries. One of his greatest achievements was to act as founder and president of Forgiveness Ministries, Atlanta, Georgia, which was born out of his concern for East African pastors whom he met when visiting that region. To obtain training for the ministry the pastors had to leave their families and culture to come to the United States at great expense and dislocation. Forgiveness Ministries was instrumental in helping to develop Indorero Pastoral Training Institute, located near Nairobi, Kenya. It was later accredited by the Kenyan government's Ministry of Education.

Before accepting the call to First Church, Dr. Holmes had served congregations in Mississippi, Georgia, Florida and California.

Dr. Holmes had published numerous articles and sermons and had preached and taught at conferences and universities on six continents. He taught national leaders in Singapore in 1987 and was the first non-African preacher, since Kenya's independence, to be the preacher at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in East Africa in 1986. He returned by repeat invitation in 1989.

There were to be during Dr. Holmes' pastorate at First Church both bad times and good times. U.S. Air flight No. 427 crashed, while attempting to land at Pittsburgh International Airport, with the loss of all aboard; Pittsburgh was plunged into mourning. In a more personal vein, Leslie and Barbara lost three of their parents over a twenty-two month period: Barbara's father in 1995, Leslie's father in 1996, and his mother in 1997. However, there were good times when their grandchildren, Hannah Michelle and Cameron Elizabeth Eby, were born.

First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh had already experienced one great event in the year 1993 in receiving its new head of staff, Leslie Holmes, who was installed on April 18. A second such event took place in June with the long-anticipated Billy Graham Crusade.

The whole congregation and its leaders entered enthusiastically into the work of the Crusade and First Church, along with Trinity Cathedral, her Episcopalian neighbor, became a focus for preparation. A series of evangelistic services was planned by the Billy Graham Association with sessions held in Trinity on Monday and Wednesday and in First Church on Tuesday and Thursday, featuring John Guest and Leslie Holmes as speakers. This was very fitting for the new minister of First Church who already had close ties with the Billy Graham organization. Many First Church members participated in the Crusade as volunteers—as office workers, ushers, choir members, and on follow-up teams.

Our Lord said that the gates of Hell would not prevail against His Church and that is gloriously true. As Christians we have always to realize that Christianity appears to be one generation away from extinction if today's youth are not won to become tomorrow's leaders. That is the task of today's Church under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. That is what revival is all about. Tom Maniaci, First Church's Youth Director, further adds:

There is no better way to develop tomorrow's leaders than involvement in hands-on ministry today. The Billy Graham Crusade offers such an opportunity. Our teens' involvement in Operation Andrew develops their prayer lives and as the Holy Spirit draws other teenagers to Christ, our teens have the opportunity to become involved in the Christian nurturing of their friends.

In this work in a multitude of ways the ministers, leaders, membership and even the children were deeply involved in advancing the boundaries of Christ's Kingdom

through the agency of the Crusade. As a result, lives were committed and renewals of faith professed so that the impact of the Crusade on the congregation was one of power and rededication.

Bob Phelps and Cheryl Fu worked for deeper spiritual commitment of college students in the Coalition for Christian Outreach. Held about this time was the Jubilee Conference designed to bring young adults of college age together to discover the "jubilation" of knowing Jesus Christ.

Mrs. Betty Chapman began serving First Church as receptionist and then secretary to the Associate Ministers. Betty now serves as Dr. Holmes' personal secretary with a most efficient and friendly spirit.

The phone system was updated by installing a voice mail system. Each church staff member and Session committee chairperson was assigned an extension/mailbox number which enables communication with church personnel to be more effective even after office hours.

Others returned during the early years of the new pastorate. Gordon Ferm, who had served under Dr. Lamont's ministry in the sixties, returned as administrator under Dr. Holmes. The Reverend Harry Coleman, who grew up in First Church's Sunday School and who became a member in 1933, also returned. As a youth he served as chauffeur to Dr. Macartney and later became a camp counselor. Harry was ordained in 1947. He retired from active duty as minister of Central Presbyterian Church, Tarentum and joined the church of his childhood and youth as minister of visitation.

Another former staff member, Dr. Douglas Dunderdale (assistant in First Church 1954-1958), Executive Director of "Pittsburgh 2000," (an organization formed to face major problems of the city) also "came home" when "Pittsburgh 2000" became housed in First Church offices.

These additions were to be a great blessing to the congregation in the coming years.

On May 30, 1993, at the invitation of the new minister, Dr. Lamont returned to First Church to preach on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination. Later, on Sunday, September 26 of the same year, Dr. Huffman returned from St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Newport Beach, California, to preach in First Church and renew friendships. A happy circumstance of the appointment of Dr. Holmes was the rapport which he quickly established with former ministers of the congregation.

The congregation was deeply shocked by the death of their former beloved pastor Dr. Bruce Wheeler Thielemann on January 6, 1994. A memorial service was held in his honor. As a tribute to Dr. Thielemann's nine years of ministry and scholarly preaching, the doors of the church library were later refurbished. The upper wooden panels of the doors were replaced with leaded glass panels which match the leaded glass transoms that were already above the doors. This project was financed by special,

designated gifts. The work was done by the Phillips Stained Glass Company of Washington, Pennsylvania.

The June 1997 issue of FPC News announced that The East Liberty Family Health Care Center was going to build a satellite facility in the Lincoln-Lemington community of Pittsburgh for mission and ministry in memory of Dr. Thielemann. This facility would be a whole-person health care service embracing dental care, addiction counseling, recovery and patient/parent education. The Family Health Care Center in East Liberty had originally been launched as a non-profit ministry by the Eastminster Presbyterian congregation and enthusiastically supported by Bruce Thielemann and the First Church congregation. The new Center would be called the Rev. Dr. Bruce Wheeler Thielemann Center for Whole-Person Health Care.

During recent years the library has become a valuable institution in the congregational life. This is largely as a result of the painstaking and devoted years of work by Miss Mary Jane Kann, formerly one of the staff of the Pittsburgh Seminary library. She volunteered her professional gifts [of service] to the church and became its honorary librarian.

The Easter Sunrise Service on April 3, 1994, was of a novel nature. The invitation was "Come As You Are In Your Car." The service was broadcast live to the cars from First Church's outdoor Geneva pulpit; since parking was limited, folding chairs were also provided outside in front of the church. A breakfast then followed this early Sunrise Service.

An announcement was made in the 1994 Spring edition of The Ligonier Gazette regarding the renaming of the lodge at the camp. At the time of its construction Dr. Lamont resisted all efforts to give it the name "Lamont Lodge." Now, Dr. Holmes, the Session, boards, and congregation insisted on rededicating the building in honor of Dr. Robert J. Lamont. And by the name "Lamont Lodge" it is known today. The ceremony was set for May 29, and Dr. and Mrs. Lamont were invited to join in the celebration. This proved to be a most joyous occasion for all.

The Ligonier Gazette in the same quarterly edition announced through its director of operations, Al Nauck, that the Lamont Lodge basement area was being renovated, three older cabins converted into a summer staff residence and, most important of all, a climbing tower 46 to 48 feet high with 4 by 6 inch beams slatted with 3/4 inch treated plyboard for the climbing surface was installed. The tower was topped by a roofed working platform for observation and the storage of safety equipment. It was also stated that a campaign to raise \$450,000 had just been completed.

In the same period Dr. Holmes began to consider the question of a Tuesday Noon Service. He had been contacted by many people, full of praise for its memory, and had heard stories of men whose lives had been changed for Christ by its ministry. He decided that simply to call the program the "Tuesday Noon" would be perceived as an attempt to resurrect a good program which might have outlived its time.

What we are about here is not the resurrecting of what used to be, as much as meeting the spiritual needs of our city's people in a great new day. For that reason I want to convey the idea that the message is the same, but that the times are changing. The best way to honor our glorious heritage is to stand on its shoulders and build for the future.

Dr. Holmes, however, noted that there was a continuing market value to the words "Tuesday Noon" in the downtown business community. Eventually Dr. Holmes decided that there would be only two significant differences. The emphasis would be on praise and a brief, encouraging message by the minister. Pastors should know that the hoped-for result would be that their people who attended should be, as a result, better members of their home churches because they came to a Pittsburgh praise service on Tuesday Noon. The emphasis would be on "lifting up Christ and building up people." As in Dr. Lamont's day the Tuesday Noon Service would be an absolute priority on the minister's personal schedule from October through May each year.

The second change would be that the new program would welcome both men and women to First Church. "In today's society we cannot afford to and should not try to separate the sexes." Eventually this service was to be given the happy title, "Tuesday Noon Boost." It began on February 1, 1994, 12:25 to 12:50 P.M., with good and increasing attendance week by week. It now begins in September and ends in June.

Specific mission to the men of the congregation, however, was not neglected. An organization called "Promise Keepers" was founded in 1990 by Colorado University's head football coach, Bill McCartney. Bill's vision to fill Colorado University's Folsom Field with fifty thousand men spread to other cities, including Pittsburgh where over five hundred men attended a breakfast on Saturday, February 19, 1994. This organization was soon playing a significant part in the lives of First Church men by its aim of covenanting men to be keepers of their promise in devotion to Christ and to reflect that devotion in being promise keepers in marriage, family life, business and all areas of living.

The year 1994 proved to be another important year in the history of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. In May Dr. Holmes launched a new program called "A Bright New Day for First Church." It was now close to one hundred years since the magnificent new cathedral-like church was built at the beginning of Dr. Maitland Alexander's ministry and dedicated on Sunday April 16, 1905. The hundredth anniversary of its dedication would take place in about ten years. During the previous ninety years the pollution and acids of industrialized waste had intensified, especially during two world wars. These took their toll on the structure and fabric of the building.

Dr. Lamont, during the writer's ministry in First Church, had noted as he stood in the pulpit that there was slight displacement of the central beams. He arranged a program to strengthen and adjust them. He also expressed dismay at the black incrustation of the interior stone. As previously stated, with the aid of a generous gift from an anonymous Tuesday Nooner, the stone was stripped of its dangerous acids and cleaned. He arranged an exterior survey and was told that the outside fabric, especially the delicate pinnacles and ornamental spires, were beginning to perish. The report of the

architects was that in the then state of technology nothing much could be done. Now, inquiry was made and it was learned that, even after a nearly quarter of a century of further decay, improved techniques could make possible a first-class repair and maintenance job.

Hence there came about, after much study and prayer, the "Bright New Day" Campaign. Instituting the program Dr. Holmes declared, "Deferred maintenance, new equipment, remodeling and new program resources and opportunities require financial as well as human support." It was estimated that the program would require two million dollars and a program of renewal was set out explicitly in a thirteen-page brochure.

First Church was fortunate in having at this time among its staff and laity a number of good fund-raisers. The May 1994 issue of FPC News announced that Mr. Lawrence M. Weber had been appointed by the Session to serve as the General Chair of the two-million dollar financial campaign. Larry and his wife, Sally, had been members of First Church since October 1986. He had, in fact, chaired the pastoral search committee which proposed Dr. Holmes as pastor of First Church. He was currently Vice-Chancellor for Institutional Advancement at the University of Pittsburgh.

James J. Bowman, Attorney, McKinley, Bowman and Bowman, and long-time and highly respected elder of First Church, became the Leadership Gifts Chair.

Another dedicated layman became a major figure of the operation as Major Gifts Chair in the person of Trustee President Robert Fletcher, a retired Senior Vice President of Mellon Bank and consultant of various banks around the country. In January 1995 he became Interim Director of Operations of First Church, working three days a week.

The campaign involved pledges extending over a three- to five-year period with donors giving on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual basis.

The June 1994 issue of FPC News stated that, before appeals to the congregation were made, three individuals had pledged gifts of \$100,000 each toward the campaign goal of \$2,000,000. Overall, \$582,000 was pledged as of May 1995 and, with the help of dedicated leadership and consecrated purpose, the total amount pledged by November 1995 was \$954,000.

It was planned that the money raised for the church should be tithed and the resultant amount given to God's work for others in the city. This sum was donated to Breachmenders, the East Liberty Family Health Care Center, the Light of Life Mission on the North Side, and the Pittsburgh Recovery Center (rehabilitation from drugs and alcohol), founded by James Milhalke, a First Church member.

A glance at a contemporary photograph of the church building reveals a crumbling of exterior stonework and acid decay, especially on the towers and at the entrance of Sixth Avenue. These badly damaged areas would be restored.

Again and again flooding had occurred during recent years, especially in the basement. A factor in this problem was poor gutters and drainage from the roof. In this regard, perhaps the worst damage to the property occurred over the years on the walkway between the church and Trinity Cathedral. Even in good weather this was a hazard to members with its protruding ridges and cracks. In very wet weather the water often simply ran from roof gutters and paving through the openings and cracks down into the basement. Many years ago, one day after a bad rainstorm, the writer was shocked to find a church member drying out the church's enormous deed on a table in the basement. The deed was given nearly two centuries before by the Penn family to First Church. In snow and frost the ruptured concrete path was a menace to those who tried to use it.

The October 1995 issue of FPC News announced that Phase I of the renovation plan was already under way but the results were not as yet very visible. Damaging roof drainage had been corrected by piping replacement and repair beginning at the top of the roof and running down to storm sewers below the space between First Church and the 300 Sixth Avenue Building. This condition will be checked on the Trinity side of the church as part of the major work to be accomplished there.

Phase I also involved replacing the front steps and railings, and all concrete surrounding the building; landscaping planters were installed at the front and on the Trinity side, turning that dangerous area into a pleasant plaza; exterior and interior doors refinished and reconstructed where necessary; waterproofing to protect doors from the weather was undertaken.

This work was to begin no later than the second week in October so that walking along the plaza on the Trinity side would be made safe before the really bad weather came in winter. It was agreed by the contractor, architect, and members of the operation and property committee that forecasts for a mild winter indicated that there would be plenty of time to complete the work, but an early severe winter brought the work to a temporary halt.

The plaza work was resumed in the Spring of 1996, along with the replacement of some of the stone steps and installation of all new stainless steel railings; the aesthetics were greatly improved with the landscaping of planted areas surrounding the front and the Trinity side of the Church.

By the end of Fall 1996, all exterior doors and some interior doors had been finished and work had begun in the cafeteria to completely refurbish it and the kitchen. The Oliver Avenue entrance to the cafeteria also was completely restored with new wall treatment and floor covering.

The 24-story office building at Fifth and Wood Streets (formerly the Farmers Bank Building) and several lower-rise buildings were demolished during the Spring and early Summer of 1997, creating a considerable amount of dust and dirt.

The office building demolition was accomplished on May 25, 1997, when it was imploded; the entire building collapsed in about eight to ten seconds without any damage to the church, but not without considerable anxiety prior to the event.

Mr. Jack Loizeaux, the 82-year old founder of the company which brought down the building, gave his testimony at the service that Sunday morning. Both his witnessing and the implosion of the building were extremely dramatic and effective.

The contractor was now ready to close the tunnel entrance from Sixth Avenue and begin an overall renovation which will complete the work to be done in the basement (the Undercroft already having been done several years ago.)**

The Bright New Day Campaign, however, was not just about renovation of the church premises but was in line with Dr. Holmes' aim of glorifying Christ and building up His Church. The program was designed to provide not only a continuation of traditional worship, but to provide a form of worship for the new generation which seemed to respond more favorably to a more contemporary style of service, with newer hymns and congregational participation through the giving of testimonies, reading of scripture and leading in prayer. The service was to be more intimate and the sermon topics of a very practical nature. "The difference would be in the 'how' we worship not in the 'whom' or the 'why.'" The service would begin at 8:30 A.M. with Sunday School at 9:30 A.M. and the traditional service at 10:45 A.M. The congregation was requested to pray not only for the success of the new program but also for revival as never before. Thus on Sunday, October 2, 1995, which was World Wide Communion Sunday, the contemporary service began and included nursery care for infants up to two-and-one-half years of age.

In this event, as had been stated, emphasis was being laid in the especial means of grace: the sacraments, public worship and prayer. A further emphasis was laid on that other means of grace—the reading of God's Word. The congregation was encouraged to make 1995 the Year of the Bible by reading a selected number of Biblical Books that year until the whole of Scripture had been covered, as in Dr. Scovel's day. Excellent help notes for this purpose were published in each issue of FPC News.

At this time the youth program proceeded with great success. The First Church Boys' Club, which had Lewis Crilley as director for twenty years, was joined in November 1994 by the Hill Toppers Boys' Club, directed by Thomas Maniaci. The program of the two groups included basketball, a time of devotions, prayer, and joyful singing to the Lord. A parent of a member of the club told Dr. Holmes that the First Church Boys' Club had saved his son from the streets.

First Church youth carried out missionary work in deed and testimony both in the United States of America and in the wider world itself.

On the morning of August 24, 1992, Hurricane Andrew with winds of 140 and gusts of 200 miles per hour ravaged the Eastern Coast of our country especially in Southern Florida. For three years First Church youth joined others in sending teams to Florida to help rebuild Homestead. On June 23, 1995, a team of very young people embarked on such a mission when twenty of them aged seven to twelve participated with

** Maintenance progress information was generously provided by Mr. Robert L. Fletcher, Interim Director of Operations.

incredible dedication in the five-day project. Youth was being trained at an early age by hands-on experience. In March 1996 arrangements were made for a return by both Senior and Junior Highs to South Dade Methodist Mission Church, a mission enterprise ministering partly to children with an Asian background. A spaghetti dinner and an auction were held which reduced the cost of the trip's participants to \$120 per person.

The wonderful urge for missionary enterprise in First Church became evident when Russia became open to Christian witness. The writer regrets that in this very brief chapter of Dr. Holmes' ministry he can only give short mention of it. If another dozen or so pages could be included in this period, they might contain some of the most exciting reading in the whole volume. Just as the missionary enterprise of First Church in the first half of the twentieth century had concentrated, but certainly not exclusively, on Korea, so now it came about that First Church would probably concentrate its work on the Ukraine. However, a trip to Russia itself was thwarted through unavoidable circumstances. For several years First Church had been involved in supporting Church Planters Training International, a ministry to train young Ukrainian and Russian men and women to share the gospel with non-believers. By November 1995 more than 1,600 church planters, youth leaders and children's teachers had been so trained. By April 1996 a team consisting of Mrs. Nancy Williams, the Reverend Douglas Dunderdale, and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dunbar was organized to fly to Kiev, the capitol of Ukraine, and then to travel southeast by car for four hours to the Kremenchug region on the Dneiper River where they would visit homes, schools and hospitals with a team of church planters. They would then share their faith through interpreters. The writer would urge the reader to obtain copies of the 1996 July/August and September copies of FPC News which contain a journal by Pat Dunbar and makes very exciting reading. It is hoped that this trip may enable First Church in the future to project concentrated mission to the area through conducted witness tours, support groups, etc. It may be that some will find such a mission witness trip more profitable for the Kingdom of our Lord than a projected pleasure trip to Western Europe. Perhaps later in life, when retirement looms large with its very doubtful benefits of little of vital significance to do and too much time to do it in, they may use their God-given training and talents to give some years for Christ's service in Russia and Eastern Europe and to serve for a full- or part-time period as foreign missionaries in the Ukraine, saying like Dr. John B. Nelson, "... you must do something for your fellowman for which you receive no pay." Who knows but that this projected plan of involvement in setting out to win the Ukraine for Christ might produce another Korean miracle.**

On November 20, 1994, at a joint meeting of the Session, trustees, congregation and the corporation a decision was made to adopt a unicameral system of government for First Church, which basically meant that trustees would be ordained and installed to the office of elder.

The television ministry to Pittsburgh and surrounding area continues. It had to be put on temporary hold in May 1995 as the cost was proving prohibitive. However, Dr. Holmes found that it could be more inexpensively financed and it continues today to reach multitudes.

** The Korean Church is now the World's largest Presbyterian Church and one of its greatest missionary churches to other countries.

In assessing the influence of First Church we must take into account its tremendous impact in promoting its evangelical message to other congregations in the area. This thrust came through various agencies of the church. It came through the camp which trained many young ministers, teachers and counselors in the denomination and, indeed, in other denominations. It came through congregational efforts in a social-action program wedded to Gospel witness. It came in the church's work in its Boys' and Girls' Clubs in strengthening racial relationships. It came through the outreach of its television and radio ministry. It came through Tuesday Noon and Tuesday Noon Boost and, indeed, through all the services which the church provided because all were strongly Christ-centered and proclaimed His Kingdom.

In July 1996 Dr. Arthur J. Helin, who had been associate minister for ten years in First Church, announced that he had accepted a call to assume responsibilities as the pastor of the United Presbyterian Church of Northfield, Ohio. He expressed his appreciation for being part of a congregation with such diversity, where both the wealthy and the welfare recipient worship Christ side by side, where old and young, black, white and Asian join in fellowship together, and for the forty-plus volunteers who have made the Walk-In Ministry a success.

In March 1996 Dr. Holmes welcomed the Reverend Douglas A. Dunderdale, assistant minister in First Church from 1954 to 1958, to join the staff ministry team to take part in a variety of pastoral care and teaching responsibilities.

It is noteworthy that the Mothers' Club, which was established in 1900, continues to minister to women of all ages and walks of life on Wednesday afternoon from September to May. Mrs. Bette Tamenne, a gifted organizer, is the club director. Another longstanding group is the Thursday Night Club for Women now led by Miss Ruth McFalls. She had been active within the club for decades and is beloved by its members.

In the Reimaging controversy First Church worked energetically with the other evangelical congregations in the General Assembly, taking a stance of strong opposition by every means in its power. The ministers, boards of the church and congregation rejected all of the convention's pronouncements and rituals which were unChristian.

During the short period of five years Dr. Leslie Holmes has carried out a most industrious and gifted ministry in the face of seemingly insurmountable difficulties. He came to First Church when the fortunes of the congregation were at a very low ebb. As already stated, a two-year gap in 1982 after Dr. Lewis left, followed by another two-year gap in 1990-1992 during Dr. Thielemann's delayed resignation, led to a decline in church membership, attendance and morale. During the last gap the great oratorical and preaching gifts of Dr. Thielemann, undiminished by ailing health, only accentuated the fact that he would soon be leaving and there was complete uncertainty in the minds of the public as to who would take his place. Few wished to join under such circumstances.

As also already stated, an even more obvious obstacle to renewal was the state of the church's century-old fabric—its gloomy surface encrusted by dark chemicals did

nothing to invite membership—which contrasted with the clean, bright atmosphere of late Twentieth Century Renaissance Pittsburgh.

It has often been said that history repeats itself. It certainly has done so for over three centuries in the case of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. A very similar situation existed at the end of the eighteenth century when the log-cabin church was showing distressingly visible signs of decay, and Mr. Steele was courageously trying to face the almost impossible situation of building a new one of brick. Again at the end of the nineteenth century when Dr. Breed took seriously ill and had to resign, the church buildings on Wood Street were falling into disrepair. In each case God provided a gifted preacher, evangelist and organizer to address the crisis; in the first instance, Dr. Herron and in the second, Dr. Alexander. The church came out of both these crises invigorated and renewed as never before.

Now, at the end of the twentieth century history repeats itself for the third time as First Church enters a new century. God has again given the congregation a minister gifted as preacher and evangelist and organizer with God-given talents and graces to courageously meet the challenge.

This, Dr. Holmes has done in spite of the terrible strain imposed on Barbara and himself by the loss of three beloved parents in less than 22 months in their native country and the constant journeyings back and forward to Ireland for sicknesses, deaths, funerals and mournings. In these sorrows and the emotional stress, imposed upon them by the added burdens of administration, Leslie and Barbara have been upheld by the Holy Spirit of the Master they love and the wonderfully loyal leaders and members of the congregation who have given them prayerful support and their unstinted love in Christ.

Meanwhile, the state of the entire facilities of the church is being beautifully restored as already reported by Mr. Robert Fletcher and, even more vital, the evangelical thrust of First Church is witnessing powerfully to the Golden Triangle and the metropolitan area of Greater Pittsburgh and beyond.

By November 1997 twice as many people had joined the congregation than in the whole of the previous year and many of them young couples.

Another exciting thing to happen in First Church in the summer of 1997 was a Vacation Bible School initiated by Mrs. Kelley Kuyat. This was the first such effort in the known history of the congregation. With thirty children registered it was an outstanding success, being led by the youth of the congregation, assisted by their parents. The heart of the Golden Triangle, mostly thronged with adults except at the Christmas season, became the unexpected venue daily for these children.

With David Durkop as Director of Music, the Tuesday Noon Boost was so well attended this spring and early summer that, rather than conclude for the summer at the end of May, by popular request it continued till the end of June. Furthermore, rather than waiting until October to recommence, it resumed on the sixteenth of September.

There are now no less than five vocal choirs and one instrumental group at First Church: a Sanctuary Choir which sings at the 10:45 A.M. service; an Oratorio Choir which sings two oratorios each year; a Children's Choir which sings once a month at the 10:45 A.M. service; a Worship Team Choir which sings at the 8:30 A.M. Contemporary Service on Sunday; and the Tuesday Noon Boosters (men and women) which sings contemporary and gospel music at Tuesday Noon Boost at 12:25 P.M. on Tuesday.

In 1997 a new member was received into the staff in the person of Miss Amy Serridge in cooperation with the Coalition for Christian Outreach. Her task is to minister to the college-age young people and young adults and especially to the more than a dozen colleges of higher learning and advanced training in the Golden Triangle.

The congregation now has, what Drs. Lamont, Huffman, Lewis and doubtless Dr. Thielemann coveted for its ministry, a man who is a trained counselor with an earned doctorate in spiritual counseling.

To ensure that First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh enters the new century with its mission program and priorities clearly understood and stated, Dr. Holmes tells us:

In late 1996 the elders of the historic First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh met together at our Ligonier Camp and Conference Center. We gathered to pray together and to design a new mission statement that would be our standard for doing Christ's work into the twenty-first century. It was one of the most amazing retreats I have attended in over twenty-five years of pastoral ministry. God's Spirit met us with power and the result was the mission statement referred to throughout this book.

The mission statement of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh declares that, as in Hebrews 13:8, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever, and that we the people of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh stand steadfastly for:

Our Foundation: The Bible, God's Word;

Our Lord: Jesus Christ, God's only Son;

Our Highest Priority: To proclaim Christ's cross and resurrection and demonstrate His love;

Our Highest Goal: That all may know the saving power of the gospel and live a life worthy of Christ's calling;

Our Strength: the Holy Spirit.

To expound the statement, Dr. Holmes has written the book** entitled *The Relentless Pursuit of Excellence for Christ*. The book has just been published at the

** *The Relentless Pursuit of Excellence for Christ*, by Robert Leslie Holmes, published 1997, printed in the United States of America by Morris Publishing, 3212 E. Hwy 30, Kearney, NE 68847.

beginning of November 1997. In preparing these messages for publication, he has two goals in mind: "First, that they might serve as an inspiring resource for our church family and new members . . . and, second, that they might be a source of encouragement for ordinary people who in their own lives desire to pursue excellence for Him who loved us all the way to Calvary."

One of the finest chapters is Chapter Four headed "To Proclaim Christ's Cross." Dr. Holmes effectively quotes George MacLeod founder of the Iona Community who said:

I simply argue that the cross be raised again at the center of the market place as well as on the steeple of the church, I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles; But on a cross between two thieves on a town garbage heap . . . Because that is where He died, And that is what He died about . . .

Dr. Holmes states that indeed that is exactly where First Church is and what her people are about. So her business goes on preaching the message of the Cross with a high degree of urgency in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh.

It should be hard for anyone who belongs to Christ on reading this chapter not to have a holy hunger to read on, and it should be even harder for anyone who does not know Him to resist an inward compulsion to take time to pursue the rest of the book.

In the second-to-last chapter he stresses that the Christian is challenged to a life worthy of Christ's calling, a task far beyond human strength, but which with the help of the Holy Spirit of Jesus he can begin on a lifelong work right now. Though it will never be perfectly completed in this world, we will work at it till the Master calls us to Himself for its final touch of His amazing grace.

Dr. Holmes quotes a fine story, to illustrate, "of an aged man, an accomplished artist, who was applying the finishing touches to a bronze sculpture. Day after day he kept filing, scraping and polishing every surface of his masterpiece. 'When will it be done?' an observer asked him. 'Never,' the grand old artist replied. 'I just keep on improving it until they come to take it away.' "

True to his concern to base his teaching solidly on God's Word and not on the doubtful foundations of human wisdom, he backs his teaching with Scripture readings and references, beginning each chapter with a passage from God's Word.

Another new book by Robert Leslie Holmes, which was to be released in mid-November, is *Don't Try To Stop on A Mountaintop*. It is a collection of inspirational essays and sermons with an emphasis on living the Christian faith in everyday circumstances.

** From *The Relentless Pursuit of Excellence For Christ*, p. 40.

The writer, on November 11, 1997, has not been able to obtain this work and, although he would like to delay and linger till it comes, he must take the advice suggested in Dr. Holmes' title and not "linger long on the mountaintop" to enjoy its challenge.

Sunday, December 14, 1997, was a special day in the mission of First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. At the close of the 10:45 A.M. service, the ministers and members of the congregation gathered outside in front of the church. From the Geneva pulpit a presentation was made, to Hosanna Industries of Bakerstown, Pennsylvania, of three pieces of heavy equipment which Hosanna workers will use as they continue to repair and build homes for those who can not afford them. The organization also offers disaster relief and members have traveled to other states to help with the devastation from flooding, hurricanes and even a church fire due to arson. In the past, Hosanna had to borrow the equipment for this work.

When members of the Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society of First Church learned of the work done by Hosanna Industries, they, too, went to work! With money from a legacy left by a deceased member—Miss Helen Fawcett—a unloader excavator, with backhoe, forklift and bucket, was purchased for \$35,000. This bright yellow piece of equipment was driven down a roped-off Sixth Avenue and parked in front of the church. In turn, a service of thanksgiving and blessing was held with words of appreciation and Bible readings by the Reverend Donn Ed (founder of Hosanna Industries); Betty Kennedy, treasurer of the Women's Home and Foreign Missionary Society, and First Church ministers, Dr. Leslie Holmes and Dr. Douglas Dunderdale.

It was a joyous occasion and one that a loving, life-long Christian like Helen Fawcett had to be smiling down on.

So now, as the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh prepares for the third time in her history to enter a new century and for the first time a new millennium, she does so with Dr. Leslie Holmes' well-chosen motto: "Lifting up Christ and Building up People."

At this novel moment in the multiplying years of First Church's long history, the minister, the staff, the boards of the church, and the members of the congregation urge all to pray as never before the prayer that Dr. Herron prayed again and again before the earliest First Church revival ". . . O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known; in wrath remember mercy." (Habakkuk 3:2) It is only through our Lord Himself that "the church that was born again" will be the church that continues to be born again. Born in revival, the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh's God-given destiny seems to be in continuing revival through the energizing Spirit of her Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

** The word "thysself" appears to be understood here, a deep knowledge of and face-to-face meeting with God is the only road to revival.

EPILOGUE

The writer of this history and of the previous one published in 1973 has been privileged to spend a joyous thirty-seven years in observing, sharing in, and recording some of his Master's story. Now, well over eighty-one years of age, he thanks God and prays that for a time he may continue to observe the people of God sharing the love of the Lord Jesus Christ with the millions of people crowded into a vast metropolitan area.

He also prays that as he reaches the cut-off date for this particular period of Gospel history, November 11, 1997, the 225th anniversary for which it is written may be a very productive and happy one for the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. As he closes this second volume may he do so with a true story told for emphasis in the first person:

I once was traveling from Scotland to New York City via Icelandic Airlines when the maintenance staff discovered in Glasgow that the plane needed repair. The officials told me they could give me accommodation for the night in St. Enoch's Hotel if I would share a bedroom with a Mr. Gilchrist. I said my prayers at my bedside and afterwards Mr. Gilchrist asked me my profession. I said, "A Presbyterian minister from Northern Ireland." "That's strange," was his reply, "my ancestors must have been of the same profession and must have been from Northern Ireland also, because my name is Gilchrist." "Why would that be?" I said. "Well," he replied, "when St. Columba left Ulster and came to Iona to try to evangelize Scotland he had a large group of laymen with him of all trades. These they had given up to be evangelists. They also surrendered their surnames and just called themselves the 'Gillies of Christ'." A "Gillie" in Gaelic meant a slave or servant. The country rapidly came under the Gospel, and the main work was nearly finished, so the Gillies of Christ decided to leave that work to younger and stronger men and go back to their trades. "But what of the names we formerly used" they asked each other. "Will we now call ourselves by them again?" "No," they said, "We are and will continue to be, servants of Christ, the Gilchrists."

In fact, every Christian is a "Gilchrist" or slave of Jesus Christ. That was the dream of Jonathan Plumer, founder of First Church, and its first born-again Christian. It is the dream of her ministers, leaders and members today that all God's people—men and women, youths and young women, boys and girls—might be the "Gillies" or servant-friends of Jesus Christ, his witnesses to the City of Pittsburgh. If the members of the congregation pray for revival and live as loving, witnessing servants of Christ, then indeed *The Church That Was Twice Born* and *The Church That Kept on Being Born Again* will live up to its destiny of continuous rebirth for all the years that may lie ahead till our Dear Lord Jesus comes.

"Even So, Come, Lord Jesus."