

# Centennial History of First Congregational Church 1865-1965

by  
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# Foreword

THE OFFICIAL BIRTH of the First Congregational Church in Washington, D.C., occurred on November 15, 1865, when one hundred and four persons who three days earlier had covenanted together to be a Church stood before a Congregational Council and were recognized as a Congregational Church. Some ninety-seven years later, in the fall of 1962, the Church Council of the First Congregational United Church of Christ determined that the Church's one hundredth anniversary should be suitably observed, and appointed a Centennial Committee to provide a program of events appropriate to so significant an occasion.

This history of the one hundred years of the life of this church is a most important part of the Centennial observance. We who today are members of this church admit that we may not be entirely objective in our appraisal of the importance of the Christian Witness of this particular church; but we believe that all who read this history will agree that there have been in the experience of this church numerous occasions of unusual interest and significance. This church has, from birth, aggressively proclaimed equal rights of all races in a frequently hostile atmosphere; members of this church conceived the idea and promoted the creation of a university open to all people, which has become Howard University; from this church went a committee to President Andrew Johnson with a petition that he establish a day of Thanksgiving which he did; this church, because its building housed for many years the largest auditorium in Washington, has been host to many of Washington's important cultural occasions; this church, in the nineteen fifties, faced the problems of rebuilding and relocating and, at a time when many inner city churches were moving to the suburbs, proclaimed its conviction that its ministry must continue as an inner city ministry, and built a new, more functionally adequate, building on its original site in the heart of Washington.

To provide the details of this century of service the Church is fortunate to have a leading archivist as its centennial historian. Everett O. Alldredge has been with the Federal Government since 1940, mostly with the National Archives. He has been president of the Society of American Archivists and has received his agency's Distinguished Service Award.

The Centennial Committee expresses its profound gratitude to this brilliant and dedicated member for giving of his time and talent to the writing of this fascinating story of the first one hundred years of First Congregational Church, Washington, D. C. It is with pride that we present it to the Church.

E. DONALD PRESTON  
Chairman Centennial Committee

# I Beginnings

IN 1861 THE CITY OF WASHINGTON had fifty-six churches and 90,000 inhabitants, of whom about 2,000 were federal employees. It was a southern city, hostile to Congregationalism which was identified with northern abolitionism. Prior to the Civil War two attempts had been made to establish a Congregational church in the city, and each had eventually failed because of local antagonism.

The election of Abraham Lincoln as President representing a new political party, particularly strong in New England and the Northwest, brought into Washington a sizable group of persons loyal to the new party and its principles. In addition, the Federal Government grew much larger as the Civil War lengthened and war-time logistics made its need manifest. Washington by 1865 had grown to a city of 150,000, of whom 6,000 were federal employees, but had added only four new churches.

The presence of so many New Englanders in Washington without their traditional Congregational church to attend seemed intolerable to a small group of persons who were determined to remedy the situation. From all accounts it took several years for the members of this group to meet one another, to grow to a size large enough to consider action, to find some leadership, and to decide they were not temporary sojourners in the nation's capital.

By the beginning of 1865 the leadership had gradually emerged in the persons of Llewellyn Deane, Daniel L. Eaton, Henry A. Brewster, Rev. Silas B. Hodges, Rev. Benjamin F. Morris, Rev. Charles H. Bliss, William F. Bascom, Rev. Ebenezer W. Robinson, William Wheeler, William R. Hooper, and Rev. Danforth B. Nichols. The large number of ministers, mostly retired, was due to the war-time work of the U. S. Christian Commission, headquartered in Washington.

The U. S. Christian Commission was formed in 1861 to provide to the armies and navies comforts and supplies not furnished by the Federal Government. It received its support primarily from the churches. During the four years of the Civil War it collected more than \$2,500,000 in cash, besides immense quantities of stores and clothing. Needless to say, it was popular with the troops.

William Hooper was an executive in the Office of the Sixth Auditor (forerunner to the present General Accounting Office). The Rev. Benjamin Morris was an employee of the Post Office Department rather than the Christian Commission. Llewellyn Deane was active in the real estate business, Henry Brewster in the insurance business, and William Wheeler was an official at the U. S. Patent Office.

These men were true leaders. They did not want to "think small" occupy a small rented building, under a second-rate minister, with a minimal missionary program, and unrelated to the pressing events of the day. Yet "thinking big" involved raising much more money than they could see in their own midst. Were they stymied?

As the Civil War drew to a close, elements within the national Congregational body felt a challenge to establish some Congregational churches in the freed areas. Petitions from existing churches led to convening a National Council in Boston on June 14, 1865. One of the petitions read:

"Whereas, by the present war, the structure of society and of ecclesiastical organization is being dissolved or greatly changed, and the shackles are being struck from millions of slaves, and whereas, vast regions and populations are being opened to the free thought, free speech, and free missions; and whereas, ideas and emigration from the Free States are likely to follow the triumph of the Union cause southward; therefore, resolved that it is the duty of the Congregational Churches of the United States, to inquire what is their obligation, in this vast and solemn crisis, such as comes only once in the ages, and what new efforts, measures, and policies, they may owe to this condition of affairs, this new genesis of nations."

Governor William Alfred Buckingham of Connecticut was designated to preside at the Council.

Word of the National Council gave the Washington group hope that here was the medium through which they might move on the scale they wished. A petition on the need and prospects of a Congregational Church in Washington was speedily prepared in early May by the Rev. E. W. Robinson and his colleagues, signed by the sixty persons for whom Llewellyn Deane had cards, and sent to the presiding officer of the Council.

Additionally, a committee, composed of W. R. Hooper and the Rev. B. F. Morris, was dispatched to the Council to plead the Washington cause. Their cause met with favor. The Council passed the following resolution:

*"Resolved*, That the trustees of the American Congregational Union be advised and requested to take into consideration the importance of a well sustained Congregational Church in the city of Washington, and, having ascertained what facilities there are for the establishment of such a church, and what aid will be necessary, to institute arrangements, according to their best judgment and discretion, for building or purchasing a suitable edifice in the national Capital in which a Congregational Church may maintain the preaching of the Gospel and the public worship of God."

The Committee which had attended the Council at Boston reported back the results of their trip on August 17, at which time the following resolution was adopted by the Washington group:

*"Resolved*, That, in our opinion, measures should now be attempted to inaugurate a Congregational Church and Society in Washington."

For a few weeks after the August 17 meeting the group continued to meet informally, securing as

the speaker whatever minister might be in the city for a Christian Commission meeting. The Rev. Charles Bliss told the group that Dr. Charles B. Boynton, a leading Congregational clergyman, had just accepted a position at the Naval Academy with his headquarters in Washington. His appointment was to write a history of the Navy during the war. Bliss knew Boynton and, with Hooper and Nathaniel A. Robbins, interviewed him.

Dr. Charles Brandon Boynton was born in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, in 1806. He entered Williams College in the class of 1827, but in his senior year left on account of ill health. He read law and was elected to the Massachusetts Legislature. In 1840 he was ordained by the Columbia Presbytery. He afterwards preached at Housatonic, Massachusetts, Lansingburg, New York, and the Vine Street Congregational Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. In the last named place he gained the reputation of being an eloquent preacher and a strong anti-slavery man. His book, *English and French Neutrality and the Anglo-French Alliance, in Their Relations to the United States and Russia*, published in 1864, had brought him to the attention of the Naval Academy officials seeking a historian.

When interviewed by Bliss *et al*, Dr. Boynton agreed to be the pastor of the new church, when formed, at a salary of \$1,800 per year. This made possible the first public worship service, well advertised by Mr. Hooper, to be held on September 17, 1865, at the small Unitarian Church, corner 6th and D Streets, with Dr. Boynton preaching. At this service the following paper was distributed as the basis and objects of the Church and Society:

"1. The doctrines of its faith, Scriptural, and such as are held in substance by all Evangelical denominations of our common Christianity.

"2. Its ecclesiastical polity, Congregational and self-governing, after the pattern of the Bible and the genius of our republican institutions, and yet in practical fellowship for counsel and cooperation, with orthodox Congregational churches throughout the land, and in interchanges of Christian salutations with other denominations who hold to the 'truth as it is in Jesus, who is head over all things to the church.

"3. Its doctrine, in their expositions and applications, designed to save the soul, to meet the demands of humanity, and the openings of Providence in this new era of our nation's history.

"4. The law of God, being the only true and solid foundation for the establishment and stability of civil government and for the reconstruction and regeneration of civil States that may need the wisdom and application of true statesmanship, one leading aim of this Christian organization in its relations to the wants of civil Society, will be to unfold and apply the principles of true Christianity to the exigencies and wants of our civil government and political policies, and thus to give moral support to the administration of law, and to demonstrate the wisdom and power of that sublime truth of the Scripture, and confirmed by all history, that 'righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

"5. Intellectual culture and social fellowship being the genius and results of a spiritual Christianity and productive of many blessings, the Church and Society design to provide ample means to attain these ends.

"6. In laboring for these results, the Church and Society, in the true spirit of Christianity and of Christian patriotism and philanthropy, will cordially co-operate with all Christian Churches and patriotic and benevolent associations.

"7. Taking our stand on this basis of Christian faith and fellowship, invoking the blessing of Almighty God, inviting the sympathy and prayers of all (Christians and patriots, and the practical co-operation of the friends of Congregationalism in this city and throughout the land, as well as of the citizens of Washington, members of the Government, and transient sojourners, we hope to build up a Christian Church and Society which will promote the glory of our common Redeemer, contribute largely to the loyalty, patriotism and prosperity of our now doubly-endearred country, and to the highest and best interest of the capital of our Christian Republic."

Another gathering pointing towards a permanent church was held at the Unitarian Church on October 11, with the Rev. E. W. Robinson in the chair. Fifty-six persons agreed to join the new "communion of saints." Some lengthy discussion ensued on a name, with a choice from thirteen alternatives (Pioneer, Plymouth, National, First, etc.) but First Congregational Church finally prevailed. At this meeting, too, a committee composed of Dr. Boynton, Rev. Morris, Rev. Robinson, Henry Brewster, and William Russell was chosen to prepare Articles of Faith. Another committee was named to arrange for calling a Council to recognize the church. This committee consisted of Llewellyn Deane, Rev. Hodges, W. R. Hooper, William Wheeler, and Leonard Watson.

At a meeting on October 21, Dr. Boynton was formally called to the pastorate, a call he accepted on the spot.

On October 23 a committee of eighteen members was allowed to visit the President of the United States, and to present a resolution asking him to appoint a day of national thanksgiving "for the suppression of the rebellion, the destruction of slavery, and the restoration of peace within all our borders." The committee, with Benjamin Morris as its spokesman, told the President that: *"In common with the churches of this city and through the land, it is the aim of the First Congregational Church of Washington, through the benign doctrines and influences of Christianity, to add moral strength to the Government, and to diffuse those Christian and patriotic principles which constitute the true life and glory of our nation. The doctrinal basis and loyal faith and sentiments on which the Church and Society are planted, are those which laid the foundation of our civil institutions, and which have been incorporated in spirit into all our forms of free government, and given us, as a nation, the political prestige and moral standing we now possess among the nations of the earth."*

The eighteen members of the committee were: Rev. Benjamin F. Morris, Rev. William R. Russell, Rev. Ebenezer W. Robinson, William Wheeler, Walter S. Bailey, Solomon P. Giddings, Charles H. Buxton, Ezra L. Stevens, George H. Williamson, William R. Hooper, Calvin S. Mattoon, Dr. Hiram A. Barber, Henry A. Brewster, Rev. Charles H. Bliss, Llewellyn Deane, Augustus H. Raymond, A. T. Longley, and James B. Johnson. President Andrew Johnson heeded the request and proclaimed a day of thanksgiving.

On Sunday evening, November 12, one hundred and seven persons, whose credentials had been examined by a committee and reported regular, proceeded to form the Church. It was duly organized under the name of the First Congregational Church of Washington, D.C.

On Wednesday morning, November 15, the Council which had been invited, met, being represented by nine churches out of the twenty invited. Included were representatives of Dr. Boynton's former church. Those in attendance were:

Rev. G. L. Walker and Bro. Elbridge Chapman, State Street Church, Portland, Maine.

Deacon Julius A. Palmer, Mount Vernon Church, Boston.

Rev. E. B. Foster, D.D., and Deacon Ed. Southworth, First Congregational Church, West Springfield.

Rev. Joseph P. Thompson, D.D., and Bro. Charles S. Smith, Broadway Tabernacle Church, New York.

Bro. Thomas G. Shearman, Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, New York.

Rev. Joshua Leavitt, D.D., Church of the Pilgrims, Brooklyn, New York.

Rev. Edward Hawes and Bro. Theo. Bliss, Central Church, Philadelphia.

Rev. Edwin Johnson and Deacon P. Morton, First Congregational Church, Baltimore, Maryland.

Rev. Starr H. Nichols and Bro. Milton Glenn, Vine Street Congregational Church, Cincinnati, Ohio.

The Church submitted to the Council the following *Articles of Faith* at the afternoon session:

*First.* We believe that there is only one living and true God; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost three persons in one God equal in power and glory; eternal, self-existent, and unchangeable; infinite in every natural and moral perfection, and the only proper object of religious worship.

*Second.* That the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are given by the inspiration of God, and constitute the only perfect rule of faith and practice.

*Third.* That all mankind, in consequence of the fall, are sinners destitute of holiness, and justly exposed to the penalty of the Divine law.

*Fourth.* That the Lord Jesus Christ has, by his sufferings and death, made an atonement for the whole world, so that whoever will may be saved.

*Fifth.* That regeneration by the Holy Spirit is indispensable to salvation, and that all who are thus regenerated are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

*Sixth.* That none but those who give Scriptural evidence of piety should be admitted to the visible Church.

*Seventh.* That the ordinances of Christ's Church are Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

*Eighth.* That there will be, at the end of the world, a resurrection of the dead and a final judgment; that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

The services for the recognition of the Church were held at the evening session in the presence of a very large audience. Rev. Joshua Leavitt, moderator of the Council, presided while Dr. Joseph Thompson preached the Sermon. Rev. Edward Hawes extended the right hand of fellowship and Rev. G. L. Walker gave the address to the church. To honor Dr. Boynton a silver communion set was presented the new Church by Rev. Nichols in behalf of the Vine Street Congregational Church. The Council concluded its evening deliberations by passing the following preamble and resolution:

"Whereas, A special recommendation was made to the churches by the National Council, at Boston, that a Congregational Church should be organized and sustained at the National Capital:

*Resolved,* That this Council recommend the First Congregational Church of Washington to the Congregational Union and to the Churches for immediate and liberal aid in the erection of a permanent and solid church edifice."

To go back two months, in September 1865 an event occurred which was to be determinant in a number of ways General Oliver Otis Howard was brought into the leadership group of the church by his Bowdoin College chum, Llewellyn Deane.

Oliver Otis Howard was born in Leeds, Maine, on November 8, 1830. He graduated from Bowdoin in 1850, and was commissioned from West Point in 1854. At the military academy he was so well liked that he was asked to stay on as instructor in mathematics. In 1861 he resigned from the regular army, a First Lieutenant in rank, to take command of the 3rd Maine regiment, volunteers, with the rank of Colonel. For gallantry at the first battle of Bull Run he was made Brigadier General. He lost his right arm at Fair Oaks, June 1, 1862, and in two months was back in action at Antietam. He commanded a corps at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. Transferred to the West he was with Grant at Memphis, with Thomas at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge, and commanded the right wing of Sherman's troops on the march from Atlanta to the sea. He was breveted Major General in the regular army for gallant conduct in the Atlanta campaign. Thus at the end of the war he was only 35 years old, a hero who had seen more action than most Union generals.

On the last day of the 39th Congress, March 3, 1865, an act was passed to establish a bureau for the relief of freedmen and refugees. It was among the last statutes approved by Abraham Lincoln. The former slaves could not be left to the mercy of charity, for their number was too large, and their former owners too poor and in no mood for alms-giving for what they considered a wrongful release. The Secretary of War, through the bureau Commissioner, was given considerable

authority to release war surplus and there was much talk of giving each freedman "40 acres of land and a mule."

General Howard was selected by President Lincoln and appointed by President Johnson to be head of this post-war Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands of the War Department. Generally known as the Freedmen's Bureau, it was the most controversial of the Federal agencies. Dedicated to helping the former slaves find a degree of economic independence, it was slated for many failures as well as some successes.

General Howard's appointment was generally applauded. The *National Freedman*, widely subscribed to by churchmen, said:

"We have cause to rejoice at the wisdom which has selected so good and so capable a man as Major General O. O. Howard . . . His known character as a Christian soldier, greatly increases our confidence and esteem."

The General immediately found himself much in demand as a public speaker to explain the aims of his agency and the degree of progress being achieved.

Once firmly connected to First Church, General Howard's services were constantly needed. An early "assignment" was to get the Society chartered by the Congress of the United States, since there was no other incorporating authority for organizations functioning in the District of Columbia. Unfortunately the same assignment was given Henry Brewster, and for awhile there was a mixup. Howard got his special friends Pomeroy (Kansas), Wilson (Massachusetts) and Morrill (Maine) in the Senate; Blaine (Maine), Eliot (Massachusetts), Deming (Connecticut) and Eggleston (Ohio) in the House to agree to support a chartering bill.

On April 6, 1866, Senator Pomeroy introduced Senate Bill 253. On May 2, Senator Morrill reported the bill out without amendment, and it was on its way. On January 31, 1867, President Johnson signed the bill into law. It created Oliver O. Howard, Silas H. Hodges, Daniel L. Eaton, Henry A. Brewster, Charles H. Bliss, Ezra L. Stevens, Benjamin F. Morris, Daniel Tyler, Llewellyn Deane and Calvin S. Mattoon, and their associates, as a body politic and corporate by the name of "The First Congregational Society of Washington," with all the powers incident to corporations and usually enjoyed by them, and such as would be required to enable the Society to sustain religious worship in Washington. The Society was specifically empowered to erect and maintain edifices for that purpose, and parsonages, provided that the amount of the value of real estate should not exceed one hundred thousand dollars. The Society was to be exempt from any taxes to be assessed upon its property, under the authority of Congress or of the District of Columbia or the city or county of Washington.

Pomeroy was a Massachusetts Congregationalist who was so concerned with stopping the spread of slavery in the territories that in 1852 he led a colony of Massachusetts Congregationalists to Kansas. He was probably on the receiving end of some "Beecher Bibles," for he was an admirer of Dr. Henry Ward Beecher, as was also Howard. Pomeroy was a member of the Free-State convention which met in Lawrence, Kansas, in 1859, and it was his work in this convention which

led to his election to the United States Senate in 1861. Pomeroy attended First Church from the beginning, later becoming a member.

Wilson of Massachusetts was one of the fathers of the Freedmen's Bureau, a life-long Congregationalist, who became Vice-President in Grant's administration. Although he never transferred his church membership from Massachusetts, he was a regular attendant at First Church. He was fond of the spirited Howard, and very close to Dr. Rankin, who was at his bedside when he died.

In December 1865, General Howard and Mr. Deane were designated as a committee of two to negotiate a building site. The Methodists offered the corner of Four and one-half and C Streets for \$25,000. The two men, and their colleagues, wanted a more central location. For seventy-five years the Van Ness family, the original owners of the western half of Washington, had been selling at city prices the pieces of their old tobacco plantation. All had been sold but a piece (7 lots) that lay on corner of Tenth and G Streets, N.W. This was decided to be the best available place, and Deane did a superb job of negotiating getting the price down from \$23,000 to \$13,550.

Following the recommendation of the November 1865 National Council, early in 1866 the Congregational Union advanced \$13,550 for the purchase of Van Ness lots 12, 13, 14 and 15, measuring 90 feet, 4 inches. Later in the same year, in the name of the First Congregational Society, Howard purchased the last three available lots, namely 16, 17 and 18, for \$3,387. This provided a total dimension of 158 feet by 100 feet on which to build a "notable church edifice."

In May 1866 the Society issued a brochure carrying this line-up of its officials:

#### OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES OF THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY

Rev. C. B. Boynton, D.D.,  
*Pastor, and Chaplain of the House of Representatives*

*Deacons:* S. H. Hodges, Wm. Wheeler, D. H. Bliss, H. T. White, D. B. Nichols.

*Permanent Business Committee:* Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard, Hon. S. H. Hodges, C. S. Mattoon, L. Deane, Wm. A. Thompson.

*Building Committee:* Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard, Col. D. L. Eaton, Col. E. R. Goodrich, L. Watson, R. H. Stevens, J. B. Hutchinson, C. S. Mattoon.

*Treasurer:* Charles H. Bliss

*General Agent:* Rev. B. F. Morris.

The Building Committee was organized in February 1866. All of its seven members had engineering or construction experience. Their job was to choose an architect and see a church edifice erected. Only two architects submitted plans, and the Committee chose that of Henry

Robinson Searle. At the end of this chapter is a newspaper account of the Searle design, which sounds as if it were written by Searle. The building plan was notable for the large gallery unsupported by pillars which gave everyone in the auditorium an unobstructed view of the platform. In subsequent chapters changes to the Searle plan will be discussed as of the time they took place.

Excavation on the building began on June 23, 1866. On October 4 the cornerstone laying ceremony was held, with General Howard delivering the main address. He chose to relate the history of the Church to that point, relying heavily on Mr. Hooper's account for the pre-1860 attempts at founding a Congregational church.

A large Council was convened in Calvary Baptist Church in October, 1866, to install the new pastor, Dr. Charles B. Boynton. Rev. J. C. Holbrook was moderator, the sermon was preached by Rev. Samuel Wolcott, and the right hand of fellowship given by Dr. Byron Sunderland, who had long wanted to welcome a well-known anti-slavery minister into a Washington pulpit.

Late in 1865 the Unitarian Church at 6th and D Streets, N.W., in which the First Church services were being held, proved too small. Metzert Hall, at 923-925 Pennsylvania Avenue, was then obtained for meetings. This, too, by late 1866 was found to be too small. A building on Fifth Street, between D and E, used as the Law School of Columbia College during the week, was next engaged because of its sizable auditorium. Even this was not large enough.

As the winter of 1865 approached, Generals Balloch and Howard canvassed the members of the House of Representatives they knew and stated to them that the Congregationalists had never been represented in its list of chaplains. They asked their friends to arrange for Dr. Boynton to be chosen as House Chaplain. The House graciously assented and Dr. Boynton was duly elected. Later the two generals addressed themselves to Hon. Schuyler Colfax, Speaker of the House, and told him how helpful it would be if the great hall could be had as a regular place of worship on Sundays. Mr. Colfax granted this request, and from December 1865 to November 1867 periodic services were held, and then beginning December 8, 1867 to May 5, 1868, morning worship was regularly held in the hall of the House of Representatives. Dr. Boynton's eloquence and the character of the place of meeting drew great crowds. An audience of nearly 2,000 assembled every Sabbath for the regular services in this large hall. Such an audience was in itself an inspiration. This audience was said to be the largest Protestant Sabbath audience then in the United States.

Dr. Boynton loved preaching in the House of Representatives' hall. One of the points of conflict between him and a large element in First Church, which will be described later, was his desire to delay holding services in the Tenth and G edifice when it was completed, so that his meetings could continue in the House chamber.

The first service in the new building was Sunday, May 5, 1868, a gala occasion, although the contractor still did not have all his work done. Architect Searle was greatly flattered by the number of other architects who came from other cities in the following weeks to see the lighting and ventilating system, to check on acoustics, and admire the gallery.

The financing of the new church building is a story within itself. The Permanent Business Committee, already mentioned, was essentially a fund-raising group. When the Congressional charter was received January 31, 1867, the committee's name was changed to the Board of Trustees. The Committee initially hoped that the American Congregational Union, as a result of the Boston National Council in 1865, would be able to give considerable help. The national drive for funds for the Union in 1865 produced only half the amount requested. Therefore, the Rev. Isaac Langworthy, of the Union, told Benjamin Morris that the Union could give First Church only \$13,550.

This was a bitter disappointment because by this time the Building Committee had already adopted the Searle design. When working out the cost of this design in March 1866, the Building Committee and the architect had estimated the charges would be \$90,775, including the architect's fee, an organ, the tower spire, a great bell, and various embellishments.

When the church was turned over to the Society by the contractor on May 12, 1868, the cost was already \$103,182, and the organ, tower spire, bell, and most embellishments had been deferred to a later date. Since the deferred items represented about \$16,000 of the original \$90,775 estimate, it meant that a \$74,775 estimate had become a \$103,182 reality. Part of the increase was due to the \$3,000 reconstruction of the west wall, blown down by a tornado at 3 a.m., July 2, 1867. Mostly it was due to the high cost of the brick work.

The Permanent Business Committee would have failed to produce the necessary funds had it not been for General Howard. Much controversy swirled around the General's head and not all historians have treated the General well. But General Howard came to realize fairly soon that First Church could not raise \$100,000 without him; having put his hand to the plow, he would not withdraw. How he found the time to help Howard University (next chapter), help First Church, and still be a full-time Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau can only be attributed to his dedication, the Freedmen's Bureau staff he could rely on after working hours as well as during the day, and his marvelous energy.

General Howard wrote everyone he knew for contributions. As he went around making speeches for the Bureau, in the evening he would arrange a special service at the nearest Congregational Church and "pass the hat." Where he couldn't go, he had Benjamin Morris go. The American Congregational Union did what it could to publicize First Church's need.

The reader of 1965, in order to make all of the figures in this chapter relevant to 1965 money values, should multiply the 1865 dollars by eight. This means that a \$100,000 church building in 1865 would cost \$800,000 if erected in 1965. With this in mind, the following material, taken from the fiftieth anniversary history, tells a great deal about the fiscal aspects of the church building:

Cost of building. ....	\$103,182.92
Cost of site .....	<u>16,937.00</u>
Cost of building and site .....	\$120,119.92
Assets May 12, 1868 .....	<u>59,815.52</u>
Indebtedness about time of completion....	\$ 60,304.40

It is of interest to note some sources from which the \$59,815, above shown, was derived to meet the cost of building. Other than \$13,550 from the American Congregational Union, the largest contributor was General O. O. Howard, who pledged \$10,000 and paid it all from his own funds in three years. He also obtained by personal solicitation several thousand dollars from rich men in various parts of the country. Some of these givers were as follows: Senator Pomeroy of Kansas, \$1,000; Hon. William E. Dodge, \$700; Fisk & Hatch, Governor Sprague of Rhode Island, C. D. Wood, Vermilye & Co., James Brown, A. C. Barstow, George H. Corliss, J. Field, E. S. Tobey, Frederick Jones, and E. Farnsworth, \$500 each; A. T. Stewart, and A. A. Low & Brother, \$250 each; William E. Dodge, Jr., \$200; Alexander R. Shepherd, Moses Kelley, and others, each \$100. Among the contributors not so wealthy were Dr. Henry Ward Beecher, \$250; Dr. Lyman Abbott, \$50, and Rep. James G. Blaine, \$300. The last named was a regular attendant during most of his Congressional service.

Some 158 other churches gave from \$5 to \$40 each, and 152 Sunday schools somewhat smaller amounts. Nine-tenths of these were in New England. Henry Ward Beecher's church in Brooklyn sent in \$4,500. The Church of the Pilgrims, also in Brooklyn, contributed \$5,200. First Church members and their Washington friends gave about \$10,000. Charles H. Bliss on his own collected \$3,600.

Over half of the \$60,000 indebtedness was in very controversial bonds; the rest in mortgages on the 10th and G Streets lots. Nearly all of the interest-bearing bonds in question were bought by Howard University, Richmond Normal School, and Hampton Institute. The charge was made that these schools so invested their funds, given them by the Freedmen's Bureau, only because General Howard told them to do so and that they could have made better use of the money. Since this indebtedness was inherited by Dr. Rankin, its retirement will be covered in Chapter IV.

The mortgages were slow in being underwritten because the title to four lots of the First Church land was originally vested in the American Congregational Union. Both General Howard and Benjamin Morris tried to get the title transferred to the Society, eventually succeeded, but then found neither the Washington nor New York banks would loan as much as the two men thought the land was worth.

This by no means begins to tell the financial story of 1866-1868. Bills came in faster than pledges at times. Twice, at least, General Howard borrowed on his personal property to meet bills. In the summer of 1869 when a \$9,000 short-term mortgage came due, the General only got the money to the bank a few hours before expiration time and then by using every cent he had. There is some reason to believe the Society repaid him only \$8,000 of this, but few men have been as philanthropic as General Howard.

The troubles the Church had with mortgages finally led to a vote that no Church real estate should ever in the future be mortgaged.

# 1866 DESCRIPTION OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D. C.

The Church is to be built on the Northeast corner of 10th and G Streets, and so placed on the lot, as to leave all surplus ground on the streets on the south and west sides. The main body of the church is about 80 x 143 feet outside. On the south front are two towers the one on the corner of the streets the larger or main tower. The otherwise long line of the sides is broken by pediments and chimnies, which project from the main wall and are topped out so as to be ornamental as well as useful. The church building is in the Byzantine style of architecture and to be of red brick, not pressed brick with plain lines, belts and blocks, of light colored stone for relief, making a plain substantial and at the same time a fine looking building.

In front between the towers there are three doors also one in front in the small tower, and one on the west side in the main tower.

On entering the church we come into a vestibule 11 feet wide extending across the front and including the towers.

In the centre of the building and extending from the vestibule to the auditorium, is a hall 18 feet wide and 37 feet long, at the end of which are three doors opening into the auditorium. On each side of the hall is a room 28 feet square, and between these rooms and the auditorium are stairways 7 feet wide leading to the galleries and lecture rooms.

It might be stated here, that the front part of the church is divided into two stories making the vestibule, hall, and the rooms on each side of the hall about 12 feet in the clear so that the floor of the upper room will be level

with the upper part of the gallery.

The rooms in the first story on each side of the hall, open into the hall with sliding doors and are to be used for Infant class and Bible classrooms or for parlors if desired.

The lecture room in the second story, covers all the vestibule, rooms and halls in the first story and is 48 x 78 feet and 20 feet high.

The central portion of about 1/3 of the whole partition, between the auditorium and the lecture room, is made up of windows which may be raised, and in this way gain more seating room in connection with the gallery if desired.

The main auditorium is 76 x 90 feet on the floor and 33 feet high. The platform is at the rear, or opposite end from the entrance and the choir gallery to accommodate 40 singers and the organ back of the platform.

There is to be a four seated gallery on the sides of the room and five seated across the front end. On each side of the platform are easy stairs, 5-feet wide, from the floor of the auditorium to the gallery making four different ways to the gallery.

On the 10th Street side, at the rear end of the church is the pastor's study 12x26 feet and 12 feet high, and which also can be used as a means of exit in case of emergency.

On the opposite end of the church, and on an alley is a sexton's room 6 x 14 feet and also an entrance to the church.

At the front or entrance end of the

auditorium, and under the stairways leading to the gallery and lecture room, is a vestibule, 7x12 feet, and an outdoor entrance each side of the church, so that there is a means of exit at each corner of the auditorium besides the 18 feet central hall.

The seats are elliptical so that each person faces the speaker. The aisles are sufficiently wide and convenient, with side and wall aisle but no centre aisle.

Under the whole building there is to be a 7 feet cellar in which there is to be a kitchen with the necessary appointments and a dumb waiter so arranged with trap doors in the floors, and adjustable guides that it can be run from the cellar to the upper room if required. In a part of the cellar and accessible from one of the vestibules under the stairs, are water closets for ladies children, and gentlemen. The rest of the cellar will be used for the general purpose of fuel and furnaces.

There is to be a thorough system of sewerage, for which the lot has every advantage.

The ceilings will be flat, and the main auditorium will be lighted from the ceiling by a number of openings equally distributed, in which will be glass, and above the glass, argand burners, and reflectors. These lights will also act as ventilators, and besides these, there will be other openings in the ceiling, and also flues in the walls, which with the windows will give as ample ventilation as can be had without artificial means, and the building is so arranged that if thought necessary, a system of forced ventilation can be introduced at any time.

Everything that a thorough knowledge of acoustics and considerable experience would suggest will be done to make the auditorium among the best rooms for speaking.

The church including the gallery will seat about 1,500 and by filling the spaces in the corners and the aisles with seats, and opening the lecture room level with the gallery the available sittings may be increased to about 2,500.

# II

## Howard University

MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH played a prominent part in the establishment of Howard University in 1867. For a long time after that start, the relationship between the two institutions was close and fraternal.

Monday, November 17, 1866, was monthly concert night for First Church members at the Columbia Law Building opposite Judiciary Square. This was one of the temporary houses of worship the Church used at the time. Dr. Charles Boynton presided at the meeting. His remarks were in the line of the thought of the day, the duty of the country and the church to the four million freedmen lately emancipated by the Lincoln proclamation and Union victory.

Then the Rev. Benjamin F. Morris told of having been present that afternoon at an examination of a half dozen colored young men in theological studies. They were attending what was then known as the "Wayland Institute," which had only a single teacher. Mr. Morris said he was surprised and exceedingly gratified, seeing how much they had accomplished with such small opportunities. He expressed the wish that the day would come when a theological school would be established by the Congregational Church in Washington, D.C.

These last words struck a responsive note with Henry Brewster, leading him to say within himself, "Why not now?" The meeting closed, and Mr. Brewster found himself busy inviting about thirty persons to a missionary meeting, to take place at his residence on I Street, near 19th, the following Thursday night, to consider whether his scheme was practicable. At the same time the Rev. Benjamin Morris and the Rev. Danforth Nichols had joined the pastor at the desk. The three were engaged in earnest conversation on the subject of the closing remarks of Mr. Morris, whether the time had not come to carry out his suggestions. The three, having received invitations to the Brewster missionary meeting, agreed to meet at the residence of the pastor one hour before the meeting and discuss the practicability of the educational scheme suggested.

The three ministers met as agreed and had their consultation, sitting at the bay window of Dr. Boynton's residence, looking out on Vermont Avenue. They agreed the time had come for a theological school.

At the Brewster house meeting, attended by eleven persons, Mr. Morris renewed his remarks that a theological school was needed to prepare colored men for the ministry to labor among their people in the south, and also to go as missionaries to aid in the evangelization movement in the

dark continent. Dr. Boynton also favored immediate action in the matter. One member of the meeting counseled delay. "First," said he, "let us build our church, and when it is built and paid for, we can move out on this new line of benevolence." The Rev. Mr. Nichols urged that the plan need not necessarily add to the financial burdens of the church. It could begin in a small way by using war surplus buildings and volunteer help.

The meeting adjourned to meet one week later at the same time and place, and appointed a committee to report a plan in detail for the second meeting. The committee appointed consisted of Boynton, Morris and Nichols. The committee report recommended the opening of a night school to begin with; that application be made to the Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau for quarters, fuel, and lights for the school; that three chairs of instruction be established to begin with one on Evidences of Christianity and Biblical Interpretation; a second on Biblical History and Geography, and a third on Anatomy and Physiology in their special relations to Hygiene. This report was adopted and ordered to be filed with the papers of the secretary. The blanks on instructors were filled by the meeting as follows: the Rev. E. W. Robinson of First Church to have charge of Instruction in Evidence and Biblical Interpretation; the Rev. D. B. Nichols to have charge of Instruction in Biblical History and Geography, and Dr. Silas Loomis to have charge of Instruction in Anatomy and Physiology in their special relations to Hygiene.

At this second meeting Senator Pomeroy of Kansas and Senator Wilson of Massachusetts, were in attendance and heartily endorsed the movement. The need to apply to the Freedmen's Bureau for help required General Howard to be brought into future meetings. At a third meeting, held December 18, 1866, Senator Pomeroy proposed an enlargement of the scope and aim of the School, making it to include the preparation of teachers as well as ministers, moving that it be called the "Theological and Normal Institute." This was heartily agreed to. At this meeting, also, a committee consisting of Wilson, Pomeroy, and Rep. Burton C. Cook of Illinois was appointed to secure a charter from Congress. A flurry of meetings took place between mid-December 1866 and mid-January 1867 when Senator Wilson introduced a bill of incorporation in the Senate. Senator Pomeroy had done the drafting. He proposed on one occasion that instead of confining the student body to colored young men that the doors be opened to both sexes, all races, colors, and conditions of men. Although this proposal was warmly responded to, Pomeroy did not include it in his draft.

Prior to the introduction of the bill, General Howard moved that the charter be written to embrace university privileges; that the school be made to include not only theological and normal departments, but also a medical department, a law department, a collegiate and agricultural, and a preparatory department. This enlargement was readily agreed to. Shortly after Mr. Nichols strongly urged the name of the school be "Howard University." Although the General demurred, Nichols' suggestion stuck as being the best of about a dozen names proposed.

At the sixth meeting of the group, January 29, 1867, General Howard read Senator Wilson's bill and suggested that no distinction should be made on account of sex, as had been previously agreed to by the group. General Howard, Dr. Boynton, and Senator Wilson were appointed a committee to revise the draft accordingly, with some other small changes.

With Senator Wilson behind the bill the Congress moved swiftly, enact-ting the charter into law, with President Johnson signing it on March 2, 1867.

The following were the incorporators of Howard University under the March 2 statute Senator Samuel C. Pomeroy, Gen. Oliver O. Howard, Charles H. Howard, Henry A. Brewster, Rev. Danforth B. Nichols, Hiram Barber, William F. Bascom, Dr. Silas L. Loomis, Rev. Charles B. Boynton, Rep. Burton C. Cook, James B. Hutchinson, Rev. Benjamin F. Morris, William G. Finney, E. M. Cushman, Rev. E. W. Robinson, Roswell H. Stevens, and James B. Johnson. It is noteworthy that with the exception of Loomis, Cook, and Hutchinson, these were all members of First Church and the three non-members were active in First Church work. Charles Howard, himself a general who led colored troops in the Civil War, was a brother of Oliver O. Howard.

At the first meeting of the incorporators, eighteen trustees were elected, consisting of the seventeen names in the Act of Incorporation, plus General George Balloch who was elected treasurer. Balloch was Howard's distribution chief at the Freedmen's Bureau and quite active in First Church.

The normal and preparatory departments of Howard University opened for classes on May 1, 1867, in an old frame building near 7th and Pomeroy Streets, N.W., rented from the Freedmen's Bureau. The Rev. E. F. Williams was the principal and his first five students were the three daughters of the Rev. Ebenezer Robinson and the two daughters of the Rev. Danforth Nichols. These five young ladies were life-long members of First Church. Emily Robinson helped celebrate the 50th anniversary of the church, while Mary L. Robinson was still alive to help celebrate the 75th anniversary.

In April 1868, arrangements were made for the completion of the organization of the medical department and a permanent plan adopted. Four physicians were named professors, they being Dr. Hiram Barber, Dr. Joseph T. Johnson and Dr. Silas Loomis, all of whom were active at First Church, and Dr. Robert Rayburn.

In September 1868, the college department was organized with members of First Church serving as the faculty: General Eliphalet Whittlesey was made professor of rhetoric and English literature, and William F. Bascom, professor of Latin and Greek. The law department was organized in October 1868 with Professor J. M. Langston in charge.

Not until August 1870, did the theology department get finally organized under the Rev. John B. Reeve. He was assisted by Whittlesey, Dr. Jeremiah Eames Rankin, the Rev. John Butler, and the Rev. John Brown. During the presidency of General Howard a music and a commercial department were established. The latter held its classes at First Church for a few years; then it fell by the wayside.

With so much of an overlapping "directorship" no one should be surprised that Henry R. Searle, architect of First Church, was the designer of the early university buildings. Or that Thomas Harvey, the contractor who erected First Church, was the builder chosen to construct the early university buildings. Because the brick work at First Church ran so high in cost, Generals Howard

and Whittlesey sought a cheaper brick for the university, which led to the American Building Block Company "scandal."

The overlapping directorate, so obvious in the first five years, was slow in dissolving. As vacancies occurred on the original Board of Trustees, initially they were filled by First Church men. John A. Cole, Col. Daniel L. Eaton, Otis F. Presbrey, Rev. George Whipple (elected also as President, but never served because he represented the American Missionary Association to which there was strong opposition at the time at Howard), Eliphalet Blatchford, Charles Howard, Mitchell Strieby, and John Washburne come most readily to mind.

At the presidential level, six of the early presidents of Howard were First Church members. In addition to Boynton, they were General Howard, Dr. Rankin, Dr. Patton, Dr. Newman and Dr. Durkee. Rankin and Newman are being given considerable space elsewhere in this book. The Rev. William H. Patton was president from 1877 through 1889. He was the first president to give undivided attention to the interests of the University or who, for any length of time, presided over it. With his wife and four children, he joined First Church shortly after his arrival in Washington. He was active in Church affairs, teaching an adult Bible class, serving as Society treasurer, and as speaker at various special services. Dr. J. Stanley Durkee was less prominent in Church affairs but he taught an adult class at Sunday School and was a frequent speaker at prayer meetings.

To summarize differently, five secretaries, two treasurers, two librarians, two matrons, over twenty-five trustees and twenty instructors of the university were First Church members during the first fifty years of the university's existence.

In October 1892, Dr. Rankin was prevailed on to speak at the 25th anniversary of the First Church building. He wanted to make certain his audience did not forget the Howard University connection. He pointed out that when Congregationalism came to Washington, the school was an impossibility. First Church not only created Howard, but created the sentiment which was needed to sustain it. He remembered well the time when it was quite common to call First Church the "Nigger church," or as one of the more euphoniously inclined Protestant pastors styled it, the "Dolly Varden" church. And First Church was the only place where Howard University could hold its graduation exercises for many years.

In the December 1893, issue of *The Howard Standard*, Rankin wrote an editorial which started out:

"Howard University originated in the First Congregational Church. It can never forget this fact. The First Congregational Church, too, largely furnished its teachers and trustees. It is so, to some extent still, though a majority of its trustees are now of other religious denominations. Of its teachers, Professor Ewell, Clark, Cummings, Foster and Seaman, Treasurer Johnson, with their families, the matron of Miner Hall, and the librarian are all of that church. When the church was poor, Howard University took its bonds. They will grow more and more apart, doubtless, but the history of the past cannot be unwritten."

# III

## Crisis

ON APRIL 22, 1869, 99 MEMBERS OF FIRST CHURCH, together with Dr. Boynton, severed their connection with the Church. This action reduced the membership of First Church to 94 resident members, who now had an unfinished building on their hands and \$60,000 of debt. It was a crisis of the first magnitude and the Church could not have survived if it had not been for the fact that nearly all of the original founding group, along with General Howard, were among the 94 remaining.

The Church split of 1869 had its issues, but there were also personalities one is soon submerged in a good deal of charge and countercharge, conflicting newspaper accounts, and partisan documents prepared for ecclesiastical councils. The facts and opinions in these cannot be made to mesh.

General Howard was convinced the split had its origin in New York in May, 1867. In his autobiography he reports:

"At the May meetings of 1867, held in Brooklyn, during one evening, at the church of Henry Ward Beecher, the Congregational Union, a church building society, had its anniversary. The house was filled with people, and Mr. Beecher presided. Our church had recently solicited pecuniary aid from the building society. Our Washington pastor, Dr. Boynton, and I were designated to plead our cause at this meeting and show why a Congregational enterprise at the capital should receive assistance from this national society. Dr. Boynton was well received by the people and gave an excellent, comprehensive written address. I followed with an offhand speech, in which I said in a half-jocose manner, that I had been at one time offered as a personal gift some United States bonds from citizens of Maine; that the press of Portland and of Boston had quickly taken up the subject before I had any notification.

The newspapers declared that it was believed, *a priori*, that General Howard would not accept such a present. On seeing such words in print, I had written to friends in Portland and Boston and stated that I agreed with the published statement, but that I earnestly hoped that the contemplated bonds and money would be given to the orphans of our deceased soldiers. In the same manner I had hitherto declined such gifts. Then, turning to Mr. Beecher, I said: 'Permit me to change my mind about taking presents. Generals Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, and Meade have had theirs. Now I will take mine. It shall be wholly for the house of the Lord!'

"Mr. Beecher, full of happy humor, said: 'Well, General Howard, you shall have your gift.' Then he told the people to pass in their donations. Some \$5,000 for our building fund was handed up from the people, in various sums, while Mr. Beecher amused them by his odd and humorous remarks. Something was said or done that offended Dr. Boynton. In some ways he imbibed the idea that my special friends and myself were endeavoring to build up a 'Howard Church,' to which idea he feelingly objected. Soon there came from the Pilgrim Church of Brooklyn, as an outgrowth of my address at Mr. Beecher's church, \$7,000 more for the same object. At a later period in Washington Dr. Boynton and his special friends drew up a pamphlet of some thirteen pages which complained of this matter in particular, and of other grievances, imaginary or real, that were coming in ever after that Brooklyn meeting to divide our church and society. The ostensible object of the pamphlet was to put the sister churches, over the country, right concerning our Washington enterprise. Opposition now set in strongly against me by many of our church members."

There seems to be no doubt that Dr. Boynton felt that General Howard's influence in the Church was too great. After all he was the bellwether of a flock of at least twenty persons from the Freedmen's Bureau. Former military personnel also tended to look up to him.

Boynton came from a church in Cincinnati which was not organized as church and society. First Church, however, fashioning itself after its Puritan forbears, was so organized. Howard, as president of the First Congregational Society, was responsible for all "business" matters. Boynton, because of his duties as House of Representatives Chaplain, president of Howard University until August 27, 1867, and historian of the Navy, could not attend very many of the business meetings of the Board of Trustees and the subcommittees of the Society. Most of his spare time in 1867-1868 was spent in seeing his two-volume *History of the Navy During the Rebellion* through the press. Insofar as First Church was concerned, he only had time for preparing and delivering the Sunday sermons and instructing the membership classes. Out of all this Dr. Boynton became convinced that the minister of the Church was being consistently bypassed by the laymen of the Society in making decisions and then letting him know about them. This was not his concept of the role of a minister. Howard's passion at the time was the Freedmen's Bureau of which he was Commissioner. He believed in it and questioned the godliness of those opposed to the cause of the freedman, as he saw it. Dr. Boynton did not fully appreciate the nature and depth of Howard's convictions.

In the summer of 1867, while Dr. Boynton was away on vacation, General Howard offered a prize to the five Sunday School scholars who brought in the most new members to the Sunday School. At this time General Howard was Acting Superintendent of the Sunday School. The children did bring in many new visitors, one hundred twenty of whom were Negro children living near the Church. This action displeased many of the Church members and Dr. Boynton immediately canceled the remainder of his vacation to return to Washington. He condemned General Howard's action, although any Negro children already enrolled in the Sunday School as members were allowed to stay enrolled. Howard began to wonder about Boynton. In November 1867, while General Howard was in St. Louis, he made a series of talks in the Congregational churches there asking for funds for First Church, stressing the fact that in First Church there would be no distinction in the membership on account of race or color. When General Howard returned to

Washington he was surprised to find that during his absence Dr. Boynton had preached a sermon on November 17 entitled, "A Duty Which the Colored People Owe to Themselves." It was the issues raised in this sermon which finally split the Church, for although most of the members initially backed Dr. Boynton, nevertheless General Howard came out solidly against it.

In his sermon Boynton thought he saw only two alternatives for the Negro race. One was racial intermingling intermarriage, integrated schools and churches with no social or political differences of any kind allowed for color. The other alternative was a Negro race, proud of its color, given every economic and educational opportunity, but moving forward as a completely separate group, including a separated religious communion. It was this second alternative that Boynton favored, and he felt he was thereby the finest kind of friend the Negro could have. General Howard held a position midway between these two alternatives. He wanted complete citizenship for the Negro, with integrated schools and churches, and did not believe the Negro should be pushed into a separate social life unless he wanted it. This was what the Freed-men's Bureau stood for, and what Howard's "radical Republican" friends in the Congress were committed to.

Several days before the sermon was delivered three Negroes, two men and one woman, presented themselves for admission to the Church. They were accepted by the deacons, but Dr. Boynton's statements convinced the two men that Boynton did not want them as members so they withdrew their applications.

The two Negro men were graduates of Oberlin College and one of them had been a captain of volunteers in the Union Army. They were employees of the Freedmen's Bureau. Dr. Boynton always insisted that their withdrawal was a "put-up job," that they withdrew their applications as the result of conversations with General Howard and not as the result of Boynton's sermon. The woman was admitted to membership.

Excitement in the Church began to run high. A motion by Professor William Bascom of Howard University, condemning Dr. Boynton's views, was voted down at a meeting of the congregation about a week after the sermon was given. Howard began receiving letters from ministers of other Congregational churches saying if Dr. Boynton's views were so generally favored in First Church they could not in good conscience give to the Building Fund. Articles opposed to Boynton appeared in the Boston *Congregationalist and Recorder* (probably written by William Hooper) and the Chicago *Advance*.

Boynton tried to defend himself by saying his views were being distorted. At a Church meeting on January 28, 1868, and then in a letter to General Howard on February 3, he pointed out that he was not opposed to admitting Negroes as members of First Church if they sought membership. True, as said in his sermon, they would thus "bury themselves .... an unheeded little company in the larger masses of the whites." At the January 28 meeting Dr. Boynton got the Church to adopt a resolution condemning the newspaper articles and a copy of the resolution sent to the papers involved.

This caused General Howard and his friends to prepare a counter resolution, protesting that the

previous resolutions were not unanimous, as was implied.

The factionalism took a sudden turn for the worse if this was possible when a long article attacking Howard appeared in the Cincinnati *Gazette*, detailing the division in First Church. The article was written by Dr. Boynton's son, General Henry Van Ness Boynton, Washington correspondent for the *Gazette*. It accused Howard of believing in racial amalgamation and determined to foist his views on America through the Freedmen's Bureau.

On February 2, 1868, at a communion service Dr. Boynton made some preliminary remarks based upon Chapter XVIII of St. Matthew. Dr. Boynton pointed out that a person taking communion should be in the right relationship with his Lord and his brethren. Apparently something in his tone of voice prompted General Howard to believe that Dr. Boynton was inferring that General Howard and his group were not in a right relationship with their Lord and their brethren. General Howard arose and addressed Dr. Boynton, making an impassioned defense of himself and his friends. Again, we will let General Howard tell of it in his own words:

"I was claiming for us love to God and our neighbor, when suddenly the pastor asked significantly: 'General Howard, do you believe in amalgamation?' Instantly it occurred to me that there were two meanings of that word 'amalgamation': one was the union of whites and blacks in church and school relation; the other the union in marriage. Whichever Dr. Boynton meant, I decided to make answer to the latter. I had never hitherto advocated intermarriage; but a case illustrated my thought on that subject. I said: 'A gentleman in Virginia, soon after graduating from West Point, had left the army, married, and settled on a plantation. After perhaps one year his young wife died. He did not marry again, but had one of his slave women as his housekeeper, and by her he had several children. This woman had recently come to me for protection against the gentleman's severity of discipline; as she was leaving she said: 'Do not hurt him, for I love him; only keep him from whipping me!' 'Now,' I added, 'before God that man and that woman are man and wife.' Here I closed. Dr. Boynton cried out: 'Yes, and I would marry them.' The communion, after that, proceeded without further interruption."

From other accounts there was additional interruption by other members of General Howard's group, but Dr. Boynton pointed out the inappropriateness of a communion service in church for airing differences. The communion incident had the effect of bringing the struggle between the Boynton and Howard groups to the rupture point, for soon after the latter apparently decided on trying to dissolve the pastoral relationship. A request signed by 64 members of the Church asked that an ecclesiastical council be called to settle the difficulties. The majority of the Church this down. While the minority was pondering its next step, the younger Boynton producing another long article for the *Gazette*, which appeared in June 1868. This was a vicious attack on Howard the politician and real estate operator (in connection with Howard University) and returned to the amalgamation theme. Howard wrote the editor that the story was 'false in spirit and false in fact' and invited an investigation.

During the summer of 1868, Dr. Hiram Barber and Mr. James Delano called on Howard. They were the two lay leaders in Dr. Boynton's majority group. They were still friendly with Howard and the purpose of the meeting was to see if somehow the gap could be bridged. Only General

Howard's version of the meeting is available, but, because Dr. Barber implied that a reconciliation would end the younger Boynton's attacks, General Howard came to view the meeting as a kind of blackmail.

The minority on October 24, 1868, called for an *ex parte* council. The *ex parte* council met November 18-20 under the leadership of Dr. E. K. Alden of Boston. Of the fourteen churches invited nine responded. Dr. Boynton at first agreed to appear before the *ex parte* council but later decided not to, although the views of the majority were presented in writing. The report by the *ex parte* council condemned the majority's racial views, but would not go so far as to say the pastor should withdraw. It urged the minority to put its hopes in a mutual council.

Thus, the principal result of the *ex parte* council was to assure the calling of a mutual council, promised by the majority the preceding November. The mutual council meeting date was set for January 13, 1869.

December was spent by both sides preparing briefs. That by the majority was printed, with copies being sent to Congregational churches throughout the United States. Although in American Congregationalism the opinion of an ecclesiastical council is advisory (unlike British Congregationalism) nevertheless both sides knew if the forthcoming council took a stand its position would ultimately prevail.

The majority brief was harsh, especially on Howard. It ran to seventeen pages in length and its intemperance of statement did the majority group no good. Howard is pictured as a conniving politician with First Church being only part of his chessboard. Dr. Boynton acted as majority's spokesman.

Eleven churches sent representatives to the council meeting. Rev. Joseph P. Thompson of the Tabernacle Church in New York was chosen moderator, and Dr. A. H. Quint of Boston was elected scribe. The meeting lasted four days.

The report of the council concluded the minority was right on every issue presented. Especially did it uphold Howard's racial views, declaring the Master cares nothing about color but simply "the character of the heart." While the report criticized each side for inflammatory pamphlets, and felt the minority should not have resorted to an *ex parte* council, still it granted the Christian character of both sides. Howard was singled out as one "whose past career as a Christian soldier has endeared him unspeakably to his country, while his efforts in behalf of this church have been from the first a principal source of its strength and success."

Finally, the report hinted that Dr. Boynton should resign.

Several months elapsed while both sides gestated the council report. It was generally understood the test of strength would come at the annual meeting of the Society on April 6, 1869. Professor William Bascom was proposed as the Society president to succeed General Howard. When he won by two votes, the old minority was the new majority, however small.

Faced by an unfriendly majority, Dr. Boynton sought a way of resigning that would not be tied to the long-standing issues. He did this by presenting in mid-April a request to the Society for an increase in salary to \$3,000, saying he could not live on less. By a vote of 36-29 the Society voted, at an April 22 meeting, that it could not pay more than the \$1,800, whereupon Dr. Boynton tendered his resignation. A paper was then presented, signed by 99 members seeking letters of dismissal. These letters were immediately granted with Boynton's resignation delayed to May 1 so he could preach a farewell sermon on April 25.

After leaving First Church, the Boynton group formed into a "Central Congregational Church" in downtown rented quarters, but never got denominational recognition. After about nine months the group transferred to the nearby Assembly Presbyterian Church where Dr. Boynton was made the minister.

The split of 1869 had a number of side effects. For General Howard it led to a series of investigations. Dr. Boynton's son commenced a new series of articles, which were widely copied by other papers, accusing General Howard of maladministration of the Freedmen's Bureau. These articles were used by Rep. Fernando Wood of New York to secure a Congressional inquiry. On "information and belief" Wood preferred fifteen charges against Howard, four of which were related to the First Jay leadership. They were:

"First. That he has taken from the appropriation made for, and the receipts of, that bureau more than five hundred thousand dollars, improperly and without authority of law, for the Howard University hospital and lands.

"Second. That portions of the land alleged to have been sold for the benefit of the Howard University fund were disposed of improperly to members of his own family and officers of his staff.

"Third. That bonds issued in aid of the First Congregational Church of the city of Washington were taken in payment for a portion of this land, which have not yet been redeemed or paid, nor have they been returned in his official accounts as such.

"Tenth. That he has paid from the funds of the bureau over forty thousand dollars for the construction of the First Congregational Church in this city, taking the church bonds in return, which he has either returned in his accounts as cash on hand, or sent south for the purposes of the bureau."

Although Howard was cleared of these charges by the Congress in 1870, thereafter the Secretary of War convened a military Board of Inquiry, headed by General Sherman, which met from March 10 to 9, 1874, to review charges of fiscal dereliction of duty. This Board, cleared Howard of any wrongdoing. Finally, Howard and General Balloch faced a civil suit in February 1878 which they won. "These trials and tribulations of General Howard are beyond the scope of a history of First Church, although they had the effect of denying much of his services to the Church after 1871, even though he was in Washington until 1874. For the reader who wants to pursue the matter further a book about Howard, *Sword and Olive Branch*, by John A. Carpenter, is recommended. It

was published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in 1964.

Another side effect of the 1869 split was that the parishioners who retained their First Church membership were convinced that they must have a pastor who was free of every kind of racial bias. They set out to find a successor to Dr. Boynton who would give them the most liberal pulpit in Washington. This led to the calling of Dr. Jeremiah Eames Rankin.

A third side effect was that the spotlight of publicity fell on First Church, by no means limited to publicity in the Washington newspapers. This not only brought the Church crisis to the attention of many people, but served to remind a good many who agreed with the "Howard group" that First Church offered them a suitable church home. Even before Dr. Rankin could come on the scene as Dr. Boynton's successor, thirty more persons had sought membership in First Church. The publicity, strangely enough, started many radical Republican Congressmen attending the Church.

The last side effect of the controversy was that Boynton's failure to break the society/church form of organization, known as "the double system," so strengthened that form of organization at First Church that it was not superseded until 1957, long after nearly all other Congregational churches in the United States had ceased to use it.

# IV

## The Rankin Period

FROM AUGUST 1869 to JUNE 1884 First Church was fortunate in having one of its finest ministers at the helm. During these fifteen years Dr. Jeremiah Eames Rankin achieved a net increase in membership from 135 to 760. The "heroic remnant" of 1869 thus grew into one of the leading and influential churches of the city.

Dr. Rankin, known to his friends as Eames, was the son of a prominent New Hampshire minister. A graduate of Middlebury College, he got his theological training at Andover Seminary, getting his degree in 1854. He served Congregational churches at St. Albans, Vermont, and three in Massachusetts Lowell, Lynn and Charlestown. At the last named he was one of the editors of the *Congregational Review*, which helped make his views generally known.

In October 1869 he received a call from First Church, after General Howard heard him preach and was impressed. He was installed by Ecclesiastical Council on April 20, 1870, with Rev. R. S. Storrs preaching the installation sermon.

Dr. Rankin was exceedingly popular with the Congress. His services were regularly attended by Vice President Wilson, Speaker Blaine, Senators Buckingham, Washburn, Dawes, Pomeroy, Windom, and Representatives Poland, Smith, Frye, and Monroe. This excludes any mention of those who came infrequently. Dr. Rankin was quite fond of Vice President Wilson, who died in office. Wilson, he thought, might well have succeeded Grant in the Presidency. Speaker Blaine used to "hold court" in front of the Church after a Sunday morning service as visitors to Washington were told this was where "the plumed knight" might be most easily met. Five days before the 1876 Republican National Convention Blaine suffered a heat stroke on the Church steps while shaking hands with well wishers, who confidently expected to see him nominated at the convention. The resulting illness may have contributed to his convention defeat.

Two of Dr. Rankin's sermons, one on "The Bible, The Security of American Institutions," and the other, "The Divinity of the Ballot," were distributed throughout the United States. Some of his other sermons were in such demand as to be enlarged into book form *Subduing Kingdoms*, *Hotel of God*, *Atheism of the Heart*, and *Christ, His Own Interpreter* are notable in this group.

Dr. Rankin's special interest was Scottish poetry a taste he probably acquired from his Scotch grandfather. His volume of poems, *Auld Scotch Mither*, written in the Scotch dialect, won him acclaim. The title poem told in charming measure how a mother, long separated from her son, never forgot the quaint things which made her son different from other sons, even the curious twirling of a fork at the table which became the key of her recognition.

Dr. Rankin's favorite poet, as might be guessed, was Robert Burns, after whom he modeled his own poetry. He liked to deliver lectures on Burns, at which time he would also recite Burns' poetry with great feeling. Whenever it was known he was speaking on Burns he was assured a crowded auditorium. Frederick Douglass said Rankin was the best speaker who ever talked on Burns.

Poetry in the form of hymn writing came naturally to Dr. Rankin. His "God Be With You Till We Meet Again" is still carried in the denominational hymnal. In the 1870's his "God and Home and Happy Land," "Keep Your Colors Flying," and "Why Art Thou Silent, Oh Bethlehem," were regarded as equally good. On some Sunday evenings the entire service was made up of Rankin hymns. His temperance hymnal, put together for the great temperance leader of the day, Francis Murphy, was a best seller.

At a joint First Church-Howard University memorial service for Dr. Rankin on January 8, 1905, General Howard surmised: "It always appeared to me that nothing would have delighted Dr. Rankin more than to have given himself absolutely to a literary career." It was at this service that General Howard told of an agreement that he had with Dr. Rankin that, if General Howard died first, Dr. Rankin would write his biography, so intimate they were.

Although General Howard was not an active participant in First Church affairs after 1871, because of the investigations going on and his work at the University, still he liked to come down to the old Church and pour out his heart to his Scotch pastor. Should he resign from the Freedmen's Bureau? Should he defend Balloch and Pomeroy in their troubles? Should he resign from the Army? Dr. Rankin, all his parishioners noted, was an avid, intent listener and a good advice giver. This led General Howard to quote Mrs. Browning: "Man is most man, who with tenderest human hand relieveth human woe."

When Dr. Rankin came to First Church he was repeatedly told that an increase in membership was the greatest need. The largest membership increase came from the 1876 "Hammond Revival." As Rankin himself told it:

"I remember when after a few years of patient toil and waiting, I proposed to the church the wisdom of inviting here, the Rev. E. P. Hammond, the evangelist, how, without any discussion, on motion of Gen. Whittiesey, one of the wisest and most conservative of men and a pastor of large experience, the church left the matter wholly to [my] discretion. A company of five pastors of the city has been for five weeks praying daily, in a room now known as the Music Room, for a revival. These men, among whom were the sainted Dr. Jason Noble, Dr. E. H. Gray, and Dr. S. Domer, agreed to unite in an invitation to Mr. Hammond, then in Harrisburg, to visit Washington for evangelical work. He came, and for three months meetings for preaching and inquiry were held in this church on every evening in the week, except Saturday; the pastor always occupied the pulpit on Sunday morning; these other pastors, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Methodist, and a band of well organized Christians of all denominations, laboring in a daily morning prayer meeting held at the various different churches. Night after night, this house was packed to the doors. The interest was so intense that sometimes an overflow meeting was held in the Social Room above, at the same time with the meeting in the main audience room. Every church in me

city was more or less quickened; and as Dr. Noble said "Washington had not been so moved by God's Spirit in a whole generation.' Some of the direct results were the addition to this church, on a single Lord's Day of 115, and during the twelve months, of 170."

Another kind of service he found helpful in increasing membership the "special" service whether a G.A.R. memorial, a Thanksgiving Day, a Forefather's Day, or a temperance revival. At such times he sought the best speakers he could secure. The following reminiscence by Dr. Rankin may be said to be typical:

"From the first it was [my] aim to impress the church with this New England idea of freedom of the pulpit, and the legitimate power of the pulpit, in the discussion of all such questions, so that public days were notable ones in that period. The Forefather's Day, after the present speaker was installed, was celebrated by a New England dinner, in which Senator Patterson, of New Hampshire, and Judge Poland, of Vermont, and Senator Pomeroy, of Kansas, and Frederick Douglass, Senator at large, were among the speakers. And the themes discussed were the great historic themes, which agitated the bosom of such men as John Milton and John Hampden and the early forefathers of New England. And night after night, at this season of the year, were addresses often delivered by different members of this congregation, and none was better able to furnish competent speakers, for during this period there were lawyers many and doctors some, and at one time twenty-three ministers enrolled among its number, on the Pilgrim Idea! On the Forefather's Day referred to, Frederick Douglass discussed his Pilgrim Fathers, who landed in Virginia; so that we got, not only the lights but the shadows of the occasion. And on Thanksgiving Day, this edifice was year after year packed to the ceiling."

Next to increasing the membership, the Church's largest problem was the \$60,000 Church debt, discussed earlier, much of it bonded at eight percent interest. To raise money the Board of Trustees, led by Dr. O. F. Presbrey, and Dr. Rankin agreed the Church auditorium ought to be rented out to useful organizations. The policy was not a wholly popular one. Various members were "severe in their strictures," to use Rankin's words, "as to what they regarded as an improper use of the sanctuary." Dr. Rankin's reply was that many persons first learned of First Church through attending a week day concert or lecture there, and they ventured to come again on a Sunday.

Dr. Rankin's success in diminishing the debt led the members to ask if some of the deferred items at the time of constructing the church building could not be accommodated. The most obvious need was a pipe organ, installed in 1874 at a cost of \$13,000. General Howard left Washington in that year to fight the Nez Perce Indians in the Northwest. In a farewell dinner, Howard in his direct fashion pleaded: "If you want to make me happy, when I return to Washington have the tower completed."

The tower was never completed. Always some other need seemed to have higher priority. In the case of Dr. Rankin, the problem lay in the space needed by Dr. John Bischoff, choir master. The church plan had simply never provided for a minister of music, which Dr. Bischoff was. At first he was given the west parlor as a studio. This cut too much into the Sunday School area. The matter was resolved by giving Dr. Bischoff the ministers' study, and closing in the vestibule at

both ends to provide a minister's study and a church office. This involved closing two exits, and opening a new one on 10th Street. This was fine even very fine but it took the money that might have been used for the tower.

Then it was the basement kitchen. The good women folk never liked the dark basement and the kitchen seemed too small. When moved into a corner of the Sunday School replacing the infant room the east parlor had to be converted to an infant room weekly. Again this cost money, and again the tower was deferred. Still, when Rankin left in 1884, the new alterations and the organ had been paid for, and the Church debt was down to about \$15,000.

In appraising some of the work done by the Church for which he was thankful, Dr. Rankin said: "The members of this church were .... active among the founders of the Young Men's Christian Association; and for years that Association looked to the fellowship of this church for its president and executive officers, as well as for the sinews of spiritual warfare, while its pastor never hesitated as to giving it the earliest and the heartiest endorsement. The same was true of the Women's Christian Temperance Union. Its ablest and purest advocates were always welcome on this platform.

'There was another line of work done by this church. It was purely Missionary. Under the lead of such men as General Howard, J. B. Johnson, J. W. Alvord, and D. B. Nichols, the colored people, who congregated at the close of the war in the camps near the city, were given systematic religious instruction.

"And for many years, large Sunday Schools were held, where now is Lincoln Memorial Church, superintended by John A. Cole, J. B. Johnson and others; and in what is now South Washington, superintended by O. F. Presbrey; while the colored school established on Judiciary Square eventually found hospitality under these walls and remained here until it was translated. At no time, indeed, were not black people, yellow people, and red people welcome to the Sunday School of this church or to its communion. And probably, there was no period during the 15 years with which this discourse has to do, when there were not from 30 to 50 colored members of this congregation; and there was a time, under General Howard's administration of the University, when many of the students regularly worshiped here and sat in the gallery as white students do in other churches. These people were not here as colored people, but as belonging to the one family, which God has made of one blood, to dwell on all the face of the earth! They were here, because they had been brought up Congregationalists or felt drawn to Congregationalism, that Mother of some of the noblest of children, not a few from Oberlin, where they had been educated. Frederick Douglass was often here; B. K. Bruce and John M. Langston, Professors Mitchell and Gregory with their families, were regular attendants."

This mention by Dr. Rankin of the colored people active in First Church only underlines Dr. Rankin's devotion to the Negro race. At a meeting in Washington of the Evangelical Alliance, a missionary body with representatives from many countries, the pastor of the most popular Methodist church in Washington called on Rankin. The pastor requested Rankin to provide a pulpit for Bishop Campbell from the African Methodist Episcopal Church because he would not be welcome in the Washington Methodist Church. Rankin gladly invited Bishop Campbell to

preach at First Church.

Walter Alien, a member of the Church during this period, has left this account of some of Dr. Rankin's ways:

"I can still picture Dr. Rankin sitting in his easy chair, reading his newspaper after dinner and chewing a toothpick. My wasteful imitation caused him to ban my use of toothpicks. I recall his voice but not his words. I remember his bedridden son, [Walter] who died when a young man, [at Princeton University] inspiring his grief-stricken father to write a second 'God Be With You.' He and his son used to collaborate in writing hymns. 'Gospel Bells,' our Sunday School song book, printed in 1880, was composed largely of songs by Dr. Rankin, Dr. Bischoff and Dr. Presbrey of our church.

" 'God Be With You Till We Meet Again' is said to have been written by Dr. Rankin because he desired something better as a parting hymn than the usual 'Blest Be The Tie.' It was very probably influenced by his having just joined a Christian fraternal beneficial organization, The United Order of the Golden Cross in which so many of our local ministers, deacons, and other ex-soldier members were interested. It became the official parting hymn of the Order and has since been adopted by organizations all over the world.

"I had it from the late George Spransy, who kept a clothing store next to the Second National Bank on Seventh Street, that Dr. Rankin would frequently go about as poor as a church mouse, forgetting that he had an undeposited check of the trustees in his pocket, until some one like Spransy would have him go through his pockets. Dr. Rankin was undoubtedly the best known downtown of any of our pastors as he lived on Grant Place, back of the church, and spent most of his time within a quarter-mile of home.

"Dr. Rankin read his sermons but they were none the less impressive. He was a man of convictions and stood up for them. The slavery element had withdrawn from the church and the war was over north of the Potomac. He preached temperance at a time when ministers sometimes slid under the table after banquets. He had a good voice and could thunder. Both he and Dr. Newman upheld the temperance banner for so many years that our church has always been regarded as a total abstinence as well as an anti-slavery church. He used the large pulpit stand with the gold cross on the front, despite frequent objections by Protestants to a cross in the church, as if we were not entitled to use it as well as the papists."

The Alien statement is interesting, too, in showing how "popular" history had come to calling the Boynton contingent of 1867-1869 the "slavery element." Though quite unfair, this is the way popular history became tradition. Alien continues:

"In the evenings and dark mornings, the church was lighted by rings of gas-jets in the dome and ventilators. Prior to the service, the sexton came around with a taper on the end of a 30-foot pole, an instrument of imprecision in the hands of a novice, and lighted the jets one at a time. Later, they were turned to proper height. In the hands of a substitute, the process of lighting was weird and increasingly interesting to those who had gathered to worship, especially the children. Later,

Welsbach burners made better light and finally electric lights made control easier.

"The cellar was a wilderness surrounding brick furnaces and fuel piles, reached by plank walks. If you lost the feel of the plank, you might need some one with a light to rescue you. I always think of the catacomb scene in 'Aida' in connection with our church cellar. Our sanitary outfit was just one step ahead of those on farms, anything but churchly and the subject of one or more treatises by me addressed to the trustees on the expectation of creating clean hearts and pure minds on the floor above with such accommodations in the cellar. There were no other basement rooms except the large bare kitchen, partitioned off from the wilderness and no lights on the stairways.

"Sometimes the furnace worked and sometimes we were chilly or cold. The organ was supposed to be kept in a temperature of 66 at all times. Otherwise, the tones became eccentric and the action harder than the sufficiently hard action of a balanced lever operation from keys to pipe stoppers, many feet away. If a woman walked the pedals in addition to playing by hand, she would rise off the bench before the keys would depress. My mother used to couple the pedals to the great organ to keep her seat.

"The organ bellows were pumped by a hydraulic motor, except on occasions when the city water service failed. Then, eight to twelve men would shed their coats and pump in relays, using handles on the bellows under the choir gallery. It was the delight of Dr. Bischoff, who possessed a large quantity of well-controlled humor, to present, on such occasions, a strong and vigorous postlude, which brought the pumpers out from under, well exercised and perspiring.

"I remember at one entertainment there was shown as a specialty a new lighting effect, a small replica of the Washington Monument being used and the light appearing first in one place and then another this was my introduction to electric lighting. The gas lights were turned low. Some one recently mentioned the human statuary groups, used as high class entertainment, probably under the auspices of the Ladies' Aid. I recollect my mother appearing in them, unrecognized by me in her white tights. The statues were posed and then the curtain drawn back for a minute. Some shows were held in the Lincoln Music Hall to save offending those who did not think them proper in a church edifice. It was unlawful for them to be still. Such is the progress of the law, as consistent as the proper length of skirts. The public street now shows scantier garbs than were allowed on the stage.

"The door to the attic over the Sunday School room being locked, it was a treat to get into it and see the ancient and recent props, such as old Chimneys, paper costumes, etc., which were stored indefinitely. Occasionally a cleaning-out was necessary. On one such occasion there was returned to me a good bust of Dr. Rankin, made by a Howard University student, which I cleaned and gilded for use in a public hall. There it was appreciated and at another time I received back a framed pledge, originally made by me to hang in the West Parlor for the use of the Loyal Temperance Legion. Railed walkways led to the dome and ventilators over the auditorium. On several occasions one or more of the openings were used to convey heavenly effects, like voices from the sky. More recently, the same effect was produced from the cellar."

Dr. Rankin was fortunate in his laymen. Dr. Otis Presbrey succeeded to General Howard's

"mantle." A leading Washington physician, with a large practice, an attractive and dedicated wife, relatively wealthy, it is still amazing how much time he had to give to church projects. Mrs. C. A. Weed was a tireless worker for the Hammond campaign and personally organized a large group of the younger converts into a Sunday School class to which she gave incredible time. The Hoopers, Whittleseys, Ballochs, [James] Johnsons, Blisses, Robinsons, Frasers, [Francis] Smiths, [Joseph] Johnsons, Giddings, Woods, [Jerome] Johnsons, and the Youngs were always on hand to undertake tasks of all kinds.

Dr. Rankin left First Church because he thought he was too old to give his best effort (although he was only fifty-seven) and he felt he needed rest and recreation. General Howard encountered him in London in the fall of 1884 thoroughly relaxed and enjoying himself. Dr. Rankin took a small church in Orange, New Jersey, for four years and then accepted a call to the presidency of Howard University in 1889, serving until 1903 (when he was too old to give his best effort).

# V

## The Newman Years

THE PASTOR WITH THE LONGEST SERVICE at First Church was Dr. Stephen M. Newman. He served almost exactly 21 years from February 13, 1885 to February 28, 1906. The selection committee which recommended the Church call him was composed of Charles Beardsley, Dr. William W. Patton, Amzi L. Barber, James B. Johnson, and George & Whittlesey. Beardsley was a prominent merchant, Patton the president of Howard University, Barber a builder of macadam roads (one of the first), Johnson the treasurer of Howard, and Whittlesey the Commissioner of the Indian Office.

Dr. Newman graduated from Bowdoin College in 1867 and from Andover Theological Seminary in 1871. His wife, Mary, attended Vassar. He held his first pastorate in Taunton, Mass., for six years.

When called he was preaching at Ripon, Wisconsin, where he had been seven years. Some firsthand recollections of him are of interest:

"Dr. Stephen M. Newman was a quiet intellectual, whose voice kept the trustees worrying because it strained easily, although behind the scenes he athletically used Indian clubs. I recollect one morning when Dr. Newman became very earnest and tried to thunder, but his sentence screeched and wound up with a squeak, serious but amusing. He could always see a joke, even at his own expense. Few who heard his oft-repeated story about a man who was so mean that he used a wart on the back of his neck for a collar button, were aware that Dr. Newman had a wart on the back of his neck. It was he who put pep into evening services and crowded the auditorium with his informative lectures, sometimes illustrated with lantern slides with Mr. Murray at the lantern. The services were a great advertisement but brought poor financial returns. It was on one such nickel-a-head evening that he stopped the opening hymn after the first verse and said: "The congregation is not singing. The music is a part of Divine Worship and I want every one to take part," showing that he could admonish when faced with the necessity. There was an immediate and audible fishing for hymn books.

"Dr. Newman preferred a small table to the pulpit and spoke without more than 'cuff notes.' His diction was so correct and his voice so clear that there were always a number of shorthand writers practicing during his sermons. His service was so well ordered that it seemed complete and

satisfying."

Among the shorthand writers was Fred Fishback, Clerk of the Senate Commerce Committee, who later became quite active in the Church. The following reminiscence by Walter Alien gives a good impression of the activity going on at the church in the Newman years:

"In my boyhood days the church was used almost nightly for gatherings, religious and secular, within the bounds of good taste. Many prominent clergy, travelers, public speakers and national organizations have vented their opinions in the auditorium. Stoddard lectured, Bryan orated, mass meetings to protest atrocities in Armenia by the Turks, musical societies, white, colored and foreign, English, Welsh and Scotch, celebrated orchestras and bands have used our facilities. The National Geographic Society held its weekly lectures, introducing famous men and women explorers, here, for many years. Revivals, like the Moody and Sankey, used the church on Sunday afternoons and evenings. Christian Endeavors used it for headquarters and as auxiliaries to their tent meetings as did also the Salvation Army, whose General Booth spoke from his specially constructed pen, guaranteed to keep him from falling over with enthusiasm. Spalding and other great musicians gave recitals. The Grand Army of the Republic and its women auxiliaries have held memorial services.

"Graduation exercises of Howard and other universities and schools were permitted; college, colored and Indian glee clubs visiting the city gave programs of high class. Patriotic societies and domestic fraternities, like the United Order of the Golden Cross, which gave concerts several times to a full house, used the auditorium free or for pay, the hall being rented to some of them. Dr. Bischoff held student recitals and also the annual series of Bischoff concerts, for the benefit of the church as well as himself, as long as he lived, and public schools and hospitals were allowed its facilities for graduation exercises. The result was that the church was a patriotic, literary, musical and welfare center for the city at a time when there were no large public halls with proper facilities available.

"As a boy I was well acquainted with many of the Union Veterans who were largely responsible for the organizing and maintaining of the Church and Society during its early years. Even when I was a young man there was a club of over sixty veterans, holding monthly meetings. Most of the officers of the church were veterans. They are too numerous to allow special mention. . . . Generals Howard, Whittlesey and Balloch; Colonel Tweedale and Captain Redway, were always mentioned by title. Cushman, Severance, Lamborn, several Johnsons, Gardner, Coleman, Greene, Caywood and Skinner, every one of them worthwhile. Not unmentioned should be their helpful wives."

The constant use of the auditorium by various groups, to which Mr. Allen refers, serves as a reminder that the Church was still largely dependent upon auditorium rentals for its income. Included in the Church records are the treasurer's large books of the Newman period. They show the average amount of the budget then to be about \$16,000. A fair amount of this was still being used to pay off the Church debt contracted at the time the Church was originally built.

On March 13, 1903, Dr. Newman had the intense satisfaction of paying off the last indebtedness

and holding a "mortgage-burning" ceremony that was colorful, gleeful, and full of thanksgiving.

The budget, insofar as revenues were concerned, was dependent upon three sources: pew rentals which raised about 45% of the income, rental of the auditorium which provided another 45%, while the remaining 10% Came from special collections on special occasions. Nearly all of these special collections were for some specific benevolences. Because members contributed through pew rentals, the Sunday collections, to which only visitors contributed, were often quite small. Professor Aaron Skinner once told Dr. Abbot that the average gift for the plate collection was three cents!

Newman did not interest himself to any marked extent in the financial affairs of the Church. He was a great believer in the New England practice of Church and Society, and during Dr. Newman's pastorate the Society was composed only of elected members of the church, numbering about 200 persons and these, for the most part, men of substance. The Society was run by a very strong Board of Trustees which carried on almost unchanged for most of the Newman period.

For those who are used to individual communion cups it may be of interest that from 1865 to 1897 communions at First Church were taken from a common cup. It was Dr. Newman who altered the practice.

Eyewitness accounts of some of the events during this period are provided by a number of Church members in the period. For example: the son of the church architect, Henry Searle, tells this story about Thomas Edison.

"One of my enthusiastic memories is of a demonstration of the then wonderful invention, by Mr. Thomas A. Edison, the phonograph.

"Mr. Edison gave a brief talk, telling of the machine, its conception in his mind, and its development. He then placed a piece of tinfoil around a small cylinder, a part of the machine, and proceeded to make a record of a cornet solo played by Mr. Elphonzo Youngs who was a prominent member of the congregation. Mr. Edison then played the record and it was distinctly heard all over the church, and as I remember our family pew was back of the center and it was perfectly clear to us. He then cut the tinfoil into small pieces and my father was presented with a piece. I little thought at the time how interesting it would be, today to have that bit of tinfoil with the little indentures made by the recording needle."

First Church was the scene of the last public appearance of President Garfield, when he presented the diplomas to the Washington Normal School graduates, class of 1881, on Thursday, June 16.

The Church history prepared for the fiftieth anniversary contains an account of the gathering of authors in 1889 to take action in behalf of the enactment of an international copyright law. We quote from that history:

"Among the notable events that have occurred in our church is that of the gathering of authors in 1889, to take action in behalf of the enactment of an international copyright law. It was desired to

raise a fund to be used in a campaign of education for rousing the people to demand such a law. For the raising of such fund it was advertised that a large number of the most prominent American authors would give readings and recitations from their own works. Great audiences gathered here both in afternoon and evening, and the admission fees produced a considerable fund for the object sought. The historian Bancroft (a venerable figure) presided. Mark Twain and James Whitcomb Riley recited their humorous pieces. Frank R. Stockton and Edw. Eggleston read passages from their respective books, as did also Thos. Nelson Page, Chas. Dudley Warner, Wm. D. Howells, Richard H. Stoddard, and Jas. T. Field.

"Probably no such number of American literary celebrities ever appeared on one platform at any other time, for the entertainment of the public.

"The generous appreciation of each other manifested by these kindred spirits was especially fine. Riley was at that time rather new to the public, while Mark Twain was an old favorite. When Riley, with his most laughable mimicry, recited 'The Color of the Peanut,' Twain roared his delight, and leaving his chair, pranced across the stage and slapped Riley on the back in a perfect ecstasy of enjoyment. Twain's manner of doing this tickled the audience as keenly as did the fun of his and Riley's recitations."

A still longer reminiscence came from Faith Bradford who joined the Church on July 5, 1891. Her reminiscence is concerned then with the early 1890's.

"Before prayer meeting, at 7:00 P.M. SHARP, there was a Bible Club in the East Parlor. The room was filled. This was a real discussion group, conducted, I think, by various deacons. Here ideas were freely exchanged, sometimes with considerable warmth. But what a flood of information was gained from these discussions, and how the young people who attended learned, not only to think for themselves, but finally to arrive at satisfying conclusions; not to be shaken by life's later contacts or experiences.

"The Prayer Meeting that followed the Bible Club was something to look forward to from one week to the next. Deacon Alfred Wood invariably sat in the front seat and was the first to take part when the meeting was opened. He was most distinguished looking, with a head of very thick white hair. His prayer was much the same from week to week, but it was sincere and all-inclusive. Then perhaps Miss Baldwin would recite a whole chapter from the Old or New Testament, especially the fortieth chapter of Isaiah. And what expression she put into every word!

Mr. Bradford, a Civil War veteran, told of his siege of yellow fever in New Orleans, and how, when the doctors gave him up, his mother's prayers continued. One evening he took a small feather from his pocket and told how when he was a stranger in a strange city, feeling alone and disconsolate, he saw that feather on the sidewalk. He picked it up and noticing its beautiful color thought how marvelously God had made even a bird's feather. Then his heart lightened as he remembered, 'Ye are of more value than many sparrows.'

"Mr. J. H. Blodgett, also a Civil War veteran, told of the time when on sentry duty a small colored girl appeared from the underbrush, and held out to him a primer. She asked him to teach her to

read, but he was in no mood to be bothered with a child and told her to go away and let him alone. Mr. Blodgett had an irascible temper, and at this point in his story he grew furious at himself. 'She went away,' he shouted, 'and see what an opportunity I missed! Today that girl is the head of the largest educational institution for colored women in the whole South! How proud and glad I could be today if I had helped her! Instead I am chagrined! Don't lose your opportunities!'

"Mr. Blodgett often waxed eloquent over some item he had seen in the newspaper or some experience at the office. Mrs. Blodgett was a calm quiet lady. She always wore long black gloves. When she thought her husband had gone far enough in a tirade, her gloved hand moved softly to his coat-tail, took a firm grip, and pulled. Down he went, muttering, 'Oh, all right, all right.' In those days there were no deaconesses, but Mr. Blodgett was the first to discover any case of illness or distress, and the first to give relief. He was always more angry at himself than at others.

"The Thursday before Communion Sunday, Dr. Newman gave a 'Preparatory Lecture.' These cannot be described any more than a college course could be summarized in five minutes. Suffice to say that one of our members remarked, 'The University from which many of us are graduates is Dr. Newman.' The truth of this statement was further proved by Dr. Newman's Tuesday evening lectures on Browning or Wordsworth, and his Sunday evening illustrated sermons on 'Heroes and Saints of Church History.'"

In the winter of 1905 Dr. Newman began to have feeble health and became convinced that he should not try to carry the pastoral load any longer. The Church very reluctantly accepted his resignation as of February 28, 1906.

The most comprehensive tribute to Newman was delivered by Justice David J. Brewer at the time of his departure from First Church. It is too long to quote in its entirety, but the following may give some impression of the address:

"While never forgetting that his chief work was in this church he has taken large part in the charities, the educational and other efforts in this city for a better civic life. Keeping in touch with and holding an honored place in the great Congregational benevolent and missionary organizations he has striven to enlist our sympathies and efforts in them, as in other respects, he has been greatly aided by the unwearied labor of his devoted wife.

"To those who have listened to him for years there has been manifested an ever-growing spirituality. He is looking further and further behind the veil. Material splendors are seen, but they are only the trailing clouds of glory attending the divine footsteps. In every experience of the soul he sees not the mere workings of material forces, but the touch of an undying spirit, and emphasizes the truth, of which so many are but dimly conscious, that we are the sons and daughters of God.

"He has always been a great reader, is familiar with the best literature, and makes abundant use of it, especially for attractive Sunday evening talks, some on historical subjects, some on the great poets and the great poems. In connection with these talks he avails himself of the stereopticon, not for spectacular purposes, but to illustrate historical facts, events in the lives of the poets and the

thoughts of their poems. And these evening talks are not mere lectures, but sermons.

"Though at times urged to take charge of such educational institutions as Marietta College, Ohio, and the theological seminary, Atlanta, Ga., he has never given up that, which from early youth he longed for and has lived for, the preaching of the gospel of Christ. While his large work has been with the church he has not forgotten that he is a man and a citizen. He has been for years a helpful and valued member of the Associated Charities, the Civic Center and of several literary and scientific societies, both local and national.

"As a man for in the pulpit as elsewhere the man behind the gun counts he is dignified, but not austere; thoughtful but not solemn. With none of the gush and demonstration of the hail fellow well met he is easy of approach, genial, appreciative of humor and not averse to story or joke, a welcome companion in social circles. Keenly sensitive to the deepest wants of the soul, his presence and words have been especially comforting in times of sorrow and death, and he has made himself very dear to many by reason thereof."

Dr. Newman's poor health did improve with rest and quiet. He subsequently assumed the presidency of Howard University and then continued to be available at various First Church activities until he moved to New Haven, Connecticut, in June 1918.

He later returned to Washington in 1921, and died November 21, 1924, at the age of 79.

# VI

## A Musical Church

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING First Church seemed to have more than an average concern in good music. It gradually became a hallmark of the church and a great source of strength in its ministry.

The reader will recall that the idea of Howard University started at a concert evening. The early Church tried to hold at least one concert each month, on a Monday evening. These concerts became increasingly popular.

As has been noted already, Dr. Rankin was a hymn writer of note, with 200 to his credit. Two books of his hymns, *Hymns Pro Patria* and *Word and Song*, were best sellers of the day. Because of his abiding interest in a singing church, he used music a great deal as responses, collects, openings for prayer, and the like. When the church building was completed in 1868, it lacked a pipe organ. Because of construction debts, not until 1873 could Dr. Rankin start raising the funds to remedy this deficiency. Henry Robinson Searle, Architect of the church building, was prevailed upon to design an organ that would enhance the auditorium and fit into its acoustical characteristics. Searle not only did a masterful design job, but superintended the installation.

Two years later, in 1875, the new organ found its master in Dr. John W. Bischoff, then twenty-five years of age. At the age of two years he lost his sight through measles. He was educated at the institute for the blind at Janesville, Wisconsin, and studied singing under the well known teachers, Bassini and Ludden. He also studied the organ under Cresswold of London, England.

His wonderful mastery of the organ, delicacy of interpretation, grasp of registration, keen sensibility, marvelous memory, and broad intelligence brought hundreds to hear him. His ability as a vocal teacher was soon recognized, and his pupils, numbered by the hundreds, filled important church positions throughout the United States and were never numerous enough to meet the demand.

Another branch of musical work he particularly loved was that of composition, secular as well as religious. Hundreds of songs and many piano pieces written by him were published. His contemporaries were particularly fond of "Goodnight, Sweet Dreams," "Bobolink," "If God So Clothe the Grass," "Take Me, Jamie Dear," "The Rose I Give You," "Star of My Soul," and his piano arrangement of "When You and I Were Young, Maggie."

Dr. Bischoff was a large man, as he needed to be to play the tracker action organ. The stories of his sunny disposition, his generosity, and his warm-heartedness are legion. Almost every member who knew him had a favorite memory of him. Here are some of the stories:

"Well do I remember the incident of Dr. Bischoff and the passing regiment, which happened on one Sunday evening during a Grand Army Encampment. The West windows were all open. I sat in the turn of the Gallery, where I had a bird's-eye view of everything up front. Far away, down Tenth Street, I heard the beat of a drum. It came closer and louder and as Dr. Newman started the pastoral prayer (Dr. Bischoff, as usual, having slid from the organ bench into his rest seat next to the console) it was at F Street, a block away. As the band, to which the drum belonged, passed St. Patrick's Church, I heard the familiar 'rrrup' of the grace note, calling the band to attention, four bars before it is to play. Then the 'rrrup' two bars before and then: 'rrrrrup, BOOM! BOOM!' and the band, now at G Street, opened up to spread "John Brown's Body" ,. all over the neighborhood, totally eclipsing Dr. Newman's voice. There was no contending that it was a large band and a good band. Dr. Newman stopped, not being used to such competition. Dr. Bischoff quietly slid onto the organ bench, found the pitch and built up the tune to full organ by the time the band was opposite the open windows. Then the organ handed back as much "Glory, Glory, Glory, Hallelujah" as was coming in the windows. We never found out what the band and regiment thought. Their leaders must have been mystified at the incidence of a church organist playing "John Brown's Body" in a Sunday evening service, especially in exact accord with the band. The trend of feet continued for some time after the passing of the band and Dr. Bischoff gradually reduced volume until his music faded out with the band in the distance. He slid back to his rest seat again and Dr. Newman resumed prayer. We were too awe-struck to laugh or applaud, although the incident deserved both.

"On rare occasions, some key-lever would stick or a bit of fuzz would cause stoppage of a pipe and Dr. Bischoff, with unerring ear, would enter the organ structure through a small door in the lattice work, and make his way to the troublesome spot. I remember after some Florida moss was used for decoration, pieces were extracted from the pipes for some time.

"The organ gallery was enlarged for the occasion of the Marine Band Concert. The platform was augmented for the concert by a temporary structure which extended out over the three front pews. The Band had about 70 members at that time. The concert was under the auspices of the Newman Loyal Temperance Legion, named after Dr. Newman. I was its Superintendent. My father engineered the production, which brought Dr. Bischoff and Prof. John Philip Sousa together for the first time. They collaborated on the program. Mrs. Nellie Wilson Shir-Cliff was the soloist. The organ and Band played separately and together and with the soloist. Prof. Sousa was so impressed with her voice that he immediately engaged her to accompany the Band on its first national tour which was to follow immediately. My station was in the music room with the duty of waiting on Prof. Sousa and the soloist. I hooked on his epaulettes for him and enjoyed some little conversation with the beautiful and talented soprano. She carried a tiny bottle containing a spoonful of something to make her eyes sparkle when she sang. The three principal performers were in fine condition that night and the program wonderful. The Band wore red coats, white pants and gold braid, and made a gaily-rich appearance. Many ladies and gentlemen arrived in hacks; the ladies wearing silks, satins and opera capes, the gentlemen in full dress. Some came in

hansoms, the taxi of the time. The driver of such sat on a high seat back of the roof of the vehicle and spoke to the occupants through a hole in the roof. To let the passengers in and out, two front doors were opened and shut with a lever.

"One Saturday night, when Dr. Bischoff called the choir to attention, he remarked: 'There is a young composer in New York who is going to make a name for himself. His name is Harry Rowe Shelley and he has composed an anthem which we will start rehearsing tonight. Ours will be its initial rendition.' This anthem was 'Hark, Hark, My Soul,' at the time novel in its style and greatly admired for its freshness and melody and for the opportunities it offered to soloists.

"At another rehearsal, following the publication of 'There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight,' Dr. Bischoff sat at the organ, whiling away the wait of a few minutes, fingering the tune and then, to our amazement, began playing in earnest, working it up to Great Organ, when it became indeed 'Hot' in the modern use of the word. Even a band cannot match a three-manual pipe organ, like our old 'tin pipe' with its 32 foot pipes. One needed the weight of a Dr. Bischoff to stay on the bench under the pressure of levered keys and pedals, when playing full organ. It showed his appreciation of a good tune, however unclassical its title, and put it at once into my Hall of Fame.

"[After his first wife died], his secretary, who became his second wife, was one of those who vocal ability he practically created. She became also an accomplished musician and substituted at the organ when he was out front rehearsing the choir. She was always with him, even in his morning errands to the bank, read new music to him and performed clerical duties. Many times I have met them strolling along, a devoted pair, most happy in each other's company and their mutual art.

"Years ago the organ needed repair. When the work was done, Dr. Eddy of Pittsburgh was invited to dedicate the new organ. He was a master of technique and gave a brilliant performance. On Dr. Eddy's request, Dr. Bischoff played one number. Dr. Bischoff approached the console happy and smiling as only he could smile, bowing in his own way then played his 'Mocking Bird.' The forest of birds was there, and, the organ was a different organ! Those who heard that 'Mocking Bird' never forgot it and often recalled the occasion.

"One Sunday evening at the close of his long career, Dr. Bischoff sat at the organ, playing softly to himself long after the congregation had dispersed. Our pastor, unknown to Dr. Bischoff, sat in a front pew listening. Finally Dr. Bischoff did what he had never done in all the years he had been organist. He closed the organ. That was his 'good-by,' for he was never able to attend the church again.'

No amount of memorable stories can convey, however, what the Church owed Dr. Bischoff for his thirty-four years of service. His famous concerts were invariably sold out. Reservations had to be made from year to year and were always at a premium. His "Evenings with the Choir" drew equally large crowds. It was Bischoff who introduced to Washington such singers as Douglas Miller, Fred Grant, Walter Humphrey, Minnie Ewan, Edna Scott Smith, and Ruth Thompson. During all his years at First Church he kept alive the concept that the beautiful derives from God.

With his death his friends were determined he have a suitable monument in Rock Creek cemetery where he is buried. Led by Daniel Fraser, Col. John Tweedale, and J. Walter Humphrey, these friends raised \$1,500 for an appropriate marker.

The next three successors of Dr. Bischoff had the misfortune to be constantly compared with the great man. None stayed very long. They were William W. Whiddit (1910-1911), W. T. Taber (1912-1913), and William Stansfield (1914-1919). Of Stansfield's successor Dr. Charles G. Abbot has this reminiscence:

"At about that time, Mr. Hugh Wright and I stirred up a hornet's nest! Dr. James Gordon was dissatisfied with the music. A good English organist, who was an uninspired director, had a choir and soloists (some of them 70 years old) who had been there for years. ... I went to the Director of the New England Conservatory. He recommended little Harry Mueller. Harry wrote me from Lexington, Ky., that he thought he was all right, except for his size.

"We engaged him. Then had the disagreeable job of telling the organist and four soloists that they would not be re-engaged. The soprano wept. We put up Harry in the front third story room of our house.... I told Harry not to fill his choir at once, but to have violin or cello soloists with the organ till he got acquainted.

"Then Mrs. Abbot and I left for South America! When we returned, two months later, Harry had a young choir, the girls all in white waists and black skirts, and all with good voices. He had a solo soprano who dressed like a million dollars, and looked to match. He had the best-voiced bass in Washington, but had to teach him his solos.

"When James Gordon returned from vacation, as he walked towards the pulpit he stopped, took a look at the choir, and said to himself, Wisdom is justified of her works!

"The hornet's nest was still buzzing when I got back, but in a little while Harry won all hearts, not only those of several girls in his choir, but even that of Dr. Chamberlain, who had been the most vociferous of all against us."

Mr. Mueller won a reputation in Washington as a teacher of solfeggio (sight-singing), using the same techniques as Professors Cole and Lewis used at the New England Conservatory of Music. By using the choral works of Bach, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn he aided the serious student in a city which at the time had little training of this caliber available.

Gradually the old organ of 1873 wore out. The Church on June 10, 1920, contracted with the Skinner Organ Company of Boston to build a new organ, to be completed in a year at a cost of \$30,000. Dr. Charles G. Abbot has a story to tell of this:

"When, about 1920, I was raising money for the present organ, a Mr. Woodward, who was an owner of Potomac boats, with his wife came to church regularly, to hear Dr. C. L. Goodell, whom Rev. Johnson and I secured for some months, after Dr. James Gordon left us. Mr. Woodward was not a member with us, but I ventured to ask if he would contribute towards the organ. He said he

would consider it. I thought perhaps he would give \$25. The next Sunday he handed me his check for \$1,000."

Dr. Jason Noble Pierce was an accomplished musician and composer and often produced original music and hymns. He also wrote the words for pageants at the festival seasons of the Church. As pastor, he encouraged and developed the musical activities of the Church. It was his suggestion [that chimes were bought for the new organ, installed by the I.C.Y.C. Club as a gift. In 1925, when the Negro contralto Marian Anderson was just getting her start, and finding it difficult to secure engagements, Dr. Pierce introduced her to Washington through a First Church concert.

Upon the departure of Harry Mueller in 1924, Dr. Pierce engaged Mrs. Ruby Smith Stahl as soprano soloist and choir director. She remained for twenty-one years, resigning in the summer of 1945. During much of her stay Paul DeLong Gable was organist (later becoming supervisor of public school music in the District of Columbia), Mrs. Dorothy Halbach was engaged as alto soloist, and Dale Hamilton was the bass soloist, so that First Church had a paid professional quartet in addition to a volunteer choir of about 70 voices 30 men, 40 women.

Mrs. Stahl knew good music. Her selection of numbers to be sung brought many lovers of musical excellence to the services. During the Coolidge years her solos were eagerly awaited. She developed the choir to the point that a capella singing was generally used. She got the Washington Missionary College interested in doing the Messiah under her lead. From time to time she brought in famous organists for concerts, or outstanding college choral groups, as Oberlin.

Howard Stone Anderson knew his mind about a replacement for Mrs. Stahl. The ministers of the other downtown churches with whom he was most intimate were Edward Hughes Prude (First Baptist), Clarence W. Crawford (Calvary Baptist), and Peter Marshall (New York Avenue Presbyterian). All three had graduates of the Westminster Choir College as their "Ministers of Music." All three had top-notch musical programs.

Just as many churches around 1900 tried to get Bischoff-trained personnel, in the 1940's the fame of Dr. John Finley Williamson, the Westminster director, had become nationwide. Starting in Dayton, Ohio, he had transferred his choral school to Princeton in 1929. Williamson was a genius. He believed in a graded choir program for a church starting with the six year old children and going on through high school. He believed in a voice training program for choir members. He believed in using the music of the masters, rather than first-rate words with second-rate tunes. When Williamson was asked to nominate someone for the First Church vacancy, his choice was Whitmore L. Hall, Westminster class of 1933. In September 1945, Mr. Hall began the work which has brought much acclaim to the Church over the years.

Actually, in securing the services of Whitmore Hall the Church got a bonus in Genevieve Hall, his wife and likewise a member of the 1933 Westminster class. Mrs. Hall, to keep close to the musical activity she enjoys, has conducted the various junior choirs which practice on Sundays while the worship services are in progress.

When Mr. Hall came to First Church the choir library contained about 930 anthems (although a

good many were missing). To this repertoire over 20 years he has added about 200 more numbers. With one more "Westminster choir" in Washington, it was possible for the First Church choir to combine with the others and with orchestral accompaniment for concerts at Constitution Hall as part of a National Symphony series. The choir has given concerts as well at the Sylvan Theatre, the National Gallery of Art and joined with other choirs for special services, as at Thanksgiving and Christmas. The Easter music was especially notable when numbers were used requiring trumpet and tympani accompaniment.

At a choir banquet in 1948 Mr. Hall received his most-used sobriquet from toastmaster Malcolm Rigby "Simon Legree of 10th and G." Thereafter whenever Mr. Hall would ask that the choir do a number "once more" at rehearsal the loud whisper "Simon Legree" would ricochet merrily through the singers. Many a choir banquet has been a zestful occasion. Mr. Hall likes to have at least fifty good voices in his choir. With the population mobility that one associates with Washington, and a downtown church on top of that, he has been faced with a constant recruitment problem. This was eased for a number of years when he was engaged to lead the Pentagon Chorus, composed of Department of Defense employees, which proved to be a source he could draw upon.

One of the most common reactions of past and present choir members is the extent to which the choir has served as a "matrimonial agency." During Mr. Hall's years over a score of weddings have taken place between persons who met at choir.

With the planning of the construction of the new church edifice in 1958, the question immediately arose whether the old Bischoff Memorial Organ, built by the Skinner Company of Boston, could be economically moved. When a subcommittee of the Church Building Council, headed by Mr. Hall, advised it could not be, the Church authorized the purchase of a new organ. In the ensuing investigation, it was decided to purchase from Casavant Freres, Ste. Hyacinthe, Canada. This firm has been making organs for a hundred years and fabricates all parts in its factory. The choice of the Casavant has been popular with the congregation. The old organ was of the "movie" type, with considerable soft metal in the pipes. The new organ has a purity of tone, classic in its transparency and clarity of sound. There are forty-two ranks of pipes and the full organ can make the sanctuary melodically reverberate with its percussive power.

In the fall of 1965 Mr. Hall will have served First Church twenty years. Those who love good music wish him to remain twenty more.

# VII

## Church Organizations

AFTER A HUNDRED-YEAR PERIOD First Church has fostered many organizations and considerable loyalty has been engendered for their worthwhile undertakings. One continuously existing organization throughout the entire century has been the Sunday School. The Sunday School, by all accounts, seems to have had varying degrees of independence. As an example, for a long time it held its own annual meeting apart from the annual meetings of the Church. The Superintendent of the Sunday School was allowed great freedom in the selection of teachers, purchase of literature, the formulation of the curriculum, the promotion of rallies, pageants, picnics and musical exercises, all of which in turn were based upon an essentially separate budget. The budget income was derived from Sunday School offerings. What was left over, after administrative expenses were met, was given to the Church treasurer to be devoted to the Church's benevolences.

The Sunday School, with few exceptions, has been led by an able Superintendent. For many years the Superintendent was elected at the annual meeting of the Sunday School, although in practice each Superintendent tended to find his own replacement. Since it was a responsible position that could require a great many hours of work, the incumbent was carefully chosen and often held no other church position.

The Sunday School was organized by public notice on October 8, 1865, and started out by enrolling a hundred members. This was mostly an adult group recruited from downtown residents. It is difficult for a person belonging to the small Sunday School of 1965 to realize that from 1865 until about 1925 the Sunday School membership was about two-thirds as large as that of the church.

Superintendents during the first twenty-five years were General Charles Howard, Alfred Wood, General George Balloch, Dr. O. F. Presbrey, and Weston Flint. Of those early years, Alfred Wood has written:

"The effects of the war were [still] fresh in our minds; shoulder straps were numerous in our Sabbath school .... many representing high rank. The atmosphere of the camp and the boarding house pervaded our audience."

In the early years, too, the curriculum simply consisted of going through a book in the Bible, covering as many verses as a class could cover in a Sunday session. When one book was finished,

the teacher started another. In the classes for young children great emphasis was placed on the memorization of selected verses. By 1890 the Sunday School had about five hundred members and income was exceeding expenses by about \$275 a year.

The largest Sunday School class was the adult class taught for many years by Samuel Gardner. Trained as a minister, he served in the Civil War as a chaplain. After the war he was active in the Freedmen's Bureau in Alabama, where in 1868 an attempted assassination nearly succeeded. Clearly it was tried by someone who resented Gardner's work with the Negroes. Coming to Washington he rose high in the ranks of the then Internal Revenue Service. A great friend of Bischoff's, for years he headed the First Church Music Committee, having an uncommon appreciation of good music.

For this period Walter Alien has left some stories of how it felt to participate in a large, active Sunday School:

"The rostrum of the Sunday School was a foot-high platform about six feet square at the west end of the room. There was no gallery or interfering posts. We had gas-lighting, 44 classes and about 600 members at one time. I remember taking attendance records above 400, when I substituted for the Secretary. Classes were individualized by forming squares of benches, like old-fashioned family pews in some churches. All studied the same lesson and sang the same songs, except the infant class, which had its own repertoire. The great and beautiful 'Gospel Bells' was my favorite, embodying, as it did, 'For God so loved the world, that his only Son He gave.' After opening exercises, the Adult Bible Class adjourned to the Southeast Gallery; the infant class to the corner room; now kitchen; later to the East Parlor, with as high as 60 attendants. Some mothers sat in the rear of the room 'the better to see you, my dear' and occasionally help in caring for the little ones, too small to safely travel the stairways.

"Frequently, small orchestras were formed to help in the music. Big Elphonzo Youngs, son of the Church treasurer, played his beautiful cornet, and Prof. O. B. Bullard and his violin was a nucleus about which others came and went. When he grew old, his violin squeaked a lot, sometimes on the wrong tone but seldom more than a bar behind. He stayed at his playing until nearly 90. He had a sweet, womanly wife, who taught parlor organ in his 'Conservatory of Music.' They were a tiny but interesting couple of willing workers. Unfortunately, he would not transfer his membership from his home state. Shortly before he died, Prof. Bullard arose in prayer-meeting and discoursed for about twenty minutes very intelligently, as if receiving a sudden gift of tongue. I do not remember him ever speaking in meeting prior to that time. We were all undoubtedly impressed by his words and the incident.

"The Library Committee was composed of a scientist, who wanted only scientific works, a lady who did not believe in fiction, another who was normal, the Superintendent, who was discreet and politically-minded, and myself, who liked to read readable books. We managed to add a lot of modern books, in driblets, compile and issue a catalog, after many hours of my time (there were over 750 books), dispose of worn-put books and have others rebound. Ten Nights in a Barroom,' 'Sanford and Merton' and the 'Elsie Books' were very popular. The last, ruled off the shelves of the city library, as not literary, contained neither smut nor sexy hints. Their literary value appealed to

the children of clean minds, even if not recognized by some adults whose pure hearts had become a bit confused with the controversies of life.

"As might be expected, once a year the Sunday School paraded to the auditorium for juvenile services. Led by the Superintendent, it descended the staircases and entered from the vestibule, especially after the intermediate glass doors were installed forward of the parlors, to the tune of 'Onward Christian Soldiers,' care being taken, after one embarrassing experience, to see that the entry was not made on the line: "See the mighty host advancing, Satan leading on.' "

During the period 1890-1915, notable Superintendents were Prof. George Cummings (who also taught at Howard), Jerome F. Johnson, Albert Wood, Carleton R. Ball, Rev. S. R. Swift, and Rev. Alfred Dumm. They presided over a Sunday School numbering about seven hundred persons. This period was notable for two adult classes, one taught by Rev. John Ewell, professor at Howard University, and the other taught by Justice David Brewer. The Brewer class met in the rear of the church auditorium and Brewer selected whatever subject was closest to his heart at the time. Brewer was trained as an educator, as well as a lawyer, and was a gifted pedagogue. A class that included such highly educated men as Oldroyd, Skinner, Paul, Abbot, Ball, Fairfield, Chatfield, and Fraser required a teacher of talent. The Ewell class was strong on the social gospel, then being preached by Walter Rauschenbusch. Ewell and Brewer died within a few days of each other in 1910.

Walter Alien's memories of this period remind one how timeless and universal such memories are:

"Every Christmas there was a special entertainment for the Sunday School children. The windows between auditorium and Sunday School were utilized by opening the middle one, enabling Santa Claus to enter the chimney from the gallery unnoticed and descend to a fireplace, from whence he issued with a load of candy in boxes for the children. Sometimes there were also presents, especially for the infant class. The program was amplified by less important items preceding the arrival of Santa Claus, interest in whom was spurred by the receipt of pseudo telegrams of progress from the North Pole. As he had his own conveyance and traveled by air, he was never bothered by lack of snow or the strikes of airport and transit employees for higher wages. There was singing and reciting and sometimes tableaux in which little reluctant dragons and even littler willing girls displayed more or less talent and beauty.

"On one occasion, we put on an entertainment in the Sunday School room. We obtained large garrison flags from the War Department to decorate the room and presented a program intended as a historical review. We made the grand mistake of spreading two flags as platform drapes, so that the singers, who were not aware of a rear entrance to the platform, stood on the floor at some distance from the spot intended. The highlight of the program was a recitation by Blakeslee Johnson: 'A hundred years ago,' in a very singsong fashion, no expression, but very clear as to the words. We offset it by heavy applause.

"Once we had a large exhibition of rugs and other household articles, lasting several days. As it was a big job to carry them back and forth from safe storage, they were left spread out in the Sunday School room, and my Father and I stayed overnight as a precaution against burglary; they

being valued upwards of \$10,000. No one thought to furnish us cots so we napped in chairs. Had burglars come, I suppose we were to smother them with rugs, as there was no phone or alarm handy nor firearms with us."

An unusual class for the 1910-1929 years was the Delta Class, with a motto taken from *Philippians* 3:13-14:

"But one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before; I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ."

Taught by William Knowles Cooper, General Secretary of the YMCA, most of its members were young men who sought discussion. Class materials in the beginning were largely prepared by Leon E. Truesdell of the Census Bureau. Men like Edwin C. Blanchard, Edwin D. Burchard, and E. Donald Preston were the backbone of this group.

In more recent times the Sunday School curriculum materials have been supplied by the denomination, except for the adult classes. These materials have been of a high order. It is generally conceded that a Sunday School scholar who carefully reads the material supplied him will know a good deal about the Bible, Jesus, Christian doctrine and ethics. In more recent times, however, the size of the Sunday School has drastically shrunk. This is part of the phenomenon of First Church being a downtown church, away from the suburbs where the children are. Mrs. Elias Alvord, during this time, lavished her time upon a notable Bible class for women and earned a devoted following. Another adult class, known as the Christian Forum, has been taught by Everett O. Alldredge. This class has devoted considerable time to Tillich, the Niebuhrs, Barth, Buber, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Bultman, and Bonhoeffer. During more recent times, too, the Sunday School no longer being fiscally self-sufficient, has been supported from Church funds. A Board of Religious Education was established within the Church organization in 1931 to give guidance and leadership to the Sunday School. Modern day superintendents have been Edwin Burchard, E. Donald Preston, Martin D. Schram, and (more recently) Ernest Will, although as was previously noted, from 1925 to 1937, Miss Nell Berghout served as a paid Director of Religious Education. It was hoped that bringing in a professional worker to head the Sunday School effort would so increase the quality of the class work that parents would not leave First Church.

The second major organization within the church has been the Women's Society. A church without a Women's Society is a boat without oars. Almost needless to say, the work of the women hasn't always been organized into a single operating unit. For fifty years there were (1) a Ladies Aid Society, which met at 11:00 A.M. on the second Tuesday of each month and which undertook a host of local tasks, including much fund-raising for benevolences; (2) a Ladies Foreign Missionary Society, which met on the third Tuesday of each month and looked to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions for meeting materials and study aids; (3) a Ladies Home Missionary Society, which met on the fourth Tuesday monthly and looked to the American Home Missionary Society for literature spelling out where help was needed and the kind and degree of help; (4) a Mission Circle, which relied upon the American Missionary Association for program guides and policy statements, and met monthly.

With the eclipse of the American Missionary Association early in this century the Mission Circle ceased to exist. Shortly thereafter the two missionary societies merged. Then in 1924 Mrs. Jason Noble Pierce convinced the Ladies Aid Society and the Ladies Missionary Society that they also ought to merge. While the demarcation of effort between the various women's groups was workable enough, nevertheless they tended to have the same membership and coordination on dates and program emphases between different sets of officers was not always effectively arranged.

In looking back over the years it is amazing how high the calibre of leadership the various women's activities received. For the first twenty-five years, it was Mrs. E. W. Robinson, Mrs. Danforth Nichols, Mrs. William Hooper, Mrs. Alonzo Chatfield, Mrs. Otis Presbrey, Mrs. Lucretia Kendall, and the two Mrs. Whittleseys; later it was Emily Cook, Mary Story, Mary Rugg, Ella Morrison, Mrs. Elphonzo Youngs, Mrs. Velma Barber, and Mrs. Jerome Johnson. In more recent times one ought to name Mrs. Elias Alvord, Mrs. David Williams, Mrs. Samuel Hallett, Mrs. Lester Fay, Mrs. Martin Schram, Mrs. Walter Britt, Mrs. E. Donald Preston, Mrs. A. O. Van Wyen, and Mrs. Clair Lemmon.

Rather than try to give a summary of what the Women's Society has done and does, consider this typical report for 1955. Any other year would have done as well for illustration, so 1955 was almost selected by lot.

#### "REPORT FOR CALENDAR YEAR 1955"

"The theme for our study and work this year has been 'Out of the Heart of the Gospel Stewards in His Service.' Programs have been developed around certain areas of study The City Church, The Christian Mission in a Revolutionary World, Indian Americans.

"To review briefly our programs

January	'Your Responsibility in Today's World,' Mrs. Howard Hyde
February	Movie: 'Of These My Brethren'
March	'The Christian Plus in a Global World,' Mrs. Gerald Winfield
April	'Man and God in the City,' Dr. Vladimir Hartman
May	'What is Your Hurry?' Mrs. Clarence Nelson
September	'Our Church in a World of Revolution,' presented by our own women
November	'Stewardship,' Dr. D. Elton Trueblood
December	'Bundles for Christmas,' Drama, Mrs. Thomas Johnson and our own women

"Each meeting has had a worship service, many of them based on 'Letters to Young Churches,' a translation of Paul's letters by J. B. Phillips. The wonderful musical talent available in our church has added beauty to these services.

"It has been the endeavor of the Women's Society through its Corresponding Secretary to write to each family from which a member of our group has this year joined the Church Triumphant. We have also tried to send notes of congratulation to families where new life has come. We share each

other's sorrows and joys, and if we fail to express ourselves to those most intimately concerned, it is because, for some reason, we have not known what has happened.

"The World Fellowship Committee has endeavored to bring before the Society the vast amount of study material available on the current study theme, also the work and needs of our Christian missionaries around the world. Specific work done: Two dozen receiving blankets and 100 dresses and panties for children at the nursery at Nagpada Neighborhood House, Bombay; several scrapbooks containing suitable designs for use by the missions in India were made; curtains, drapes, and slipcovers were sent to Mrs. Long; thousands of Christmas cards were processed; two Afghans were sent to Korea; boxes of clothing to Southern Union, Church World Service, Korea, and American Indians. The committee also planned the farewell program for Leeds and Gladys Gulick before they returned to work in Japan. A Christmas gift of \$100 was sent to Mrs. Long. Mrs. Forrest Pauli was sent as a delegate to the missions conference at Silver Bay last summer. "In the past the Women's Gift has been \$100 in the Women's Society budget. This year it was omitted from the budget and made a personal thank offering by each member. These gifts were dedicated at a service at the March evening meeting. We rejoice that \$178.50 was given this year.

"The Community Service Committee has kept a watchful eye on the Northwest Settlement House. Hats were collected for millinery classes. Cigar boxes in which the children in the nursery could store their belongings were gathered. No. 10 size cans and tuna fish cans were collected to be used by the children in the summer day-camp for their cookouts. Articles were collected for the White Elephant sale at the House. At Christmas time, gifts were purchased for the teen-age boys and girls. The staff at the Settlement House was also remembered. The Business Women's Fellowship wrapped the gifts. The M.R.S. Circle sponsors a sewing class for women at the House, ably taught by Mrs Grace B. Landergren and assisted by Miss Jean Bennett.

"The Friendly Service Committee completed the quota assigned to our Society by the Middle Atlantic Conference. Layettes, cotton balls, adhesive plaster, bed gowns, and bed slippers were sent to Ryder Memorial Hospital in Puerto Rico. Kitchen towels, blankets and used clothing went to Defiance College. Receiving blankets and warm clothing went to Dr. Santi in Naples, Italy. Two large cartons of shoes for children went to Puerto Rico. Warm clothing and hand knit sweaters went to Korea. Christmas gifts and more sweaters and mittens went to the Fort Berthold Indians. Most of the packing, sorting and sewing was done at the all-day work meetings.

'The Social Action Committee has been active, laying its emphasis on education. It has a representative on the Inter-church Slum Clearance Committee. A project started by this committee and finished under the Church's Social Action Committee was a statement written to the subcommittee on District of Columbia appropriations. This statement deplored the cut in the D.C. budget for 1955-56 which deprived the youth of the city of certain recreational, healthful, and educational advantages. It recommended restoration of that appropriation. The paper was read at a hearing on April 28.

"The number of members participating in the 'Adventures in Reading' program increased, and a greater number of books was read.

"The Hospital Committee has sponsored the second floor surgical ward at District General Hospital. They have kept it supplied with combs, wash cloths, tooth brushes, toilet articles, scuffles, etc. The scuffles are made by our women. Tray favors were made at our workdays, for special holidays. A Christmas party with cookies, punch, a tree and gifts is an annual affair. Books, magazines, and glasses are supplied by our women.

"The House Committee has kept our equipment in condition and added to it as necessary. They have also planned and served five wedding receptions.

"The Flower Committee has again brought the beauty of flowers to the Sunday services of our church. With the assistance of the Deaconesses and the Junior Deacons, flowers have been taken to the sick, shut-ins, and bereaved. Our thanks go to those who have so generously given memorial flowers.

"The choir robes have been cared for and kept in repair by the Vestment Committee, and new robes made when required. It is hard for the congregation to realize the many hours required to do this.

"An effort has been made by the Membership Committee to contact all women joining our church. The Year-book chairman has done an outstanding piece of work in keeping our membership list up to date with correct addresses and telephone numbers. At the last report there were 274 members of the Society.

"The Congregational Home is one of the concerns of the Society. We give financial help and keep in touch with its needs through our representative on the Board.

"The Hospitality Committee has done much to make the monthly meetings of the Society run smoothly.

"Much of the success of the Work-day meetings has been due to the careful planning of the Project Day chairman, who has carefully coordinated the work and seen that supplies and materials were available.

"The Red Cross Committee is small but there is nothing small about the work they turn out:

Made Layette Blankets (460 hours) . .	115
Made Layette Covers . . . . .	71
Assembled Layettes . . . . .	52
Knitting . . . . .	140 hours
Collected . . . . .	\$65.00
Wrapping Christmas Gifts . . . . .	30 hours

"The Wednesday Family Night Dinners have a very important place in the life of our church. They have been served by the Circles under the direction of the First Vice President and the Church Hostess. Without our Hostess we could not serve all the meals we do. Two of the outstanding dinners this fall were, the one in recognition of the Whitford Halls' ten years of service in the

church, and the one observing the 90th anniversary of the founding of the church.

"There has been a very wonderful response to the letters sent to the women of the church by the Pledge Chairman. We are looking forward to the time when all money necessary to carry on the work of the Society will be received through pledges and we can concentrate on work for others. "In September it was decided to omit the Shoppers Luncheons and try doing without a full-time maid. This reduced the budget considerably, so the Ways and Means Committee has had just two money-making projects this fall a Smorgasbord and a Turkey Dinner.

"At the Annual Spring Luncheon in May, 'Woman of the Year' orchids were presented to Mrs. Miriam Alvord and Mrs. Janet Swift, each over 90 years old. Their Christian lives are a challenge to all.

"Attendance at the meetings has been most gratifying. The number of younger women attending grows. Having Mrs. Ella Jonson in charge of the nursery has been a wonderful help in that way.

"It is impossible in this report to list all the things done by the Circles and individual members. Our appreciation and gratitude goes to each and every one.

'The present list of Committee Chairmen follows:

Adventures in Reading	Mrs. Robert Trumbull
Audit	Miss Charlotte Kimball
Community Service	Mrs. Katherine Denton
Congregational Home	Mrs. Howard Lord
District Gen'l. Hospital	Mrs. Willard Griffing
Finance	Miss Laura Hammond
	Mrs. Harvey Goddard
Flowers	Mrs. Carl Izzard
Flowers-Summer	Mrs. Malcolm Rigby
Friendly Service	Mrs. Edmond Garvey
Hospitality	Mrs. William P. Benson
House	Mrs. Samuel G. Hallett
Membership	Mrs. Martin D. Schram
Pledges	Mrs. Harvey Goddard
Program	Mrs. E. Donald Preston
Project Day	Mrs. Michael Cherwek
Red Cross	Mrs. Robert Howard
Social Action	Mrs. Warren Burgess
Vestments	Miss Caroline Bennett
Ways and Means	Mrs. Ernest Lundberg
Woman's Gift	Mrs. May Flickinger
World Fellowship	Mrs. Robert Lorenz
Worship	Mrs. Charles Parker
Year Book	Mrs. Fred Hagger

"And so we come to the end of 1955 and look ahead with this prayer in our hearts:

"Teach us, good Lord, to serve Thee as Thou deservest;

To give and not to count the cost;

To labor and not to ask for any reward

Save that of knowing that we do Thy will,

Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

HENRIETTA C. FAY, President

No account of the Women's Society would be complete that did not mention the Circles. Although varying in number and in size, they permit members of the Society to meet on a neighborhood basis, to be more social in nature, and to undertake projects supporting the larger work of the Society. Any mention, too, of the Women's Society inevitably brings to mind the Church Hostess, who presides over the Church Kitchen and assisted by a volunteer crew furnishes many a nourishing meal during any given year. From 1928 to 1945 Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson served as Hostess. "Tommy," as she was affectionately known, was a German lady married to a Norwegian professor at the University of Maryland. Since 1952 the Hostess has been Mrs. Grace Bennett Landergren, graduate of the first home economics class of Cornell University in 1911. Mrs. Landergren has deep family roots in First Church, joining in 1914, and has been a professional restaurant manager most of her life. Not only does she bring great competence to the work, but she participates in a number of other Church activities.

Traditionally there has been a young people's group that met Sunday evening prior to Church services. After evening services were halted on Sundays in the 1950's, the young people did not need to start so early. From 1870 to 1889 the youth organization was called the Young Peoples Union (YPU). In 1890 it changed its name to the Young Peoples Society of Christian Endeavor (YPSCE) and affiliated itself with the National Christian Endeavor Movement. This was only eight years after Dr. Francis Clark started the Movement in his Congregational Church in Portland, Maine.

Christian Endeavor came to First Church in the person of William H. Pennell, who was one of Dr. Clark's charter members and one of the most dedicated of men. In 1895 he brought recognition to First Church by being elected national president of the United Society of Christian Endeavor, and he succeeded in bringing the C. E. national convention to Washington in 1896. He was much in demand throughout the United States as a speaker.

With Pennell on the scene, it is small wonder that the Christian Endeavor movement, for some twenty-five years at least, was very strong at First Church. A senior society of C. E. was formed, and an intermediate C. E. came into existence, along with the YPSCE. Many of the old C. E. records are still in existence, including a moving memorial service for Mr. Pennell, attesting to the strength of the organization, the calibre of the outside speakers brought in, and the financial support it enjoyed from the membership. National C. E. literature was used in building programs and delegates to the National meetings were faithfully elected. With its motto, "For Christ and the Church" the organization did much to prepare young people for active service in the church. The Sunday School survived the shrinkage of young people in the church which began in the late 1920's. The Christian Endeavor Society could not. After several years in the early 30's without a

young people's group in the church, the TUXIS and Scrooby Clubs were started by Dr. H. S. Anderson, as related in chapter XII.

No short history can do justice to the score of other organizations that have been on the First Church scene for varying lengths of time. From 1867 to 1916 the Soldiers Union was active for Civil War veterans. At its height it had about one hundred members, with Chaplain J. H. Bradford at its head. It was host to the G.A.R. encampments hi Washington which met in First Church, and was host to General Howard whenever he returned to Washington. For example, he headed the veterans' units at the presidential inaugurations of 1901, 1905 and 1909. It kept active liaison with the Pension Office for old friends who could not be in Washington. For the most part it was a social organization that re-fought the Civil War every time another famous general's memoirs appeared. Another social organization of note is the Better Halves Club, originally for young couples to meet monthly, started by Mr. and Mrs. Whitford Hall in 1946. The Business Women's Fellowship, started in 1947 as an outgrowth of the Young Women's Club, is for professional women who can not participate actively in the day meetings of the Women's Society. It has done a great deal for the Church through its gifts.

# VIII

## A Missionary Church

**W**HATEVER ELSE MAY BE SAID of First Congregational Church, it has rarely lacked missionary zeal. How this zeal helped in the establishment of Howard University has already been related. General O. O. Howard, William R. Hooper, William F. Bascom, Llewellyn Deane, Dwight H. Bliss, Silas H. Hodges, Rev. E. W. Robinson, and Rev. W. A. Thompson, to name some of the individuals in the early Church who were missionary-centered, consistently maintained that half of the Church's budget and effort should be in the missionary field, either home or abroad. At a time when so much of the resources in the Church were going toward building an edifice and equipping it, such statements may well have been regarded as hopelessly ideal, and of course the goal was never reached. Still from the very beginning there was a monthly missionary concert and this rule on special collections:

"On the second Sabbath of each alternate month, a public collection shall be taken up for the following objects of Christian benevolence, viz: Foreign Missions in January; Home Missions in March; American Bible Society in May; American Tract Society (Boston) in July; American Missionary Association ... in September; Congregational Church Building Fund in November. . . .

"At the close of each communion a collection shall be taken up to defray expenses and for the benefit of the poor."

This last rule was the basis for the Deacon's Fund which has remained unchanged during the hundred years the church has been in existence.

In 1883, Frances Hooper, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William R. Hooper, sailed for Japan as the missionary from First Church. With her departure a Mission Club was established, which, for thirty-five years, paid most of her salary and arranged for her homecoming when on furlough. In 1888, Miss Hooper married Dr. Jerome D. Davis, an outstanding missionary already in Japan, who was noted for his vigorous work in higher Christian education there. A sister of Frances Hooper, Martha, was the most active member in the First Church Mission Club. She twice took trips around the world seeing as many missions as she could on those trips, and visiting her sister in Japan.

Upon the return of Frances Hooper Davis, First Church voted to support Dr. and Mrs. Lorin S. Gates who had been in Sholapur, India, since 1875. They continued to represent First Church at the Marathi Mission until Dr. Gates' assassination by a Moslem mob in September 1922. The Church happily saw a good deal of the Gates family during their 1920-21 furlough.

Dr. Gates' wife, Frances, was the sister of Henry A. Hazen who was for years a well-beloved

member of the church, Superintendent of the Sunday School, and a professor of meteorology at the Weather Bureau. They were the children of India missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Allen Hazen. With the death of Dr. Gates the next foreign field representatives in First Church were Dr. Edward Field Parsons and his wife, Marion Tucker. They were commissioned at an impressive service on February 1, 1925, attended by the Coolidges, and were sent to the Williams-Porter Hospital in Techow, North China. In March 1931, after a little over six years of fruitful service, Dr. Parsons died in his own hospital.

The Parsons' support by First Church was only part of the support they received, as arranged by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. They were supported by other churches as well. The value to the missionaries to be supported by several churches rather than by the Board was that it gave them a more immediate tie to people interested in their particular welfare. It also made the individual church more aware of the challenge of the foreign field. On November 12, 1931, the Rev. Loy Lewis Long and his wife, Edna, were chosen as missionaries of First Church on the same basis as the Parsons. They had already been at Ahmednager, India, for some years. Mr. Long, at the time of his 1936 furlough, was ordained to the Congregational ministry by a Council which met in Washington on April 21 of that year. The Longs remained in India until August 1956, when they terminated a quarter century of missionary service.

They were replaced in October 1956 as First Church's field representatives by the Rev. and Mrs. Leeds Gulick, who had become members of First Congregational Church in 1947, while on leave of absence from their missionary assignments. Leeds was a fourth generation missionary, born in Osaka, Japan, and appointed by the American Board as English teacher at Doshisha University in 1921. Gladys Ramsey, his American college sweetheart, joined him in 1922 and they were married in Japan. Having served a number of missionary appointments in Japan, they were in 1955 again at Doshisha University, Leeds on the faculty of the School of Theology, and Gladys as an English teacher in the Girls High School. In 1960 they were transferred to Okinawa, where Leeds served as Field Representative and Treasurer for the three-denomination Okinawa Inter-board Committee where they continued until their retirement in 1964. Throughout their service their unfailing equanimity and contagious good humor made their home a popular gathering place for the students among whom they worked as well as for other missionaries who sought their counsel, guidance and encouragement.

At the time of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Church, William R. Hooper computed during that time the Church had raised \$454,718. Of this, \$336,943 was for the local expenses of the church, while \$117,775 went to benevolences. This would be a 26% portion of the budget being allotted to mission work. This percentage remained almost unchanged until 1931, when the great economic depression made its impact felt, and the benevolences figure dropped to about 12%. Both Dr. Howard S. Anderson and Dr. Carl H. Kopf, who were deeply interested in the spread of the Gospel, did all they could to get the benevolences figure back to the old mark, but they were not successful, although they did get up to a 20% figure.

In the Anderson period the competition for funds came from reviving the Endowment Fund, while in the Kopf period the competition came from enlarging the Building Fund to the point where it

could be the take-off point for a new church edifice.

In the early days of First Church the principal denominational instrument for missionary work was the American Missionary Association which concerned itself with Negro education. General Howard was a valuable fund raiser for this Association. Another denominational interest was the American Congregational Union which provided funds or loans to get new churches on their feet. By 1880 the Church was giving most of its funds to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the American Home Missionary Society.

General Whittlesey, Dr. Patton, Justice Brewer, Dr. Jay Stocking, Dr. Merrill E. Gates, and Dr. Kopf were at one time or another Directors of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Dr. Anderson, E. Donald Preston, and the Rev. David Colwell (currently) have served as Directors of the Board of Home Missions, now the Board for Homeland Ministries. Since these were the highest positions in the denominational missionary structure, it speaks well for First Church that it was so often represented on these Boards.

Another area in which First Church has made a missionary impact is that of being "Mother Church" in the Washington area. Mr. James B. Johnson of First Church on January 1, 1873, was commissioned by the American Missionary Association on the recommendation of General Howard, to superintend a Lincoln Mission Sunday School at 11th and R Streets, N.W. Johnson was then treasurer of Howard University. It is impossible to say how much time he gave to this effort in starting the school and keeping it going until March 10, 1881, when it could be organized as the Lincoln Memorial Church. This name was later changed to the Lincoln Memorial Congregational Temple. The Lincoln Mission was in an area known as "Hell's Bottom" and nearly all of the corps workers assisting Johnson were recruited from First Church. With the call of the Rev. S. P. Smith as pastor of the Lincoln Memorial Church in 1881, the support of First Church to this enterprise could be lessened.

During the same time that Mr. Johnson and his co-workers were working at the Lincoln Mission another mission school for Negro children was started in the First Church building on Sunday afternoon. While the attendance at this school never exceeded 300, whereas the attendance at the Lincoln Mission sometimes ran to 1,000, nevertheless, the First Church Mission headed by the Whittleseys was impressive in its influence. A third Negro mission was guided by the Presbys. In 1891 several hundred Negroes withdrew from a Methodist church in the city and approached Dr. Newman for help in organizing a Congregational church. Dr. Newman immediately got in touch with Dr. Rankin, then at Howard University, and the Rev. Sterling Brown to work with Mr. Charles Young of the former Methodist church. This led to the establishment of People's Congregational Church at 4704 15th Street, N.W., and the calling of the Rev. J. H. Daly as the first pastor. Because of Dr. Newman's and Dr. Rankin's interest, First Church contributed heavily to the new church, especially to the erection of its church edifice during 1894.

The next church getting help was one at first called the Church of the Pilgrims in May, 1907, but then changed to Ingram Memorial Congregational Church after a very generous gift by Mr. O. H. Ingram of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. First Church contributed the money for the site at 10th Street and Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., and in conjunction with Mount Pleasant Congregational

Church, pledged support to the salary of the first pastor, Dr. J. W. Frizzell. First Church continued this annual subvention of funds until Ingram was self-sustaining. The second pastor at Ingram was the Rev. Lewis E. Purdum who transferred there from an assistant pastorate at First Church. The next church to receive help was Cleveland Park Congregational Church at 34th and Lowell Streets, N.W. Founded in 1917, largely through the financial support of First Church, and under the guiding pastorate of Dr. L. L. Royce, this church initially met in a portable chapel. Part of the impetus to its founding was the fact that First Church, then crowded by persons wanting to hear Dr. James L. Gordon, seemed to be getting too big.

In 1957, Mr. E. Donald Preston of First Church was active in the establishment of the Congregational Christian Church of Fairfax County in Annandale, Virginia, which called as its first pastor the Rev. Hubert S. Beckwith, who had served as the assistant pastor at First Church under both Dr. Anderson and Dr. Kopf.

At the time of the Conference of Nations at The Hague in Holland in 1907, Justice John M. Harlan of the United States Supreme Court, was a member. His secretary was Mr. Will C. Lewis, an active member of First Church. After the close of the conference Mr. Lewis spent some time in Paris where he was astonished to find no English-speaking church. With the help of friends at the American Embassy, Mr. Lewis established the American Church at Paris. Upon returning to Washington he kept soliciting his First Church friends to support the Parisian church.

Any account of First Church missionary interests would be incomplete without mention of Mrs. May L. Flickinger and her annual mailing of Christmas cards to mission stations in all parts of the world. The number of cards sent each year after the first year (1954) has increased to the point where it is almost beyond the capacity of volunteer help to handle the cards. Many Christmas cards, of course, do not lend themselves to be used for this purpose and many others have to be trimmed and personal messages removed.

# X

## Woodrow, Stocking, and Gordon

**T**HE PERIOD 1907-1919 was one of quiet growth for First Church. It went from 990 members to 1,190, which was commensurate with Washington's growth. Giving reached a new high. The Church was blessed with a strong pulpit. No great problems were encountered.

For some reason First Church found securing a successor to Dr. Newman a difficult task. The Pulpit Supply Committee, composed of Aaron N. Skinner, Daniel Fraser, Alvin M. Lothrop, William Lamborn, Isaac Clark, John Tweedale, Miss Anna W. Fairfield, and Mrs. George Whittlesey on May 10, 1906, recommended that Rev. Henry H. Tweedy of Bridgeport, Connecticut, be called, but the Church would not assent. This rejection led Rev. Charles H. Everest, the Assistant Pastor, to believe he might be acceptable. On February 1, 1907, his services were terminated with the further notification that he was not wanted for the permanent pastor. This led to some acrimony.

On February 14, 1907, gathering sentiment in favor of Dr. Samuel H. Woodrow led the Committee to report his name. A unanimous call was forthwith extended. Dr. Woodrow accepted and his pastorate began on May 1, the service of installation being held on November 5. At that service Dr. Nehemiah Boynton delivered the sermon.

Dr. Woodrow was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Bates College, and then got his theological training at Yale Divinity School. His first parish was at Westerly, Rhode Island, followed by Plymouth Church in Providence. He came to First Church from Hope Church in Springfield, Massachusetts. In 1899 he authored *Probability and Possibility of Miracles*, well thought of at the time. He was active in the YMCA and the Anti-Saloon League. He was most helpful in getting Ingram Memorial Congregational Church started. Named to the presidency of the Congregational Home Missionary Society, Dr. Woodrow was called upon to travel extensively and speak frequently. He was a delegate to the 1910 World Missionary Conference held in Edinburgh. He felt sure the honor came to him not only because of his missionary zeal but because of First Church's leadership in the "Together Plan," a national denominational drive for funds to put the great denominational societies and boards on a sounder fiscal footing. First Church contributed \$6,000, which was considered unusually good.

Dr. Woodrow was instrumental in getting the "apportionment plan" adopted by the denomination.

Under this system each church had a minimal target to meet in furthering such national work as only the denomination was equipped to do.

During the Woodrow period electric lights were installed in the church building and a balcony was constructed in the Sunday school room to ease some of the crush of a burgeoning attendance. This work required raising \$12,000, which was done quickly and easily.

In April 1892 Mrs. Lucy Spalding had bequeathed \$100 to the Church. Then in 1909 Mrs. Alma J. Herbert, of Concord, New Hampshire, a former member of the Church, by legacy contributed an additional \$950. At a meeting of the Board of Trustees on December 28, 1909, when the announcement of the Herbert legacy was made, it was decided to take a definite step toward the creation of a permanent reserve fund. In the language of the Minutes, "The Board voted to invest as far as possible the proceeds of the Herbert legacy and the Spalding legacy . . . in a high class bond. . . ." At the next meeting of the Trustees, the chairman reported that he had purchased a \$1,000 Potomac Electric Consolidated 5% Bond for \$1,021.39 including accrued interest. The Trustees then "... directed the Secretary to rent a safe deposit box and place the bond therein for safekeeping." Subsequently, on January 16, 1911, when the first dividends from this investment were received, "The Trustees voted ... to request the Treasurer to deposit them in a separate account to be denominated Endowment Fund." This was the beginning of that Fund.

Twice every Sunday Dr. Woodrow preached to a full church from 1,200 to 1,400 persons at each service. It was the reputation he so swiftly made at First Church which led the Pilgrim Congregational Church in St. Louis to call him in March 1913 to come West. Dr. Woodrow was torn between leaving after six years, especially when he was so urged to stay, but he was convinced that the St. Louis opportunity was the greater challenge. First Church reluctantly accepted the resignation in April.

A Pulpit Supply Committee consisting of Isaac Clark, Charles Abbot, Aaron Skinner, William Cooper, Hugh Thrift, Alfred Wood, William Hyde, Mrs. M. H. Sawyer, and Miss Flora Johnson at once set to find a new pastor. Miss Johnson was the librarian of Howard University and the daughter of James Johnson. On November 20, 1913, the committee reported the name of Jay T. Stocking, of Central Church, Newtonville, Massachusetts. He accepted the call and assumed his position on February 15, 1914. After only a year and a half of strenuous work in the parish, Dr. Stocking resigned, effective July 23, 1915, to accept a call from Union Church, Upper Montclair, New Jersey.

The brevity of Dr. Stocking's service was much regretted by the congregation. A man of great earnestness and ability as a preacher, truly catholic in his theological views, he was quickly given a high place in Washington's admiration and regard. Especially the parish had hoped he would be able to stay on through the fiftieth anniversary celebration, held in November 1915. He did preach the anniversary sermon entitled, "The Unchanging Church," which was printed in the anniversary history. It well depicts the warm emotionalism of which he was a master.

On May 11, 1916, the Church at the behest of Hugh Thrift, reporting for the Pastoral Committee, extended a unanimous call to Dr. James Logan Gordon, of Winnipeg, Canada, to succeed Dr.

Stocking. Dr. Gordon accepted this call and entered upon his duties as pastor October 1, 1916. Born under the shadow of Independence Hall, Philadelphia, in March 1858, Gordon became a newsboy at the age of twelve, so that any schooling he had after that time was through personal application. At the age of twenty he became an invoice clerk at the Wanamaker Department Store. Dissatisfied with life, feeling a religious call, at twenty-eight he became a YMCA secretary in Brooklyn, later served as secretary in Boston, and then as General Secretary for Connecticut. Still not satisfied, he was ordained by the Congregational Church at the age of forty, without benefit of theological training other than the self-administered kind.

His first three pastorates were in Canada St. John's, Toronto, and Winnipeg for his qualifications were not questioned there. Nevertheless the rigors of the Canadian winters gave him trouble and made him desire to return to the United States. He was fifty-six years old when called by First Church.

First Church entered into a unique monetary arrangement with Dr. Gordon. In addition to his basic salary of \$5,000, he was given \$1,000 a year to "be used in such manner as he may see fit for the good of the church." Previous pastors had no such arrangement, nor was one entered into subsequently. The minutes are silent as to the reason.

Mr. E. Donald Preston, one of the few remaining members of the church who was a member during Dr. Gordon's pastorate, writes of him:

"I shall never forget the impression made upon me by Dr. Gordon personally, and by his preaching. He seemed to me to be more like an Old Testament prophet than any preacher I have ever known. A solidly built man, of average height, with a heavy shock of iron gray hair and bushy mustache, with an excellent voice, he put everything he had, mentally and physically, into his preaching. He used notes, but his notes were not understandable to anybody but himself. Red circles, green triangles, blue rectangles, and other reminding figures, together with a few words, filled his note pages. His delivery was dramatic: he marched back and forth across the platform, used effective gestures, and would fix a piercing gaze from under bushy eyebrows on various parts of the congregation. The church was packed to capacity to hear him, Sunday morning and evening. Persons stood the length of the side walls, sat on the front steps leading from main floor to balcony, and filled the platform and balcony of the Sunday School room in back of the church balcony. Firemen checked the services frequently to be sure that aisles were not blocked, and fire regulations observed. Some considered him a sensational preacher. His sermon subjects, widely publicized, certainly were attention catchers: for example, 'Next to the Bible, What Is the Greatest Book in the World?'; but I never came away from a service when he preached without feeling that the Word of God had been preached to me and to a great multitude of others."

Mr. Preston's reference to the difficulty of obtaining seats during Dr. Gordon's pastorate may serve as a reminder that this was one of the factors in leading persons in the Northwest area to start Cleveland Park Congregational Church.

Dr. Gordon's mid-week services were usually featured by a question box, with announcement in advance of the questions he would answer, and these programs aroused great interest and attracted

a large attendance. The membership took a notable increase under his leadership from about 1,125 to about 1,225.

The Church constituency was deeply stirred and influenced by the emotions and activities engendered by the World War. Members and adherents endeavored to meet the problems and duties of the time in the light of the Christian Gospel, and to bring cheer and encouragement, so far as they could, to those actively engaged in the war and to those directly or personally affected by it. The downtown location provided an access to soldiers stationed in or passing through Washington. These young men away from home were a challenge to the congregation to do what it could to place them under good and inspiring influences, if they could be reached, besides administering to their physical and social needs. There was added, of course, the patriotic incentive of giving support to the war effort. And so the boys in uniform were welcomed to attend religious services, and the Christian Endeavor Society held regular Saturday evening socials to brighten up life for the men who were away from home. The Christian Endeavor also conducted services at Fort Myer and other army posts in the Washington area.

Servicemen were also afforded facilities for writing, and other conveniences in the social rooms of the church, and the women cooperated with neighboring churches in holding joint socials for the men, in accordance with the program suggested by the National Council of Congregational Churches.

The women also met to sew for the soldiers, and provided supplies and delicacies for the military hospitals, while the public patriotic meetings and other war activities undertaken were numerous, including various cash contributions from Church collections which were donated to war work. Together with their fellow-citizens in general, members were ecstatic in greeting the coming of peace and in thanking God when the war ended in November 1918.

The churches of the District of Columbia, together with all public meeting places, were closed by order of the District Health officials during the entire month of October 1918, because of the influenza epidemic. This may have swelled the November audiences as the war concluded. New stained-glass memorial windows were installed in the church in 1918. One which was unique in design was "In honor of the Union Veterans of the Civil War." It was due to the zealous efforts of a small group of women who still remembered Howard, Balloch, Whittlesey, Bradford, Tweedale, and the other "Men in Blue" so closely identified with First Church.

Dr. Gordon resigned the pastorate June 28, 1919, to become minister of the First Congregational Church of San Francisco. As he said in his letter to the parish:

"The city of San Francisco, to which your pastor has in the presence of God been called, is, as you are aware, one of the commercial nerve centers of the nation. In that city, destined in a quarter of a century to have a population of a million souls, the future of Protestantism still hangs in the balance."

The Church was indeed sorry to see its pastor go. As was said by the Ecclesiastical Council called to pass on the dissolution of the church-pastor relationship: "He has been the Great Heart of our

fellowship through the expression of his unique genius as preacher and inspirer of men . . . may success wait upon his ministry as he continues to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ." It is probably impossible for a person who never heard Dr. Gordon to get any idea of his style. Excerpts from a 1918 sermon have been picked out as typical of the man and also the time:

#### "OUR WOUNDED HEROES AT WALTER REED"

"In the autobiography of Jean Jacques Rousseau on page 207, of the edition which I possess I find three words, printed in italics: "*I HAVE LIVED*'

"President Eliot of Harvard University has coined a phrase which seems to be solid with meaning, 'The durable satisfactions of life.' This is a veteran's phrase. The words fall naturally from the lips of one who has grown gray in the service of humanity. When the hair has silvered, when we have passed over the hill of life's meridian, when the afternoon shadows begin to lengthen, when our faces are turned toward the Shekinah glories of that One 'whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,' then we begin to meditate upon 'the durable satisfactions of life.'

"Richard Baxter exclaimed, at the close of an eventful career, during which he had found time to write a wonderful volume 'The Saints' Everlasting Rest' 'I have been a pen in God's hands.' George Mac-Donald mused in his declining years: 'If I have put the rosy touch of the sunset into the lives of a few, I have not lived in vain.' Ira D. Sankey remarked to a friend, a year before his death: 'I am old and sick and blind, but they are singing my songs in India, China, Japan and Egypt.' Russell Sage, having lived to the beginning of his eighth decade, affirmed: 'I have built great railroads great continental railroads.' Theodore L. Cuyler, the Grand Old Man of American Presbyterianism, wrote in his Recollections of a Long Life: 'Looking back over a long ministry, I can honestly say, that I have never courted the rich, or, knowingly, neglected the poor.'

"John A. Andrews, the 'war governor' of Massachusetts, in his last farewell message to the world, said: 'I know not what sins I must answer for on the other side, but I know, I have never despised a man because he was poor, ignorant or black.' James Chambers, in reviewing a missionary career of twenty-one years, exultingly exclaims: 'Give me back all its experiences, all its shipwrecks, all its dangers, all its hunger and thirst, all its savage attacks, all its wounds and I will be your missionary.'

We live in deeds, not years.  
In thoughts, not breaths.  
In feelings, not figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart throbs. ;  
He lives most who thinks most,  
Feels the noblest and acts the best.

"Thus we speak, thus we muse, thus we sing, and thus we write concerning 'the durable satisfactions of life.' Shall we not, in the same retrospective spirit, review the past and peer into the future, as we consider 'the durable satisfactions of war' and pay a well-earned tribute to our wounded heroes at 'Walter Reed?'

1. Consider the satisfaction of having fought in a great cause. The Great War was humanity's battle for humanity. That human liberty might be preserved! That Universal freedom might be perpetuated! That the democracy of the world might be safeguarded! That Christianity might survive! That the world's-last and best, civilization should not break down! The Great War was a world war. It was the first conflict in which two great hemispheres clashed. Ten million dead! Twenty-five million wounded! Great provinces blighted and splendid cities laid low. History affords no parallel. To have had the most insignificant part in such a struggle were enough 'honor for mortal.' 'I Was There' were the three words which Napoleon inscribed on the reverse side of a medal on which was inscribed the main facts of a great victory. Let there be no whine, no groan, no complaint, no regret, no sober second-thought. We entered unprepared. What a scramble! What a stampede! Blunders were committed and mistakes were made, but there is glory enough to cover all. Germany has been defeated, the Kaiser dethroned, the invader driven back and barbarism rebuked. What satisfactions should be ours! If the dear old veteran in gray, fifty years after an honorable defeat, can comfort his soul by singing an old song of the Southland, we certainly have reason to write new songs of victory.

"Better the fire upon thee roll,  
Better the blade, the shot, the bowl,  
Than crucifixion of the soul,  
Maryland! My Maryland!

3. Consider the satisfaction of a Great Decision 'Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide.' My boy, you will never be ashamed of the hour when you decided that, somewhere, on the sea, in the air, or on the bomb-torn battlefield, you would have a hand in the great conflict. Before the Lusitania went down, before the hypocrisy of Bernstorff was known, before the Allies had called on America for help, before the seas had been mapped out in zones for the deviltry of the submarine, before the President had called on Congress to declare war, before lots were cast to discover who first should serve as the vanguard of our American Army and Navy you had decided to ask for the honor, the danger and the glory of standing between the bullet and the flag. You will never regret that decision. Like John Huss, at the stake, when called on to recant, our noble men were ready to respond: 'I am here to suffer death!' Till your dying day you will thank God for that decision.

"Had Moses failed to go, had God  
Granted his prayer, there would have been  
For him no leadership to win,  
No pillared fire, no magic rod,  
No wonders in the land of Zin.  
No smiting of the sea, no tears  
Ecstatic shed on Sinai steep,  
No Nebo, with a God to keep  
His burial; only forty years  
Of desert, watching with his sheep.

4. Consider the satisfaction of Great Comradeship. Tennyson sings of Wellington: 'He stood four square to all the winds that blew' The foremost captain of his time.' But what poet, eloquent and musical, shall tell of the heroism of Pershing, Haig, Kitchener, Allanby and Foch? Their names,

and the names of those who served under them, shall be immortalized in an everlasting memorial. It is something to have fought under a great leader. I can imagine Napoleon at Austerlitz; the battle begins just as the golden disk of the rising sun kindles the horizon of the daybreak: 'Behold the sun of Austerlitz!' Listen to Henry of Navarre, at the battle of Ivry (he wore three white plumes). Hear him, as he exclaims, in the heat of battle: 'If the standard should fail, keep my plumes in sight!' The memory of a great leader never dies. The enemies of Imperial Rome assassinated Julius Caesar, but in the hour of his death he seemed to be more alive than ever. Alive! Near! Impending! Enthroned! Glorified and about to appear! The name of the leader never dies, and those who were led shall sleep, forever, beneath the folds of the flag which they loved and fought for.

"Tis but an old piece of bunting,  
Tis but a fluttering rag  
But thousands have died for its honor  
And shed their best blood for the flag.'

6. Consider the satisfaction of honorable wounds. It is given to few men to have the history of their country, written by sword and bullet, on the tender parchment of their own flesh. That piece of lead which the surgeon was unable to remove is one of the honorable punctuation points of history. That vacant sleeve by your side is more eloquent than the most finished paragraph of the greatest orator. That crutch which you carry, or which helps carry you, is more honorable than medal bestowed by king, queen, or prince. The pathetic limp of the wounded soldier is the most graceful action to be seen on stage, platform or street. I heard General Beaver of Pennsylvania, afterward governor of his own state, exclaim, as he stood on the platform in a great political meeting and held aloft the crutch on which he had been leaning: "I won this at Chancellorsville!" I can imagine the look on the face of Paul the Apostle when he wrote the words: 'From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.' Let the brave American warrior gaze on his own wounds and then think of that One who was 'wounded for our transgression.'"

Apparently, Dr. Gordon and his good wife, Lillian, remembered their days at First Church with great pleasure. After Dr. Gordon's death, Mrs. Gordon gave the Women's Society a silver tea service. After Mrs. Gordon's death the Church received a legacy of several thousand dollars.

# X

## Jason Noble Pierce

**J**ASON NOBLE PIERCE preached his first sermon as pastor of First Church on September 19, 1920. His last sermon as pastor was on November 23, 1930. The Pierce period was the most event-crowded decade for First Church since the first ten years of its founding.

Dr. Pierce received his B.A. and B.D. degrees from Amherst, and his D.D. degree from Yale. He came to First Church from a very successful pastorate at the Second Church of Dorchester in Boston, Massachusetts.

Dr. Pierce is best remembered for his close relationship with Calvin and Grace Coolidge. The Coolidges began their attendance at First Church in early 1921, while Mr. Coolidge was Vice President in the Harding administration. After becoming President he first accepted Dr. Pierce's invitation to participate in the Communion Service on August 5, 1923. At a Church meeting on Thursday, October 18, 1923, a letter was read from Dr. Pierce asking the Church to enroll Mr. Coolidge as a member, and Mrs. Coolidge as an associate member, retroactive to the date of their first Communion. This proposal was unanimously agreed to and in the Coolidge autobiography the President refers with real gratitude to the way Dr. Pierce brought him into membership at First Church.

The Coolidges were regular attendants at Sunday morning worship when in residence in Washington. They were often accompanied either by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Stearns of Boston, or their two sons, John and Calvin. The President also occasionally attended the Sunday evening services.

The throngs presenting themselves for Church services when the President was in attendance presented a seating problem that taxed to the utmost the resources of the Church ushers. Since the number of members and visitors seeking admission usually exceeded the capacity of the auditorium, it was necessary to provide the members and regular attendants with tickets. This resulted in discouraging the attendance of many regular members, and persons who might have become regular attendants who did not care for so much hustle and bustle at a worship service. Various anecdotes have been circulated concerning President Coolidge's church life. The most famous is the probably apocryphal one in which Mrs. Coolidge, having been absent from the service, asked her husband on his return to the White House, what the subject of the sermon had been that morning. He replied, "Sin." "Well, what did Dr. Pierce say about it?" pursued Mrs. Coolidge. "He said he was agin it," was the President's terse and taciturn reply.

On July 11, 1924, the Church sent a letter of sympathy to President and Mrs. Coolidge on the untimely loss of their younger son, Calvin, who died of a foot infection after playing tennis. This letter meant a great deal to Mrs. Coolidge, who referred to it a number of times afterwards in talking to her First Church friends.

On a happier note, the Church choir with Mrs. Coolidge's consent, sang Christmas carols at the front of the White House each Christmas Eve during the Coolidge administration. These concerts, as they were regarded, became increasingly well attended by the public.

The Coolidges were deeply religious. Mr. Coolidge possessed the inborn appreciation of the New England Puritan for religious values. Mrs. Coolidge was always ready to help the Church and participated in women's activities insofar as the demands on her time would permit.

For example, as much as anyone else, Mrs. Coolidge was a factor in the establishment of the Congregational Home of the District of Columbia. This Home was incorporated in the District on May 3, 1926, but had been in operation for about eighteen months prior to that time. A number of years before, Mrs. Sarah Frances Tyler, a Church member, made provision in her will that if First Church had a Home for the elderly in operation within five years after the Declaration of Peace (World War I), the Church would receive her inheritance, which turned out to be \$13,800.

Another member of First Church, Mrs. Mary Gardner Smith, added to this amount a sum of \$3,000 and contributed her home at 1403 Twelfth Street, N.W., together with all the furnishings to be used as a Home. Mrs. Smith served as matron of this Home until her death on February 13, 1926, at which time the Tyler bequest was released.

The third and largest donation leading to the establishment of the new Home was given by Mrs. Martha Helen Sawyer. Mrs. Sawyer, who died on November 11, 1926, made a provision in her will of \$39,629.00 for a Home. With this sum the Board of Trustees purchased the property at 1290 Crittenden Street, N.W., and sold the Twelfth Street property. The new Home was dedicated February 24, 1929, with Mrs. Coolidge unveiling a memorial tablet to the three donors. About the same time administration of the Home became a responsibility of the four white Congregational Churches in the District of Columbia, although the property continued to be primarily a First Church project until 1959.

The Pierce decade is also memorable for a project that failed a failure that was very disappointing to Dr. Pierce and to the Board of Trustees. The large number of persons attending the Church, filling the unsupported balcony, led to a weakening of the timbers. As early as January 24, 1924, a report was prepared by Colonel Starling of the White House Secret Service detail and by the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, indicating that the building was in no way dangerous but that it ought to be strengthened and repaired.

The early 1920's was a time of much national church building in Washington. The Universalists were erecting their National Church, so were the Baptists and Unitarians, and a move was under way by the Northern and Southern wings of the Methodist Church to do the same. This gave Dr. Pierce the feeling that it was possible to build a "National Congregational Church" in Washington

rather than simply repair the old First Church building. Dr. Pierce felt that the magic of the Coolidge name, the large attendance, and the scheduled meeting of the twenty-first National Council of all Congregational Churches in Washington in October 1925, would provide the interest in building a national church in the Capital. Dr. Pierce's interest in a new church carried the day, although the Board of Trustees were inclined toward an income-producing building with stores at the first level for rental. The Board of Trustees were empowered at the Annual Meeting, January 22, 1924, to take steps to raise funds for a new building, leaving undecided the nature of the building or its site. They proposed the engagement of a firm of professional money raisers, Tamblin and Brown of New York, to manage the campaign. At the same time Dr. Pierce undertook to form a National Committee which would cooperate with First Church in raising funds throughout the United States.

At the Annual Meeting, January 27, 1925, Dr. Pierce reported on a recent gathering of the denominational leaders in Chicago, planning for the 1925 National Council, and he was overjoyed at the unanimity of sentiment shown there for a "National Church." Likewise, at a meeting of the National Committee appointed to cooperate with First Church in the fund-raising, he came back with confidence that the denomination would take hold generously. The Church thereupon approved the employment of the fund-raising firm, voted for an income-producing church, although the income was to be derived from a hostel for young men and women rather than from offices and stores.

The National Council of Congregational Churches met in Washington on October 20-28, 1925, with Dr. Pierce as the local arrangements chairman, and President Coolidge as the honorary moderator. The National Council meetings were held in the Washington Auditorium. Mr. John D. Northrop, of First Church, was registrar and Mrs. Louisa Preston still an active member was assistant registrar. Overburdened by the mass of detail involved in registering, housing, and collecting fees from so many delegates, Mr. Northrop collapsed with a nervous breakdown before the Council sessions began, leaving Mrs. Preston to struggle through the entire period of the session. How she survived she does not know to this day she still trembles as she recalls going home alone on a bus late at night with more than a thousand dollars in registration payments which she hid beneath her bed until it could be banked the next day!

To place before the National Council a more specific plan of operation, First Church held a meeting on September 18, 1925, at which it was voted to build a new church on the Tenth and G Streets site, to have in the church an auditorium capable of seating 2,500, and a building to cost \$750,000 plus a \$500,000 fund for special religious work among the population of Washington. This \$1,250,000 project was approved at the National Council meeting and given national publicity in the church journal, *The Congregationalist*, on October 1, 1925. For the remainder of 1925, *The Congregationalist* ran statements from national Congregational leaders such as R. H. Potter, G. A. Gordon, J. P. Huget and C. R. Brown. Expectations ran high.

The official opening of the building campaign preceded the meeting of the National Council. It began with a mass meeting held at Memorial Continental Hall on October 12, with the Rev. S. Parkes Cadman as the principal speaker, and Mr. Harold Stearns also speaking. The audience, including Mrs. Coolidge, numbered over a thousand. By the close of the National Council

meeting, \$125,000 had been pledged by First Church members and its Washington friends. This was half of the \$250,000 that First Church was expected to raise. By April 19, 1926, First Church had received \$190,000 in pledges, but since \$40,000 of this was owed to the firm of Tamblyn and Brown, the further services of that firm were dispensed with.

It was hoped that the denomination would raise \$1,000,000 to bolster the \$250,000 set for First Church. It was decided to announce February 21, 1926 as Washington Church Day throughout the Congregational fellowship, this date to be the "kick-off" date for the national campaign.

The national campaign never went well. It is impossible to tell from the Church records just how much was received as the result of the national campaign, but it appears to have been less than \$20,000. This is so far removed from the \$1,000,000 goal that the disappointment of the Church is quite understandable. On the other hand, a good deal of the \$190,000 pledged by the Washington area was never collected. The main result of the 1925-26 church building campaign was a net realization of \$172,000 of which \$55,000 was invested in the purchase of the Grant Place property adjoining the Church building which would be needed if and when the Church ever did rebuild. Since these were income-producing properties they eventually returned their cost to the Church Building Fund.

The national campaign received another opportunity to publicize the First Church need when on May 30, 1926, at the evening services, a thousand people were present to hear Dr. Samuel Hughes of London, and quite a bit of plaster fell not far from the President's pew, showering those nearby with lime and stunning one woman so that she was carried out unconscious. At first it was thought the troubles were with the plaster or loose lath, and during the following week an effort was made to repair all spots where there were signs of danger. The Board of Trustees engaged one of the most distinguished engineers in the East, Mr. Thomas Marshall, to make an examination of the structure, and his investigation proved so disquieting that a Board of Examination, consisting of engineers, representatives of the government's inspection engineers, and prominent building architects made a further examination. All reports were adverse and use of the building had to be discontinued.

Since it was the President's church, all of the large downtown churches offered to try to accommodate the congregation through joint meetings or meetings earlier than those regularly held. None of these offers was very realistic, so beginning on June 13, 1926, services were held in Loew's Palace Theater at 1306 F Street; then in the Washington Auditorium, 19th and E Streets, June 20 through August 1, and thereafter on Sunday mornings in the Metropolitan Theater at 934 F Street, N.W., with evening services in the Hebrew Temple on 8th at H Streets, N.W. Not until Christmas Sunday, 1927, was First Church able to meet again in its own building. At the time it was thought the closing of the church would result in additional funds coming in from the denomination, but despite all the publicity this was not the case. Actually since it cost over \$55,000 to repair the church steel girders had to be put under the balcony money had to be "borrowed" from the Building Fund to finance the repair work.

Dr. Pierce, unlike his immediate predecessors, interested himself in the Church's Endowment Fund, as a needed auxiliary to long-range planning. Thus an Endowment Fund of \$5,200 grew to

\$31,100 during his pastorate. Daniel Fraser, longtime Trustee, bequeathed \$5,105.23 in 1922; Levi Woodbury, \$5,000 in 1926; Mrs. Martha Helen Sawyer, \$1,000 in 1927; Mrs. Myra Tweedale, \$500 in 1929; M. Louise Anderson, \$1,000, and Mary W. Story, \$4,786.71 in 1930. Of the \$31,100 the principal amounted to \$21,700; the accumulated earnings to \$9,300.00. In 1930, Dr. Pierce in concert with a number of other downtown churches, entered into an agreement with the Rev. William Kernahan to conduct an evangelistic campaign. The campaign was unusual in that it involved large-scale visitation by the participating churches to those persons coming to hear Kernahan. For the one hundred twenty-five persons from First Church participating in this visitation (the Church having received over eight hundred prospect cards from the campaign) came a sizeable number of new members.

In order to bolster the evening service Dr. Pierce started a series of motion picture evenings. Since this required taking scenes from many movies and building a brief sermon on what had been seen, this involved a tremendous amount of work for Dr. Pierce. It also enmeshed him in a lot of bookkeeping because the films had to be rented, a projectionist hired, and the expenses taken from the collection to provide a net monetary gain. The motion picture services were quite well attended. For a while Dr. Pierce had such services every weekday, both afternoon and evening. He could not maintain this pace, however, and the frequency of the services was later reduced to about two a week, usually Thursday and Sunday.

Dr. Pierce always felt the motion picture services were instrumental in his keeping the membership up after the Coolidges left. In his ten years he was able to bring in 900 members, yet at the same time the Church lost about 900 members, thus keeping the total membership at about 1,390 during his entire ministry.

Apparently Dr. Pierce did not turn over the motion picture money regularly to the Board of Trustees, and also some of his bookkeeping was hard to decipher. On August 13, 1930, he received a very harsh letter from the Board complaining of his faulty accounts. On August 23, he answered this with a very long letter, obviously hurt by the implications of the Board's letter. It is hard to say whether this was a factor in his resignation dated November 12, 1930, and read to the Church the following night.

In this letter Dr. Pierce said: "I am glad to have had for more than two years the experience of using motion pictures in connection with religious services. They enable the Gospel to be preached each year on Sunday and Thursday nights, and in special services, to an aggregate of 100,000 people; whereas without them we should have had probably 15,000 people . . . less, and they added thousands of dollars to our treasury for the support of missionary work at home and abroad which otherwise could not have been given. Moreover, they beat a path to this church for scores of people who have come into its membership through personal work."

A committee led by Dr. J. M. P. Metcalf, Dr. J. D. Wolcott, Mr. E. Donald Preston, and Mrs. E. C. Alvord were determined that Dr. Pierce not leave without a resounding vote of confidence. Of all the First Church ministers who have received a formal resolution at the time of their dismissal, that for Dr. Pierce is the longest and most detailed. Parts of this resolution are almost a history of the Pierce decade.

"The membership of the Church, despite several very drastic revisions of the roll, has been more than maintained, nearly nine hundred new members having been admitted.

"The benevolences of the Church for the ten years before Dr. Pierce came amounted to \$36,000; for the ten years after he came, to \$74,000; i.e., they were more than doubled.

"The receipts from the weekly offerings were trebled in the period. . . .

"The organization of the Women's Society, embracing under one head all the women's work of the Church, has been here, as elsewhere, a very strategic move.

"The fine new organ is installed, with \$5,000 in hand for an echo organ; the Church choir is vested, and the 'a capella' chorus carried to a point of unsurpassed excellence. Dr. Pierce's own musical talent, in composition and in voice, with his gift of poesy, have made a fine contribution to the musical prominence of our Church.

"The experiment in motion pictures in connection with preaching services, cost Dr. Pierce untold effort and not a little money, but the message of the Gospel, as he presented it so lovingly, so sympathetically and so forcefully, went into a hundred thousand hearts a year, and generous financial profits were added to our treasury. Not many preachers in our denomination reached a larger audience. . . .

"This committee realizes that our Church, with its large membership, its downtown problems, its wide reaching service to the community and its varied forms of work, including its moving picture services, has very seriously overworked its Pastor and failed to give him the help that he should have had or the office assistance so greatly needed. We have forgotten that our Pastor was preaching, not only on Sunday morning, but to even larger audiences on Sunday nights and on Thursday nights three sermons a week, where many ministers have only one. He could easily have been content with less, one might think, but he was not satisfied to preach only to confirmed Christians and members of the Church, but sought also to reach the larger number of those not often in the Church at all. We shall never know how much more our Pastor might have accomplished and how much wider an influence our Church might have had if more generous pastoral and office help had been provided.

"Our minister had a voice of very fine quality, so strong and clear as to carry to the remotest corner of our large building, and yet so smooth and mellow as to be always restful and pleasant. When other prominent preachers have filled our pulpit, the difference has often been marked, the effort to hear was trying, the contrast was striking. It should be said also that our Pastor's recitation of the Scripture lesson was exceedingly effective. And with the voice was a manner, in the pulpit and out of it, so genial, so sympathetic, so intimate, that he seemed to be talking as to one large family, taking each into his confidence and bringing all into a close family relationship, and into a real fellowship with the Heavenly Father. And people who met Dr. Pierce casually felt the same genial, friendly man back of the voice, a man with a heart and one ever ready to lend each one his sympathy, the help of his wide experience and of his resourcefulness in finding the right thing to do.

"Our Pastor had a very remarkable capacity in the conduct of the midweek service. There was an intimacy about it like that of a family gathering, and the whole Church was borne on his heart, the sick and afflicted were brought to our notice and often some appeal was made for a needy member. And then, his way at the piano as he led us there in the hymns of the Church was spontaneous and hearty and cheering. There was often humor, Dr. Pierce was fond of a joke, and we know how skillfully a story can remove tension, and bring back sunshine and help us to meet our daily tasks. But the mid-week service, under his leadership, always brought us at some point into close touch with Jesus and into the presence of the Heavenly Father. Surely the people who attended the mid-week service were always sorry when Dr. Pierce was not there.

"Our minister for these last ten years had unusual resourcefulness, exceptional versatility, plenty of initiative, and was able to meet each situation as it arose. He knew the right thing to say at the right time. How beautiful, how comforting, how strong were his loving messages in the last service for the dead. His mind was fertile in plans. He rose greatly to meet a great emergency, with keen intellectual capacity and resourcefulness. He could compose music and write poetry and hymns. He wrote the words for pageants.

"But with these qualities just mentioned went also great breadth of sympathy, great heart interest in people, great love for all humanity. We felt he loved us each one of us and his audiences felt the power of that love and were drawn to the man. No one doubted his own personal faith in and devotion to Christ, the reality of his own religious life or the sincerity of his purposes.

"This suggests the further fact that our Pastor never made any concealment of his broad ideas of brotherhood and he won the respect and love of all races here, especially of the colored people, who have recognized him as a warm friend and a real helper and one who never feared to voice his convictions in their interest.

"The Jewish people of Washington knew our Pastor's wide sympathies and his constant effort to get the two peoples into active cooperation in every good work. So also the Catholics, not a few of whom have come to our Church, were always treated with courtesy in our pulpit and their cooperation in Christian work and civic betterment desired. It might be said here, that in these matters and in many others, our Pastor nobly continued the great traditions of this fine old Church, in the heart of the Nation's Capital."

Dr. Pierce's resignation was accepted to take effect November 30, 1930, in order for him to accept the pastorate of the Collegiate Church in Nashville, Tennessee, and a Chair of Preaching at the Vanderbilt University School of Religion. The farewell dinner tendered him gave the Church another opportunity to indicate the warmth of affection in which he was held by so many of the congregation.

# XI

## Depression and Stockdale

A SPECIAL CHURCH MEETING WAS HELD on February 26, 1931, to consider a motion from Thomas G. Sherman, Chairman of the Pastoral Supply Committee, that Dr. Allen A. Stockdale be called as minister. Of the 196 people present, 169 voted for the motion, 26 against, and one person did not vote. The 26 votes against Dr. Stockdale were an ominous prelude. They grew out of the circumstance that in the considerable lapse of time between Dr. Pierce's departure and the choice of a successor, Dr. Stockdale had served as an interim supply pastor for two months. During that two-months' period Dr. Stockdale antagonized a small group of members, an animosity he was not able later to overcome.

After accepting the First Church call, Dr. Stockdale began his active pastorate on Easter Sunday, April 15, 1931. He was installed on May 12 at a very happy gathering featuring a fellowship dinner. Those present heard addresses from the Rev. Z. Barney Phillips (Church of the Epiphany), Rabbi Abram Simon (Washington Hebrew Congregation), the Rev. William Abernethy (Calvary Baptist Church), the Rev. Joseph R. Sizoo (New York Avenue Presbyterian Church), and the Rev. Dr. John Cartwright (St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church). This was one of the infrequent times when St. Patrick's participated in a First Church event.

Dr. Allen A. Stockdale was born in Zanesville, Ohio, taught and developed under the spiritual leadership of the Methodist Church. Early in life he decided upon the ministry as a life work. He was a poor boy and started out for his education with very little money. After a somewhat unsatisfactory college experience at Taylor University, a small religiously conservative school in Indiana, he went to Boston for an extended period of study. He spent three years at the Boston University of Theology, then continued his studies for two more years in post-graduate work in philosophy, sociology, languages and other broadening and reinforcing subjects.

While a student in Boston, he earned his way and the support of his wife and young son by his outstanding work as a reader and impersonator. Many of his friends often remarked that the stage lost a talented actor when Dr. Stockdale decided to pivot his life on the pulpit and parish.

Dr. Stockdale was first called to the pastorate of Berkeley Temple; he remained the markedly successful pastor of this historic Boston Church until the merger of Berkeley Temple and Union Congregational Church, being then called to be the pastor of the new combined and enlarged enterprise, where he remained for six successful years. Large audiences greeted his ministry, morning and evening, and new members were continually received into the Church. Especial attention was given to the university student life of the city.

As a lecturer Dr. Stockdale was known all over New England. For eight of the ten years of his Boston ministry, he was Chaplain of the Emerson College of Oratory. He was also elected a Trustee of Boston University while pastor of Union Church in Boston.

From Boston, Dr. Stockdale was called to the First Congregational Church in Toledo, Ohio, where his longest pastorate was full of building, growing and organizing. This was another merger enterprise it seemed most of Dr. Stockdale's ministry was to be spent in the problems and opportunities connected with combining churches. The majestic new auditorium of Toledo's First Congregational Church was built and entirely paid for during his ministry. He received fourteen hundred new members into the Church, while simultaneously raising over one million and a half dollars. In this way benevolences were raised to first place among the Ohio churches, as were also home expenses, property values, and membership.

During the first World War the Toledo church generously gave Dr. Stockdale leave for six months as a Red Cross captain in France at Base Hospital No. 1, Vichy, and with the Second Division in front line service. The year 1922-23 he spent on leave from his church in study at Oxford University, England. In 1929, Dr. Stockdale became pastor of the Rogers Park Congregational Church in Chicago. His service there was a short but highly effective one. He saved the property from foreclosure, then stepped aside to allow for a complete new adjustment of operating budget, needed by a church with the burden of building obligation.

In Washington, Dr. Stockdale became an enthusiastic baseball fan. In his study could be seen a baseball signed by some of the Washington pennant winning ball team of 1933, several of whom were quite regular in attendance at First Church when in town. Dr. Stockdale also became a familiar figure on the bridle paths of the city, being an enthusiastic devotee to the sport and exercise of horseback riding. His varied activity repelled, however, a portion of the congregation who considered him too effervescent and "gushy," too much of a "back slapper," and too much of a "hugger." This was countered by those who pointed out that he was quite active in his aid of many good civic, social, and religious movements in the city and in the country at large, and was much in demand as a collaborator and speaker for various organizations.

Dr. Stockdale promoted direct pastoral relations with his parish by making numerous personal calls. He had to do without an assistant pastor, but the Director of Religious Education, Miss Nell Berghout, afforded him valuable help in the church work.

In January 1933, Mrs. Grace Goodhue Coolidge was made a life associate member of First Church following the lamented death of her husband, ex-President Calvin Coolidge. This honor had previously been conferred upon but few, namely: Miss Ellen Stone, missionary, upon Dr. W. W. Post of Chattanooga, Tennessee (1928), and the Rev. Ida A. Green of Havre de Grace, Maryland (1928). A bronze plate was placed on the Coolidge pew in the church by the choir in June 1933. The Coolidge pew, it should have been indicated earlier, was the old General Howard pew.

In 1931, the Board of Religious Education was reorganized and given complete control over the Sunday School, which became the Church School. This change was consummated by an

amendment to the Manual defining the permanent organization of the Board, which was approved by the Annual Meeting in January 1932.

The national depression was in full swing in early 1931. Dr. Stockdale certainly knew he was taking on a hard row to hoe at First Church, but it is to be doubted if he realized how long or how hard the row could be. The Board of Trustees found it necessary to make a cut of 10% in all salaries over \$1,200. Dr. Stockdale cheerfully accepted this reduction and sacrificed more, too, later on because of the continuance of the financial dislocation brought on by the depression in the Washington area.

Since the establishment of the Endowment Fund in 1910, it had been the undeviating policy of the Society, and its Board of Trustees, that accumulated earnings be added to the principal. This policy had to be reversed in 1931, when despite a heavy cutback in programs, current expenses could not be met from current income. Church revenues would have to be supplemented by the accumulated earnings of the Endowment Fund. From 1931 to 1935 the dipping into the reservoir was so great that in its Annual Report for 1935 the Board of Trustees explained, "There is now no longer any accumulated Endowment income to be used and we must face the year 1936 with the program of pay as you go. ..." This meant the Endowment Fund was back to its principal of \$21,300. In the debate which followed, Mr. Edwin Blanchard and Mr. David Copenhafer strongly held that the Board of Trustees did not have the power to use Endowment principal.

In 1932, \$1,000 had to be raised by subscription to repair and renovate the parish house on G Place, especially for use of the church school. At the Quarterly Meeting, April 13, 1934, a resolution proposed by the Board of Trustees was unanimously approved to hold a campaign to raise funds to redecorate the auditorium and the Sunday school room, and also, if possible, to meet a deficit in general expenses through the summer months. More than \$3,000 was raised, which met the cost of repairs, but not the deficit in general expenses. The Church was closed for repairs during two Sundays, August 5 and 12, 1934. The aging building thus added to the financial difficulties in which the Church was already engulfed.

Dr. Stockdale emphasized the mid-week service and carefully prepared his addresses for it, periodically providing excellent outside speakers. By these means, attendance and interest were increased. He also encouraged the work of the Committee on Evangelism, sending out its members to make calls from the dinner at the mid-week service. Mrs. Stockdale was an active helper in Church activities, notably with the young women's clubs.

In October 1932, the Twice-Monthly Club, successor to the Senior Society of Christian Endeavor, and later the Friendly Forum, was organized. This Society presented a baptismal font to the Church, which was dedicated at the Sunday morning service on January 22, 1933. It also took general charge of Sunday evening socials held after Church services, and conducted directly one of the socials each month. These socials were especially helpful in getting members better acquainted with one another.

To write a satisfactory account of the last year of Dr. Stockdale's ministry is impossible. Partly this is because the anti-Stockdale group in the Church, apparently, never went on record as to the

exact causes of its opposition or what events fed it.

On November 11, 1935, at a meeting of the Standing Committee, Mr. Robert Metcalf earnestly spoke of the need for reducing salary costs and requested some action be taken by the Standing Committee toward this end. He further suggested that Dr. Stockdale be asked to resign as pastor. At this point Dr. Stockdale withdrew from the meeting and then a committee of seven persons was appointed to review the pastoral relationship. The committee was mostly composed of anti-Stockdale parishioners, indicating that they may have pre-arranged to be out in force. Some time on the next day, November 12, Dr. Stockdale wrote his letter of resignation. In this letter Dr. Stockdale said the following:

"It resides in the minds of some that it would help to ease the financial burden if the allotment for salaries were less, and chiefly that of the minister. To make this possible for 1936, I hereby cheerfully resign as minister of First Congregational Church, to take effect December 31, 1935.

"The membership of First Congregational Church represents a District and vicinity-wide parish, with a very large number of aged, infirm, sick and shut-in, who need continual attention. No one man can properly prepare to fill the pulpit and also master the pastoral work without a full-time, efficient, and sympathetic assistant. How this can be done by paying a smaller salary to the ministry is a problem I would not care to attempt to solve."

On the night of November 14, without anyone knowing of the letter of resignation, a very large fellowship program was presented in which all aspects of the work of the Church were exhibited and a large turnout for dinner (about 250 persons) was experienced. The reaction to Dr. Stockdale's letter of resignation, read to the congregation at the Sunday morning service, November 17, was instantaneous. Members crowded around him urging him not to make it final. Among these were Dr. Charles Abbot, the Rev. Harvey Goddard, and Thomas Sherman who was a leading Washington lawyer. They assured him that the action of the Standing Committee could be reversed in a Church meeting, but Dr. Stockdale, during the following days, would not reconsider. His resignation was finally accepted at a Church meeting held on December 2, to take effect December 31, 1935.

Dr. Stockdale utilized his departure from First Church to become part of the public relations staff of the National Association of Manufacturers.

For the N.A.M. he was one of the three or four principal speakers at business gatherings of all kinds and was generally considered to be one of the ablest public relations speakers in trade association work in the United States throughout the 1940's until his death in 1956.

## XII

# Howard Stone Anderson

**S**EPTEMBER 24, 1936, the Pastoral Supply Committee, headed by the Rev. Harvey Goddard, recommended to the Church that the Rev. Howard Stone Anderson be called as minister. Few pastoral supply committees have felt called upon to do a more thorough job than the one of 1936. Some forty ministers were considered, of which five were selected for a thorough check of all possible references and of these Mr. Anderson appealed to the committee as the best choice. A unanimous call was forthwith extended by the Church, which Mr. Anderson accepted. He preached his first sermon on October 18, 1936. He was installed by Ecclesiastical Council on April 9, 1937.

At the time of his coming to First Church Mr. Anderson was thirty-one years old. His father was the Rev. F. H. Anderson; his mother was also an ordained minister. He graduated in 1925 from the University of Omaha, where he was active in athletics. He then attended Chicago Theological Seminary, class of 1928. His student charge was at Peoria, Illinois, where he proved himself to be an outstanding musician. Peoria, of course, represented a 320-mile round trip every weekend.

During this period he married Miss Marlowe Addy of Omaha. She had graduated from the University of Omaha, with graduate work at the University of Chicago and Iowa State Teachers College, and had taught briefly at the University of Omaha.

In 1927 Mr. and Mrs. Anderson went to Memorial Church, St. Louis, where his father and mother were joint pastors, and there the young couple were both ordained to the Christian ministry.

In September 1928, Mr. Anderson became a pastor at Williston, North Dakota, doing exceptionally well at heading a divided church. In 1932 he was called to Warren Avenue Church in Chicago, another badly divided church which he not only skillfully brought together but in a short time greatly increased the membership and activity of the church. Here Mrs. Anderson served as Director of Religious Education.

The most immediate problem was to harmonize, if possible, the previous pro-Stockdale and anti-Stockdale factions. Animosity of these kinds are hard to heal. Actually, the Pastoral Supply Committee throughout its search for a new minister had kept this requirement in mind. Mr. Anderson was selected because it seemed a certainty that his wit, urbanity, and his ability to weld different age groups into a well coordinated organization, would be adequate to the task. To his credit, they were.

Mr. Anderson wanted to restore the assistant pastor's position and secure a full-time minister of music for the church staff as soon as it could be financially arranged. A special meeting of the Church and Society held on June 9, 1937, authorized the recruitment of an assistant minister. The Rev. Walter G. Borchers of Emory University, Atlanta, was called and began work October 15.

Not until September 1, 1945, however, was it possible to arrange for a minister of music. Whitford L. Hall, who came from the First Presbyterian Church of Santa Ana, California, as related in chapter VI, was the widely cheered selection.

In 1940 the church celebrated its Diamond Jubilee. Preparations began in the spring of 1939 when the church published its first directory since 1924 as a memorial to Miss Ella May Okey. Scrooby Club for young adults, organized in March 1939, took for its celebration project the raising of funds to purchase 700 new Pilgrim Hymnals. These books were dedicated on May 26, 1940, and saw great use in the subsequent years. A second part of the celebration was the presentation of the pageant "The Pilgrims in Washington," written by Miss Clara Cornelia Rand and presented in eight scenes in June 1940. On November 10, 1940, the choir sang for the first time the hymn "Speak to Me Lord," composed by First Church member, Martin D. Schram.

Sunday, November 15, 1940, marked the actual Jubilee Service. Previously, Dr. Lloyd C. Douglas, author of the best-seller *The Robe*, presented a series of well-attended lectures. Dr. Russell Henry Stafford, minister of the Old South Church, Boston, preached the anniversary sermon, Miss Ella J. Morrison, a member of First Church for many years, collected a large photographic exhibit of pastors, officers, and members of First Church since 1865, while Dr. J. D. Wolcott of the Library of Congress prepared a 20-page history for the years 1915 to 1940.

On Christmas, 1940, the Washington Federation of Churches held its Interdenominational Services in First Church. Bishop Adna W. Leonard of the Methodist Church preached the sermon. President Franklin D. Roosevelt attended the service with Mrs. Roosevelt, his mother Sarah Delano Roosevelt, and other members of his family.

During 1941 First Church held a series of evangelistic meetings. The Rev. Dr. E. Stanley Jones, author of many devotional books, conducted one group of meetings as a preaching mission. Then Gipsy Smith, famous preacher of his day, led a number of meetings with his famous singing as part of the service. It was estimated that he preached over 15 times to audiences which numbered nearly 20,000, when totaled.

The entry of the United States into World War II in December presented many new problems. Washington was faced for the second time in a generation with the influx of war workers, members of the armed forces, and young people, many of whom were away from their homes and families for the first time. The church's program, therefore, had to be geared to meeting the needs of these people. To do so First Church became a virtual social service center. Scrooby Club performed magnificent service with its Game Night, entertainment of hospitalized servicemen, and the Sunday dinners held in the Upper Room.

The Friendly Forum helped to refurnish the West Parlor for servicemen's use. Senator Hugh

Butler of Nebraska, a regular worshiper, presented the church with a new United States and Christian flag. In this, he was joined by other donors. These flags were dedicated on May 26, 1942.

During the same year, Mr. Anderson received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from Doane College, Crete, Nebraska, which was Senator Butler's alma mater. On October 1 was begun the publication of *The First Church Congregationalist*, a new weekly paper which the church mailed to all resident and non-resident members.

D-Day, June 6, 1944, was a day which First Church will long remember. From a few minutes past six in the morning when the news came over the radio that the allied armies under the command of General Dwight D. Eisenhower had landed in France, until late that night, throngs of worshipers came to the sanctuary to pray. They came singly and in groups, and remained to pray and join in the religious services. The ministers held six services during the day and one of them was on duty at all times. A group of organists relieved each other at intervals.

Dr. Anderson was concerned that the depression had reduced the Church's Endowment Fund to its original capital of about \$21,300. As he talked to men like Dr. Charles G. Abbot, Mr. Hugh A. Thrift, Mr. William P. Benson, and Mr. Edwin C. Blanchard, he became convinced the fund should be enlarged should another rainy day come. The Budget Committee, in its proposals for 1944, recommended that both the income from the Endowment Fund and the Easter offering be added to the Fund, and the Annual Meeting of the Church so voted. On February 24, 1944, Dr. Anderson informed the Society's Committee "that a generous member of our Church, who insisted upon remaining anonymous, had agreed to contribute \$5,000 as a special Easter gift to our Endowment Fund provided the remaining members of the Church matched that amount in the Easter offering. In other words the Church would receive \$2 for every \$1 contributed." This conditional offer was exciting news, and the Committee unanimously voted to "meet the challenge." Counting the unknown donor's gift, the Easter offering of 1944 totaled more than \$12,000.

The Easter campaigns of 1945 and 1946 added another \$4,411 to the Fund, and accumulated income and additional legacies raised the total assets to \$57,448 by the time Dr. Anderson left the Church. This revivification of the Endowment Fund was one of Dr. Anderson's best administrative contributions.

In this volume a number of references have been made to the Sunday evening service how up to 1920 it was as well attended as the morning service. Dr. Pierce began to experience a drop in attendance in the late 20's, which he attributed to the advent of radio. Dr. Anderson strove to keep the evening service alive. In June 1944 he wrote the Standing Committee:

"For some time I have been disappointed in two attitudes toward the Sunday evening service. One is the attitude of certain salaried members of our church staff, who make no pretense of their opposition to a second service, who criticize it frequently and in front of volunteers who are expected to attend it and who consistently decline to display any initiative in presenting evening programs which would be of wider interest and larger attendance. The second attitude which is

disappointing is the almost general apathy and indifference of both of the officials and members of the church. This has been reflected in many ways and is most evident in the fact that evening after evening the only church members present are the ushers and members of the Scrooby Club.

"The net result of all of this has been that the minister has seemed to carry both the responsibility and onus of continuing a Sunday evening program. To some this may appear he is an arbitrary old fogey who can't recognize that the Sunday evening service is dead, and to others it has again appeared to be a matter of indifference and they have been willing to indulge him in what they apparently feel is a harmless whimsy.

"The plain fact is that it is simply not true that the Sunday evening service is either dead or dying. To support my conviction in that respect I have made a study of the records of attendance and offerings of the past three years and they reveal hardly any fluctuations of attendance (with a Sunday evening average of about 250 for each season) and do reflect quite a material increase from year to year in the Sunday evening offerings. The record of the past three years, for example, shows:

Church Season	Average Attendance	Number of Sundays	Offering Totals
1941-1942	260	28	\$772.79
1942-1943	254	32	1,180.24
1943-1944	247	33	1,365.10

"It appears to me that this is a record of which trustees, deacons, and music committee must take account. Of course, the record includes great extremes of attendance because it includes bad weather and good weather, special events, and ordinary services, but the consistency of the annual averages over a three-year period is something really to make us appreciate the significant place of this service in our total church program. I would, naturally like to have the attendance at the service increased and would especially appreciate having the entire project understood, endorsed, and supported by the Standing Committee."

If radio didn't kill the Sunday evening service, then television did. Under Dr. Carl Kopf, in 1950, the Church leadership reluctantly discontinued these services.

In 1946, one of the most loyal and devoted members, Dr. Charles G. Abbot, retired as President of the First Congregational Society of Washington. He had served almost continuously in that capacity since 1911, for a total of thirty years, the closest confidant and advisor of a number of pastors. This was truly a remarkable record by a remarkable churchman. Long the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Dr. Abbot had always helped make clear there was no conflict between science and religion at First Church.

Youth work veritably flourished under Dr. Anderson's guidance. In addition to the organization of the Scrooby Club, a TUXIS Club came into existence on October 3, 1937, to serve high school youth. (T for truth, S for Service, X for Christ-centered, U before I).

On February 16, 1947, Dr. Anderson submitted his resignation as minister to be effective April 15, 1947, to accept a call from the United Congregational Church, Bridgeport, Connecticut. Possibly the best summary of Dr. Anderson's work at First Church can be excerpted from his letter of resignation:

"Ten years ago last September you called me to be your minister, and on the third Sunday of October, 1936, I began service among you. I was young and unknown; you were divided and desperate. We cast our lots together 'for better, for worse' and have worked together all these years in harmony . . . they leave a precious legacy of memory.

"We have seen this great church stir like a slumbering giant and come awake with new life and power. Spiritual harmony has prevailed these ten and one-half years; almost one thousand new members have been added, so that five-eighths of our present membership joined in this period; budgets to current expenses and benevolences have trebled; new organizations have been added to our program and are flourishing; new staff members, including an Assistant Minister and a full-time Minister of Music have proved indispensable additions; and our congregations have greatly increased in size."

Perhaps this is the place to comment on Dr. Anderson's mention of bringing in one thousand new members. From the beginning of the church until the end of the first World War, First Church grew slowly but surely, bringing in about fifty new members a year and losing perhaps thirty-five. In the 1920's, First Church perceptibly came into the category of a downtown church, as Washington at the same time became a metropolitan center. Now First Church had to bring in almost seventy-five members a year in order to balance the seventy-five it was losing. This turnover feature in some ways is the most persistent characteristic of a downtown church.

As Washington expanded under the New Deal of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Dr. Anderson found that now he had to bring in almost one hundred members a year to balance the one hundred he lost. Part of the disenchantment that some of the members had with Dr. Stockdale was that he could not bring in as many members as the Church was losing.

## XIII

# Carl Heath Kopf

FROM NOVEMBER 1947 TO JULY 1958, the minister of First Church was Dr. Carl Heath Kopf, one of the most-beloved pastors the church ever had, a man who had to grapple with a seriously split parish, and who immeasurably saddened Washington by taking his own life.

Dr. Kopf was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1902, and graduated from Princeton University in 1925. He served as instructor in the history of Christianity at Princeton during 1925-26, and then did graduate work in theology at Princeton Seminary and Boston University School of Theology.

He was an immediate success in his ministry in New England, first serving as assistant pastor at Eliot Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts, from 1926 to 1928, and then as pastor of the Crombie Congregational Church in Salem, Massachusetts, 1928 to 1933. He began his ministry at Mount Vernon Congregational Church in Boston in the fall of 1933, where he served thirteen years. While at Mount Vernon, Dr. Kopf was noted for his Sunday radio broadcasts, "From a Window on Beacon Street." These radio broadcasts, which had a simple down-to-earth quality, endeared him to many listeners of all faiths, and made him one of the most popular young ministers in the Boston area. He was also the author of a book of essays, *Windows on Life*, published in 1941, and of *Personal Crisis*, published in 1945.

Dr. Kopf was known as a member of the liberal, or modernist wing of Protestantism. In his sermons, he spoke eloquently for racial tolerance and a less rigid interpretation of religious dogma. A well known proponent of Sir Wilfred Grenfell and Toyohiko Kagawa, he was called to Washington because the First Church Pulpit Supply Committee thought his enthusiasm and energy might solve two nagging problems.

The first of these was what to do about the "flight to the suburbs" of the First Church membership. The second was how to get a new church built that would meet church needs better than the great edifice of the late 1860's. Both problems were fraught with portent for the future.

Almost immediately after the end of the second World War, Washington commenced a great building boom in the suburbs. These became the principal areas where home buyers could purchase modern homes. As the central and northeastern parts of the city began to be filled by incoming Negroes from the South, the white persons in those areas increasingly headed for the suburbs. This tremendous shift in population by 1950 had extended First Church parish boundaries from Beltsville on the north, beyond Alexandria on the south, beyond Bethesda on the west. It became increasingly difficult for the pastor to reach the far-flung membership.

Dr. Kopf and the Board of Deacons, led by Mr. Lester Fay, revived a former zone plan, whereby the members living most closely to one another would "shepherd" their neighbors. The plan never worked well, although some of the most able laymen of the church gave it their time and intelligence.

To communicate more easily with the dispersed parish, a weekly informal bulletin called "Gabriel's Horn" was sent to all members replacing "The First Church Congregationalist." It tried to be more newsworthy than most church publications, and if it had been in existence since 1865, this church history would have been much, much easier to prepare.

Fortunately, Dr. Kopf loved pastoral calling. He was given an automobile money allowance so to do as much as he could. Margarete Alldredge, in her book *Carl Heath Kopf: Man of God*, says of this aspect of his work:

"A great many parishioners commented that Carl's visits were as good as, if not better than, medicine. His cheeriness was contagious. He knew precisely how long to stay and the prayers made at the time of such visits were so apt and so well expressed as to linger long in the memory.

"The range of Carl's conversations during his calls ran the gamut of everything he had ever read and thought about. It could be baseball or banking, the theater or theology, art or agriculture, music or mechanics and it was always refreshing when spoken and graphically illustrated."

While the aforementioned devices generally kept the members from dropping their membership so to affiliate with a nearer church, Dr. Kopf knew the church was battling a sociological phenomenon that could not be kept in bounds by loyalty to a beloved pastor.

The second problem was tougher because here the church became increasingly divided on a solution. The question of replacing or altering the building which had served since it was first occupied on May 10, 1868, came with a set of choices. First Church (1) could replace the old building, using the same site, (2) relocate on a site which the members might think more strategic than the northwest corner of Tenth and G Streets, or (3) build onto the church an annex using the G Place area.

As a very small footnote it might be pointed out that the writer of this book led the very small group of persons who favored the third choice. It must have been a quixotic position for it got short shrift every time its advocacy was advanced.

The other alternatives had considerable history behind them. As related in chapter X, from 1924 to 1927, the church tried hard to bring to reality a decision to rebuild at Tenth and G Streets. It raised \$176,000 for that purpose. When the drive to obtain over a million dollars in funds had failed, the Trustees switched to the plan to relocate on some other downtown site "south of Massachusetts Avenue, between 10th and 17th Streets, Northwest." This course was unsuccessfully attempted between 1928 and 1930. When Dr. Pierce departed in 1930, and the depression set in, the Church had to abandon any additional fund-raising plans as unrealistic. Between 1930 and 1952 the whole relocation plan lay dormant.

In the spring of 1953, Dr. Kopf thought he could tackle the dilemma anew since an inspection of the G Place properties resulted in their condemnation for further use. The Trustees immediately revived the relocation approach and on November 16, 1953, they received Church and Society approval to place the entire property on the market for sale, provided it could be sold for \$700,000. On June 13, 1954, at a Society meeting, the Trustees requested and received permission to reduce the sale price to \$600,000. They received no offers at the lower figure.

In the meantime, another factor complicated the dilemma. In 1955, representatives of the Grace Evangelical and Reformed Church, a downtown church with problems similar to those of First Church, approached Dr. Kopf with a proposal to merge the two congregations. This would permit a local united church in keeping with the proposal to create the new United Church of Christ through a merger nationally of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church. If approved, the local merger would become effective in 1957, the date of the creation of the new denomination. Both churches appointed study committees to examine all aspects of the plan, including the matter of a location for a new church building. After considerable discussion, First Church approved the plan in 1956, but Grace Church failed to secure the necessary two-thirds vote for approval. The proposal was consequently abandoned.

The failure of the Grace Church referendum forced the First Church Trustees to continue their efforts to sell the church property and to find a new location elsewhere. In the fall of 1956, a buyer came forward offering to purchase the property for \$475,000. The offer, of necessity, required a complete reappraisal of the whole situation, which was stated as follows:

"Shall the First Congregational Society of Washington (the Church and Society) accept an offer dated October 17, 1956, to purchase our Church property, being lots 800, 801, 811 and 812 in square 375, situated at 10th and G Streets, N.W. in the District of Columbia, and direct the Board of Trustees to accept in writing the said offer and to sell the real property of the Society in accordance with the terms therefor?"

The Church Planning Committee, which had been appointed late in 1953 when the property had first been placed on sale, had Mr. E. Donald Preston and Mr. Everett Alldredge prepare an eight-page letter for the membership which re-examined the new situation. Included in this analysis was a study of the character of the 10th and G site from the standpoint of transportation, hotels, rooming houses, small apartments, historical significance, and areas of blight. The missive also reviewed the advantages of a new site to be located in the area bounded by Harvard Street, Rock Creek, the Potomac, and 14th Street, N.W.

Mr. Gerald S. Radley and Mr. Samuel G. Hallett, two members who worked for the U.S. Public Buildings Service, made a structural study of the building which indicated that more and more repairs during the next few years would be required, repairs which could be expected to be major in character as the building was then over ninety years old.

The Church Planning Committee, essentially a temporarily enlarged Board of Trustees, having examined the various proposals in some detail, recommended that the church accept the offer of \$475,000 for its property and relocate somewhere, unspecified, in the above mentioned area. The failure to specify a location may have been critical.

At a memorable meeting on November 8, 1956, the Church and Society voted overwhelmingly to reject the offer for the sale of the property.

In retrospect, the congregation voted to remain at Tenth and G Streets because it felt that the present location was better for a church with a downtown ministry than an unspecified and possibly unattractive site. In addition, public transportation and parking facilities were good and many of the members felt that the present site was more desirable because of the sentiment attached to it. Denominational aid was more certain at the Tenth and G site than a site which would be nearer the Cleveland Park Church. Probably the most convincing argument arose when it was pointed out that the blighted area about the church should be serviced rather than fled from. This decision to remain was widely acclaimed both in the District of Columbia and in the denominational headquarters in New York.

Even at the time, the meeting of November 8 was recognized to be not only a dramatic, tense, and emotional gathering, but it was also a traumatic experience for the Church leadership. It was a watershed date just as April 22, 1869, was a watershed date. Things were never quite the same afterward. It is regrettable that a "roll call vote" could not have been taken at the meeting for it would have shown on the losing side (1) the entire Board of Trustees, (2) most of the members of the Church Planning Committee, (3) the pastors, and (4) most of the Diaconate. The writer of this book was on the Board of Trustees at the time and can speak with certainty of the feeling of repudiation the meeting evoked.

In the weeks that followed, a majority of the Board of Trustees stepped aside. So deep was their sense of being disowned that they ultimately ceased to be members. Other than the heroic efforts of Dr. Kopf nothing was done to cushion this bruised feeling of shock.

On November 28, 1956, the Church and Society called a special meeting at which time the church property was withdrawn from the market. In addition, the Church Planning Committee was dissolved and a Church Building Council established to develop plans for a new church building. Mr. Carl Izzard was named chairman of the new council.

The first task of the Council was the selection of architect with whom the Council would work. On February 20, 1957, the choice of Milton L. Grigg of Charlottesville, Virginia, as the architect for the new building was approved. Mr. Grigg, in consonance with the Council, at once embarked on a site utilization plan.

To get started on securing funds for the new building, at the annual meeting on January 23, 1957, the Church approved plans made by the Board of Trustees to seek assistance from the Board of Home Missions in conducting a fund-raising campaign. Mr. E. Donald Preston agreed to take on the burdensome task of campaign chairman. Over the following months he worked so hard as to become ill.

During the week of June 3-9, 1957, the Rev. Le Roy Eide of the Board came to Washington and met with the men of the church, holding special meetings to instruct them how to campaign for funds. In this campaign they were joined by some men from other Congregational Churches in the

Washington Association. Mr. Eide's week was a profitable one. The men, including Dr. Kopf, obtained pledges of approximately \$136,000 on Visitation Sunday, June 9, increased to \$154,000 by October. When this was added to the amount raised as the result of the building campaign in the 1920's, the church had over \$366,000 to start with. This was still some distance, however, from the amount required. The contract price then estimated by the Church Building Council for the new building was \$730,000.

The meeting of November 8, 1956, forced a reorganization of the church. It did not come at once, but on May 26, 1958, the church was incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia. This abrogated the old 1865 Congressional charter, under which a separate Church and Society were maintained, an arrangement that had outlived its usefulness. Elimination of the Society drastically curtailed the role of the Board of Trustees. From 1865 to 1956 the Board of Trustees had been the lay power-center.

On July 1, 1958, members of First Church were shocked to learn of the sudden and unexpected disappearance of Dr. Kopf. For three days, members kept a round-the-clock vigil at the church. On July 4, Chaplain Rowland C. Adams, while searching the southeast tower, discovered Dr. Kopf's body hanging from a rafter by a length of clothesline. This tragic news brought tears to many, coming as it did without any warning, but members immediately rallied to support his wife, Mary Kopf, and the Rev. Delbert L. Achuff, Jr., the associate minister.

No one pretended to have an answer to the cause of the tragedy. Some attributed the death to Dr. Kopf's working beyond his strength. He had been very weary and depressed for many months because of factionalism in the church and had experienced some of the symptoms of a nervous breakdown which he had been powerless to halt some ten years earlier.

On Sunday, July 6, scripture lesson and the sermon topic were changed. For some verses from Corinthians, the 17th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John was substituted. It included this verse: "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." Dr. Kopf was to have spoken on "Our Interdependence." Instead, Mr. Achuff spoke of Dr. Kopf's death, and preached a memorable sermon designed to provide the fullest Christian assurance of hope, whatever the outward circumstances.

The message began as follows:

... "This past week our community has been shaken to its very foundations by a tragic event. For anyone to pretend that he understands the mystery of this life and death is dangerous hypocrisy; to actually believe that one understands is an unfounded pride in our abilities to fathom fully the depths of human experience; a pride which borders on blasphemy; 'for we know in part and we prophesy in part . . . our knowledge is imperfect . . . we see in a mirror dimly.' And so this morning we stand in awe in the fact of a great mystery, and the proper posture is that of humility.

"Is there reason then in tragedy? To man God has given the power to reason. One way of describing human beings is to say that we are problem solving animals. God has given to us the power to see relationships and the things which we can do with this power are truly marvelous. Our civilizations mark those accomplishments and we call them good. But the danger comes

when we think that we can encompass life in its entirety and predict always how it shall proceed. As long as we can predict, we say things go well. But life is not always so domesticated, and into the midst of it comes tragedy . . . unexplainable, mystifying, and sometimes terrifying. It upsets our applecart it breaks up the ground on which we are standing. In this condition we know ourselves for what we are creatures of God made little lower than God, but not God or gods; in need of the strength and the power which comes not of ourselves. In such moments we are forced back upon the Lord God of our fathers, in prayer and silence.

"Sometimes we do not recognize it as prayer; as devotion; for we may curse at God and even say that he cannot exist. But let us be reminded that some of the greatest passages of our Bible were written by men in the throes of such desperation, consternation and downright doubt. It is the growth of the soul the transforming hand of God upon us."

Mr. Achuff next went on to probe the tragedy of the premature death.

"Another problem before us this morning is illness. Illness is still to us a great mystery. In its physical manifestations it robs us of vitality, interferes with our natural processes, immobilizes us. We know the symptoms, we describe what we call causes, but basically we remain in its grip. Mental illness also robs us of our usual dexterity, adaptability, of our powers. Again, we recognize some of the symptoms but the causes elude us. Illness, too, speaks of our condition and how often we forget that we are creatures all of us ministers and laymen, alike. And as creatures are as prone to the diseases of destruction in this world. Therefore we need not despair when tragedy comes. Is it not significant that it is in such moments that we feel almost compelled to reach out in sympathy, to find some task which we can do to show our love, our concern, our interdependence one upon another? When all is going well, we often isolate ourselves from each other and seem unable to find an expression for the love we preach, almost incapable of feeling the need of another the need in which our motivation to serve is born.

"But despite our consternation, our terror, our lack of understanding, God speaks out and He tells us again that our knowledge is imperfect; we know only in part. But not this alone does God say He speaks too of the promise which He has made to us. Then we know that we are not saved either by our knowing, nor by our understanding, nor by our ability to express what we feel and apprehend but we are saved by our faith in the God that was in Christ. It is He who promises us that He will overcome the discontinuities of life; who will bring victory out of defeat."

Mr. Achuff concluded with the fullest Christian assurance of hope.

"In our perplexity, this morning let us remember that it was this same Apostle who reminded us that we are never without hope, whatever the outward circumstances. We may be perplexed but never lost. In the midst of our doubt and fear and terror, God yet raises up among us the Cross, and in quiet reassurance says:

"I am the resurrection and the life. If a man believe in me though he were dead, yet shall he live. And who liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

The service ended with the service of Holy Communion and the benediction by the Rev. C. Shelby Rooks, minister of the Lincoln Temple, who was there to offer the sympathy of his

congregation.

Dr. Kopf's memorial service was held on Sunday, July 13, at which time the church was jammed by members and friends paying tribute to a sensitive and Christ-like man.

Dr. Sidney Lovett was the ideal person to make this tribute, because he had preceded Carl at Mount Vernon Church in Boston, and in his subsequent years as Chaplain at Yale University, he and Carl had kept in touch with one another. Dr. Lovett had this to say to the grief-stricken congregation:

"Some years ago, a Scots philosopher-preacher in Boston, George A. Gordon, wrote a book entitled, *Aspects of the Infinite Mystery*. The central thought of his theme is one with that of an ancient mystic; 'Everything runs out into Mystery.' Life and Death are, as it were, islands, set in a wide ocean of Being, whose ultimate bounds and depths are beyond the limits of our knowledge. It has been told me that Carl himself, was increasingly concerned with this element of a 'mysterium tremendum,' surrounding such realities as human life and death. This is one of the marks of a sensitive mind that seeks to bring the elemental facts of our human existence, and the inexplicable mysteries of the divine Being that encloses us, into some kind of focus.

"Most of us here would own to a sense of the mysteries of pain and evil, admixed as they are and have been from the beginning with the healthier and holier elements in God's creation. When, in deference to a few particles of disordered matter, a lovely, brave spirit is suddenly extinguished, few of us can suppress the anguished question, 'Why should this thing be?' Now, it is in just such a crisis, that a binocular view of human life, compassing both its reality and its mystery, both its temporal and its eternal aspects, comes to our relief. 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.' These words of Jesus Christ, the Lord and Giver of life, may seem to add little to our immediate knowledge or our momentary belief with respect to the human predicament. But they do extend to us a hand-clasp of faith in the essential and ultimate rightness and goodness of God, Whom Christ came to reveal.

"This faith, in time, will come to increase our knowledge to enlarge our belief, because it includes and transcends them both. Faith, that the greater and the better part of life is out of sight, but never out of mind. Faith, that the wounds inflicted by God's judgment are healed by God's love. Faith, that 'the sufferings of this present moment are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed.' Faith, that neither death nor life . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.'

"This is the full and final testament of our Christian faith, declared in the first instance by St. Paul; richly appropriated by Carl in the course of his ministry. It is now offered anew to you and to me, in this service of Remembrance and Hope."

# XIV

## Today

**T**HE DEATH OF DR. Kopp precipitated the Church into a membership decline it could ill afford. Although a number of studies were made as to the extent and reality of the drop, certain reasons were clear.

For one, a number of the persons who wanted to see the Church leave its 10th and G location felt their wish had been overridden irretrievably. Others could not believe a new church building could be financed and did not want to go through what they were sure would be continuous requests for additional money. Finally, the pull of the Maryland and Virginia suburbs would not lessen nor would the mobility of Washington's population cease its gyrations.

For sixteen months, the associate pastor, Rev. Delbert L. Achuff, Jr. had to "hold the fort" pending the calling of a successor to Dr. Kopf. It was truly a rough assignment.

Meanwhile, all during 1957 and 1958 and up until May 1959, the Church Building Council, chaired by Carl F. Izzard, was busy planning what the new building should be like. The Council had to consider thousands of details which dealt with the space requirements for each church program; agreement on a site plan, involving the kind of tower, the decision for a garden, staff parking, and borings for the foundation; question of a day care center, resolved in the negative; review of all the architect's preliminary and "final" plans; selection of a heating and air cooling system; choice of building materials; what to salvage from the old building; whether to have an elevator; selection of sanctuary and chapel organs; sculpture over the church entrance way, later deferred; and so on. Mr. Izzard, an engineer with the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads, had an indefatigable assistant in Mr. Alfred Lester Fay. Mr. Fay gave hours upon hours to reviewing the engineering drawings of the architect.

After the May 1959 award of the contract to Martin Brothers for erection of the church building, the Church Building Council still had much work to do. Twelve lengthy meetings were held on such subjects as demolition of the old building, design of the clerestory windows, changes in the building required by the D.C. Code, chancel furnishings, selection of pews, and redesign of the organ frieze.

The money pledged to the Building Fund came in with very little renegeing (unlike 1925). In addition, during 1958, the alumni of Howard University contributed over \$3,200 as a memorial to General Oliver O. Howard. In addition, friends of Dr. Kopf contributed over \$3,800 as a memorial to him, while John Coolidge presented a pulpit and lectern in memory of his father and mother,

Calvin and Grace Coolidge. Ellsworth Alvord contributed the sum of \$50,000 to furnish a chapel in memory of his parents, Elias and Miriam Alvord.

In the spring of 1958, Walter Britt, Lester Fay, and Everett Alldredge, journeyed to New York to see whether the Church might receive a loan from the Board for Homeland Ministries for rebuilding. After getting a yes answer, at least nine subsequent trips had to be made by Mr. Fletcher Lutz and Mr. Walter Britt to work out the details. This part of the financing thus arranged, early in 1959 the final plans for the new building were adopted. The final services were held in the old church edifice on "Milestone Sunday," June 28, 1959. The music on this occasion was magnificent and the ceremony most moving. The summer months saw the demolition of the old building. Ground-breaking for the new building took place on Sunday, September 13, 1959. Construction began late in the year. Thus ended a long period of uncertainty and strife in the life of First Church.

During the summer of 1959, after the congregation had vacated the 10th and G building, union services were held at Ingram Memorial Congregational Church. Beginning in September, as the new church building was being constructed, Sunday morning worship services were held at the Jewish Community Center, 16th and Q Streets, N.W. Wednesday evening meetings were held at the Chinese Community Church, 1011 L Street, N.W., where Mr. Britt served as a Trustee. During this interim period the Church offices were located at 1311 H Street, N.W., and it was here that most committee meetings were held. Such a dispersed arrangement could not be conducive to anything but some membership loss.

During 1959, the church sold the parsonage at 3344 Runnymede Place, N.W., to purchase a new home at 1418 South 21st Street in Arlington, Virginia, which was larger and could house a family with a number of children.

A Pastoral Supply Committee, headed by Mr. E. Donald Preston, in the fall of 1959 recommended a call be extended to the Rev. David G. Colwell, pastor of the Park Hill Congregational Church in Denver, Colorado. The Church unanimously concurred and Mr. Colwell began his ministry on January 3, 1960. He was installed by Ecclesiastical Council on February 28, at which the Rev. Robert W. Spike, General Secretary for Program of the Board for Homeland Ministries, was the preacher.

Mr. Colwell was a Yale graduate, notable as a football fullback. Unusual for a minister, he had received a Master's degree in Business Administration at Harvard. In 1943 he graduated from Yale Divinity School and forthwith proceeded into the wartime chaplaincy. In a paper read at his installation, he said: "The twenty-six months that I spent with the armored troops, most of them in the combat zones of the European theatre, were a means of the rapid maturation of my faith."

Mr. Colwell's historic associations had been with the Northern wing of the Baptists. His father taught a large Men's Bible Class in St. Louis, his mother in 1949 was President of the American Baptist Convention, and his maternal grandfather in Colorado was a Baptist preacher. Yet his first call came from the Pleasant Street Congregational Church in Arlington, Massachusetts, where he and his wife, Catherine, spent five years. This was followed by nine years in Denver. There for

two years he was President of the Denver Area Council of Churches.

Pastor Colwell, in common with the major denominational leaders, is interested in a more ecumenical church. As Chairman of the Commission on Christian Unity and Ecumenical Study and Service of the United Church of Christ he has an opportunity to keep his interest, and that of the denomination, alive and capable of some fruition. As a member of the UCC delegation to the Consultation on Church Union he has shared in the ups and downs of that body.

Another major interest of the pastor is the revolution for full civil rights for all citizens. In his report to the annual meeting in 1963 he wrote:

"The Church of Jesus Christ and this particular congregation of God's people were deeply involved in the civil rights revolution. With a prayer for forgiveness for its lateness, the church finally moved fully into the struggle for freedom. The first indication of this on a national scale was the action of the General Board of the National Council of Churches in June. Subsequently, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ in July took what I consider to be a proper stance in regard to the issue of civil rights. I am proud of the way in which this congregation has moved to begin to meet some of its responsibilities. In the spring and again in the fall in congregational meeting, we reaffirmed our commitment to open occupancy in housing in both the District and the suburban communities, and called upon each member of the church to make his own commitment. As nearly as I can tell, some 40 of our members participated in the March on Washington on August 28th, and the facilities of the building were used by many others. In the 'Future of First Church,' adopted in congregational meeting on October 13, the congregation affirmed its faith in policy statements in many aspects of the racial involvement of the church. In November, you responded to the United Church of Christ appeal for funds for the special offering for 'Racial Justice Now' with gifts totalling \$578.60. This is a partial enumeration of things we have done. However, let none of us believe that we have done our work. We have not, and we shall not have done it so long as any person is denied his rights or is discriminated against because of his race."

The civil rights theme, in its full Christian setting, continued to be a frequent sermon theme or allusion, although it was not a popular subject with all elements of the congregation.

Mr. Colwell gave support to a major reorganization study of the Church, which was derivative from the Church Meeting of November 8, 1956, and the May 26, 1958, incorporation of the Church under D.C. law. Miss Charlotte D. Kimball chaired the study group to draw up a new constitution and bylaws, which were adopted June 11, 1958. The principal lay body is now the Church Council which meets monthly. Reporting to the Council are four Boards Diaconate, Christian Education, Missions, and Trustees. Each Board can have such working committees as approved by the Council. In consonance with this more tightly structured organization, the church adopted a "unified" budget, which supplants most of the previous separate funding arrangements.

The construction of the new church edifice meanwhile was proceeding on schedule. In the memories of those concerned with the construction activity, four persons stand out. Most active was Walter W. Britt, a retired insurance executive, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, who was at

the site daily to see that the materials met specifications and to answer questions from the contractor. Carl Izzard was concerned with any changes needed in the plans. Lester Fay, a professional with the Army Corps of Engineers, served as the liaison between the Building Council and the architect. Finally, W. Fletcher Lutz, Church Moderator, then an accountant with the Civil Aeronautics Board, kept surveillance over the fiscal requirements and resources. Speaking of fiscal requirements, the final figures for the new church building were as follows:

<i>Total construction costs</i>	\$804,961.76
<i>How financed:</i>	474,747.84
Church Building Fund	75,000.00
Loan, Board for Homeland Ministries	50,000.00
Grant, Board for Homeland Ministries	9,086.12
Donations for memorials	4,527.80
Donations for special purposes	191,600.00
Loan, Perpetual Building Association	\$804,961.76

The first service of "Re-entry" was a Wednesday night communion and prayer service, April 12, 1961, with the first Sunday services on April 16. Both were happy, joyous, reverent occasions of a memorable kind great music, deeply-felt prayers of gratitude, and a victorious sense of high accomplishment. The dream of 1925 had at last, in some fullness of measure, come true.

The new church building has a smaller sanctuary than its predecessor seating 650 as against 1,500. The basement houses a large Fellowship Hall with a stage, suitable for all kinds of meetings. Adjacent to this is a commodious kitchen, well equipped, which enables the Fellowship Hall to become a dining room seating 200 persons. The two-story education wing includes, in addition to classrooms and nursery, the church office, a pleasingly furnished garden room for small meetings, and studies for the pastors. At the G Street end of this wing is the Alvord Chapel, in which a stained glass window made by the Willet Studios forms the entire chancel wall. Its symbolism is based on the passion, crucifixion, and resurrection of the Lord, being dominated by a large red cross.

The sanctuary is air-conditioned, thus ending the previous discomfort caused by Washington's humid and hot summers. Indeed, one's memory-picture of a summer service in the old edifice is hundreds of hand-held fans ceaselessly moving. The principal embellishments of the sanctuary are eight clerestory windows made of conchoidal glass, abstractly depicting eight of the beloved parables told by Jesus. The product of the Willet Studios, they were fabricated from colored pot metal glass about an inch thick, cut to the desired size, chipped and faceted, and set in a matrix of epoxy resin.

The choir area in the nave is adomed with panelled wood, surmounted by enameled relief panels at the base of the organ pipes. The panels graphically illustrate various verses of the 148th Psalm. The 16-foot long Lord's Table majestically stretches across the nave of the sanctuary, behind the font and in front of the highly-raised Puritan pulpit, which in turn is backed by a high and lifted

cross. The font, table, pulpit, and cross are constructed of walnut, trimmed with satin-finished aluminum.

The narthex entrance has a mosaic in the floor, rich in symbolism, and worked into its west wall are these words from the eighth chapter of Romans:

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? .... Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In front of the building is a garden, dedicated to the memory of Carl Heath Kopf, with its shrubs and trees, which favorably contrasts with the bustling sidewalks and streets on its periphery. At the 10th and G corner of the garden is the Howard memorial tower, with its "beckoning, redemptive cross." The community consensus is that architect Milton L. Grigg has designed well and reverently.

A number of documents could be cited to show how the Church at present is trying to understand its downtown, inner city role. Perhaps the best of these is a challenging statement, developed while Mr. David Johnson was Moderator, and adopted by the congregation at a meeting on October 13, 1963. Too long to be quoted in its entirety, nevertheless it provides a thoughtful ending to this centennial history:

### **THE FUTURE OF FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Where have we been, what have we accomplished, what should we be doing, and how can we accomplish these tasks? This report presents some reflections on the past decade, some ideas on the Church's mission, and projects financial and membership needs. Recommendations are made to increase the faithfulness of First Church.

#### *The Mission of the Church.*

We have made a Covenant with God and with each other to be a Church of Christ. Thus we are bound to be an instrument of God's mission, to live and work for God's purposes on His terms. We are Called to be pilgrims, going out to serve in the world, feeding more than ourselves. In the community, we are to be a living witness to God's love.

The history of First Church is evidence that our forebears also understood that the Church is Mission. Support for abolition of slavery, the founding of Howard University, the establishment of sister churches, and the work of First Church members in missions abroad and at home and in their work and civic life for almost a century, are challenges to us. The decision to remain at 10th and G Streets leaves us no choice. The Church is Mission.

Since our return to the rebuilt Church we have taken some important steps. However, too many of these steps have occurred within the comfortable walls of our sanctuary. We must leave the sanctuary and push forward and outward. As God works in history and in all the world, our faithfulness is measured in the context of our total life. As a Church we are called not to succeed, but to be faithful and obedient. What are a few of the specific steps we can take now?

1. In greater measure, we must act in community affairs. We must present our position as a Church before the governing bodies and agencies of the District of Columbia including the Board of Commissioners and appropriate Congressional Committees. These statements of position should deal with all aspects of life in the Washington area. We should present these statements as a congregation located in Washington or through various organizations with which we are associated. Our duty to speak is manifest; our right to speak is incontestable.
2. We must be increasingly active in the Church's neighborhood. A good beginning has been made with the Thomson School Project, the Mission to the Central City, the Northwest Settlement House, and others. Our participation should be expanded this year with more members taking part. As a further step we as a Church can extend our involvement at Junior Village. As projects proceed, is it possible to ask some of the non-Church members residing in the neighborhood to give of their time to this work?
3. We must open our building to serve a wider need and support constructive use of our facilities by our interest. For example, at the present time our facilities are now used by the D.C. Junior Citizens Band, Gamblers' Anonymous, Executive Board of Washington SANE, Cuban Clothing Center, etc. Further assistance of our members is required for expanded use of our facilities.

Another use has been suggested from the past. It is the simple act of opening the Chapel for private personal devotions early in the morning. This task would require about twenty to twenty-five men, each of whom would be willing to give one early morning per month to opening the Chapel at 6:30 a.m. and remaining there until 8:30 a.m. In our old Church we used to have from 25 to 30 persons each morning use the Nave for personal devotions.

4. Each member should be involved in study. We must encourage each of our members to participate either in a study group or Church School class. This study should be concerned with God's Word and Truth in the context of today's life.
5. This Church is committed to witness in the greatest social and moral issue of our time: equal opportunity and justice for all.
  - a. We must actively seek out members without regard to race, economic or social standards, who will accept the responsibility of Church membership.
  - b. As individuals we must strive to achieve equal justice and Christian love in our daily circumstances.
  - c. The Church shall recruit, as needs arise, the best qualified persons for professional

- and non-professional positions without regard to race or sex.
- d. We commit ourselves to encourage group endeavors with our sister United Churches, other Churches and civic organizations. These endeavors can consist of joint committees assigned to specific problems, joint committee and Board meetings, an annual United Church Sunday with an outside preacher for the day. In addition, there can be joint choir presentations or exchange of choirs and pulpit exchange.
6. We must relate ourselves to the 1964-65 Biennial emphasis of the United Church of Christ which is on the Urban Mission, emphasizing that the Mission of the Church is One Mission in which all congregations participate. This means cooperation with residential churches in work in the central city, mid-town, and suburbia.
  7. Finally, we must continue to support efforts to make the Church of Jesus Christ one Church. As a member congregation of the United Church of Christ we must be a united and uniting Church.

### *The Past Decade*

1,064 active members, 529 persons attending worship services on an average Sunday in 1951; 553 active members and 334 persons attending worship service in 1962! These statistics point out a part of the problem facing this Church.

A measure of the congregation's life is the amount of active participation by individual members in various Church programs. Identification of a meaningful statistic is difficult. A perusal of the records for the decade indicates a lack of participation by many of our members, or rather an over-participation by a relatively few. Any year will show instances of individuals serving on as many as 5, 6 or 7 different committees, with persons serving on 2 or 3 being so numerous as to be commonplace. Contrast this with reported membership figures ranging from 553 to 1,064 and an average Sunday attendance of 334 to 529.

A second measure of the congregation's life is the number of pledgers and the average pledge. The number of pledgers has decreased. On a percentage basis, the percent of active members pledging has consistently risen from a low of 52% in 1951 to a high of 77% in 1962. This percentage increase has shown a marked upward swing since 1959, being 65% in 1960 and 76% in 1961. The result appears to be traceable to two causes: 1) reinstatement of an actual every-member canvass, and 2) the review and updating of the rolls discussed earlier. The average pledge per pledger has more than doubled during the last 12 year period, rising from \$69 in 1951 to \$143 in 1962.

Thus one of the strong points of our Church has been the increasing commitment of our Church membership to the financial aspects of Christian stewardship.

Historically, we have depended on pledges, offerings and investment income. Current giving has accounted for about 70% of our revenues while 30% has been received from others and previous

generations. This outside revenue cannot be expected to continue and our future programs will depend upon an increase in current giving.

An important measure of the program of any Church is how it expends the funds entrusted to it. The following tabulation portrays our stewardship.

[Click Here for Details](#)

It should be noted that the percentage of total cost given to Benevolences increases 1% a year from 21% in 1964 to 25% in 1968. Church Operation costs are increased at the rate of 3% per year. Capital Expenditures remain constant for the next five years.

#### *Summary of Projected Resources*

The projected unified pledge resources are based upon the 1963 estimated data and updated for each year on the premise that the average pledge will increase \$10 per year. Likewise there is a projected 2% yearly increase in the percentage of members pledging.

Membership net gains are projected on a nominal basis because to obtain these goals we must take into membership about 60 persons per year to overcome the number of persons that are taken off the membership rolls due to death, transfer to the inactive rolls, and persons leaving the city. The planning conference concluded that we should have 600 to 700 active members in about 10 years.

Offerings, Gifts and Other Income are forecasted on a basis to show the reduction in UCC aid, decrease in Endowment Fund Income due to a smaller investments base, and a transfer of offerings and gifts to pledged income.

The projected estimates are as follows:

[Click Here for Details](#)

#### *Policy Recommendations*

1. The Endowment Fund should be used to finance all deficiencies that occur in the program. If the trend shown in the projection continues we will not need to use the Endowment Fund after 1968. In 1969 the resources and costs should be in balance. The total to be taken from the Endowment Fund from 1964 through 1968 is \$50,000. At the present time the Endowment Fund has approximately \$105,000.
2. We will receive from the United Church of Christ \$5,000 in 1964. This amount will decrease \$1,000 each year until 1969 when we receive nothing. We should seek no further financial aid from the UCC for this minimal program.
3. Net membership increases are essential to the Mission. The proposed increases are small and can be met through a thorough evangelism program that adheres to the highest Christian principles and does not sacrifice our Mission emphases.

4. Continue constantly to review operating costs with a view toward eliminating overlapping functions and resultant unnecessary costs. Cost saving methods of operation should also be constantly reviewed.

5. Continue, but on a more thorough basis, the year round Christian Stewardship education of all Church members and friends. The program should include an emphasis that will teach each member that Christian Stewardship calls for pledging and giving a regular weekly amount of time, talent and treasure. This giving should be done by each member out of love for God and loyalty to the Church. We should set as a goal in financial giving a yearly increase of at least 1% of the members' total income until the member gives at least a tithe (10%). Our goal for time and talent should be that each able bodied member should give to the Church and its Mission a minimum of 10 hours a week of his time and talent including participation in regular Church services.

# Appendix I

## Church Ministerial Staff

### **PASTORS:**

The Rev. Charles B. Boynton, D.D. ....	1865-1869
The Rev. Jeremiah E. Rankin, D.D. ....	1869-1884
The Rev. Stephen W. Newman, D.D. ....	1886-1906
The Rev. Samuel H. Woodrow, D.D. ....	1907-1913
The Rev. Jay T. Stocking, D.D. ....	1914-1915
The Rev. James L. Gordon, D.D. ....	1916-1919
The Rev. Jason Noble Pierce, D.D. ....	1920-1930
The Rev. Alien A. Stockdale, D.D. ....	1931-1935
The Rev. Howard Stone Anderson, D.D. ....	1936-1947
The Rev. Carl Heath Kopf, D.D. ....	1947-1958
The Rev. David G. Colwell .....	1960-

### **ASSISTANT, ASSOCIATE, AND INTERIM PASTORS:**

The Rev. M. Ross Fishburn .....	1892-1894
The Rev. B. Alfred Dumm .....	1898-1900
The Rev. Charles H. Everest .....	1906-1907
The Rev. Samuel R. Swift .....	1909-1912
The Rev. Lewis E. Purdum .....	1912-1915
The Rev. Robert Wood Coe .....	1915-1917
The Rev. Wilmer P. Johnston .....	1918-1921
The Rev. Franklin I. Winter .....	1923-1926
The Rev. Don Ivan Patch .....	1926-1927
The Rev. Walter G. Borchers, Jr. ....	1937-1940
The Rev. John Elmo Wallace .....	1941-1942
The Rev. Walter G. Borchers, Jr. ....	1943
The Rev. Bertram D. Crocker .....	1944
The Rev. Hubert S. Beckwith .....	1945-1949
The Rev. Robert K. Nace .....	1949-1951
The Rev. Franklin I. Winter .....	1951-1952
The Rev. Charles W. Parker .....	1952-1956
The Rev. Delbert L. Achuff, Jr. ....	1957-1960
The Rev. Bruce Hanson .....	1961-1964
The Rev. C. Shelby Rooks .....	1964
The Rev. David J. Robb .....	1965-

# Appendix II

## Essay on Sources

This book has been written from the below listed original records in the custody of First Church, totaling some forty linear feet.

The clerk's records, both Church and Society, have not been uniformly prepared. Some clerks, like John P. Metcalf, kept a full record of all meetings. Some other clerks did little more than keep membership records. No records of the clerks have been destroyed, however, since they are well bound in nine large volumes. The volumes are indexed by the names of individuals, but this is not helpful for searching by subject.

The correspondence files of the paid staff are missing. They were apparently considered the property of the various pastors and taken by them.

The retained treasurer's records are quite spotty in the information they contain. The bound ledgers have fared well over the years. The unbound records, including card files, have mostly disappeared.

The records of the various church components (women's society, deacons, trustees, Sunday School, missionary societies, and the like) have not been generally preserved except for minutes of meetings. A series of scrapbooks for the period since 1904 is especially useful, since the books contain news clippings, copies of programs, and memorabilia of various kinds.

As a result of Ella J. Morrison's work at the time of the 75th anniversary of the Church, the archives contain a sizeable collection of photographs of pastors and members. The more recent Martin D. Schram collection of color slides supplements the photographs.

The author had hoped to include a chapter on social action in this centennial history. The activity of the Church in the Anti-Saloon League, the Church's connection with the peace movement of the 1930's and 1940's, its slavish adherence to the Republican Party for so long all deserve discussion. In the present state of the archives the documentation for such a chapter could not be assembled in the time allowed. If there is ever a second edition. ...

In 1957 the Church established a History Committee reporting to the Board of Christian Education. This Committee realized that until the archives were arranged and described its work would be ineffectual. A good inventory of the records now exists, and the loose materials are in a logical order. The work of Mr. Frank J. White, Mr. Jacob A. Duerksen, and Mr. Sherwood P. Van Waters has been especially notable in this connection.

To hold the cost down, this book is not being printed with footnotes, or an index. The manuscript copy of the text, however, will be footnoted and indexed for archival preservation.

EVERETT O. ALLDREDGE