

100 Years Of
Witnessing

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
McMINNVILLE, OREGON



Our Houses of Worship

Top: Old College Building used as home of worship from 1867 to 1883.

Center: Building erected in 1898.

Bottom: Present building erected in 1926.



Foreword

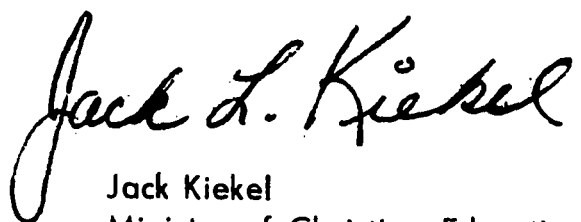
It is a rare and exceptional privilege for any minister to serve with a congregation as it bridges the gap from one century of service to the second century of ministry. As the Minister of Christian Education, it is also my honor to prepare this foreword to our Church's history.

Actually there is no better place to pen a few words about a Church's history than in the foreword. This is the heart of the matter - FORWARD - not to languish in past glories; not to enter a second century of ministry on laurels of past leadership and accomplishments but to be thrust responsibly forward into the second century.

This is a great Church in a great place of influence in a great moment of history. I encourage you to make no little plans, for little plans do not stir men's blood. Dream big dreams and kindle the desire in men's hearts to reach far beyond their careful tendencies.

In the words of Theodore Roosevelt - "Dare Greatly - It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbled, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena. . . who at best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement; and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."

So look back Old First, but linger not long, for the future is your inheritance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jack L. Kiekel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "K".

Jack Kiekel
Minister of Christian Education

Pastors of the Church 1867-1967

C. C. Riley	April to October 1866
J. W. Osborne, Sr.	February to December 1869
W. D. Meadows.	May to November 1870
E. Russ	December 1873 to June 1876
A. J. Hunsaker	January 1877 to November 1879
G. J. Burchett.	January 1880 to April 1881
W. J. Crawford.	September 1881 to August 1883
G. J. Burchett	August 1883 to April 1887
W. T. Jordan	July 1887 to January 1889
R. McKillop.	October 1889 to December 1892
C. L. Bonham.	May 1893 to May 1894
E. B. Pace.	December 1894 to June 1896
R. W. King	April 1897 to March 1901
L. W. Riley	July 1901 to April 1903
F. H. Adams.	June 1903 to April 1909
C. A. Martell	September 1909 to September 1910
H. W. Jones	October 1910 to September 1913
J. B. Champion	December 1914 to August 1917
C. L. Trawin	November 1917 to November 1925
W. E. Henry.	April 1926 to January 1940
R. A. Davenport	June 1940 to August 1942
A. M. Bailey	November 1942 to June 1945
E. E. Smith	Oct. 1945 - Jan. 1957
H. B. Bjornson.	Jan. 1958 - Jan. 1967

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SERVICE

A History of The First Baptist Church of McMinnville, Oregon 1867 - 1967

By Jonas A. Jonasson

The men and women who a century ago organized what is now The First Baptist Church of McMinnville were building on still earlier foundations of Baptist faith in this community. For ten years or more the old college building, an L-shaped wooden structure that stood on the corner of what is now First and Cows, had served as a center of Baptist work. It was there, in 1858 or 1859, that the Reverend George C. Chandler, first president of McMinnville College, organized the first Sunday School, and at about the same time called the first prayer meeting ever held in the community. Baptists living in McMinnville still belonged to the South Yamhill Baptist Church, six miles southwest of the town. Organized in 1846, this was the third oldest Baptist church in Oregon, and probably on the Pacific Coast.

In April, 1862, the South Yamhill Baptist Church voted to hold its meetings for business in McMinnville on "Saturday before the Second Lord's day in each month." Three years later, in September, 1865, it decided that "the time has come in the advancing state of Society, and the increased interest of the Baptist Church in McMinnville that it should have regular preaching at least two Sabbaths in every month, once in McMinnville and once in the bounds of the church." George C. Chandler was asked to preach once a month at the Old Meeting House," when it is fixed in a proper condition." It appears, then that the South Yamhill church had been holding Saturday meetings in McMinnville for about five years, and both Saturday and Sunday meetings there nearly two years before formation of the McMinnville church.

Discord within the South Yamhill church led to the dismissal on Saturday, May 11, 1867 of twenty-two members for the purpose of forming a new church in McMinnville. The organizational meeting, moderated by the Reverend J. W. Osborne, Sr., was held in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church at 4:00 p.m. on the same day. The new body adopted the Articles of Faith and Rules of Decorum already in use by the Yamhill church, and followed them with practically no change for fifty years or more. It also voted to petition for admission to the Central Baptist Association, and named delegates to that body. The Association, meeting with the LaCreole Church in Polk County on June 6-8, accepted the McMinnville Church into membership, together with the one at Albany.

Although only twelve men and four women were present at the organizational meeting, all of the twenty-two who withdrew from the Yamhill church came to be considered charter members of the new church. These include

John J. Collard, Martha F. Collard, E. T. Warren, Susan Warren, J. Wischer, W. Norton, A. B. Mays, Mrs. D. Mays, S. Cozine, Mahalla Cozine, L. L. Whitcomb and family of three, E. Norton, Wm. Arthur, J. B. Kirby and wife, Mrs. S. J. Adams, H. Norton, Jane Curtis, Helen Norton.

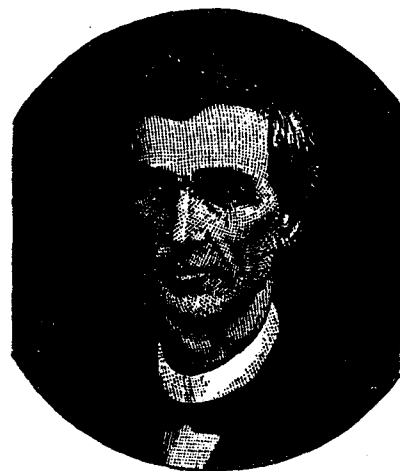
At that time McMinnville had about 300 inhabitants and was the location of "5 stores, 3 blacksmith shops, 2 wagon shops, 1 photographic artist, 1 silversmith, 1 shoe store, 2 doctors, 2 churches, 1 flouring mill. . .and no licensed grog or beer saloons." It was also the home of the struggling Baptist college established nearly ten years before. All in all, it was a promising field in which to launch a Baptist church.

Much of the pastoral work among pioneer Baptists in Oregon was done by self-educated preachers, and not by college or seminary graduates. Having little in common with generally better-educated Presbyterian and Episcopal clergy in the West, they worked more like Methodist Circuit Riders, but without their advantages of centralized administration. What would now be considered serious academic deficiencies may then have helped preachers and people to meet on common ground and establish mutual confidence. The general pattern was to have religious services only once a month, when held at all, and a vigorous preacher might well serve two or more churches at the same time.

Finding a shepherd acceptable to the new flock in McMinnville was not easy. When two ballots at the July meeting and two in August failed to produce agreement, the church decided to ask Reverend Cleveland C. Riley to preach at regular meetings until "such times as we can elect a pastor." In the meantime, "Brother Chandler" was "to preach for us tomorrow if Brother Osborn does not come." Riley preached in September, but apparently there was no regular minister for the October meeting. John Osborne preached in November and December. Finally, on December 9, the church unanimously elected C. C. Riley as its pastor, but getting him required another call in March 1868 and he did not begin his pastorate until April.

A native of Tennessee, Riley came to Oregon in 1853, and served the South Yamhill church and some others before moving to California in 1869. A simple and unassuming man, he was a warm, enthusiastic preacher. Although having only limited formal education, his easy flow of language and the ability to carry conviction to his hearers made him one of the best revivalists of his day. He agreed to serve this church for one year, but the records fail to show that he preached more than five Sundays.

After Riley left McMinnville, the church faced what was to become the dishearteningly frequent task of finding a new pastor. In February, 1869, J. W. Osborne, Sr. was elected for one year, but stayed only until December. W. D. Meadows was elected in May, 1870, only to resign three months later. Church activities were at a low ebb, and no minutes were kept during the following interim between pas-



Our First Pastor.

tors. Five of the original members of the church had withdrawn at the December, 1867 meeting, though the record does not indicate why. At one time membership dropped to eight because of removals and exclusions.

Church discipline was frequent, and often severe, during those early decades. In November, 1870, a member "was excluded for immoral conduct." At the next meeting, another was required to present evidence in support of his charge that a leader of the church was "a swindler in three different cases." When the accuser refused to furnish evidence, he was found to be in contempt of the church and excluded from its fellowship. Even though committees of the McMinnville Church and brethren from South Yamhill worked for months to ascertain the facts and bring about a reconciliation, efforts came to naught. On this note of tension the church minutes go blank from May, 1871 to July, 1873. No one knows what bitterness and un-Christian gossip was mercifully hidden by this two-year gap in the official records. In 1876 a member was excluded when the church learned that "she had changed her name and was living in Salem, Oregon in an un-Christian and immoral manner." Available records do not indicate what action was taken a dozen years later in the case of a lady member who had been to a dance but took only a few steps on the floor, or another who "had been to a dance but did not dance--was sorry that she went."

Yet, somehow, the church survived, and the minutes tell of unspectacular maintenance and growth. In December, 1873, members of the church were invited to "pay a donation visit to the Pastor." A "protracted meeting" of 22 days, beginning in February, 1875, resulted in the addition of fourteen members through experience and baptism. At about the same time, the church organized a Sunday School. The work of repairing a room at the college for use as a chapel was delayed in November, 1876, because "owing to the condition of the roads lumber could not be hauled at present."

The provision that the church inquire into the absence of members from meetings was more than idle form. Late in 1877, for example, a committee was appointed to wait on a certain member and "request him to attend the next regular meeting of the church." When approached by the committee, the "erring" member refused to have anything to do with the church, or make any explanation of his absences. With suitable expressions of regret, and "upon a full vote of those present," the church then promptly withdrew the hand of fellowship and excluded the man.

Finances were an ever-present subject of concern. In 1878 Reverend G. J. Burchett, president of the college, agreed to supply the pulpit once a month for \$100 a year, and to give as much toward his own salary "as any other member of the church had or would subscribe." In 1881 the church asked the Home Mission Society for a grant of \$400 to pay one-half of the pastor's salary "so that we thereby could be able to have preaching each Sabbath as soon as a pastor could be selected for that purpose." After this assistance had to be discontinued three years later, the church became self-supporting, but pastors frequently still had to wait for their meager pay.

After meeting for sixteen years in the college chapel, or sometimes in the

Cumberland Presbyterian meeting house, the church decided to build on lots bought from the college. Some such decision became necessary when the college disposed of its old building and moved to its present campus.

Finally, on December 2, 1883, the First Baptist Church met for worship in a building of its own. The new structure was 34 by 54 feet in size, with a tower reaching 65 feet from the ground. The main room, with the pulpit at the south end, seated about 250 people. Under the pulpit was a brick masonry baptismal font, entered through a door in the floor. A year later the church voted to install a gutter on the west side of the building to lead rain water into the baptistry, but nothing was done about heating it. Four windows on each side lighted the building by day, and two large chandeliers illuminated it at night. The outside of the church was finished in rustic, painted a modest yellow with trimmings a neat brown. The building cost \$2100, of which only \$600 remained unpaid at the time of the dedication. Less than half of the 88 members lived near the church. The others included those living in or near Dayton and many whose whereabouts were unknown.

In 1882 this church established "an arm" in Dayton to be in all ways a part of it until the members there might want to unite in a church of their own. In the meantime, it was planned to have a minister visit there once a month, but available records do not indicate for how long this was done. In any case, at a meeting on June 18, 1885, letters of dismissal were given to twelve members for the purpose of forming a Baptist church in Dayton.

In the early years of this church, deacons occupied a position of unusual dignity and honor. Ordained in ceremonies strikingly similar to those setting ministers apart for Christian service, they were the true patriarchs of the church, serving for life and giving spiritual stability regardless of the frequency of pastoral changes. Older people valued their counsel, while youth generally looked up to them with respect and an element of awe.

On at least one occasion the church tried to hold a pastor in the face of another call, and then "bargained" with his successor about pay. In 1887, a petition "from church members and others" asked G. J. Burchett to reconsider his acceptance of a Home Mission Society appointment. The church also voted to raise his salary to \$1000 a year. The pastor expressed his appreciation for the petition, but only a month later the church accepted his resignation by a unanimous vote. At the same meeting it voted to call Reverend M. L. Rugg at a salary of \$1000 per year, but negotiations moved slowly and the offer was never accepted. Two months later, the church invited Reverend W. T. Jordan to come at a salary of \$850 per year. Jordan offered to come for \$900 if the congregation would try to raise \$1000, but accepted when the church reaffirmed its previous offer and expressed its willingness to increase his salary after the first year "should he be pleased to remain and we are satisfied." In November the church instructed the finance committee to consider the establishment of a better financial system. It was also voted to pay the pastor's salary and other expenses weekly.

In 1889, San Francisco Baptists invited this church to send delegates to a meeting called to consider the advisability of founding a theological seminary.

The church responded by indicating its awareness of the importance of the project, but did not send delegates.

Lighting the church by electricity came up for attention shortly after the establishment of the first electric plant in McMinnville. In November, 1889, the committee on electric lights reported that ten lamps could be had for \$5.00, and the church authorized the trustees to make this expenditure. But there seems to have been some further question of costs involved, for in March, 1890, the church voted to pay the February bill of \$7.87 but to send a committee to visit the city council in reference to the rate for lights.

At about this same time, a number of members left the church with the stated purpose of joining with others to form a new Baptist church in Sheridan or to unite with one to be organized in Hopewell. Disputes over theology may have caused these withdrawals, for the church voted to declare itself "to be a regular Baptist Church," and expressed its regret that anyone should request a letter of dismissal because of doctrinal views. A short time later it voted to grant no letter to any member who was in debt to the church, by pledge or otherwise, unless in the opinion of the church there were sufficient reasons for not paying it.

The Whiteson Mission of the First Baptist Church of McMinnville was established in January 1893. It fixed the qualifications of its own members and in general managed its own affairs, though its moderator was chosen by the McMinnville church. The parent church also agreed to match up to fifty dollars any funds contributed on the field for the support of the mission.

A resolution passed in 1894 declared that it was "the sense of this church that the practice of card playing, the frequenting of public dances, or the renting of any building to be used for saloon purposes, are things. . .radically contrary to the gospel and spirit of Christ, that they each and all are, when practiced by church members, calculated to seriously injure the cause of Christ, and that any member of this church continuing in any one of these ways to bring disgrace upon the cause of Christ shall be considered a fit subject for church discipline."

Until 1900 or after, the Rules of Church Order included lengthy provisions for the disciplining of members. Logically, the severity of the discipline depended on the nature of the offense, and the degree to which it involved the good name of the church. According to the rules adopted in 1893, "if the case be one of flagrant immorality by which the reputation of the body is compromised, and the Christian name scandalized, the hand of fellowship shall be withdrawn from the offender, notwithstanding any confessions and promises of amendment."

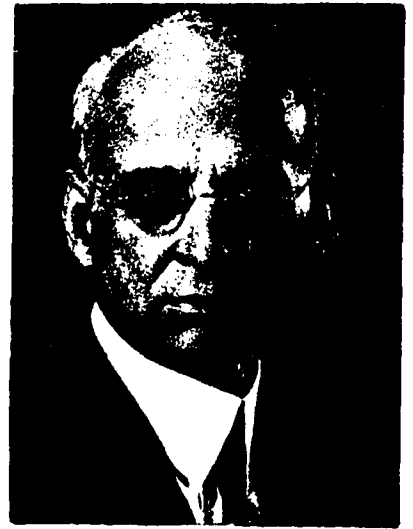
This chronically explosive issue of discipline was given little attention in the Rules of Order adopted in 1915 and revised in 1927. In substance, they provided simply that in case charges of disorderly walk were made against a member, the church could refer the matter to the deacons, but in no case was final action to be taken at any meeting at which the charge originated.

On March 3, 1898, the church voted to erect a new building to cost no less than \$5,000 fully furnished, if that amount in reliable pledges could be secur-

ed. Because these were not in hand as soon as expected, the church authorized the trustees to borrow, pending receipt of pledges. When the building was dedicated, on January 8, 1899, its entire cost of approximately \$5800 was covered by pledges and subscriptions. A gift of \$500 from the Home Mission Society was secured by a mortgage to be enforced in case the church violated its covenants and agreements.

In August, 1900, the church established a mission in Gopher Valley, and at the first meeting there received nine persons by experience or as candidates for baptism. Those present subscribed \$4.18 per month to provide monthly preaching services at the mission. How long this was continued is not known, but it appears probable that at least occasional services were held there during the next several years.

No one in the church could have realized what far-reaching consequences were to flow from the call of Reverend Leonard W. Riley to the pulpit in 1901. A graduate of Denison University and Rochester Theological Seminary, he came to McMinnville after four years in his first pastorate, in Lebanon, Ohio. When he began work here, the church had an indebtedness of about \$1700. Seventy of the 221 members reported at the end of the year were non-residents. Only 81 were males. Yet under Pastor Riley's leadership the church soon paid off the debt, and rejoiced as three of its youngest members burned the cancelled notes. Then, after less than two years in the McMinnville pastorate, Riley resigned to become general missionary of the American Baptist Home Mission Society for Oregon and corresponding secretary of the Oregon Baptist Convention. Fortunately, he was not lost to this church, for in 1906 he began a quarter-century of service as president of Linfield College. During all of that time and most of the years of his retirement, he continued as leader of the church, which, in one way or another, he served more than half of his life.



To replace Riley as pastor, the church called Reverend Floyd H. Adams, of Palmyra, New York, at a salary of \$900 per year and \$100 for moving expenses. The new pastor and his family arrived in June, 1903, to begin a period of nearly six years here before going to the First Baptist Church of Lebanon, Indiana. A son, Theodore Adams, later a well-known denomination leader and president of the Baptist World Alliance, was baptized in the church in 1906.

In January, 1907, the church voted to undertake the full support of Charles Rutherford as its missionary in India and to apply its regular foreign mission offerings to his salary, provided he was appointed to serve under the Missionary Union. Mr. Rutherford had been licensed by this church shortly after his graduation from McMinnville College in 1904, and was ordained here on June 11, 1907. This close relationship continued throughout his decades of notable service in India, and his eventual retirement in Oregon City.

The problem of keeping the membership rolls accurate has been chronic for sixty years or more. It has been complicated by the large number of college students who bring their letters here and then scatter to all parts of the world. Many of these listed as "non-resident members" might better have been called nominal and inactive Baptists. At times, too, at least until the twenties, it was common practice for students going home for the summer vacation to ask for their letters and then rejoin this church at the opening of the next college year. Such well-intentioned coming and going distorted church statistics, by giving the appearance of more membership change than there actually was.

One of the shorter periods between pastorates was that which followed the resignation of Reverend G.A. Martell on September 8, 1910, to take effect not later than October 1. The church immediately reactivated the pulpit committee of the year before, which two weeks later presented the name of Reverend H. Wyse Jones, already well known through his service as an evangelist of both the Oregon and Northern Baptist Conventions. The constitutional requirement of two weeks' notice before calling a pastor was suspended by vote on September 29, and a call extended to Reverend Mr. Jones. His letter of acceptance was read at the regular meeting on October 13.



Following Mr. Jones' resignation in June, 1913, the church invited Reverend Charles L. Trawin, of Boise, Idaho to accept the pastorate. Trawin responded that he was overwhelmed by the heartiness of the call and the expressions of confidence. A few days later, he wrote that, because of the condition of the work in Boise and the insistence of the church there, he had decided to decline the call to McMinnville. Professor J. Sherman Wallace, then chairman of the pulpit committee, resigned from that office in order to serve as acting pastor.

Convinced that this was "the most important church on the coast," the pulpit committee felt that no position being held by a prospect could be so high that he would not consider coming to McMinnville. In August, 1914, therefore, the church voted to call Dr. W. B. Hinson, then pastor of the First Baptist Church of Portland, at a salary of \$1800 per year. However, Dr. Hinson wrote that he felt it was his duty to stay in Portland.

The next invitation went to Reverend John B. Champion, of Roxborough, Pennsylvania, at the same salary and with a contribution of \$500 toward his moving expenses. Mr. Champion's acceptance concluded with the words "May there be no unfulfilled expectations on the part of church or pastor." (Psalms 37:4.) At the end of the first year of his pastorate, Mr. Champion was proud to announce that 112 members had been welcomed into the church. At its semi-centennial in May, 1917, the church claimed a membership of 730.

Yet, in spite of gratifying progress, there was an undercurrent of tension

in the church. The open break was triggered by the pastor's attack on the liberal theology of two members of the college faculty, and his call for an end "to the vicious strategy of diverting attention from questionable teaching and textbooks by assailing and casting out pastors." To the six deacons, five trustees, and four members of the finance committee who met informally on April 6 to consider the situation, it seemed that only the resignation of the pastor would heal the wounds. But to avoid dampening the festive spirit of the 50th anniversary celebration of the church, they delayed forcing the issue until early in June, 1917.

After heated debate, the controversy was referred to a council of ministers from about fifteen Oregon churches, which reported that it found no implication of un-Christian conduct on the part of either side. It did observe, however, "that the present unfortunate situation has arisen, in part, by the official boards acting in private session on matters that ought to have had the consideration and decision of the entire church before action was taken looking to the close of the pastorate, and also that a greater degree of tact and forbearance ought to have been shown by the pastor." The council recommended that pastor and church cooperate to "bring about the severance of the relation now existing as pastor and people, in Christian courtesy and good will, at as early a date as seems satisfactory to both parties.

The church rejected this solution by a vote of 71 to 45. Instead, it granted the pastor the privilege of submitting a substitute letter of resignation. That it accepted in a resolution that took a slap at the "unauthorized action of some members of the official boards who met in the absence of the pastor, and without the consent or approval of the church, in effect, asked the pastor to tender his resignation." The effective date of the resignation was set at September 15, 1917 with pay to continue for three months after that.

With feeling at such a high pitch, it was well that the church could turn quickly in its choice of a new pastor. At the annual meeting on September 24, the rules were suspended, and a call extended to Reverend Charles L. Trawin, who three years before had felt unable to accept a similar invitation. Salary was fixed at \$2000 per year with \$100 for Northern Baptist Convention expense, one month's vacation, and the opportunity to hold one or two evangelistic meetings. On October 20, the church was heartened by Trawin's enthusiastic acceptance to begin his ministry on November 1. The reassuring, yet challenging, tone of his greeting on the first Sunday promised well for the future. "We expect," he said, "to slip quietly into service without abrupt change or unusual methods of work. We believe in a confident and comfortable type of religion and endeavor to preach the old Gospel in a plain and practical way. We shall appreciate your counsel and expect your cooperation. May the great Head of the church strengthen our hands in work and enrich our hearts in worship through years of blessed fellowship."

By this time it had long been apparent that the church building dedicated in 1899 was inadequate, and that it did not lend itself to extensive remodel-

ing. A "nest egg" of \$3,000 had been accumulated by 1908 without any campaign for funds, and this amount grew modestly in the next ten years. During World War I at least \$2600 in government bonds was pledged toward the cost of a new church.

Before the end of 1919, committees concerned with the projected building program were hard at work. There was some talk of raising \$100,000, and the process of getting assistance from the Home Mission Society was set in motion. Negotiations for the purchase of a site at the corner of Fifth and Grant Streets (now First and Davis) fell through because of a disagreement on price. Still, things were progressing well enough that the church voted on May 4, 1921 to start building a year later if \$35,000 had been paid in on pledges by that time. This was not to be, but the general plan of the new building was approved in October, 1922, and in following August the church voted to let the contract for excavating the basement and putting in the concrete walls. Then, just as it seemed the new structure was beginning to take shape, another problem threatened the whole project.

Encouraged by the possibility of more substantial support for Linfield College in a larger city, its Board of Trustees considered moving it to Portland or elsewhere if suitable inducements were offered. Fully aware of what this could mean to its own future, the church took vigorous action. In a resolution passed unanimously on May 22, 1924, it deplored the widespread misunderstanding among Baptists in the Northwest. It insisted that the vital question was the "conservation and furthering of the cherished ideals which the fathers had in mind and heart when they made provisions for real Christian education under what they considered the most favorable environment." The church pledged its full cooperation in a "united campaign to assist in providing our college at McMinnville with the necessary equipment to meet its greatest opportunity and make effective its high ideals in the field of Christian education."

Continued uncertainty about the future location of the college suggested the advisability of postponing any new construction at the church. When this, in turn, led the pastor to notify the board of deacons of his contemplated resignation, the church granted him a leave of absence for a year "or until such time as conditions will permit the resumption of our building program." In July, 1925, however, the church voted, 28 to 27, to advertise for bids as soon as possible thereafter. On May 16, 1926 it authorized a \$55,000 contract for construction of the new building, but postponed the letting of contracts for heating and plumbing because all bids initially received were rejected as being too high.

Delays in the building program had already contributed to the loss of the pastor. In November, 1925, the church released Mr. Trawin to accept a call to the First Baptist Church of Eugene, Oregon, which he was then serving on an interim basis. Dr. M. E. Bollen, professor of speech at the college and acting pastor of the church, continued to fill the pulpit until the coming of Dr. W. E. Henry in April, 1926.

After his graduation from Crozier Theological Seminary, and his ordina-

tion in 1896, Dr. Henry served churches in the East and the Pacific Northwest. He came to McMinnville from the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Yakima, Washington.

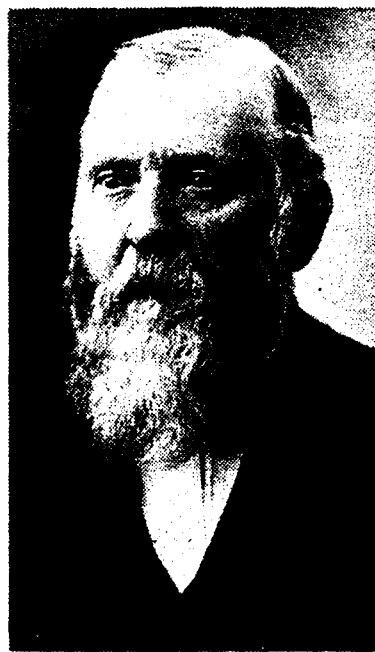
The new church, so long planned for and so often delayed, was dedicated January 16-20, 1927. It represented an investment of nearly \$80,000, besides approximately \$6,000 for the pipe organ. The Hunsaker Memorial Auditorium, named in honor of the fourth pastor of the church and long an honored deacon would seat approximately 625 persons on the main floor and in the balcony. The three-floor educational unit was expected to prove adequate for decades to come. The dining room and its equipment was considered sufficient to serve 220 persons at a time. Someone with a statistical turn of mind counted 41 rooms in the building, exclusive of the narthex and five rest rooms. It was a plant worthy of the "most important Baptist Church on the Coast."

To finance this project, the church went heavily into debt. A \$25,000 loan from the Lumbermen's Trust Company of Portland, with six percent interest, was to be paid off at the rate of \$2500 per year through 1936. A \$5000 loan from the Home Mission Society was scheduled for payment between 1929 and 1937.

Paying for the new building proved more of a burden than had been expected. On March 1, 1928, slightly more than a year after its dedication, the indebtedness on it was \$26,500. But large as it was, this debt could have been managed if all pledges had been paid. Unfortunately, even before the outbreak of the depression in 1929, the church treasurer complained about the number of delinquent building pledges. For the next several years, things got worse instead of better. By January, 1933, the pastor's salary was \$300 in arrears, and the church was failing by \$100 a month to meet its current expenses. Delinquencies on building-fund pledges had reached \$7000 to \$8000, and \$3800 was still owed on the Mission Society loan of \$5000. By the end of 1933, \$6500 of the debt was past due.

In July, 1936, for a change, there was a temporary surplus in the bond-retirement fund, but only because a misplaced bond was not presented for payment when it matured. Thanks to this passing good fortune, the church had enough money available to make some needed repairs.

When Dr. Henry retired at the end of 1939, his pastorate of nearly fourteen years was already the longest in the history of the church. In the words of the resolution making him Pastor Emeritus, he had "given unstintingly of his strength and time in dignifying the preaching ministry," had "ministered



with rare Christian sympathy to the sick and bereaved, and by exemplifying in his personal and family life the high ideals of the Kingdom of God." Had "made a notable contribution to the moral and spiritual life of the community." For many years after his retirement he taught an adult Sunday School class, a labor of love to which he brought notable scholarship and devotion. Occasionally he also conducted funerals, a form of Christian service for which he possessed a rare talent.

Dr. William G. Everson, president of Linfield College, served as interim pastor for the first quarter of 1940. A minister of wide experience, he had recently come from the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Portland. He agreed to serve if the vote to call him were unanimous, and with the understanding that he would accept no salary. He asked that the money saved in this way should go into necessary church repairs and the creation of a fund to defray moving expenses of a new pastor.

On April 25, 1940, the church extended a call to the Reverend Rowland Davenport, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Butte, Montana. By this time the previously bleak financial situation was considerably improved. The final payment on the Home Mission Society loan was made during the summer, and the next treasurer's report showed all current bills paid and a balance of over \$300 in the general fund. The last of the bonded indebtedness was paid in 1942, except for the one bond still reported lost. All in all, the future looked bright as the church observed its 75th anniversary in May, 1942. Yet Mr. Davenport's resignation only a month later to enter the army as a chaplain was an early indication of how deeply World War II would affect the church.

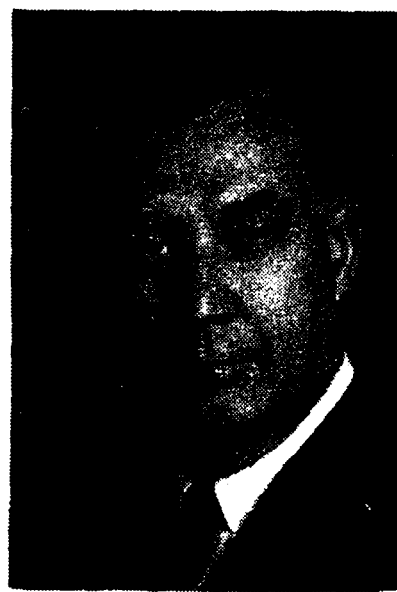
To replace Mr. Davenport, the church called Dr. Ambrose M. Bailey, a former pastor of the First Baptist Church of Seattle, but then serving in Willocks, California. Although near retirement age, Dr. Bailey came to McMinnville at the urging of his long-time friend, Dr. Leonard W. Riley. To share the pastor's heavy load, the church employed an additional worker among the young people and others of the congregation. Then, when the war was nearing an end, and he felt he had kept his commitment to serve during the emergency if his health permitted, Dr. Bailey resigned effective June 1, 1945.

Dr. Henry filled the gap until the coming of Reverend Elton Smith as pastor in the following October. A year later the church named an assistant to the pastor, at a salary of \$140 per month, and employed a student as a special Christian worker among the ex-service men at Linfield. James Howard came in the fall of 1947 as assistant pastor with primary responsibility for youth work, and served until the summer of 1949.

These were difficult times for Baptists in Oregon, but ties between this church and the state convention remained strong. It was only natural, then, that several McMinnville Baptists should be in key roles during the crisis which culminated in the division of the state convention in 1948. After a period of widespread discouragement and uncertainty, American Baptists in Oregon rejoiced in a renewed spirit of confidence and cooperation. Even so,

although this church was spared from the bitterest forms of internal strife, a number of its members withdrew to unite with the newly-formed Conservative Baptist Church in McMinnville.

Nine months after Mr. Smith's resignation, in January, 1957, the church called Reverend Harold B. Bjornson, then pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waterloo, Iowa. A professional forester before World War II service in the Coast Guard, he had entered Berkeley Baptist Divinity School after the war. While in the seminary and for a year between graduation and going to Waterloo in June, 1950, he was on the staff of the First Baptist Church in Oakland, California.



In his letter of acceptance here, Mr. Bjornson wrote, "We come to you in the belief that you are a church which does not intend to be comfortable but rather useful in the work of the Kingdom of God. Let us pray that as we work together as people we shall be usable by God."

The new pastorate began auspiciously in January, 1958. The church budget of \$36,324 included \$26,214 for current expenses and \$10,110 for missions. Mr. Bjornson's ready acceptance in the community did much to enhance the image of the church as a force in the life of McMinnville. Both he and Mrs. Bjornson brought with them a record of leadership in American Baptist affairs, and they were soon chosen for positions of responsibility in the Oregon Baptist Convention as well.

An important step forward was the calling of Reverend Jack L. Kiekel as minister of Christian Education in 1959. A graduate of Willamette University and Berkeley Baptist Divinity School, Mr. Kiekel was then serving as youth director in the First Baptist Church of Denver, Colorado. His coming made possible a notably enlarged and improved ministry to youth in the church and the college.

In its call to Mr. Bjornson, the church promised that satisfactory housing would be provided by mutual agreement. To that end, a parsonage committee was appointed to study the possibilities, and the Bjornson family lived temporarily in a rented house on South Baker Street. In due time, the church decided to build a parsonage as soon as possible, on a site just north of the Theta Chi fraternity house on South Davis Street.



These plans for construction were scarcely under way when an opportunity came for the church to purchase what must have become the largest and most luxurious Baptist parsonage in the state, if not in the nation.

Mr. Louis A. Courtemanche, Jr., long a leading business man in McMinnville, but then a resident of Portland, offered to sell his palatial home one block north of the church for use as a parsonage. By a conservative appraisal, the house was worth at least \$60,000, which became the agreed-upon selling

price. Mr. Courtemanche offered to make a donation of \$35,000 to apply against this purchase price, reducing the net cost to the church to only \$25,000. Some concern was expressed about the cost of maintenance and eventual repair of the parsonage, but these misgivings did little, if anything, to delay the purchase. On May 18, 1958, by a vote of approximately four to one, the church decided to buy.

About seven years later the official boards were sufficiently concerned about costs to bring the whole question of pastoral housing to the church anew. The result was a decision to sell the parsonage to the City of McMinnville, for use as a city hall, for \$42,500. The Bjornsons then bought their own home, and received a housing allowance.

In 1961, the church considered plans for changes in and additions to the church building at an estimated cost of \$228,570. On May 6, 1962, it voted to authorize a campaign for building funds, with renovation and construction to begin in 1963. The extent of the project was to be determined after the financial campaign, and its cost was to be funded over a period of several years. By late October, 1962, pledges to the building fund amounted to \$63,250, and it was decided to continue the drive with the expectation of reaching at least \$80,000 if at all possible. But, in spite of heartening evidences of support, progress was slow. It was December 1, 1963 before the church authorized the Building Council to proceed with construction and remodeling to cost an estimated \$12,000 above the original projected limit of \$225,000. The excess was to be raised in the two subsequent three-year campaigns and by soliciting for supplementary pledges. The motion passed 122 to 19.

Two years later, in May, 1964, the new education wing of the church was dedicated. Besides providing badly needed classroom space on two floors, the building included a chapel seating about 75 persons, a multi-purpose room, and a generous sized narthex.

After nine years of leadership here, Dr. Bjornson, in January, 1967, left to become pastor of the First Baptist Church of Palo Alto, California. His pastorate, the second longest in the history of the church, was highlighted by the addition of the educational wing and by steady progress in the overall program of the church.

The Reverend Frederick Gilson, interim pastor of the church in Palo Alto before the coming of Dr. Bjornson, came here in March, 1967, in the same capacity. During his forty-one years of Christian service, Mr. Gilson had been a missionary in India, and pastor of churches in Montana, Nebraska, California, Illinois and New York.

Twenty-three men have served as pastors of this church during its first hundred years, or an average of nearly four and a half years each. For the first half-century, the average pastorate was only two years, and the church was without a pastor for about a third of the time. Five terms of service were for



one year or less, and three others for less than two years. By contrast, the three longest pastorates have accounted for all but seven of the past forty-one years.

Growth in church membership has been consistent since the early years of struggle and uncertainty. From 88 members in 1883, the church grew to 221 in 1902, and to more than 500 only ten years later. At the end of 1966, membership was 979, of whom about 300 were non-resident.

Increased budgets have more than kept pace with growing membership. From \$1800 in 1905, the budget has risen to \$55,757 for 1967, exclusive of building funds. The budget of 1920 was notable in that it allocated exactly as much for missions as for local expenses, with \$3443 for each.

This church has always been mission-minded: Besides establishing "arms" in Dayton, Whiteson, Hopewell, and Gopher Valley, it has accepted the world, no less than the county, as its "larger field." Beginning before the turn of the century with Miss Ida Skinner going to India, Miss Mattie Walton to Japan, and Reverend J. E. Rhodes to Burma, a host of missionaries have gone forth from this church. Many of them have been graduates of Linfield College, and several others have spent furloughs here or have retired to this community.

The roster of men ordained or licensed here, and of others going into church-related vocations, is too long to be included here. Perhaps it will be enough to note that hundreds of ministers, denominational leaders, and other Christian workers, serving literally around the world, bear the imprint of this church. There is no way to measure its impact on an even larger number of dedicated laymen, without whom countless churches and denominational programs would be much poorer indeed. Dr. Leonard W. Riley, former pastor of this church and long-time president of Linfield College, was the "father" of the Board of Education of the American Baptist Convention. Dr. Harry L. Dillin, a member of this church since 1931 and president of Linfield College since 1943, was president of the American Baptist Convention in 1956-57. He and others have served on boards and commissions at the state and denominational level in capacities too varied and numerous to be catalogued.



As this now substantial and favored church approaches its centennial, the words of Dean Emanuel Northup on a similar occasion sixty years ago seem appropriate. "When we think of the beginning of this church," he said, "we must think of heroic deeds done by those who never thought of heroism, of undaunted courage of those who were always fearful, of patient disheartening labor by those who thought only of doing the Master's will in such a manner as to please him." Of such stuff is the living history of this church, as it gives thanks for its rich heritage and looks forward to a future of even greater significance.

Church Officers 1967

Interim Minister, Rev. Frederick L. Gilson; Director of Christian Education, Jack L. Kiekel; Moderator, Dr. J. A. Jonasson; Clerk, A. G. Boone; Assistant Clerk, Mrs. Elmer Adams; Treasurer, Dr. W. W. Dolan; Assistant Treasurer, Don Blensly; Financial Secretary, Mrs. Robert Jones; Asst. Financial Secretary, Mrs. Howard Daniels; Non-Resident Secretary, Mrs. C. B. Hansard; Supt. of Bible School, Noel Martin; Asst. Supt. of Bible School, Ted Lehman; Bible School Secretary, Miss Judi Beard; Librarian, Mrs. Harry F. Hulac; Head Usher, W. Trent Barnes; Asst. Head Usher, Morlan White;

Board of Trustees: Roy Helser, Selmer Severson, Barry House, Chm. C. B. Hansard, Wendell Martin, Dr. J. H. Pollard, Wallace Aebi, Roy Matthews, Mrs. James Lockett.

Board of Christian Education: Chm. Dr. Paul Howard, G. E. Gillaspie, Dr. Elmer Million, Robert Luse, Dr. Lyn Swanson, Mrs. Elmer Fricke, Dr. Norman Goss, Mrs. Ervin Royer, and Mrs. Ish Duckett.

Board of Deacons: Kenneth Rogers, Dr. John Boling, Chm., Elmer Carlson, Clarence Kohl, Delbert Anderson, James Craig, Dr. Paul Little, Stanton Bennett, A. G. Boone, Charles Coulter, Thomas Irwin, Emmett Dromgoole, Thomas Meicho, Ervin Royer, Bruce Huffman, J. Forest Walton, Paul Durham and Robert Travis.

Board of Deaconesses: Miss Ann McCune, Mrs. Hugh House, Chm., Mrs. Albert Youngbert, Mrs. Cecil Will, Mrs. Emmett-Dromgoole, Mrs. Clarence Kohl, Mrs. Archie Hartzell, Mrs. Ted Lehman, Mrs. Paul Little, Mrs. Lyn Swanson, Mrs. J. Forest Walton, Mrs. Frances Cross, Mrs. James Craig, Mrs. Harry Yates, Mrs. Don Eastman, Mrs. Marion van Dyk, Mrs. William Paulsen, and Mrs. Leon Babcock.

Centennial Committee: co-chm., Nancy Singletary, Leon Beal; Historian, Dr. J. A. Jonasson; Publication, Mrs. Thomas Irwin; Publicity, Rev. Frederick Gilson; Drama, Dr. Lester Schilling; Music, Mrs. Craig Singletary; Corresponding Sec. Mrs. Frank Grundhauser; Social Hostess, Mrs. Stanton Bennett.

1867 The Brethren to constitute a new
Church. Meet. Saturday, before Second.
May 11th Lords day in May. at 4 P.M. The Bros.

Osborn, officiated in the Organization,
The following. Bros & Sisters were present
John. J. Collard E. J. Warren, J. Wickser
W. Norton H. B. Mays, & wife O. L. Cugini &
wife L. L. Whitecomb E. Norton & wife Arthur
J. B. Kirby, & ~~Wm~~ O. J. Adams, H. Norton
Jane, Curtis Helen Norton. The name
of the new organization to be The McMinville
Bap Church. The Articles of Faith and rules
of Decorum the same as the Jamhill Church
J. B. Kirby was Elected Mod. J. J. Collard Clerk
The voice of the Church is that we present our
selves to the Central Association, for admittance
and send our delegates, namely, E. Warren,
J. B. Kirby, J. J. Collard O. L. Cugini, E. Warren
and J. J. Collard to prepare a Church letter
for the Association. Bro Chandler, was
asked to preach at our next meeting, at
our July. Meeting we Elect a Pastor. This
Book was Bought and paid for at a cost of
\$1.25. Adjourned in order J. J. Collard, Clerk

July 13th The McMinville Bap Church. Meet -
Pursuant to previous arrangement. after
Preaching by Elder J. Osborn Sen. the door of
the church was opened for members. reference
called for the election of pastor after
balloting twice it was laid over to our next
regular meeting Adjourned in order
John J. Collard Church Clerk,
Saturday before
the Second Lords day in July

