"I HAVE MUCH PEOPLE IN THIS CITY"

HIGHLIGHTS OF 125 YEARS CENTERVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

PAUL ROGERS

DEDICATION

This book is affectionately dedicated to all of those "dear hearts and gentle people" who have zealously worked to make the Centerville Church of Christ *"a city set on a hill"* for 125 years.

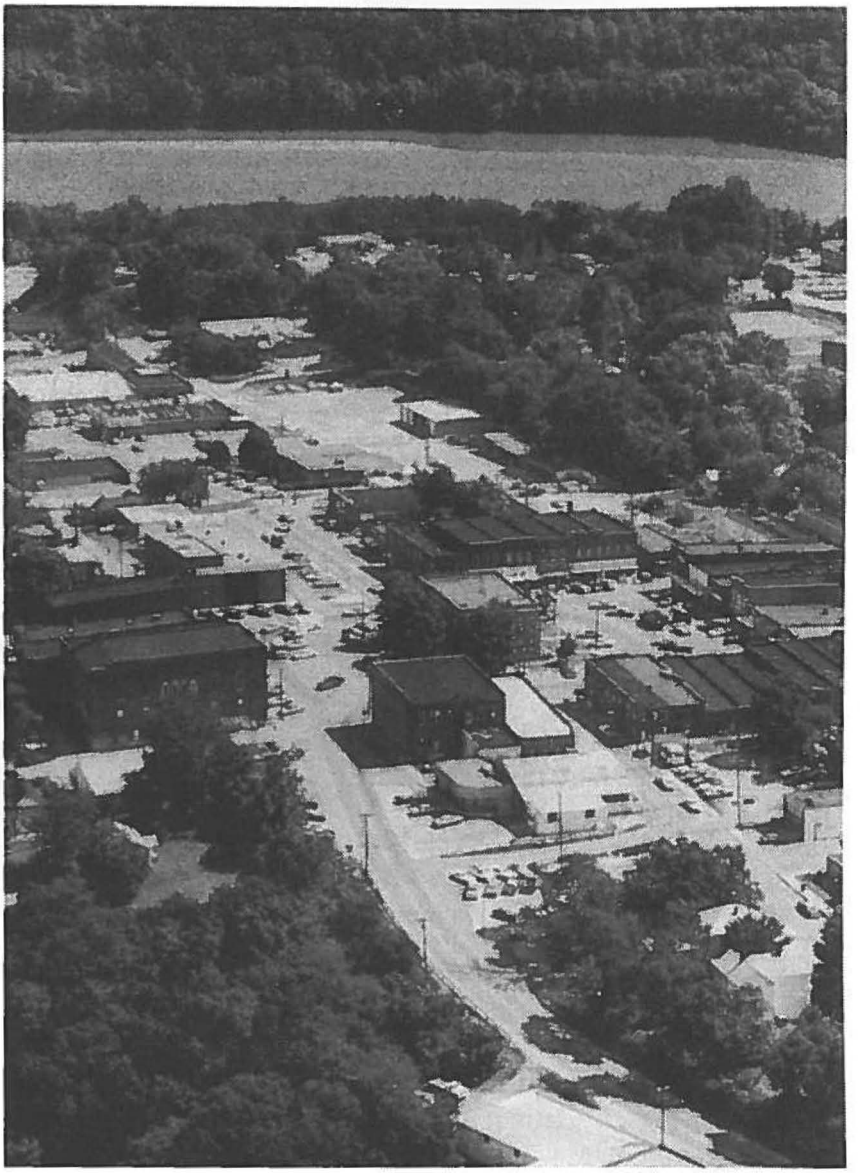
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Rogers has served as Pulpit Minister for the Centerville Church of Christ, Centerville, Tennessee since January 1, 1957, one of the longest tenures of any preacher in America. He is a graduate of David Lipscomb University and Harding Graduate School of Religion. He has preached in England, Austria, India, and has made four trips to the Holy Land. He serves on the Board of David Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee. He received the *Distinguished Christian Service Award* from Harding University in 1988, was *Alumnus of the Year* in 1975 at Harding Graduate School, and was selected as *Centerville Man of the Year* in 1978.

He is wed to the former Judy Johns and is the father of four children: Larry, David, Susan, and Emily.

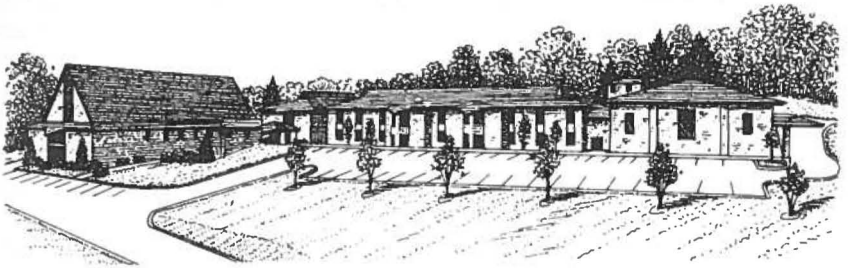
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
The 1870's, Surviving and Succeeding	1
Stirrings in Shady Grove	14
The Restoration Movement in Hickman County	18
A City Set On A Hill	29
People and Places	94
I Remember, I Remember	120
Tomorrow, Better Than Today	130
Timeline	133
These Thirty-Five Years	140
Dinner-On-The-Ground, 1870-1995	149



"I HAVE MUCH PEOPLE IN THIS CITY"
Acts 18:10





"THEY REHEARSED ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM"
Acts 14:27

1

The 1870's, Surviving And Succeeding

The Centerville Church of Christ in Centerville, Tennessee had its beginning in 1870, according to the oldest records of the church. It was an appropriate time for new beginnings, for restoration and rebuilding. The single most tragic chapter in American history had just closed with the ending of the Civil War. Some 620,000 young Americans, clad in Blue and Gray, lay in premature graves, over half of which are unmarked. Another 500,000 had been wounded during the war. It would be no exaggeration to say that a full half of all of the young men in the South had either died or been wounded in that awful struggle. An entire generation had evaporated in the flames of fury and fighting. The extent of this carnage may be seen in the fact that more American soldiers died in the War between the States than the sum total of all Americans who died in World War I, World War II, and Vietnam. There was scarcely a house in Tennessee that did not have its dead or wounded.

Of the three million men who served in one of the two armies, 115,000 Tennesseans fought in the Army of the Confederacy, with another 38,000 (mostly from East Tennessee) in the Union Army. Thirty-nine Confederate Generals and six Union Generals were Tennesseans, making this state indeed *"A house divided against itself."*

Tennessee was the single most fought-over state in the land, with 298 troop engagements. From 1862 onward the state was a battlefield. No one will ever forget the battles of Shiloh, Chattanooga, Nashville, Franklin, Signal Mountain.

DESOLATION AND RUIN

F. B. Srygley, author of *Seventy Years in Dixie*, described the days immediately following the war: *"When the war closed, the South was a land of desolation and ruin. There was scarcely a home in all the country that did not mourn the loss of its own dead. In many homes*

the absent dead out-numbered the desolate living, and in every case the loved, but lost, were the strength and support of the family. It was a land of disconsolate widows and helpless orphans. Every heart was burdened with sorrow and every home was shrouded in gloom. There was no place in all the South but had its evidences of the ruin of war and ravages of famine. There was scarcely a horse or a mule in the whole country that did not have the familiar army brand, and the people were compelled to clothe themselves in garments made from cast-off and worn-out uniforms. It was difficult to find a man in the whole country who had not either lost a limb or received a wound in the army."

The total cost of the war to the South was estimated at $4 billion (*The Civil War Handbook*, Price).

THE WAR IN CENTERVILLE

While Centerville and Hickman County did not witness a major Civil War battle, the area was nevertheless hard-hit by conflict. Many of the leading citizens were slain, homes were destroyed, livestock confiscated by Federal forces, farming equipment destroyed, buildings and fences torn down, and many fields were grown up in briars and bushes.

The Courthouse on the Public Square in Centerville had been gutted and ruined. The Union sympathizers were known as the Jayhawkers from Perry County and the Southern supporters were called Bushwhackers. At the height of the struggle, the Jayhawkers had burned the business portion of Centerville, along with many private residences. The Courthouse was destroyed by the Bushwhackers in an effort to keep it from being used once again as a fort by the Northern forces.

There were numerous skirmishes in the county, one involving Confederate Captain John Nicks, who later would lead in the establishment of the Centerville Church of Christ. He was able to drive the Federal forces up the hill from Indian Creek (now Twomey) to the Public Square where they commandeered the Courthouse, turning it into a fort.

BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER

Tennessee had been a divided State on the war question. Records show that 105,000 citizens had voted to secede from the Union and 47,000 to remain. Thus, as the veterans returned home crippled, wounded, and exhausted, there was great animosity between supporters of the Union and Confederacy. Often it was brother against brother, father against son, neighbor against neighbor. Even the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, had four brothers-in-law to serve in the Confederate

Army and three sisters-in-law married to Confederate officers. There was a heritage of hatred and hostility that only could be weakened by the passing of years.

THE RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD

The war ended April 9, 1865, at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia. Governor William G. Brownlow, known as "the Fighting Parson," was made Governor of Tennessee for the next four years. He was a fanatical Unionist determined to make the "rebels" pay dearly for having entered the war. No one was permitted to vote who was not a Union sympathizer and all state-wide elections were under Brownlow's control. In Hickman County, only 150 persons were eligible to vote in the years immediately following the war.

The situation was made worse by the untimely assassination of President Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth. Lincoln pled for reconciliation and had resolved to lighten the load on the devastated South. His plan was to allow any seceding state to return to the Union if as many as one-tenth of the citizens took an oath of loyalty. After his death, radicals in the North sought feverishly to frustrate that plan. Discharged Confederate soldiers were not permitted to bear arms for protection, and no person could vote who had willingly assisted the Confederacy in any manner.

Carpetbaggers, so-called because it was said of them that "they could put all they owned in a carpetbag" infiltrated the South, controlling the elections and stirring the emotions of the people. Those southerners who had shifted their allegiance to the Union were referred to as "scalawags." It was a time of turmoil and tears all across the southland.

HOPE REIGNS SUPREME

With the coming of 1870 and a new decade, a fresh glimmer of hope broke upon the horizon. The United States, undivided and unfettered, would be again "One Nation Under God." There was peace, rapid growth, and immense progress. In Tennessee there were 5,317 manufacturing establishments of all kinds operating in 1870. Governor DeWitt Senter, in his inaugural address in that year, called for *"the cooperation of all good citizens of all classes, sects, and parties."* A Constitutional Convention convened in Nashville on January 10, 1870, to adopt a new document for a new day. From the Appalachian Mountains in the East to the Mississippi River in the West, poor but pious people were rebuilding their lives and homes, helping their neighbors and learning to laugh again. Everywhere there were corn shuckings, barn raisings, quiltings and folk games.

The average size farm in 1870 was 125 acres. Fields once again were sown and harvested. Cotton, corn, wheat, and livestock were the major products. Farmers then, as now, complained of the high cost of supplies, the low price for their products, and the large taxes and insurance payments. There were millions of fine trees still in the forests and never had so much lumber been needed for houses, factories, businesses, barrels and crossties. Factories and furnaces, tanneries and sawmills, gristmills and flour mills were at capacity. Life had begun again in Tennessee!

The counties of the state abounded with wildlife following the Civil War. In 1867 the County Court was paying a bounty of $1.00 for each wildcat killed and $4.00 for each wolf slain. It was not at all uncommon to hear the eerie howling of wolves through a dense forest night after night.

Food was simple, but adequate, with tables laden down with such delights as roast venison, bear meat, fat bacon, Johnny cakes, corn lightbread...all cooked over a hot oak bark fire!

THE TOWN OF CENTERVILLE

In 1870 Centerville was a village of perhaps 500 inhabitants located in Hickman County. The county had been created in 1807 by the Tennessee General Assembly, having formerly been part of Dickson County. It was named for Edwin Hickman, who had been slain by Indians near the mouth of Defeated Creek just across the river from Centerville. Following the Indian Treaty of 1818, settlers began to cross over Duck River in large numbers and populate the southern portions of the county.

The first County Seat was in the community of Vernon. However, it was decided in 1823 to locate the county government nearer the center of the county. It would be known as "Centreville," located on a 61-acre tract of land donated by John C. McLemore and Charles Stewart. The old log courthouse at Vernon was dismantled, hauled on wagons to the new location, and rebuilt on the public square. The first dwelling in Centerville was constructed by Peter Morgan in 1823. The Post Office opened its doors in 1823, but the first newspaper *The Hickman Pioneer* was not begun until 1878, 55 years later. Hickman County's Representative in the State Legislature in the 1820's was none other than the famed backwoods explorer, Davy Crockett.

The old log Courthouse remained on the square until 1845, when a new one was built. During the closing months of the Civil War, it was burned by southern sympathizers, but was built back to the same walls in 1867. It continued to be used until 1926, when the present Courthouse was constructed.

W.M. Johnson was Mayor of Centerville in 1872 and W. M. Edwards City Recorder. This is the first mention of such officers in the minutes of

the County Court. John T. Anderson was at that time designated to be the "Keeper of the Poor House."

The nation was poised for growth and expansion. The population of the United States was 50,000,000 persons with the population of Tennessee being 1,258,520, and the population of Hickman County being 9,856.

PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE

Prior to 1870 there was no bridge spanning Duck River anywhere in Hickman County. It was necessary either to cross by ferry or to ford the river. Farmers found it extremely difficult to get their produce to market, to obtain supplies from town, and to trade in Dickson or Nashville. Thus it was that in April of 1877 a movement was begun to build a bridge over Duck River at a site due north from the Courthouse, near the mouth of Bell Hollow (at the lower entrance of what is today Camp Meribah). Never was there a more hotly-contested struggle among the citizenry. There was a strong pro-bridge faction and a strong anti-bridge faction. However, those favoring the bridge and progress prevailed and the bridge was completed in July, 1878. It was used until the fall of 1933. Four men were appointed by the Hickman County Court to oversee construction of the bridge, with power to inspect daily progress and to accept or reject the structure upon completion. Two of those four, John Nicks and T. J. Walker, were members of the newly-formed Church of Christ in town.

A NEW RAILROAD

In 1879 the County Court called an election to determine the willingness of the people to build a railroad through Hickman County. It would be known as the Nashville and Tuscaloosa Railroad and would not exceed a cost of $5,000 per mile.

Prior to the War, there had been very few improved roads anywhere in the county, and it was expected that all male citizens should work so many days annually on the road which passed by their house. Farmers would sometimes transport their crops on flatboats down the Duck River to the Tennessee River, thence to Natchez or New Orleans, and return home on foot.

Once again there was heated controversy, but passage of the railroad resolution was secured, and in 1883 the first passenger train crossed the railroad bridge at Shipps Bend and pulled into the station named "Centreville."

PROGRESS STATEWIDE

The 1870's witnessed a remarkable surge of interest in public education. Prior to that time there had been numerous "Academies," including the Centerville Academy which had opened its doors in 1842. However, in 1873 the Legislature established the first public school system in the State, and by the end of 1873 there were 60 public schools in Hickman County alone. These were erected on donated land, constructed with donated lumber, and built by donated labor.

In 1875 a State Board of Education was formed. There was a State Superintendent of Education and each county had its own local Superintendent.

Vanderbilt University was founded in 1870 and named for Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, a northern philanthropist who gave $1 million to its establishment. It was at the outset a church-related institution having ties to the Methodist Church. In 1879 East Tennessee University was renamed The University of Tennessee. A concern about the evil effects of strong drink was reflected in the 1877 ruling by the Legislature, which prohibited the sale of alcohol within four miles of any incorporated institution of learning unless it was located in a town which allowed the sale of liquor.

THE MARY CLEES ARRIVES

Adding immeasurably to the excitement of the 1870's was the coming of the Steamboat Mary Clees to Centerville in February of 1878. It was a beautiful, 100-foot boat that somehow made it up the Duck River, around the curves, to dock at Centerville's door. The *Hickman Pioneer,* of March 1, 1878, described this grand event as follows: *"During the forenoon and about noon on Monday last vague and uncertain rumors got afloat in our midst that a steamboat had been sighted somewhere in the river below this place. As the hours wore away, thicker and thicker came the report that she was coming to Centreville, and excitement grew higher as the rumors increased. About one o'clock a distant sound like a steam whistle was caught by the quick ears of those on the lookout, who were so anxiously hoping that the rumors were true. Straggling parties at this time might have been seen in the vicinity of the river, running to and fro in the vicinity of Mr. Nixon's grass lots, to get a favorable position. In a few moments another sound came, nearer and clearer, 'Don't you see that column of smoke around the bend younder?' About that time a good-sized calf bellowed in Dr. Thompson's lawn, and two young men–truants from Prof. Clarke's school - with three or four of the '15th Amendest' of the smaller size,*

fell off the fence upon which they were sitting, and down the bluff they went, hollowing, 'It's coming! It's coming!' Presently a shrill whistle was heard and a white cloud of steam was seen bursting up through the treetops, not far distant, and then a general stampede set in. By this time the more quiet citizens of our town began leisurely moving off in the direction of the river, and ere long a considerable crowd had gathered at Broom's ferry. A few moments later, another whistle was heard and the steamer hove in sight, and running smoothly and rapidly above the force it landed at the ferry. A cheer was set up by those on the banks, which was re-echoed by the passengers who had met the boat at different points below and come up to this port. Hearty congratulations were extended to all on board, particularly to the officers of the boat, who had made it a point to come to Centerville. It wasn't long before the decks were crowded. Some greeted the Mary Clees as the first steamboat they had ever seen. The boat remained at the landing Monday night, and Tuesday morning at 8 o'clock an excursion party got aboard and steamed up the river a short distance and returned to the landing. About 9:30 o'clock the Mary Clees, with her passengers, and addition of several citizens of our town to the number, turned her bow downstream and was soon out of sight. The fact of seeing a steamboat was not what caused such a sensation, but the fact of seeing one in Duck River, a stream that, though large and deep, had never been considered navigable, and as we were informed, it has been about thirty years since anything of the kind has been attempted and since that time the river has been lying idle, and we have been sending our produce to market during the cold winter season by wagons and paying highest rates for hauling; and hence the importance that is attached to this movement."

It should be noted that on its return trip, thirteen miles away from Centerville, the Mary Clees ran on a sandbar, where it remained until the water rose sufficiently.

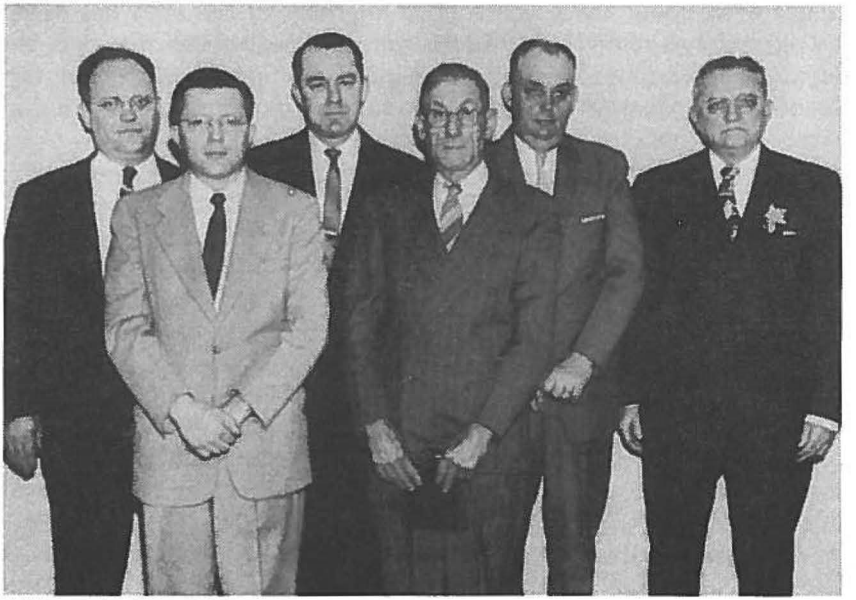
A NEW DAY DOWN SOUTH

F. B. Srygley summed up the postwar period: *"The South entered upon an era of unprecedented prosperity, and in a few years thriving cities sprang up as if by magic upon the ruins of antebellum fortunes."*

In the midst of all this progress, a tiny band of believers gathered first in homes and then at a location one block off the city square to form the Centerville Church of Christ. *Sola Dei Gloria,* To God Alone Be The Glory!



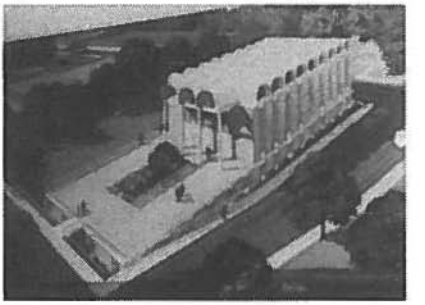
Elders 1957
James R. Brown, J.L. Worley, Ezra Ammons, E.J. Beasley, Jim D. Bates



Deacons, 1957
Dr. Parker D. Elrod, Dr. James Blackwell, Edward Loveless, Jess Nicks, Jake Loveless, Claude B. Stephenson



Church Building, 1958



Early Architectural Sketch Abandoned



Vacation Bible School, 1958



Zone Leaders, 1957
Delbert Roder, Brown O'Guin, Edward Loveless, Bobby Bates, Carl Rodgers, Dr. James Blackwell, Elton Johnson



Elders, 1962
Carl Rodgers, J.L. Worley, James R. Brown, Jim D. Bates, Dr. Parker D. Elrod



Educational Annex, 1962



Bible Teachers
1957

Benevolent Workers
1957





"Emma Nicks Day", 1954
Hickman County High School



Miss Elizabeth Sesler



Byron Bates, Boyd Worley

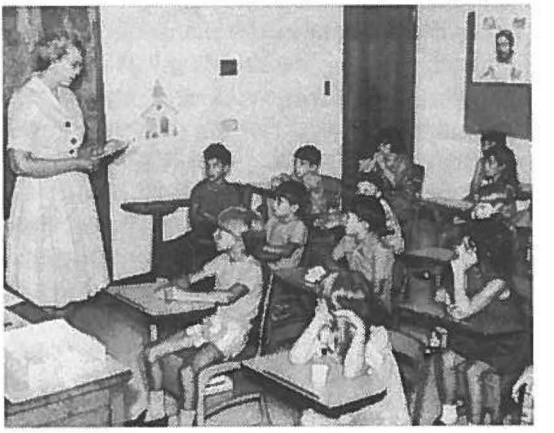


Herald of Truth Dinner, 1965



Amazing Grace Bible Class Telecast, 1981

Children's Class Thelma Totty



2

Stirrings In Shady Grove

"Wake up, Shady Grove! Preacher Stone is just down the Natchez Trace headin' this way. He'll be here by nightfall and plans to preach at The Stand tomorrow morning. Spread the word! Ring the bell! Gather the people." Barton W. Stone, one of frontier America's foremost pulpiteers and organizer of the largest religious gathering the nation had yet seen, a Camp Meeting at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, attended by 25,000 persons, preached in Shady Grove early in the 19th Century. A congregation of the Church of Christ would be established in that community which, according to Dr. Mac Lynn, is the 14th oldest congregation still meeting in America. The oldest church is Rock Springs in Celina, Tennessee, established in 1805. Shady Grove was established in 1820. As the Centerville church celebrated its 125th Anniversary in 1995, the Shady Grove church enjoyed a 175th birthday. The churches met together for a joint celebration and service of Thanksgiving. Both congregations were established in a large part by the same family, William Nicks the father and John Nicks the son. Their histories have been intertwined through all these years.

A VILLAGE IN A GROVE

Shady Grove was a Post Hamlet on the south side of Duck River, fourteen miles southeast from Centerville. It took its name from the Grove in which the first store building was erected. The first house belonged to Captain Henry G. Nichols, who was also the first merchant. Dr. M. H. Puckett was the first practicing physician to locate there, in 1870. John M. Anderson established the first school in 1871. The first Post Office was opened in 1866, with H. P. Nichols the Postmaster. By 1878 the picturesque village had two stores, two blacksmith shops, one cabinet shop, one school, two saloons, one lawyer, three physicians, and three churches...Methodist, Christian, and Mormon. The population was 125 persons. Located on the famed Natchez Trace which led from Nashville

to Natchez, Mississippi, Shady Grove had a unique opportunity for early expansion.

Prior to 1805 the area had served as home to the Chickasaw, Creek, Cherokee, and Shawnee Indian Tribes. The Treaty with the Chickasaws in 1801 enabled the Natchez Trace to pass through Shady Grove.

FAMOUS PERSONS

The Village has seen a number of prominent individuals through the years. Three United States Senators have at one time lived there. Thomas Hart Benton worked for John Gordon and taught school at Shady Grove, then later became a United States Senator from Missouri. Theodore Carraway was also a school teacher at Shady Grove. He became in time U. S. Senator from the State of Arkansas. His wife succeeded him in a special election following his death in office. She was Senator Harriett Wyatt Carraway.

Among the teachers at Shady Grove Academy in later years was a Mr. Lee, who was the father of Bing Crosby's wife, Dixie Lee.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

The first prominent school in that district of the County was built on the ridge between Dunlap and Buck Branch around 1820. It was a simple, rough log building with split log seats. The citizens would employ a professor to conduct a short school term with each parent paying for his children's education. In 1896, the Shady Grove Institute opened its doors with W. C. Salmon and E. B. Stover as teachers. It was at that time the only high school in Hickman County and had 300 "scholars" in the very first term. Many of these were adults and several came from other counties of Middle Tennessee. The Institute sold its building to the county in the early 1900's, and in 1928 a modern brick building was erected in the valley.

On a high hill above the Shady Grove valley was a hallowed spot known as "The Stand." It featured an outdoor pulpit erected under a "brush arbor." People came here by the hundreds for camp meetings which lasted for days on end. All the preachers of the area were invited to speak. This continued until 1834 when, according to Spence, the last such gathering occurred at The Stand. A building was erected on that hilltop and was for many years the meeting place of the Church of Christ. When the congregation moved down into the valley, it created much division among the people, some favoring and some opposing the change.

GOSPEL ADVOCATE ARTICLE

The church at Shady Grove, also called Dunlap, was featured on the pages of the *Gospel Advocate*, April 23, 1903. The article is given below.

"This church was established in 1820, I think, at what was formerly called "The Stand." For several years the meetings were held in the woods under the trees. A Stand (it would now be called a rostrum) was erected, on which the preacher stood while preaching. Seats for the audience were made of logs split in two and made smooth by a broadax. Long wooden pegs driven into auger holes in the half logs served as legs.

In January, 1827, S. A. Baker bought of Allen V. Montgomery one acre of land on which was built a log cabin in which worship was conducted until 1894, when a new meetinghouse was built.

Among the first members there were William Nicks and wife, Nathanial Kellum and wife, S. A. Baker and wife, David Davidson and wife, Hugh Leeper and wife, Abner Higgens and wife, R. B. Cooper and wife, Josiah C. Bawcomb and wife, William Walker and Prudence Pugh. I have been told that these members were then called "Stoneites" or "Newlights," "Schismatics," and later on "Reformers," William Nicks and J. B. Cooper took the oversight as teachers for the congregation.

Later on....a meeting was held at which William Nicks, J. B. Cooper, David Davidson, and S. A. Baker were ordained elders by fasting and prayer, with laying on of hands by Joshua K. Speer. Subsequently A. S. Gill was put forth for ordination to preach the Gospel, being ordained by prayer and laying on of hands by G. W. Cone.

Some who preached here in the early history of the church were John Hooten, W. R. Hooten, Wade Barrett, James Anderson, Tolbert Fanning, and W. S. Gooch. Barton W. Stone was once the Pastor of a Presbyterian church in Bourbon County, Kentucky, but he abandoned Presbyterianism, taking the Bible alone as his rule of faith and practice. He preached here during the 20's.

John Hooten had but one good eye and could not read and write. However, he is said to have been a good preacher, and his memory was so good that he could give out his songs and quote his texts correctly, telling where they could be found.

The following preachers were formerly members of this congregation: William Nicks, Nathanial Kellum, David Davidson, A. S. Gill, J. M. McCaleb, J. D. Evans, and Ernest Love. J. M. McCaleb, who is a missionary in Japan, is well-known to the readers of the Advocate, as he reports his work through this paper.

A great many protracted meetings have been held here in which many of our talented brethren have labored. Three new houses of worship have been built near this place, one at Anderson's Bend, one at Little Lot and one at Leatherwood Creek, and an effort is being made to build up a congregation at Forty Thickets...so the number of members is not as large as it was before these houses were built. There are about 70 members here at present and they meet each Lord's day for worship.

The following brethren have preached here: William Nicks, Tolbert Fanning, William Anderson, E. G. Sewell, David Lipscomb, William Lipscomb, Granville Lipscomb, John Hooten, D. R. Sowell, Felix Sowell, Samuel Sewell, James Litton, J. M. Barnes, E. S. B. Waldron, R. L. Whiteside, R. T. Sisco, E. Showalter, John Nicks, Jr., A. D. Nicks, Jr., S. P. Nicks, Tolbert Nicks, Ernest Love, R. C. White, J. M. McCaleb, and many others.

W. S. Gooch held a successful debate here with a Mormon elder. J. M. Ratliffe held a successful debate here with a Presbyterian preacher.

Absalom Doak Nicks lived in the Shady Grove area. His son, born July 24, 1824, was named Barton W. Stone Nicks."

It was yet another son of William Nicks, Captain John Nicks, who played a leading role in the establishment of the Centerville congregation in 1870.

3

The Restoration Movement In Hickman County

"Let us speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where it is silent. Let us do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names. Let us have no creed but Christ, no book but the Bible, and no aim but to glorify God." Those righteous resolves have now been sounded around the world for two full centuries. They form a call for the Restoration of New Testament Christianity based upon the teaching and examples of Jesus Christ and His apostles. While freely acknowledging their own inadequacy and making no claim to an infallible interpretation of scripture, the leaders of this Movement have nevertheless joined with Jeremiah the prophet to say, "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls" (Jeremiah 6:16)

The Restoration Movement is a call to return to "the *old* paths," to preach the same gospel, wear the same name and be members of the same church set forth in the New Testament. Apparently no section of the United States has been more open to that idea than Hickman County and Centerville, Tennessee. Dr. Mac Lynn, of Nashville, whose extensive statistical studies of Churches of Christ are widely received, has indicated that there are more members of the Church of Christ per capita in Hickman County, Tennessee, than any other county in America.

THE BEGINNING

As the nineteenth century dawned, America was barely on its feet and independent, with settlers just beginning to enter Kentucky and Tennessee. Nashville was a tiny village of some three hundred inhabitants and Hickman

County belonged to the Chickamauga Indians. Life was simple, but hard, with leaves many inches thick covering much of the county. There were no post offices, hospitals, newspapers, or good schools anywhere in Middle Tennessee. And there was very little church-going. One observer estimated that no more than five percent of the American people were active members of any religious body, and the few who were found themselves hopelessly divided among warring denominations, each with its own particular creed or catechism.

It was in this wilderness that a brave band of men and women suddenly appeared, declaring that all questions of religious faith and practice ought to be decided on the basis of apostolic teaching. It was an idea whose time had come and within 50 years an estimated 500,000 people in sparsely populated America had accepted this Restoration plea. By 1860, Churches of Christ had become the seventh-largest and fastest-growing religious body in the entire land, and 93 congregations were meeting in Middle Tennessee.

AN ILLUSTRIOUS FAMILY

Thomas Campbell at age 45 immigrated to America in 1807 for health reasons. He was born in Belfast, Ireland, in 1763, educated at the University of Glasgow, and ordained a Presbyterian Minister. Upon his arrival in Philadelphia, he was assigned a church in Washington County, Pennsylvania, and was quite likely one of the best-educated preachers in America at that time.

Even before his departure from Ireland, Campbell had been greatly distressed over the religious division he observed. The situation now seemed even worse in his newfound land, with churches openly and bitterly opposing each other. In September of 1809, he penned a 54-page document known today as the *Declaration and Address,* calling for the unity of all believers in one New Testament church and a resolve to pursue "In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; in all things charity." To Thomas Campbell's astonishment, his oldest son, Alexander, still in Ireland, had reached the same conclusion. When the family was reunited in 1809, the son, now 21 years old, read his father's *Declaration and Address* and assured him that he would devote his life to preaching those principles. A spark was lit and soon it became a prairie fire!

BARTON W. STONE

Barton W. Stone was born in 1772. His great-grandfather was Governor of Maryland, and a cousin was among the signers of the Declaration of Independence. In 1796, Stone was licensed to preach by the Presbyterian

Church and settled in Cane Ridge, Kentucky. Here he played a leading role in early America's largest camp meeting, held for seven days on the grounds surrounding the Cane Ridge meetinghouse and attended by 25,000 people. When one recalls that the largest city West of the Alleghenies was Lexington, Kentucky, with a population of 1,500, the Cane Ridge crowd was indeed phenomenal.

Like the Campbells, though unaware of their efforts, Barton W. Stone began to question many of the denominational doctrines he was expected to teach, especially the Westminster Confession of Faith. Thus in 1802, with four other preachers, he left the denomination of which he was a part, resolving to wear no other name but "Christian" and to accept "the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven." He wrote: "Our divisions are driving thousands to skepticism and hardening the world of the ungodly to their utter ruin. Our divisions are drying up the spirit of the godly, destroying the influence of christianity, and barring the way to heaven." Infant baptism and sprinkling were abandoned.

Barton W. Stone was a powerful pioneer preacher, baptizing over 1000 persons annually for sixteen consecutive years. The congregation he served at Cane Ridge would be henceforth known as the Cane Ridge Church of Christ. The building, constructed in 1791, stands yet, fifty feet long, thirty feet wide, fifteen feet high, made of blue ash logs, the oldest meetinghouse associated with the Restoration Movement.

On New Year's Day, 1832, the supporters of Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone met at Lexington, Kentucky to join their forces. Raccoon John Smith, a popular preacher of that time, made this appeal: "Let us then, my brethren, be no longer Campbellites or Stoneites, new lights or old lights, or any other kind of lights, but let us come to the Bible alone, as the only book in the world that can give us all the light we need."

Barton W. Stone often visited Middle Tennessee, referring to Nashville in 1796 as "a poor little village scarcely worth notice." He lived for a time near Gallatin. Following the death of his first wife, Eliza Campbell, in 1810, he was wed in 1811 to Celia Bowen. He was the father of nineteen children. He died on November 9, 1844, at age 72 and is buried at Cane Ridge, Kentucky. In his old age he counselled young preachers to "pursue steadily the course we have taken and leave the event with God. We have taken the Bible as the only rule of our faith and practice and the name Christian as the only name we wish to have. In this we cannot be wrong."

SHADY GROVE

Spence's *History of Hickman County* states that the first congregation of the Church of Christ in the county was at Shady Grove, and he sets 1820 as the date, although no meetinghouse existed for several years

thereafter. It was here that Barton W. Stone preached at "The Stand," a hilltop overlooking the peaceful valley below and near to the Natchez Trace. William Nicks seems to have been among the early preachers and founders of the congregation. By 1890 there were 125 members.

EARLY CHURCHES

Congregations began to spring up in all sections of Hickman County, Lower Sulphur in 1836, Totty's Bend in 1846, Little Rock in 1848, Pinewood in 1852 (David Lipscomb is known to have preached there), Fort Cooper in 1866, New Antioch in 1869 and Centerville in 1870.

Writing of religion and life in general, an article in the *Hickman Pioneer,* September 17, 1886, avowed: "There was a slight sprinkle of what has been known as Campbellism through the country caused by the works of Nicks, Sullivan, and Johns Totty, but they were so much in the minority that they had but little to say." Time changes everything!

INTERESTING ITEMS

The Sulphur Church first met under a grape arbor at the home of Adam and Polly Coble.

In October 1868, Theodrick W. Miller deeded one acre on Piney Fork at Beaverdam Creek "For the love I entertain for the Church of Christ and interest I feel for education of the young of this vicinity." The building was to be both a church and a schoolhouse and "Said house is to be under the supervision of the elders of the congregation of Disciples of Christ which is to be organized in said house, and said house is to be free to the various surrounding denominations when not otherwise used by the Christians."

J. A. Jones deeded a plot of ground in December, 1887 to the Christian Church. In 1906 the Coble Church built a two-story building with the church downstairs and the school upstairs. According to old records of the Little Rock Church, the contribution on the following Sundays in 1866 was as follows: September 2, 45 cents; December 2, 25 cents; September 30, 35 cents; September 16, 75 cents.

HICKMAN COUNTY PREACHERS

While it is not possible to report on all the preachers whose labors have advanced the cause of Christ, the following are recalled.

JAMES P. LITTON was born January 8, 1845, in Maury County and moved to Hickman County in early life. He was baptized by Hosea Gibbons in 1869 and began preaching in 1871. His wife taught him to read and

write, as he only went to school fourteen days in his life. He was blind several years prior to his death and during his last years would sit in a chair and preach. He died at Lyles on April 24, 1906.

WESLEY W. BARBER was born February 8, 1875. He taught school at Sulphur 1898-99 and began preaching while there. He attended the Nashville Bible School.

THOMAS CAGLE, JR., of Coble, died in 1919. He was an enthusiastic leader of the church in the Sulphur and Coble communities. A farmer, miller, carpenter, and minister, he and his brother Sam built the old church building at Liberty and the old building at Coble.

R. T. "CAP" SISCO was born on August 30, 1865. He attended the Nashville Bible School and was a man of great faith and strong character. It is said that he baptized over 2,000 persons and preached for fifty-five years. He died in Farmersville, Texas, in 1845; and the body was returned to his old home community at Salem.

ALVIN BANTEAU GUNTER was born January 19, 1880, on Wolf Creek. He was baptized by R. T. Sisco in 1897. He preached his first sermon in 1899. He held meetings in many different states and baptized twenty-six persons in a meeting on Garners Creek near Pinewood.

WILLIE GUNTER was born in 1876 and was the brother of Banteau Gunter. He was baptized by R. T. Sisco and preached at various congregations in the county. He often walked many miles to hear others preach and to fill his own appointments.

JOHN J. LANCASTER was born in 1882 in a smokehouse on Blue Water. His parents' home had burned a few days prior to his birth and they had set up housekeeping in the smokehouse. He taught school through much of his adult life and was a strict disciplinarian. He was 27 years old when baptized by W. R. Hassell. Both he and his wife became Christians on the same occasion. During his lifetime, brother Lancaster preached in thirty-seven of the forty-two congregations in Hickman County.

W. S. MORTON was a well-known preacher, conducting many meetings in Hickman County and in the Centerville Church.

W. R. HASSELL was born on Hassell's Creek. From 1906 to 1929 he baptized 2,311 persons.

J. D. EVANS often preached in Centerville during the early portion of the Twentieth Century. He later moved to Denver, Colorado, where he was one of the founders of the church in that city.

S. P. PITTMAN held many meetings in this county in the early Twentieth Century. He was an outstanding orator and professor at David Lipscomb College.

BROWN MCCLAIN worked during World War II at an Aircraft Plant in Marietta, Georgia. The church there had no regular minister, and he

preached for them while in that city. He was well-known in Hickman County, preaching in many of the congregations and conducting a large number of funerals and serving as an elder of the Fairfield congregation.

MARK LOVE, known affectionately as "Brother Love," walked to his preaching appointments. While residing at Kimmins, he would walk to the Sulphur community in the 1920's and 30's every Sunday, twenty-one miles one way. He would preach his sermon, teach his class, remain for lunch, sing awhile, preach again, and start for home about 8:00 P.M., arriving after midnight, with not more than 50 cents remuneration for his efforts. Children of that era still recall Brother Love's heavy walking shoes and how two or three such walking excursions wore out a pair. He preached "in season and out of season" reproving, rebuking, exhorting, showing neither fear nor favor to any man. He told of one place where live snakes were actually thrown through an open window as he spoke!

JAMES POLK BAKER and his wife Snow were the parents of fourteen children, all of whom were members of the Shady Grove Church of Christ. One son, Edward Giles Baker, remained active in that congregation until his death in 1930. In 1995, his son, David Edward Baker, continues active in the work of the Shady Grove Church.

THE TOTTY FAMILY. David Easley Totty came into Tennessee from Virginia in 1809. He and his wife were the parents of six children, one of whom was active at the Shady Grove Church until his death in 1923. Robert Totty, Sr. entered Tennessee also from Virginia in 1809 and became the first settler in what is today known as Totty's Bend. The family continued for several years active in the Totty's Bend Church of Christ. The grandchildren of Lewis Perkins Totty vividly remembered his conducting the services. He would quote the scripture and talk for well over an hour, as the congregation did not have a regular preacher. He died in 1937 and his son, L. N. Totty, continued as an active leader of the congregation until death in 1963. Other members of the Totty family have been a blessing to congregations around the world, including the Centerville Church of Christ.

AMONG THE GOSPEL PREACHERS BORN IN HICKMAN COUNTY ARE THE FOLLOWING:

James Allen
Allen Baker
Cathey Baker
Jerrie Barber
Wesley Barber
Edgar Beard
Brent Beard
M. W. Beard
Jackson Blackwell
George Beasley
James D. Burns
W. D. Burns
Thomas Cagle
Red Cathey
James E. Chessor
John Will Chessor
Artie Collins
Charles Collins
Willie Cochran
Herman Daniel
Leonard Deen
Tillman English
Boyd Fields
Carl Gossett
John Graham, Jr.
A. B. Gunter
Carlos Gunter
Willie Gunter
Will Hassell
Kenneth Holt
O. E. Hudgins
Stanley Hudgins
Wayne Hudgins
Bobby Kelley
Mike Kelley
Floyd Kimbro
Manuel Kimbro
Carl Lancaster
J. J. Lancaster
Herbert Lawson
Slayden Leathers
Ernest Love
Mark Love
H. Clay Loveless
William Luckett
Calvin Lynn
Ward Mayberry
Glen Mayfield
Bill McDonald
John Moody McCaleb
Brown McClain
Greg McCord
John McCord
J. Frank McGill
Homer Moss
Jerry Nash
John Nicks
Devin Pickard
R. T. Rivers
Dancy Sanders
Jim Scates
Craig Shelton
Daniel Sullivan
Charles D. Tidwell
W. L. Totty
Paul Tucker
Gilbert Tyler
Granville Tyler
Leonard Tyler
W. S. B. Waldron
David Whitwell
R. L. Whitside

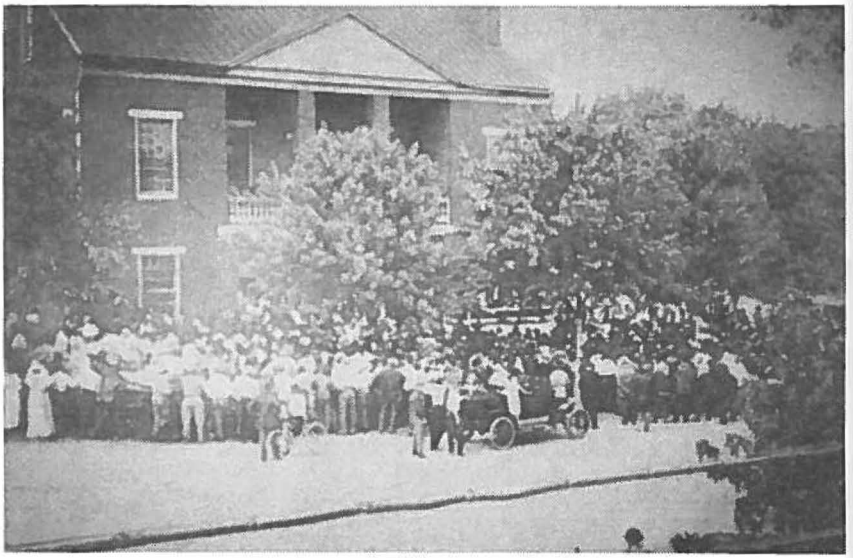
OUR FOREFATHERS

Edward Dotson, Hickman County Historian, writes of the early pioneers who entered this part of the world: "Most of our early settlers in Hickman County were primarily a religious people. It has been recorded by historians that the early settlers came over the mountains into what is now Middle Tennessee with a rifle in one hand and a Bible in the other. The rifle was for physical protection and food, the Bible for spiritual protection and food. Adversity tends to draw people closer to God and early life in America seemed to have this good effect on most of them. They were a product of the Reformation Movement in Europe. Most of them were Primitive Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists. We must credit David Lipscomb and the college which he established with being one of the chief reasons why the Church of Christ has enjoyed such remarkable growth in Hickman County and the other counties of Middle Tennessee."

Dr. Mac Lynn reported in 1994 that Churches of Christ in Hickman County had an average of 2,931 persons in attendance each Sunday (*Churches of Christ In The United States,* Lynn).



Centerville Church Building in 1914



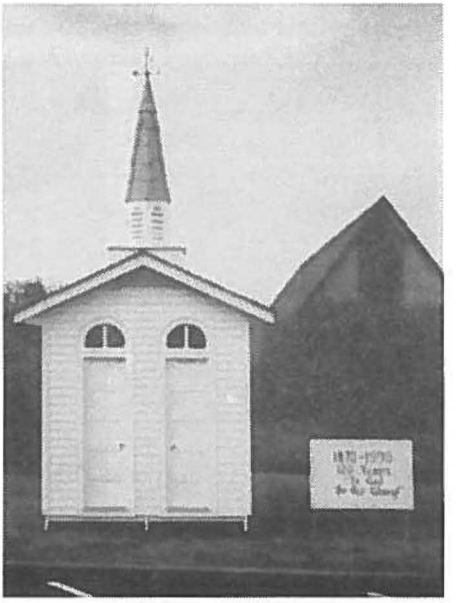
Courthouse in Early Twentieth Century



Centerville in the Late Nineteenth Century



Original Communion Pitcher



Replica of 1870 Building



Dr. C.V. Stephenson, Elder



Ed Johnson



1945 Building

4

A City Set On A Hill

Centerville, Tennessee, is one of more than 100,000 American cities, a small community of 4,000 persons situated on top of a hill overlooking and encircled by beautiful Duck River. As Jesus observed sixty generations ago there is such a thing as, *"A City Set On A Hill Which Cannot Be Hid."*

At the edge of the old city limits, also perched on a hilltop and guarding the entrance to the community, is the multi-million dollar plant of the Centerville Church of Christ. Though practically hidden away in one small Tennessee village, the influence of this church has extended throughout the brotherhood of Churches of Christ and even into foreign countries. The late Dr. Ira North, esteemed Minister of the largest Church of Christ in America, Madison, Tennessee, while addressing the Abilene Christian University Lectureship in Abilene, Texas, referred to the Centerville congregation as *"A real Jerusalem Church."* And in his final written work, *Balance*, he made mention of only a few exemplary churches and one of those again was Centerville.

FEATURED IN PUBLICATIONS

The congregation has been featured extensively on the pages of both the *Christian Chronicle* and *Gospel Advocate.* Its Minister has been invited to tell *The Centerville Story* to audiences across the United States, including annual Lectureships at Abilene Christian University, David Lipscomb University, Harding University, Freed-Hardeman University, Oklahoma Christian University, and Faulkner University. In addition, he has spoken on the above theme to area-wide Workshops and Training Series in such cities as Memphis, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Blue Ridge Encampment, Evansville, Indianapolis, as well as a large number of congregations. Indeed, the Centerville Church of Christ in the late Twentieth Century, like the community of which it is a part, is *"A City Set On A Hill Which Cannot Be Hid."* It has been for several years one of the 100 largest congregations of the Church of Christ, with some 800 members.

The Christian Chronicle, published in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is the brotherhood's most widely circulated publication and reaches into well over 100,000 homes. In its July, 1982 issue, a full-page article was entitled, *"Church Growth: Centerville Church of Christ,"* Portions of that article are reproduced below.

> Fifty miles west of Nashville, Tenn. is the rural town of Centerville. The church in the county seat of Hickman County has a membership of somewhat more than 800 in a town of 2,500. Of course, not all of the members live in Centerville. Many drive in from all over the county, an area which has forty other congregations. Centerville rests firmly on an economy of agriculture and small industry. The sound school system and the rich tradition of family values serve as a foundation for the work of the church there.
>
> The Centerville church has an average Sunday attendance of 650 with 550 in Bible school. The church continues to grow even though the general population of Hickman County has declined gradually in the past few years.
>
> **Strong Leadership**
>
> The primary reason for growth at the Centerville church is leadership. The congregation has seven elders who have served for many years. Jim D. Bates, Bobby Bates, James Blackwell, Parker Elrod, Bill Davis, Bill Kittrell and Edward Shepherd have steered a course which encourages church members to use their talents in service to their community.
>
> The elders of this congregation meet regularly, but they also recognize the need of keeping the men of the church informed about their plans. Consequently, they have a monthly business meeting with all of the men of the church. One evening each year they have a "church night" which is an annual planning session when all of the men of the church get together and share their dreams for the kingdom's progress during the coming year. Cooperation is a key word in the life of the Centerville church. Cooperation among the elders, cooperation between the elders and the ministers and cooperation between the ministers and the congregation. Unity and goodwill prevail as an abiding spirit in the church's life.
>
> **Long Preacher Term**
>
> One of the most remarkable things about the church in Centerville is its preacher, Paul Rogers. Paul came to Centerville 26 years ago after he had completed his undergraduate studies at David Lipscomb College and a graduate program at Harding Graduate School. Paul is deeply involved in the life

of the church, but he sees his primary responsibility as a preacher. He is a diligent student, and he works very hard preparing for his lessons. He keeps a lot of ideas turning at all times, and just recently he had on his desk a hundred folders with ideas for future sermons. He constantly studies, and as he studies he looks for those concepts which will give life and vitality to the word of God. He stresses that he likes to preach sermons in a series to cover in-depth subjects which could not be treated with a single lesson.

Paul's emphasis on preaching is reflected in the congregation's efforts to broadcast their weekly services on radio. Knowing that he has a much larger audience than those who are present in the church building, Paul has to plan lessons which are thought provoking and evangelistic in nature. Just a few years ago the success of his local radio ministry prompted a church member in Vicksburg, Miss. to make available opportunities for his nine o'clock worship service to be carried on a 100,000 watt FM station in Vicksburg. Paul now receives almost as much mail from Southern Mississippi and Alabama as he does from Middle Tennessee about his preaching and his teaching.

Capitalizing on Paul's ability to proclaim the word, the congregation is exploring the possibility of television coverage on one of the cable networks for his morning sermon.

Paul observes, "No matter how work oriented a congregation is, the church will succeed or fail on the basis of the preaching." With that as his fundamental philosophy, through the years he has carefully recorded in pamphlets the work efforts of the church as he's had time to reflect on the planning and experience of specific drives. Rogers has been extremely successful in planting ideas and helping others get enthusiastic about them to carry them on. The Centerville church is a church characterized by a host of activities.

A Strong Work Force

In addition to the efforts of Paul Rogers, the Centerville church benefits from the services of David Craig, who is a full-time associate minister. David, the son of Mack Craig, vice-president at David Lipscomb College, is working on a doctorate in psychology and counseling at Old Miss. He carries on an extensive counseling ministry among church members at Centerville. Only Paul and David are full-time employees of the church. Bill McDonald, who serves as the church's youth minister, is an owner of a local funeral home at Centerville. Wayne

Qualls, who is superintendent of schools for Hickman County, serves as director of the Bible school. These men are supported by two full-time secretaries who carry on many of the activities related to a complex program.

Benevolence-A Key Activity

The Centerville church has constantly looked for effective ways of making an impact on the community. One of the most effective works has been a benevolent program which is extensive and highly respected in the community. The church has built an Outreach Center which collects and distributes clothing and nonperishable food items. Through the years the church has been able to serve many people in the Centerville community who found themselves in financial need. The church is so highly respected that most of those who come to the Outreach Center are referred there by the Welfare Department or administrators of the school system who discover children who need clothes or help of some other kind. Nearly three-fourths of those who receive help through the Outreach Center are children. Members of the Centerville church regularly bring food as they come to services to keep the Outreach Center supplied with the necessities. More than a thousand requests for help come each year.

In addition to the work with those who have financial needs, the Centerville church has been involved in building Tulipwood, a housing complex for the elderly. Tulipwood has 75 apartment units for those who qualify. Jerry Baird, Jr., a devoted member of the church, is the manager of that housing facility. The Centerville church sends a bus at each service to pick up those from Tulipwood who need a ride. At various times the congregation goes in mass for visitation. The residents of Tulipwood use the church buses to travel together to events in the county or to important activities in which they all have an interest. The church members at Centerville regularly go to Tulipwood to have an ice cream supper or to provide some other kind of social activity for the residents of that housing unit.

The people who live in Tulipwood in turn are eager to help with manning the Outreach Center, and they take on clerical duties such as addressing the bulletin to be of assistance to the church.

Visiting for Good Will and Fellowship

And each team meets once a month on a rotation basis so that there is one meeting each week. Approximately 100 people are involved in the visitation teams. They follow a fairly

typical pattern of meeting for a potluck fellowship and then going out to make their visits. Between 75 and 100 visits are made each week to those who are sick, to those who have any kind of family or personal problems, to those who are newcomers to the community, and to those who have not been attending services regularly.

The visitation program is primarily designed to promote good will in the community and to offer services to those who may have problems.

Because the church members of Centerville are spread all over Hickman County, the elders have used geographical zoning to help promote fellowship. The leaders of each group are carefully trained to work with those in their neighborhood. The zones meet regularly, at least once a quarter. Some zones meet once a month so that they can more effectively serve the people who live in the community.

In addition to the zone organization which is designed to help people know each other better, is a 24-hour telephone service which is called Lifeline. This provides up-to-the minute information about members of the congregation and activities planned for the church.

A Promotional Church

The Centerville church recognizes the importance of campaigns and promotional efforts to keep their work before the community. They recently completed a vacation Bible school which had 700 in attendance. By letting the community know of their work and getting people out, they are succeeding in teaching. They are planning to devote October to foreign missions. All their Bible classes will be studying missions, and they plan to reconstruct an African village in one of their classrooms to illustrate life in another culture.

The congregation normally has two Bible school attendance drives each year, and one time each year, special appeals are made to the community. One year their efforts in the community were heralded as "Operation Doorbell" and another time "Knocking at our Neighbor's Door."

"Magnify the Cross of Christ" was a month long effort to teach in all Bible classes and all sermons the significance of Jesus' death to both members and visitors invited for the lessons. Bible school and worship are both pushed. A Roll Call program encouraged every member of the church to be present for Bible class one month.

Centerville has worked hard to serve the Kingdom. The church has told the story of Jesus in a variety of ways. A concerted effort in benevolence has led the way into the community. The church enjoys a reputation of service and concern. The glorification of Christ has led to steady and reliable growth.

THE 1870'S...A SEED SOWN

The Centerville Church of Christ was not the first congregation to exist in Hickman County. Churches were already meeting at Shady Grove (since 1820), Little Rock (since 1848), Totty's Bend (since 1846), New Antioch (since 1868), Pinewood (since 1869), and Fort Cooper (since 1866).

Following the War Between The States, Christians began to meet in homes and public buildings. An 1897 Record of Members is the only surviving official account of that beginning. In faded, but beautiful handwriting, Clerk T. J. Derryberry wrote in September, 1901: *"The congregation was first established about the years 1870 or 75. Some years afterwards the Clerk, Hood Thompson, died and the records were lost. Afterward J. H. Russell was an elder and clerk. About 1894 J. H. Russell left the country leaving no record either of finances or membership. In the fall of 1894 Elder R. P. Meeks conducted a meeting and the congregation was re-organized. Since that time meetings have been conducted by M. H. Northcross, W. M. Morton, R. P. Meeks, and J. D. Smith."*

In 1873 William Walker deeded a piece of property to J. H. Moore, J. A. Cunningham, John Nicks, Sr., T. J. Walker, and Lon Walker as Trustees of the church. Walker stated, "For and in consideration of the interest I feel in spreading the gospel and religion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and enjoying the worship of God, said lot is donated for the purpose of having a place of worship built upon for the Christian Church." Historian Edward Dotson states that the original church building was completed in 1873 at a cost of $1000, including the seats.

Elders in the 1870's were John Nicks, Sr., Gabriel Fowlkes, and Pleasant Walker. After the death of Fowlkes, Dr. T. J. Derryberry was appointed to the eldership in 1900.

1870-1900...WATERING THE SEED

According to old records, Mrs. Sam Ward was baptized in March of 1878. This is one of the earliest mentioned baptismal dates, although there were many prior to that time. Mrs. Ward later moved to California and died there.

Among the Ministers who preached in Centerville during the beginning years were as follows: M. H. Northcross, W. M. Morton, Sidney Williams, R. P. Meeks, F. C. Sowell, John D. Evans, F. B. Srygley, E. J. Sewell, E. A. "Cane" Land, and Captain John Nicks.

Earliest members listed on membership roll as having been part of the church prior to 1900:

J. R. Adair
Laura Adair
Minnie Adair
F. C. Adair
Mr. and Mrs. D. L. Brown
Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Brown
Mrs. J. A. Brown
Mrs. Eugenia Coleman
Miss Maud Cullom
Miss Annie Lee Coleman
Willie Coleman
R. Dean
Rebecca Dean
W. A. Duncan
Dr. and Mrs. T. J. Derryberry
S. O. Drake
M. O. Drake
William Dodson
Fred Dunn
Rosa Bell Dunn
Benjamin Dunn
Betsy A. Easley
A. J. Fowlkes
Estelle Fowlkes
Mrs. J. D. Flowers
Mamie Fowlkes
G. Fowlkes (died Jan. 1898)
Ella Fowlkes
H. L. Frazier
Eugene Frazier
Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Griner
Mrs. John Greer
Brit Garner
Fannie Garner
John C. Gabell
Mrs. John C. Gabell
Richie Gabell
Mrs. Walker Green
Eva Grimes
M. L. Huddleston
Earlie Harlan
W. J. Hines
Jimmie Lee Hightower
John Killinsworth
Ed Milum
Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Miller
Jennie McDonald
J. H. McWilliams
John Nicks, Sr.
John Nicks, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Nall
Carrie Norris
Sallie Nicks
Eva Nicks
Susan Nicks
W. R. Nicks
Delia Nicks
Laura B. Nicks
Mattie L. Nicks
Mr. and Mrs. J. N. Parris
Cora Porter
Mollie Parris
Sallie Richie
Sarah Rogers
Mr. and Mrs. W. N. Ratliff
Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Russell
Carroll Rafeier
Susie Sugg ("lifelong loyal member")
C. E. Thompson
Mr. and Mrs. John Thompson
Patrick Thompson
Mr. and Mrs. P. Walker
Tabitha Ward
Dr. and Mrs. J. L. Ward
Mrs. Mary C. Ward
Mattie L. Warren
Dr. J. C. Ward
Ila York

1900-1930...CONTINUING ON

Hickman County experienced significant growth in the opening years of the 20th Century with the Census of 1910 showing 16,527 persons. Churches of Christ were sharing in that growth.

The church records of that era are very incomplete, but nevertheless encouraging. The incredible Twentieth Century began with this brief statement, *"In the year 1901 Elder J. D. Smith of Dry Fork, Kentucky held a meeting resulting in six baptisms and five reclaimed."* The Century was underway!

In September 1902, J. D. Smith baptized eight persons in a revival meeting. In 1912 the greatest orator of the age, T. B. Larimore, held a two-week meeting in Centerville with services twice daily. It is reported that the stores downtown closed for the afternoon service as there was such widespread interest in hearing this eloquent orator. The memory of his meeting continued for decades and a special link to the Centerville congregation exists to this day. A beautiful table in the church lobby was given by Larimore that this struggling congregation might have a suitable spot for the observance of the Lord's Supper.

June of 1922 brought to the congregation A. B. Barrett of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The fourth Sunday of October, 1922, Ira Douthitt, of Sedalia, Kentucky, conducted a revival. Douthitt returned in 1923, 1924 and 1925 with a total of 44 additions. Ben Harding, of Columbia, preached in a meeting in June of 1926 with 20 additions, returning in 1927 with eight more baptisms. S. P. Pittman, beloved David Lipscomb College Professor, conducted a revival in June of 1928 with four additions. He was followed by D. D. Woody in 1929 with two additions. In February of 1930, Ira Douthitt returned and in July of 1930 J. W. Brents of Muscogee, Oklahoma preached. There were others who discoursed on Sunday or in protracted meetings, including the illustrious N. B. Hardeman and Horace N. Mann.

The 1925 congregation had approximately 125 attending, with a Bible School average of 114 in 1926.

In 1928 Sunday School Superintendent Claude P. Stephenson reported an average attendance at Sunday School of 110 per Lord's Day. An average of 81 students were said to be "on time" with an average contribution of $6.17 per week. Brother Stephenson was a painstaking chronicler, noting that the weather was "fair" on 42 of the 52 Sunday mornings. He took note of the particular song with which the Sunday School began each morning, the passage of scripture that was read and by whom. Teachers were expected to report monthly on their absentees as well as maintain a record of which students were not remaining for the morning worship service. It was also expected that the teachers would

visit the homes of the students and would take special notice of those who were yet unsaved. *Indeed, the work of the Lord was a serious matter in 1928!*

MEMBERSHIP ROLL OF THOSE LISTED AS HAVING COME TO THE CENTERVILLE CHURCH OVER THESE THREE DECADES, 1900-1930.

Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Adair
Frank C. Adair Jr.
Robert Adair
Edwin Adair
Lucille Adair
Andrew M. Adair
Mr. and Mrs. Lem Allen
Floy Allen
Louise Allen
Martha Jo Allen
Mr. and Mrs. Douglas Arnold
Frances Arnold
Van Arnold
Ivan Arnold
Mildred Atkinson
Virgil Mays Atkinson
Elaine Atkinson
Audrey Baker
Sallie B. Baker
Viola Baker
Mr. and Mrs. Ward Banks
Louise Banks
Cynthia Ann Bartlett
Tom Bartlett
Ruth Bates
W. B. Beard
Mr. and Mrs. Horace Beasley
Mrs. Rufus Beasley
Delbert Breece
Grady Breece
Mr. and Mrs. John Breece
Ruby Breece
Mrs. S. M. Breece
Emma Bogle
G. M. Bogle
Mrs. Robert Bogle
Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Bond
Beatrice Bond
Edith Bond
Eva Bond
Mary Bond
Ruth Bond
Mrs. S. R. Bond
Mrs. Booker
Ellis Booker
Mrs. Pearl Booker
Amy F. Brown
Hazel Brown
Mrs. Ijam Brown
Mrs. J. A. Brown
Kittie Brown
Lizzie Sue Brown
Lela Brown
Ruth Brown
Mrs. O. L. Brown
Mrs. Senia Brown
J. W. Brownlee
C. E. Calvin
Eva Chandler
Mr. and Mrs. Hodges Chandler
Hilda Chandler
Lillie Chandler
Walter Coates
Edna Coates
Thomas Coleman
Mrs. Tom Coleman
Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Cooper
Irene Cooper
Jessie Mai Cooper
Field Cunningham
Hazel Lee Derryberry
Mary Nell Derryberry
Mr. and Mrs. James W. Derryberry
Sarah K. Derryberry

Louise Dodd
Mrs. Raymond Dodd
Tom Ella Dodd
Mrs. John Dodd
Allen Downey
Ava Downey
Fred Downey
Paul Downey
Grady Lee Downey
Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Downey
Edith Downey
Pearl Downey
Katie Drake
Olive Dudley
Sue Dudley
W. A. Duncan
Kate Eason
Mr. and Mrs. R. M. Eason
Mr. and Mrs. John Easley
Lillian Easley
Francis Easley
Ida Flowers
Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Flowers
Mrs. Fortner
Mr. and Mrs. Brit Garner
Mrs. Moody Garner
Lois Garner
Margerette Garner
Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Gentry
Ada Goodman
Mr. and Mrs. F. P. Goodman
Ida Goodman
John Gossett
Mr. and Mrs. E. J. Graham
Eleanor Graham
Mrs. A. H. Grigsby
Martha Grigsby
Annie May Grimes
Mr. and Mrs. E. O. Grimes
Walker Grimes
Gary Grimes
Brownie Grimes
Mildred Gunter
A. C. Hall
Elva Harris
Everett Harris
Lillie Hatcher
Amy Henley
Myrtle Henley
Mr. and Mrs. Dave Henley
H. C. Henley
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Hooper
Wallace Hooper
Geneva Hooper
Elizabeth Hoover
Mary Francis Hoover
Era Hoover
Mrs. Lou Huddleston
Mrs. Nixon Huddleston
Annie Lou Hudspeth
Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Hudspeth
Gladys Hudspeth
Johnnie Elise Hudspeth
Mrs. Andrew Hunter
Clara Jackson
Mr. and Mrs. W. N. Jones
Ed Johnson
Sarah Johnson
Margueret Johnson
James King
Laura Lawson
Willie S. Lawson
Clyde Loveless
Mrs. J. W. Malugin
Mrs. Clint Malugin
Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Mathis
Louise Mathis
Eva Mathis
Neva May
Mrs. J. H. Mayberry
Emma Mayberry
Mrs. J. P. Mays
Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Mays
Cathey McClanahan

Hazel McCoy
W. C. Morrison
W. P. Morrison
Mary Murphree
Bertha Myatt
Delbert Nall
Jessie Lee Nall
Mr. and Mrs. Sam Nall
Mrs. Rosa Anna Nall
Sammie D. Nall
Lizzie Nicks
Susie Nicks
Jennie May Nicks
Mr. and Mrs. John Nix
Mr. and Mrs. Ed Nix
Helen Nix
Mrs. Bertie Nix
Dr. A. Norris
Mary J. Nichols
Hattie O'Neal
Lassie O'Neal
Tom Porter
Annie Plunkett
Delia Plunkett
Donna Peters
Effie Proctor
Rosa Rogers
H. S. Richie
Rhomie Robertson
Willie Roberts
Davis Roberts
Norris Russell
Kate Sharpe
Mrs. James Smith
Bess Stephenson
Claude Stephenson
Cowan Stephenson
Guy Stephenson
Louise Stephenson
Dr. and Mrs. C. V. Stephenson
Dr. J. W. Thompson
Jennie Thompson
Mrs. J. P. Thompson
Mrs. Weaver Totty
Thomas Wilson
D. H. Waynick
Louise Warren
Will Warren
Whitson
Herbert Warren
Aline Warren
Lonnie Warren
Mrs. W. C. Warren
Louise Webb

1930-1945...DEPRESSION AND WAR

Surely the record of posterity will show that there were never fifteen more traumatic years in human history than 1930 to 1945 A. D. One cataclysmic event followed upon the heels of another, and the entire planet was plunged deep into darkness and distress. Those years witnessed the rise and fall of Adolph Hitler, whose ambition drove the world into unprecedented turmoil... The Great Depression, which affected the entire Western World and left one-fourth of America's working people unemployed, with no benefits to fall back upon...The rise of Joseph Stalin, who ultimately enslaved all of Russia and Eastern Europe in the cruel chains of atheistic communism...World War II, with its decimation of Europe and Asia, leaving in its wake 50,000,000 dead and darkening the homes and hearts of millions of American families...Sixty-one young men from Hickman County died in the service of their country...women entered the work force to a degree that had never been witnessed by any nation at any time, a fact that would forever change the American home and family...the ultimate weapon, an atomic bomb, was developed and exploded over Hiroshima and Nagasaki near the close of World War II. The power of the atom, for better or worse, had finally been unleashed and nothing would ever be the same again.

FAITHFUL IN AND OUT OF SEASON

1930 found the Churches of Christ active and alive in Hickman County. The decade opened with the return of S. P. Pittman to be the revival preacher in Centerville. Between the years 1930-1939, the following evangelists would conduct protracted meetings: S. P. Pittman, Ira Douthitt, J. W. Brents, Foy E. Wallace, D. Ellis Walker, Edward J. Craddock, Leroy Thompson, J. M. Phillips, Granville W. Tyler, and Boone Douthitt. During that time frame, Ira Douthitt would hold four meetings, D. Ellis Walker two meetings, and Granville W. Tyler two meetings. The total responses in the 1930s during gospel efforts amounted to sixty-three.

Sunday School attendance in 1930 averaged one hundred; in 1932, one hundred one, in 1934, ninety-five. But in 1943, at the peak of World War II with many able-bodied men away from the city, Sunday School attendance had dipped to seventy-seven and had only risen to an average of seventy-nine in 1946.

D. Ellis Walker was the first fully-supported Minister of the Centerville Church, coming in 1932. He preached all over the county and was supported not only with a salary, but with chickens, garden produce, etc. Other Ministers during that period were Wallis Beasley and Tom Burkett.

James Wells served during the early 1940's and B. B. James began a seven-year ministry in 1945.

In 1943 the *Firm Foundation* printed its *1943 Church Directory & List of Preachers of Churches of Christ.* Those listed in the Centerville area were Leroy Thompson, James E. Chessor, J. J. Lancaster, Carl Gossett, W. T. Gunter, Allan Baker, Cathey Baker, W. C. Baker, M. C. Love, George Lovell and Clay Loveless. Several congregations listed in that report are no longer meeting: Macedonia, North Bethel, Sunrise, Dunlop, Haley's Creek, Wryes Chapel, Taylor's Creek.

1939 MEMBERSHIP ROLL

The records of 1939 contain the names of 266 persons at the Centerville Church of Christ. Those listed who continue to be members of the Centerville congregation in 1995 are as follows: Thelma Aydelott, Virgil Mays Atkinson Petty, Rosa Nell Bates Loveless, Lou Helen Bates Sanders, Jewell Beasley, Morell Ferguson, Allene Houston, Christine Huddleston, Nettie Loveless, Nancy Pace Durham, Inis Puckett, Virginia Runions, Nina Shipp Harworth, Thelma Totty, Oma Worley, Melba Gilbert Witherspoon, Ruby Duncan Sawyer....Eighteen persons, all women!

The 1944 roll of members contained the names of 227 Christians. Thirty-four of those are yet part of the Centerville Church: Virgil Mays Atkinson Petty, Thelma Aydelott, Jewell Beasley, Bobby Bates, Rosa Nell Bates Loveless, Brownie Coble, Virginia Coleman, Girleen Copley, Georgia Coble, Katie Chessor Bates, Mary Dell Duncan Wilkerson, Agnes Dotson, Edward Dotson, Morell Ferguson, Betty Jo Ferguson Claud, Lula Mae Gilliam, Christine Huddleston, Elton Johnson, Mildred Lovell Bogle, Lillian Leathers, Edna McCord, W. E. McDonald, Mary Rushton, Inis Puckett, Nancy Pace Durham, Virginia Runions, Ila Bess Rochelle, Ruby Duncan Sawyer, Lou Helen Sanders, Nina Shipp Harworth, Thelma Totty, Oma Worley.

The elders in the early 1940's were E. J. Beasley, W. A. Downey, Dr. C. V. Stephenson, and J. P. Thompson.

THE SUMMER OF 1944

J. E. Chessor was an encourager and a supporter of every good work, keeping precise records of the meetings being held by area gospel preachers. He reported that James Wells in the summer of 1944 held meetings at Coble, Wrigley, Twomey and Hillsboro in Williamson County. There were thirty-one responses. However, he added that brother Wells conducted a total of eleven meetings during that particular year.

J. J. Lancaster led revivals at Tatum, Brushy Creek, and Defeated Creek, with a total of fifteen responses. In the course of the year, Brother Lancaster preached in nine such efforts.

A report was also given on the activities of Buford B. James, then of Mobile, Alabama, who was scheduled to move to Centerville in January of 1945 as the new Minister. He preached at Aetna, Fairview on Cane Creek, and Flatrock, with twenty-one responses. His protracted campaigns for the year would amount to eight.

1944 was the year of the Normandy Invasion of Europe, the Battle of the Bulge, and the final thrust toward victory in World War II. And back home in Hickman County Churches of Christ continued to preach the soul-saving gospel *and pray for "the boys to come home safely to us."*

1945-1957...PLANNING, PRAYING, PURSUING

1945 ranks with the years 1492 and 1776 as one of history's turning points. It marked the end of mankind's most destructive armed conflict, World War II. At its close, much of Europe and Asia lay in smoldering ruins, waiting to be rebuilt and re-tooled for productivity. The dead and wounded were numbered in the tens of millions, with fatherless children and husbandless wives found in every American city, large or small.

VJ-Day, September 2, 1945 was a celebration of victory over Germany and Japan. The "war to end all wars" had ended and tomorrow would surely be better than today! On the Public Square in Centerville a throng of people gathered to embrace, shake hands, blow horns and whistles, and to sing hymns of praise to that One who was *"our help in ages past, our hope for years to come."* Unlike our counterparts in Europe and Asia, our factories were unscathed and our workers able-bodied, anxious to supply the needs of the marketplace for generations to come. There would be scant competition from the battered cities across the sea. America ruled over sea and land and our day had come! The GI's returned home with a heightened vision of the world, plus improved skills and expectations. Farm boys who just a few years before had pushed a hillside plow were now experts in technology, communication, and aviation. Some were trained mechanics, engineers, accountants, and pilots. They would enjoy the benefits of a GI Bill which would enable every veteran who so desired to receive at public expense a college education. Thus, many young Americans would never return to the farm, beginning a migration to the city that continues to this day, and with it the growth of urban churches and the decline of rural congregations.

THE CENTERVILLE CONGREGATION

Centerville, Tennessee, was a village of some 1200 persons in 1945, with minimum opportunities for employment or expansion industrially. However, whatever was lacking in financial strength was more than offset by the moral and spiritual climate of the community. These were Bible-believing, church-going men and women who were content to "live in a house by the side of the road and be a friend to man."

A new, young, energetic Minister moved to the city in 1945, B. B. James, of Humphreys County, and more recently of Mobile, Alabama. Armed with natural speaking ability, a strong, clear voice, a winning personality, and a deep commitment to Jesus Christ, he began his work in the happiest of all times, post-war America.

The spirit of the age is reflected in the writings of James E. Chessor on August 8, 1946. He wrote of the Centerville church in the *Hickman County Chronicle: "This church has had a steady, remarkable growth since 1870. The former leaders have passed to their reward but in their day they served well in the Master's work. The membership has been consecrated, united, imbibing the Spirit of Him who 'hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light'....The congregation numbers in excess of 300 regular communicants, but its attendance often overflows the auditorium. The local minister is held in high esteem by the church, the town, and the people of the entire county. His work is patient, consecrated, and productive of lasting good results...The officials of the church, and its entire membership, extend a cordial welcome to visitors, especially to the factory workers who have come to make Centerville their home."*

THE FIRST BUSINESS MEETING

The first organized Business Meeting of elders, deacons, and Minister began on August 1, 1945, 4:30 P.M., in the office of local Attorney Claude B. Stephenson. Present were W. L. Downey, Jim D. Bates, Claude B. Stephenson, and B. B. James. A financial report indicated that the balance on hand was $107.80, and a decision was made that all fifth Sunday contributions were to be sent to the Tennessee Orphan's Home at Spring Hill. Future meetings were to be held on the first day of each month. Each meeting was to open with prayer and follow proper parliamentary proceedings. The Minutes were to be read to the entire congregation on the following Sunday. The business sessions continued at the Stephenson office until May, 1947, when they were moved to the church building.

At the November 1 monthly meeting a discussion was held as to the possibility of placing bricks around the church building and refinishing the interior of the auditorium. Eight brethren attended and the financial balance was $204.79. It was decided to proceed with the laying of bricks at an anticipated cost of $18.90 per thousand, requiring a total of 24,000 bricks. The building was then 75 years old. There was also discussion of the possibility of constructing a new preacher's home, but this was voted down. The Minister's salary was raised from $40 to $50 each week.

In December of 1945, discussions were held as to the beginning of a new congregation in the Gray's Bend community. To that end B. B. James would conduct a gospel meeting and Slayden Leathers be employed to preach each Sunday. A building was secured for this purpose. However, by May of 1946 this effort was abandoned and no further determination was made in that regard.

The elders in 1946 were W. L. Downey, E. J. Beasley, and J. P. Thompson, who had been a member of the congregation since 1885. In December of 1946 the first church bulletin, known as *The Monthly Messenger,* was published. It was to contain both teaching articles and local news reports. The Editor had a brief statement regarding the Ira Douthitt meeting in November, 1947 and the fact that he would return for another short campaign in February, 1948. W. B. Bradley was to direct a Singing on a Monday evening in November, 1947. In June, 1947, Jack McElroy would preach and Burley Bradley would direct the song service. The September issue sadly noted that, *"All of Centerville, and especially the church here, mourns the loss of 'Uncle Sam' Nall. Brother Nall was a member of the Lord's church for about 60 years and a friend to all who knew him."* The October issue of that year found the Minister lamenting the fact that many visitors failed to sign the Guest Register. He requested that all who had visitors have them sign the Register and thereby have their names to appear in the *Monthly Messenger.*

The August, 1947, church paper noted that a tent meeting was being held at the junction of Hwy. 100 and 48, with Willard Collins preaching and T. E. Nicks leading the singing. *"This meeting is being sponsored by a number of congregations out in the county. Even though this congregation is not helping to sponsor it, we realize the amount of good that may be done, and must support it in every way that we possibly can."* With regard to protracted meetings that summer, B. B. James added, *"Most of the congregations have already had a protracted meeting. I am sure that it is safe to say there have been larger crowds, more interest, and more additions throughout the county in meetings this year than in previous years. So far as can be seen, good feelings and a spirit of cooperation exists between the different congregations."*

The summer of 1947 found fifty children from the church enjoying a picnic at Centennial Park in Nashville on July 31. Brother James asked, *"Why don't the older people follow the example of children and get together occasionally and become better acquainted? Life is more pleasant if we enjoy it with others."* It was necessary that year to borrow $4,000 to handle the construction costs, and it was estimated that only two years would be required to pay off the notes.

IT'S A CRYING SHAME

That is how Minister Buford James entitled his article in the August, 1947 church paper. He lamented the fact that *"Not more than one-third of the congregation attends Bible Study on Sunday morning. About one-fourth of the number is present on Wednesday night. There must be some reason. Is it lack of interest in the church? Could it be lack of love for the Truth? Is it because of the teachers?....Some of the members of this congregation go to the Show and to the Softball Games when we are having a religious service! I know–I have seen you go in and come out! It makes no difference about my seeing you, or what I think about it, but the Lord sees you too! Aren't you a little ashamed to stay at home or go elsewhere when you are expected to be at the Lord's house?"*

In February of 1947 a decision was made to send a $50 contribution to the American Red Cross. In December of 1948 the Ladies Bible Class requested the use of a room for sewing and quilting. Those items made would be used in the benevolent work of the church. In September of 1949 it was agreed that henceforth the church would purchase unleavened bread for use in the Lord's Supper. Prior to that time, for more than seventy years, it had been prepared by the ladies of the congregation.

B. B. James tendered his resignation, effective on December 30, 1949, to begin a new work with the Henderson Church of Christ in Henderson, Tennessee and to further his education at Freed-Hardeman College. Across the years he would be invited to return again and again and would always be much-loved by the people of Hickman County. The new Minister would be Ralph Stout, beginning his labors in March, 1950. His contract with the church stated that *"Besides doing the preaching, he is to lead singing during protracted meetings and keep the visiting preachers at his home."*

THE RALPH STOUT YEARS

Ralph Dare Stout became the Pulpit Minister for the Centerville Church of Christ at age 24. He was born in Louisville, Kentucky, and had been

trained at Freed-Hardeman College. While a student on the Henderson campus, he had served the Nunnelly congregation and came into contact with various brethren in Centerville. He was an excellent speaker and had a most pleasing personality, with a rich sense of humor. The Sunday School attendance in 1950 averaged 143 and growth was the watchword among churches of Christ in America. Never had there been such a conducive climate for growth as that experienced in the decade of the 1950s. In 1951, Sunday School attendance had risen to 156, with a $200 weekly contribution. New homes were being built in Centerville, Genesco had opened a large plant, the radio station had its first broadcast in 1950, and the Centerville church would share in this expansion. The Sunday School attendance in 1953 averaged 178 and in 1954, 194.

In May of 1952, the elders agreed to build an addition to the auditorium and in July of 1954 the building was air-conditioned. In August of 1954 the congregation began to collect, store, and distribute clothing to needy persons in the community.

The summer of 1955 had its own tinge of excitement with the coming of singer Ray Walker, who would go on to national prominence with the Jordanaires Quartet. He lived in the community, taught a Singing School, and worked with young people. This would form the beginning of a long and happy relationship that continues to this day with the annual Thanksinging. In July of 1955 James R. Brown and Ezra Ammons were chosen as elders of the congregation. The year of 1956 saw the first use of "Visitor's Cards" and a bus was chartered from the Ladd Motor Coach Line to take a large group of brethren to the David Lipscomb College Lectureship.

A 6:15 A.M. service was held during the James Wells protracted meeting of 1955, with 111 persons present. The 1955 Bible School attendance was 264 and 1956 averaged 267. A Teacher Training Series was conducted in 1956 by Dr. Ira North, of Madison. There was increasing conversation regarding the need for expansion and an effort was made to obtain additional property next door. However, it was not available for sale at that time.

The post-war years had brought to Centerville a group of young professional men who were destined to provide remarkable leadership for the congregation. Such men as W. E. McDonald, Dr. Parker Elrod, Dr. James Blackwell, Carl Rodgers, and Bill Kittrell were not only leaders in the business and medical communities, but would supply much-needed guidance and direction in the Lord's Church.

Early in 1956 Ralph Stout had expressed his intention to resign at the close of the year. At the October 5, 1956 regular business meeting, it was stated that "the elders are trying to secure the names of prospective preachers and meet again in two weeks, the 19th of October." At the

next session, November 2, 1956, "A letter was read from James Wells suggesting under what financial circumstances he would consider moving to Centerville. A report was submitted to the effect that seemingly a majority of the people contacted would prefer Paul Rogers of the three preachers who had tried out. There was some discussion of the different preachers who had been here and also Brother Wells. Brother Elrod was to attempt to contact some "older" preachers to "try out here." However, at the November 30 gathering a motion was made "that it be stated in the minutes of this meeting that this congregation has employed the services of Paul Rogers, of Lewisburg, Tennessee, to begin work here the first of the year."

A LONG MINISTRY BEGINS

Paul Rogers arrived in Centerville on January 1, 1957, a brisk and beautiful New Year's Day. He was twenty-two years of age, his wife Judy twenty and they were expecting a first child in May. A native of Birmingham, Alabama, he had graduated from David Lipscomb College just seven months before and had worked with the Church Street congregation in Lewisburg, Tennessee as Associate Minister. Prior to that time, during college years, he served as Minister of the Old Jefferson Church near Smyrna. Never was a young preacher more excited, grateful, and surprised to be chosen as Minister of such a wonderful congregation as Centerville!

The Church Directory in 1957 listed 345 names. There were two morning worship services and this would continue until 1966. Andrew Brown and Athens Clay Pullias conducted meetings in 1957. George Goldtrap came in the Spring to serve as Youth Minister and Songleader. A house directly across the street from the church edifice was purchased for additional classroom and office space. A monthly publication entitled *Gospel Herald* was begun and circulated throughout the community.

1958 saw an annual Church Budget of $20,800, which was exceeded. A mission work was begun in Janesville, Wisconsin and most of the support was provided for evangelist Ted Kell. This relationship would continue for a full decade. Succeeding George Goldtrap, who moved to Cincinnati, was Dick Brackett working as Youth Minister and Song Director. Gospel meetings were conducted by Charles Chumley and Harold Sain. Over 900 persons were enrolled in Vacation Bible School, filling the church house, the annex, and spilling over into the High School one block away. It was reported in 1958 that the Church Library now was in possession of 200 books (2,000 in 1995). At the year's end the ladies of the congregation baked 36 cakes for Christmas Dinner at Tennessee Orphan's Home. E. J. Beasley died in August of 1958 at age 75. He had

served for three decades as an elder of the congregation. In addition, he had been a faithful and efficient Treasurer.

1959 BROUGHT TO CENTERVILLE the enthusiasm of Dr. Ira North, with a record crowd of 380 attending the Sunday night service of his meeting. Once again Vacation Bible School enrolled some 1000 persons with 902 actually present on Thursday. During March, a new early Sunday morning broadcast began, *"The Gospel in Word and Song"*, with Ward Mayberry and Dr. James Blackwell as the first speakers. Ann Wharton was employed as the first part-time Secretary of the church. Paul Tucker conducted a fall meeting and Larry Walker assumed the post of Youth Minister and Song Director. On September 6, an announcement was made that the church would undertake an extensive Building Program. The first phase would be a new Educational Building at the rear of the auditorium followed by a new auditorium at the corner of College Avenue and Church Street. An amount of $500 was placed in the Building Fund, and a special contribution for this purpose brought $2935 on November 29. At the close of the year $5000 was in the Building Fund and excitement was mounting day by day.

THE 1960'S ACTIVE AND ALIVE

The new decade saw unveiled and displayed in the auditorium an architectural drawing of the proposed expansion. There would be thirteen new classrooms and an assembly room at the outset. Gospel meetings were held by Paul Hunton and James Wells, a new mission work was begun in Waynesboro, Georgia, and a record number attended Sunday School to hear Juvenile Court Judge Sam Davis Tatum. A contract was awarded for the construction of the annex totaling $51,800, and construction began.

1961 SAW AN ENTRANCE into the new Educational Facility February 26, 1961. On that day 400 persons were present. At the same time, work began on a new church building in Janesville, Wisconsin and missionary homes in Seoul, South Korea. A parking area directly across from the church building provided additional space for 70 automobiles. Ted Kell and Ralph Stout returned for gospel meetings. On May 21, the Fairfield Church of Christ entered its new church building. On July 23, Dr. Parker D. Elrod and Carl Rodgers were added to the eldership, serving with Jim D. Bates, James R. Brown, Ezra Ammons, and J. L. Worley. A Men's Training Class began in October using a booklet written by the Minister. At the close of his first five years in Centerville, Paul Rogers noted that Sunday School had increased by 65 persons and the contribution $250 per Sunday. He wrote excitedly, *"During the next five years, we must sacrifice more, work more, and live more for Jesus Christ.*

This congregation should be on the threshold of its greatest growth and activity...but it all depends upon you." In November of 1961 elder Ezra Ammons died while deer hunting. He was 68 years old and had served the congregation as an elder since 1955. In addition he had been for many years the teacher of our Men's Bible Class.

1962 BROUGHT TO OUR CITY Paul Hunton and D. Ellis Walker as guest evangelists. During the Hunton Spring Meeting, 133 persons were present for the 6:15 A.M. services. Ed Warren was Song Director. D. Ellis Walker delivered in September a timely address on the issues of cooperation and benevolence, with twenty congregations represented. The Nashville Municipal Auditorium meeting with Willard Collins was attended on October 9 by some 500 persons from Hickman County, traveling in a motorcade. There were 10,500 persons present that evening and Paul Rogers led the prayer. The total attendance for the eight-day campaign exceeded 90,000, with many turned away. On October 7 the congregation viewed a sketch of the proposed new auditorium to be built at the old site. It was a modern architectural rendering that for months hung on the auditorium wall. With an average contribution that year of $597, the congregation was assured that construction would not begin until $700 weekly was being received. Larry Walker closed his three-year ministry with the church and Ron Ingram was employed to work part-time.

THE WINTER OF 1963 brought a visit from the illustrious Marshall Keeble, who spoke to a full house on February 20. In his lifetime he had baptized over 25,000 persons and established hundreds of congregations. A gospel meeting in May with Dr. Mack Wayne Craig resulted in eighteen baptisms. During the month of June, Paul Rogers worked in a campaign for Christ held in London, England. There were 26 responses. Elton Johnson, Bill Kittrell and Dr. James Blackwell were appointed to serve on our Building Committee. Nancy Durham became the new part-time Secretary.

1964, DOING MORE! Paul Rogers wrote during the first week of January, *"Each of us should determine now to do more in '64. Let's be optimistic! Our Bible School and Contribution are at their highest peak ever."* While the building debt remained at $17,500, anticipation heightened daily with regard to the new auditorium. Guest speakers included Clayton Pepper, speaking on personal evangelism: B. B. James and Charles Chumley in gospel meetings; Clyde Lee, All-American basketball player; S. P. Pittman, 88 years of age, having first preached in Centerville in 1906 and conducting gospel meetings in 1928 and 1931. A Sunday School record of 544 was set on September 27. Ron Ingram began a fulltime ministry in Lewisburg and Tim Walker, a student at David Lipscomb College, was employed as Associate Minister and Song Leader. He was the third member of the Walker family to serve on the church staff.

In December 135 persons attended a Herald of Truth Dinner with Batsell Barrett Baxter as the speaker, and $750 was given to the work. New beginnings included a Correspondence Course, a regular bus route, and the church paper to be mailed into the homes rather than distributed at the door.

AN HISTORIC MEETING

On March 8, 1964, all the men of the congregation were requested to gather together for an announcement. It was reported that property had been purchased on the Nashville Highway for the construction of our new church plant. Architectural drawings were already being made and an investigation into the sale of bonds was underway. The four-acre site would provide space for the building, parking, and future expansion. A proposed architectural design was unveiled on April 5. With almost one hundred percent support, the elders planned to move from the ninety-four-year location downtown.

1965 WAS A YEAR OF CHALLENGE. The Minister wrote on March 24, *"As a member of this congregation, will you dare to be a dreamer? Can you envision great things for the cause of Christ in Centerville? Visualize a day when we will have facilities adequate for our worship and work. Dream of a day when we can operate a home for orphans and a home for the aged. Dare to be a dreamer and work to see your dreams come true."* A Personal Work Dinner in March was attended by 39 persons and it was reported that 174 cottage Bible classes had been taught recently. Twenty-three persons were baptized in a Campaign for Christ in Janesville, Wisconsin. The Paul Rogers family moved from Perry Street to 115 East Swan, on the new property. A statement was made that from henceforth the church building would remain locked when no one on the church staff was there. For ninety-five years the doors had been left open to all. In June excavators began to grade the site for the new building. Yearwood & Johnson were chosen as architects and the Building Committee consisted of Dr. Parker Elrod, Elton Johnson, Bill Kittrell, and Lonnie Gilliam. A bond sale began on August 22, with the entire $250,000 Issue reserved within twenty-four hours. Later, an additional $75,000 of bonds would be necessary. Bids were opened on September 28 and construction began on November 1. As expansion of the facilities began, the congregation was challenged to keep in mind three long-range goals: A home for older persons, a kindergarten for children, and a Christian school. The year ended on a mountaintop with Paul Rogers writing, *"As we approach 1966, let us move with cooperation, conviction, and cheerfulness. Let us give plentifully of our time, tal-*

ents, and money. May our attitude be that of Isaiah in the long ago, 'Here am I, Lord, send me.'"

IN THE SPRING OF 1966 fifty students from David Lipscomb College joined the Centerville congregation in Operation Doorbell. They knocked on 700 doors, arranged for 105 Bible studies, and brought a new spirit to the church. The Jim Bill McInteer meeting in May saw nineteen baptisms and two restorations. Kindergarten began with nine students and Thelma Totty as the teacher. A County-wide Fund-Raising Drive was begun for the Herald of Truth, with a goal of $9,835 for the production of a Master Film.

SEPTEMBER 4, THE GRAND OPENING

Never had the congregation seen such an exciting day as September 4, 1966, the dedication of the new Church Building. 1071 persons were present from seven states and twenty-two Tennessee cities. All attendance records were shattered, a crowded Open House was held in the afternoon, and Paul Rogers addressed the theme, *"There Remaineth Yet Very Much Land to Be Possessed."*

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF 1967 brought 514 persons together for worship. James R. Brown, an elder since 1955, passed away on January 3. The year posed a significant challenge as the budget was raised to $1,471 per week. Jane Talley was employed to be the full-time Secretary. Among the speakers for the year were Dr. William S. Banowsky, who would later be President of Pepperdine University and the University of Oklahoma. And Dr. Batsell Barrett Baxter, whose coming was a surprise on July 29. He was engaged in a meeting with the Hohenwald church and agreed to speak at the 9:00 A.M. service in Centerville also. His message was entitled, *"The Shadows of Influence."* Upon his return home, he wrote, *"I just wanted to drop you this note to tell you how much I enjoyed preaching for you last Sunday morning and especially how much it meant to see the wonderful new building. I have admired your work a great deal through the years and feel that what you and the brethren at Centerville have done is one of the outstanding jobs in the entire brotherhood. The building certainly lives up to all expectations and more. I rejoice with you and all who have a part in the achievement. Everything that I hear about the work there is good."* The Drive to produce a Herald of Truth Film successfully reached its goal of $9,968, with thirty-one congregations and many individuals assisting. It was shown on 153 television stations. A Youth Forum in April was attended by more than 700 persons from eighty-five different congregations. Among the speakers were Coach Jim Pyburn and converted Catholic Priest Antonio Frias. A Training for Service Series was held in October with forty-six congregations represented. The congregation began for the

first time to use attendance cards, the Library reported 700 volumes on hand, the *Messenger* was now being mailed to 550 homes, and a publication entitled *The Star* was mailed into every home in Hickman County. Claude B. Stephenson passed away in October. A long-time Sunday School Superintendent and Bible teacher, he had seen the Sunday School attendance increase from 98 to 448 on the last Sunday of his earthly life.

1968 BROUGHT AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN FEBRUARY that the Hartie Lee Coble family was donating a 160-acre tract of land for development of a Christian Camp. A committee was appointed to formulate a master plan for development, Edward Shepard and Howard Gilliam began bulldozing a road through the area, 7,000 pine trees were planted, brush was cleared, trails were opened, and 60 truckloads of debris hauled away. Paul Rogers promised that *"The potential over a period of years is enormous!"* A new 48-passenger bus was purchased at a cost of $6,282. A Youth Chorus, formed by Tim Walker, traveled widely presenting programs at various churches in the area. The Clearview Church of Christ began meeting in August. On October 20, Jimmy Allen spoke at Homecoming. He had recently conducted a city-wide meeting in Memphis which averaged 8,000 persons per night in attendance. The Homecoming brought together 1,032 persons from 35 different cities and six states. Dr. Ira North returned November 18 and challenged the congregation to complete the construction of a Children's Home. Within a month after his appearance, over $11,000 had been given and plans for a four-bedroom home were in the making. The Claude Stephenson family at the close of the year donated an additional forty acres to the Camp Meribah property.

1969 WAS THE YEAR OF THE CHILD. Eight acres of land on Hillcrest Drive were donated in January for the proposed Centerville Children's Home. Kenneth M. Wilson gave $5,000 for the construction of a cabin at Camp Meribah in memory of Dr. Ogle Jones. After a successful ten-year ministry, Ted Kell submitted his resignation with the Janesville, Wisconsin church. He wrote, *"We have felt since our first acquaintance with you that God's providential love brought us together."* Paul Rogers traveled in Israel for three weeks studying archeological sites and touring the country. Jane Talley and Sherry Breece began to share the secretarial duties in February. Changes in 1969 included the move of Carl and Ona Rodgers to Nashville after twenty years of service to the Centerville church, an elder since 1961....Tim Walker resigned to become Associate Minister and Song Director at the Old Hickory Church, closing out a five-year ministry...Four additional elders were appointed on October 26, Dr. James Blackwell, Bobby Bates, Bill Kittrell, and Edward Shepard, serving with Jim D. Bates and Dr. Parker Elrod...Ron Ingram arrived in December to begin full-time work as Educational Director and Songleader....Alan Bryan

conducted a three-day gospel meeting in November, with thirty-one responses on the final evening. A contribution of $15,125 was made to the new Children's Home on November 23 and a Visitation Program began with Bill Davis as the Director. On October 19 the Children's Home was dedicated, with Athens Clay Pullias as the speaker. The cottage had been constructed at a cost of $24,000.

CAMP MERIBAH OPENS

July saw the first session of Summer Bible Camp at Meribah with 35 boys and girls led by Tim Walker and Paul Rogers. Tim Walker wrote afterwards that it was *"A golden opportunity...A golden success! Let us not close the doors of Camp Meribah each summer, so that it lies idle nine months of the year. We must use the facilities to gain the value of them."* From that humble beginning, Meribah has attracted over 100,000 campers in a quarter of a century and is in use virtually every weekend from March to December. On the day prior to the opening at Camp, the entire community was shocked and saddened by the untimely death of Ken McDonald, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. McDonald. A thirteen-year-old young man, he had worked on the camp property the week before and was enrolled to attend the very first session. Some 900 persons attended his funeral on Sunday afternoon. The McDonald family announced plans to construct the Ken McDonald Hall in memory of their son. Bricks for the front would be donated by Jim D. Bates and Elton Johnson. As the decade of the 1960's concluded, Dr. Ira North sent this brief word of congratulations, *"You really have things marching in Centerville. Stay on the firing line and keep up the good work. You are an inspiration to us."*

THE 1970'S, GROWTH AND EXPANSION

1970, THE CENTENNIAL YEAR. January brought the arrival of Roy and Clara Shannon to be the first houseparents at the Children's Home and the completion of Ken McDonald Hall, ready for occupancy by summer. In March, J. L. Worley died, having served as an elder from 1948 to 1963. George Bailey, Herald of Truth Radio speaker, conducted a successful meeting in April with sixteen baptisms. The property at 111 East Swan Street, where later the Outreach Center would be erected, was purchased and given to the church by Dr. Parker Elrod and W. E. McDonald. Enrollment at Vacation Bible School reached 800, and 1000 calls for clothing were answered (5000 in 1995). Homemade candy was sent to forty-three service men around the world. A letter from Fred Bowman, then serving in the Vietnamese War, appeared in the *Centerville Messen-*

ger. It was then picked up by the Lifeline Radio Broadcast and heard on 532 radio stations across the United States. October 25 marked the 100th Anniversary of the Church... A Centennial Homecoming. Once again Jimmy Allen preached and various former Ministers of the church taught classes. 1100 persons were present, coming from eight states and fifty cities, in spite of a rainy weekend. As the year drew to a close, it was reported that the population of Hickman County had increased by ten persons from 1960 to 1970! And the national debt was over $373 billion (exceeding $4.5 trillion in 1995). And B. B. James wrote, *"The Centerville Church just has to be one of the greatest churches that I know about."*

1971, THE FIRST FORUM. March 1 brought to Camp Meribah the first annual Middle Tennessee Preacher's Forum, with Dr. Jack Lewis as the speaker. Eighty persons were present from thirty-three surrounding cities. Pauline Parris succeeded Boyd Worley as the Director of our Bible Correspondence Course. Annis Womack began her work as church secretary, serving with Sherry Breece. Buzzy Neil was Summer Camp Director, with 123 young people attending in July. A second cottage in the Centerville Children's Home opened on the grounds of Camp Meribah, with David and Gloria Love as houseparents. In September the Centerville Christian Training School began at the Ken McDonald Hall, with Paul Rogers teaching a course on *"The New Testament World."* Bailey Howell, a former NBA Basketball star, spoke to young people in October and Boy Scout Troop 772 began in the fall, sponsored by the men of the church. Ron Ingram resigned his work and Jeff Henry was chosen to be the new songleader. In December we became the sponsoring church for the work of Haskell Chesshir in Seoul, South Korea.

1972 OPENED WITH THIS CHALLENGE, *"If we won in '71, what can we do in '72!"* The work in Milledgeville, Georgia continued, with thirty-three members and Larry Murdock moving to become their minister during the year. Paul Rogers and Jeff Henry journeyed to that city for a mission meeting in April. Batsell Barrett Baxter returned to preach on Sunday, May 18. At that time he was being heard over 505 radio stations and 156 television stations in America. The outdoor gymnasium was completed in June at Camp Meribah and twelve children were living in the Centerville Children's Home. Nineteen students enrolled in the Fall session of the Centerville Christian Training School, held each Tuesday evening at the Ken McDonald Hall. John Clayton, a former atheist and brilliant scientist, spoke to appreciative audiences October 21-22. The Sunday evening crowd of 512 was a record-breaker. He had appeared on sixty Lectureships that year. In May a second bus route began and as many as 75 riders were often on the buses. The cost of utilities in 1972 amounted to $135 weekly ($900 weekly in 1995). The cost of insurance

was $35 each week ($300 each week in 1995). The Budget was $2075 ($8942 in 1995). An area survey indicated that the Centerville congregation was giving $3.50 per attendee, which compared well with other congregations in the Middle Tennessee district.

THE WINTER OF 1973 introduced the Teacher's Appreciation Dinner. Eighty-five teachers attended the event held at Camp Meribah. The month of April was woven about the theme *"Magnify the Cross of Christ"*, with guest speakers and a gospel meeting led by C. W. Bradley. In March the worst flood to hit Hickman County in a quarter of a century was experienced. E. H. Ijams, former President of David Lipscomb College and then in his mid-80's, spoke to appreciative audiences at Vacation Bible School during June. That same summer, Boy Scout Troop 772 hiked 74 miles over the Appalachian Trail. The parking lot was paved, providing 100 additional spaces, and scientist John Clayton returned for a series of lectures. The Centerville Christian Training School began its third session in September and Phil Patton became the regular song leader on September 8, 1973. In October, Chuck and Joyce Boyd began their work as houseparents in the Children's Home. At year's end it was reported that eighteen different children had lived in the Centerville Children's Home with over 10,000 days of individual child-care given since the work began. The total contribution for 1973 was a record-breaking $110,976.

1974 SAW THE RETURN of Willard Collins for a Spring meeting which resulted in twenty responses. A "Back to Church On Sunday Night Campaign" during the month of May resulted in a high attendance of 515. It was also reported during May that for the first time ever the membership of the congregation exceeded 700. During the month David Craig became a full-time Associate Minister and Rick and Faye Hinson were selected to be houseparents at the Children's Home. The Paul Rogers family moved to their new home in Shipps Bend and the former preacher's residence was designated as Children's Home #3. Walter and Johnnie Ruth Elrod began their work as Camp Superintendent, living in the house on the grounds. Thirty-one members of the congregation went to Milledgeville, Georgia to work in a Campaign and saw a record attendance of 97. The attendance that year increased from 45 to 69 persons. Jack Durham, Bus Evangelism Director, reported a high of 90 riders for a single service during 1974. Alan Bryan was a guest speaker on September 1 and stated that, *"There is not a church in Middle Tennessee that has inspired more congregations than Centerville."* A notice in the *Centerville Messenger* in September reported that a Committee was studying the possibility of providing housing for older persons. Thirty-seven persons were baptized, thirty restored, and thirty placed membership in the course of the year. Shortly before Christmas the city was jolted by one of the biggest bank robberies in Tennessee history, occurring on the public square and

involving the safety of several members of the congregation. In time, all of the robbers were captured and imprisoned. As the year drew to a close, Paul Rogers noted that, *"It has rained every Sunday this fall,"* However, the congregation weathered the weather and did more in '74!

1975 OPENED WITH A PRAYER MEETING. The theme of the service was: *"Lord, Set Us A 'Praying!"* In February once again the possibility of building a housing complex for older Christians was mentioned. 175 persons attended the Middle Tennessee Preacher's Forum in early March and 30 prisoners at Turney Center completed the Correspondence Course. A "Paint Night" on March 17 brought out 36 helpers to paint the walls of the Educational Building. The Men's Bible Class taught by Dr. Parker Elrod accepted a challenge in the Spring to read 23 chapters of the Bible each week. The weekend of March 16 brought to Hickman County the most devastating flood ever seen in terms of financial damage. In Hickman County alone the damage was estimated at $500,000. 1975 was distinctively the year of the bus! A third large bus was purchased for $11,000 and a high of 121 riders on October 30 was counted. The largest number of Sunday morning riders was on April 13, with 76 on the buses. A Bus Riders Picnic was held on May 18 and Jack Durham, Bus Evangelism Director, reported a total of 147 different persons on the buses in 1975. J. C. Bailey, widely-known missionary to India, spoke at Vacation Bible School and work was begun in July on the A-Frame Chapel, funded by Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Rogers. The Children's Bible Hour had its beginning August 24 and was to be a regular training program for children 3rd grade and under each Sunday night. Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Semore began their work as houseparents in the Centerville Children's Home. And a Committee flew to Atlanta to visit the Christian Towers, hoping to build a similar structure in our city. October 12 was designated as Roll Call Day, with a concentrated effort made to have every member present. 731 attended. Paul Rogers was selected as the Alumnus of the Year at Harding Graduate School of Religion in Memphis and in November departed for a month of preaching in India. 500 persons were baptized during that month of mission activity. Upon his return he delivered a series of illustrated Lectures on India, with 587 attending a Sunday night service.

1976, AMERICA'S BI-CENTENNIAL YEAR, BEGAN WITH A DRIVE to send sweaters to the people of South India. 1600 were eventually collected, boxed, and mailed to the poor villages of the Far East. On the first Sunday of the year, Paul Rogers spoke on *"The Joy of Memorizing Scripture"* and challenged the congregation to memorize as a body of people the entire New Testament! Each volunteer was to take a particular chapter, commit it to memory, write it down on February 29 during the Sunday School hour, and then have this hand-written Bible bound. The congregation responded well and practically the entire New Testament

was memorized and written on February 29, 1976, the first fifth Sunday in February since 1948. This volume remains in the Church Library. The year of the Bi-Centennial had as its theme, *"Calling America Back To God."* The guest speaker on February 29, Hans Novak, had grown up under Adolph Hitler and had become a successful gospel preacher. A "Let Freedom Ring" Chorus was formed, with Mike Bradley as the Director. The group sang both on WNGE-TV and WTVF-TV in Nashville. Larry Murdock resigned his work in Milledgeville, Georgia after three successful years. The Jim Bill McInteer meeting in May saw eight responses to the invitation. On June 27, a special "Prayer Service For The Nation" was held and on July 4 a "Brush Arbor Meeting" at Camp Meribah was scheduled to celebrate the nation's 200th Birthday. A stage was built and a grassy area reserved by the lake for this event. Because of heavy weekend rains, the outdoor service was cancelled and moved to the church auditorium, where 700 persons attended Sunday night. A $1300 special offering for Christian Education was made on that day. Summer camp saw 20 young people responding to Christ's invitation during the second camp week. October was devoted to the Restoration Movement in America, climaxing with a tour of Cane Ridge, Kentucky and Bethany, West Virginia the third week of the month. In September Putman Reeves became the song leader of the church. The former residence of the Minister next door to the church building was converted into a Benevolence Center in December. It was estimated at year's end that the value of all church facilities owned was $1,280,000. An estate gift of $41,140.92 by Mrs. Elmer Thompson and her daughter, Mrs. Odell Coburn, was greatly appreciated.

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN 1977 marked the 20th Anniversary of Paul and Judy Rogers' ministry in Centerville. It snowed that day, as it did on the first three Sundays of the year. A special "Italy Sunday" was held January 23, with David Lavender, Earl Lavender, and David Elrod as speakers. Forty-seven young people enjoyed a skiing excursion in Gatlinburg and David Craig, Youth Minister, also worked as an AGAPE Caseworker. A non-profit corporation was formed to finance and hopefully build Tulipwood Housing For the Elderly. On February 7, during an extreme energy crisis, the Educational Building was closed and all classes met in the main auditorium or basement areas. The first week in April brought to the Centerville Church Earl and Rebecca Lavender. He began work as a full-time Associate Minister, with the intention of becoming our Missionary. That was the beginning of a long and fruitful association, six years in Italy and six in Highland, Illinois, plus the establishment of two new congregations. During June the Lavenders and Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Barber worked in a Campaign in Italy. A gospel meeting with Myron Keith the first week of May was highly successful. Prior to that meeting the members were requested to pray for every family in the Centerville

telephone directory whose last name began with the same initial as theirs. Mike Bradley began full-time work on the staff during the summer, involved in Vacation Bible School, Summer Camp, and other ongoing activities. Families were requested to sit together on Father's Day, June 20. The largest family in attendance was that of Mrs. Noah Chessor, twenty-two persons together side by side on the pews. An outdoor service at Camp Meribah by the lake was held on Sunday night July 3, followed by a watermelon feast and a choral program. 390 attended. In October Rick and Diane Henry became houseparents at the Centerville Children's Home. Paul and Judy Rogers traveled to Italy in August, meeting with Christians in Monfalcone and exploring mission possibilities. He had opportunities to preach in Vienna, Austria and Zagreb, Yugoslavia, as well as meeting secretly with Christians in Hungary and Yugoslavia during the journey. A series of Lectures entitled, "A Journey for God Behind the Iron Curtain" was presented on consecutive Sunday nights, with audiences exceeding 500. The Centerville church was featured three Sunday mornings on WSM-TV and invited to return twice to WTVF-TV. Paul Rogers spoke and a Chorus led by Mike Bradley sang. Twenty children were part of the Tuesday School and a $2,939 contribution was presented David Lipscomb University as Willard Collins assumed the Presidency of that institution. In December a new bus was purchased, seating 26 persons and equipped with luggage racks. 1977 and we were on our way to Heaven!

1978 BEGAN AS "THE YEAR OF THE VOLUNTEER", with 250 persons filling in a worksheet during January. The year also began with a statement that efforts were continuing to find a funding source for Tulipwood. The prayers and patience of the congregation were requested. The first two months of the year featured messages and classes on the theme, *"Meeting the Master In Mark"*. On February 23 an announcement was made that the congregation was to construct a benevolent building, to be known as the Outreach Center, with construction beginning in July. The total cost for this 5000 square-foot structure was $161,617. On March 5, Bill Davis was added to the eldership of the congregation. A radio broadcast began each Sunday morning live over a 50,000 watt radio station in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Sunday telecasts were seen over WSM-TV March 26, July 16 and November 5. 250 persons attended the March Preacher's Forum and $2,850 was raised for a special telecast of the Herald of Truth in New York City. On March 30 it was announced that additional property had been obtained joining our building allowing room for construction of the Outreach Center and giving us 5.4 acres of land in the heart of the city. On April 6, W. C. Hayes became Camp Superintendent at Meribah, a post which he continues to hold in 1995. W. C. and Evelyn Hayes had moved from Dallas, Texas just a few months before and would efficiently and faithfully oversee the day-to-day activities of the

camp for years to come. Dr. Mack Wayne Craig conducted a successful meeting May 7-11 and a Bus Riders Picnic was held May 28. On May 25 the Tulipwood project was updated with the statement that an option had been obtained on property at the corner of East Swan Street and Murphree Avenue. Twenty-two workers were in Milledgeville, Georgia in June for a Campaign led by Earl Lavender and David Craig, with a new attendance record of 76 being set. Ray Jerkins conducted a Family Living Workshop June 25-28. On August 27, celebrating the final payment on the church building, Homecoming was held with Willard Collins as the speaker. 954 persons attended. The week prior to that event found Paul Rogers in Birmingham to speak at the funeral of his oldest brother, Andy, who in the summer of 1948 had saved him from drowning off the coast of South Carolina. An exciting announcement was made September 10 that funds had been secured for the construction of Tulipwood, $2,147,625, through the Department of Housing & Urban Development. 75 Apartment Units would be built, providing security, companionship, inexpensive housing, and Christian love to hundreds of senior citizens across the years. Edd T. Lancaster, President of Tulipwood Corporation, expressed the hope that the facility would be in operation in 1980. Also in September John Plemmons came to be the regular song leader of the Centerville church. Thanksgiving Sunday brought back to the city Tim Walker for the first annual Thanksinging. On that day the congregation had an all-time record contribution of $50,101. This would underwrite several unique opportunities for service and apparently was the largest small-town offering of any congregation of the Church of Christ in Tennessee history. Indeed, the year ended on a high note. The final issue of the *Centerville Messenger* even affirmed that, *"We have some twenty babes in arms or on the way"*. The church was growing!

1979 OPENED WITH AN EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT that Wayne Qualls had been employed as our part-time Educational Director. Previously he had preached for the congregations at Little Lot and Chestnut Grove and was serving as Principal of Centerville Elementary School. In years to come he would be Hickman County School Superintendent and Commissioner of Education for the State of Tennessee. An effort was underway to find 100 persons to serve on a Visitation Team, with the theme being, *"Bringing Many Sons Unto Glory"*. Telecasts were made for WTVF-TV on February 11 and August 5, WSM-TV on October 14 and December 16, WNGE-TV on December 9. 275 persons, the most ever, attended the March 5 Middle Tennessee Preacher's Forum at Camp Meribah. The Wayne Kilpatrick meeting in May resulted in eight responses to the gospel. Jeff Pyburn, star athlete at the University of Georgia, spoke on June 17. Construction of the Outreach Center continued and the Andy W. Rogers Staff Lodge was built at Camp Meribah, financed by a

contribution from his wife. The new Yearbook and Directory contained 987 names, including children and spouses who were not members. Paul Rogers was featured on a radio talk show in Nashville, station WWGM. In July the church began to meet in Cervignano, Italy and the Tuesday School was expanded to both Tuesday and Wednesday in September. Summer camp had its largest-ever single-week enrollment in July, with sixteen baptisms resulting. At the beginning of the summer, Paul Rogers challenged the people to memorize fifty-nine different passages of scripture. The first person to complete that assignment was Slayden Leathers. The final loan for Tulipwood was finally approved, amounting to $2,578,000. A sixty-acre addition to the camp property was purchased and $10,000 of new broadcast and public address equipment was installed. The congregation enjoyed a visit from B. Ratnam, of Rampachadovaram, India, Paul Rogers' translator while in that country, on October 14. The year closed with the Minister recovering from back surgery. It had been a most wonderful decade!

THE 1980'S...ONWARD AND UPWARD

AS 1980 OPENED, INCREASED TENSION WITH IRAN in the Perisan Gulf was underway. On that first Sunday night, Paul Rogers dealt with this under the title, *"Islam, A Threat In Time and Eternity."* Sherry Breece resigned after ten years of faithful service as Church Secretary and Ruth Reece was added to the office staff. An Elders/Deacons Workshop was led by Dr. Mac Lynn in March and a Teacher's Workshop also conducted that month. A Bible Teacher's Swapshop brought 175 people together from sixteen congregations in the Spring. The Singles Ministry began in March with Dr. Bob Etheridge as the leader. Mladen Jovanovic made his first appearance in Centerville on February 24. Fifty-one young people and their sponsors enjoyed a Gatlinburg trip during the Winter and the 1980 Preacher's Forum was re-scheduled to March 24 due to snow. A new Nursery was begun near the office area and the Outreach Center had its official opening on Sunday, May 11. 1000 calls for clothing came annually (5000 calls in 1995). Jimmy Allen spoke at the best-attended revival since the opening of the new auditorium in June, with seven baptisms and sixteen restorations. David Craig and Mike Bradley led a good session of camp during the summer. On September 16, the HUD loan for Tulipwood was closed and bulldozers quickly moved onto the Tulipwood property. The ground-breaking was held on September 23. D. Ellis Walker spoke at the October 19 Homecoming attended by 801 persons. A celebration of fifty years of preaching was enjoyed, noting that Brother Walker was the first located preacher for the Centerville Church, moving to Centerville five decades previously. Paul Rogers led a

Restoration Tour in October to Bethany, West Virginia, with forty-four persons traveling together. As the year closed, construction was underway at Tulipwood and the Staff Lodge at Meribah was completed. The church was building for the future!

1981 BEGAN WITH A MESSAGE FROM OUR MISSIONARY, Earl Lavender, who was home on furlough from Italy. The congregation was once again featured in February on WTVF-TV. In March Joe Barnett, Minister of the Broadway Church in Lubbock, Texas, preached and spoke at the Middle Tennessee Preacher's Forum. Jerry Baird, Jr. was employed as Administrator at Tulipwood on March 18. In April, the Lifeline telephone ministry began which would bring approximately 30,000 calls each year. A bequest from Hester Jones, of Louisville, Kentucky, of $5000 was received in April and forty-three children graduated from Day School on May 14. Bill McDonald began as a part-time Youth Minister on June 1. He would continue to be one of the brotherhood's most popular speakers to young people and in years to come would conduct Grief Seminars throughout America. David Craig moved increasingly into the area of Counselling and received a Doctorate in that field. The Day School expanded to a five-day-a-week operation. In July a "Knocking at My Neighbor's Door Campaign" was conducted throughout the city, followed by a Revival led by Jimmy Allen. Average night attendance was 422, with twelve responses. Tulipwood officially opened on August 16. In the Fall brethren from eighteen different cities descended upon Centerville for a weekend "Building Up The Church in A Small Community Seminar". Dr. Ira North brought the Amazing Grace Bible Class to Centerville on Sunday night, October 18. 700 persons attended, which was up until that time the largest Sunday evening audience ever. Mrs. Loudie Peeler, who was soon to be 100 years of age, was presented a Bible by Dr. North and a booklet, *"Building Up The Church In A Small Town"*, written by Paul Rogers, was offered to the viewing public. After thirty years of faithful service, Slayden Leathers retired as Church Custodian and was replaced by Richard Turnbo. All-Church Night was held December 10 at Camp Meribah and it was reported that the Visitation Teams had made 1300 visits during the year. 175 boys and girls had been in the Summer Camp. The end of the year marked the close of a quarter-century of service to the Centerville Church by Paul and Judy Rogers. In those years he had prepared, preached, and had on file over 2000 sermons. He estimated that the total number of words that he had spoken in the Centerville pulpit would amount to 10,300,000!

1982 BEGAN ON A RAINY, DREARY NOTE with heavy weekend rains. However, it was the 25th Anniversary of the Rogers family in Centerville. On Saturday night a Surprise Roast was held at Camp Meribah by the elders and deacons. Out-of-town roasters included Willard Collins,

Jim Bill McInteer, George Goldtrap and Myron Keith. Frances Meeker, Religious Editor of the *Nashville Banner,* planned to be present but was caught in a heavy storm, got on the wrong road, and was inundated by mud on the backwoods roads at the camp! The congregation gave to the Minister and his family a beautiful Tea Service to commemorate their years of service. On January 17, Mrs. Loudie Peeler, a member of the congregation almost 85 years, celebrated her 100th birthday. January 21 brought a temperature of minus 20 degrees, the coldest day in many, many years. However, 400 were still in worship. In the first twelve Sundays of the year, 24 persons responded to the invitation. Mrs. D. Ellis Walker, wife of the first Centerville located preacher, passed away in February. Myron Keith returned for a gospel meeting May 2-6. There were 31,000 calls for Lifeline during its first year of existence. In May, 48 persons traveled together to the Knoxville World's Fair and the first annual Breakfast in honor of High School Seniors was held. The summer camp at Meribah was a joint venture between the congregation and David Lipscomb College, with Mike Bradley as the Director. Sixteen men from the church enjoyed a fishing trip in Destin, Florida in July, bringing back 2000 pounds of fish and making the local Fort Walton newspaper. Earl Lavender reported to the congregation in August that nineteen members were meeting in Cervignano. An International Night on September 30, featuring foreign foods and decorations, was enjoyed by the congregation as a farewell tribute to the Lavender family upon their return to Italy. Mladen Jovanovic, of Yugoslavia, spoke on October 24 and a World Evangelism Forum that week brought missonaries David Lock, Ernest Stewart, and Jim Waldron to the city. At the closing of the year it was noted that fourteen members had died, 2062 visits had been made by the various teams, 1300 calls for clothing had been filled, 58 of the 75 apartments at Tulipwood were occupied, a total of $238,726 given, and the high attendance for the year was 737 on April 11.

1983 WAS "THE YEAR OF THE BIBLE", so proclaimed by President Ronald Reagan. An alumni meeting early in the year reflected the fact that over 100 persons from the Centerville church had studied on the campus of David Lipscomb College at some time in the past. Loudie Peeler died in early February at age 101, having been associated with the Centerville church through most of nine decades. The first cable telecast of our morning service was on February 6, seen in Centerville, Hohenwald, and Mt. Pleasant. Shortly thereafter $9000 worth of professional equipment was purchased. A Teacher's Workshop March 18-19 brought Ken and Sharon Rhodes, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, to Centerville. David Craig resigned on April 4 to begin as an Associate Minister of the Graymere Church in Columbia and work with the Columbia Mental Health Center. He had served ten years with the Centerville congregation. A Zone Pro-

gram was announced on April 21, with the entire county divided into three zones. This would provide fellowship and service opportunities. On July 3 a broadcast entitled *Bible Truth and You* began over WCKY-Cincinnati. It was heard in an area of 12,000,000 persons and would result in mail from thirty different states. The Golden Rule Reading Club was a Summer-long effort to encourage the reading of scripture. A total of 27,001 Bible chapters were read and thirteen young people read 100 or more chapters. Students at Vacation Bible School read some 4,000 chapters. Randy Becton, of the Herald of Truth, was the Vacation Bible School speaker. Miss Emma Nicks left an estate to the Centerville church exceeding $60,000 which would be used as a Scholarship Fund. The Fund would assist students attending a Christian college across many years. By 1995 the principal exceeded $80,000. B. Ratnam, of India, returned on July 31. A special contribution for his work brought $3209.50. He especially enjoyed the Ice Cream Supper that evening, which was his first taste ever of homemade ice cream. He ate at least three cups filled to overflowing! The adult Bible school theme for October, November, and December was, *"The Church Through Twenty Centuries"*. On September 29, an announcement was made that Tulipwood had finally reached capacity, with every apartment taken. A special "Tulipwood Day" was proclaimed for November 20, with B. B. James speaking and lunch afterward. Family Night at Camp Meribah on November 3 was a dramatic depiction of church history across nineteen centuries. A German meal was enjoyed in honor of the 500th Birthday of Martin Luther November 10. Sunday, December 25, turned out to be the coldest Christmas Day ever recorded in the state of Tennessee, in Centerville minus 10 degrees. In the course of the year there were 74 responses, clothing given to 2,192 persons, team visits made to 3,000 homes, and the *Messenger* was sent into 32 states. Paul Rogers wrote, *"The Lord continues to bless the Centerville congregation with good people whose zeal is unabated...We press on, upheld by the fact that we are bound for a Promised Land."*

AS 1984 OPENED, THERE WAS A CERTAIN MOVE toward conservatism in America. It was a year of new beginnings and a year of farewells. Ira North died early in the year, with an estimated 8,000 persons attending his funeral, the largest such crowd in Tennessee history. There had been a special tie between Dr. Ira North and the Centerville Church of Christ for three decades. The portraits were made for the first-ever color Directory, with 360 families included. Richard Taylor came on March 25 to tell a gripping story of his life and conversion, from being a college basketball player to being shot by gangsters and left for dead, to becoming a faithful Christian. His speech at Hickman County High School received a standing ovation from the students. Paul Rogers was invited to speak

at the Montana State Lectures in Lewistown, Montana. In later years, four members of that congregation would be part of the Centerville church: John Smith, Glenn Smith, Jerry Smith and Dan Smith. The Earl Lavender family returned from Italy to spend a year in Centerville before returning to another new mission work. In April, 30 men of the congregation once again went deep-sea fishing in Destin, Florida. Sunday nights in May were given over to revival with guest speakers each week. Larry Keen began his work as Youth Minister on the first Sunday in June and 159 young people were enrolled in Summer Camp. The annual Ice Cream Supper on July 29 brought together 524 persons. A record crowd gathered on September 16 for Double Day, with Harold Hazelip and Ray Walker leading the service. 1122 persons were in attendance from nine states and forty-two cities. It was noted afterward that we were but 35 persons short of the small-town record attendance of the Church Street Church of Christ in Lewisburg back in 1953. The Centerville congregation resolved to handle that matter on some future day! A new songbook was ordered, *Songs of the Church,* and a new 15-passenger van was purchased in the fall. Paul Rogers' mother died early Sunday morning, November 11, at age 90. He delivered the sermon that morning before announcing her death and then departed for Birmingham. The year closed with "A Real White Christmas," providing gifts wrapped in white for needy children in the community.

1985 BEGAN WITH NEW ENTHUSIASM IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL. All students were re-enrolled in all classes and a new resolve was made to maintain good attendance records through the year. Awards would be given to children having perfect attendance for an entire quarter. Sunday night, January 20, proved to be the coldest temperature ever recorded in Middle Tennessee, minus 18 degrees, with a wind chill of minus 60 degrees. In the Centerville area it was minus 22 degrees, the "chill of the century". With 6" of snow on the ground, 143 persons managed to get to the building for Sunday morning worship. School students were dismissed for four consecutive weeks due to the extreme weather conditions. Bill Skelton and Earl Lavender began work on our Broadcast Studio. It was built on the second floor of the Educational Building and featured state-of-the-art equipment. J. T. Bates began his work as Custodian in March. Juan Monroy, of Spain, spoke to the church March 24 and to the Preacher's Forum the following day. 743 persons heard him Sunday morning. A letter was received from Policeman Paul Higgs in the Turks and Caicos Islands. He wrote, "While my wife and I pray for this great church, the Church of Christ, please pray for us while we are awaiting its establishment here. I am asking that you pray that I will one day be able to attend a Bible College." He had been contacted through our WCKY broadcast and began to inquire regarding our religious

plea. 100 persons attended the Golden Age Banquet on March 14. "Meetings In May With Our Neighbors" were held in the month of May, with Sunday School gatherings being held by neighborhoods. Toby Hamman and Teb Batey were employed to be Youth Apprentices for the summer of 1985. Richard Taylor came in June for a Drug and Alcohol Seminar which was well-received. On June 12 Paul Rogers and Toby Hamman departed for the Turks and Caicos Islands. While there, preaching services were held at two different school houses and attended by some 150 persons. Paul Higgs and Christopher Missick, a former Church of God of Prophecy preacher, were baptized in the Atlantic Ocean. A long association with this island began that continues in 1995. Walt Leaver conducted a gospel meeting in July and there were 20 responses at Summer Camp that month. It was also announced in July that the largest manufacturing concern ever to be built in America was to be placed in adjoining Maury County at Spring Hill. Middle Tennessee would never be the same again! As of 1995, four Saturn families are part of the Centerville congregation. It was reported in the summer that mail from WCKY broadcasts had now come from twenty-six states and 225 cities. On August 22, a Drive was announced to raise sufficient funds for a church building on North Caicos. Coming Home '85 was held September 29, with Jerrie Barber as the guest speaker. Former members returned and 836 persons were present. In October Paul Rogers journeyed to Canada where he was the featured speaker on the Western Christian College Lectureship in Saskatchewan. In December 44 persons enjoyed a tour of Williamsburg, Virginia. The year-end Victory Contribution for 1985 amounted to an outstanding $16,609 given.

THE FIRST MONTH OF 1986 saw a Church Leadership Sunday on January 19. The elders and deacons, along with their wives, were seated together and introduced to the congregation. There were seven elders, 29 deacons, with a total of 463 years of leadership as either an elder or deacon. The 1986 theme was, *"Good News Is For Sharing."* Members were requested early in the year to turn in to the elders their dreams for the future. B. Ratman returned to speak on March 23 and at the Forum the following day. The largest crowd ever to attend the Preacher's Forum, 450 persons, enjoyed the message he brought. The facilities at Camp Meribah were refurbished and remodeled at a cost of some $100,000. Our Sunday worship service began to be seen each Sunday over cable television in McMinnville, Tennessee. Willard Collins returned for a revival June 1-4. On July 5 the Centerville Church and Freed-Hardeman College jointly sponsored a Seminar for Elders on the Henderson Campus. The Earl Lavender family announced on July 13 their intention to move to Highland, Illinois, there to begin a congregation in that city of 10,000 population. The church began on August 24. Homecoming '86 was held

on August 31, with Ray Walker directing the singing and Paul Rogers preaching. A sight-and-sound presentation depicting 150 years of Churches of Christ in Hickman County was a feature of the day. 1142 persons attended, the largest Sunday morning attendance of any small-town Church of Christ in America, so far as anyone knew. The congregation enjoyed a Day of Affirmation on September 28, with dreams of a large Fellowship Hall, a new Day School facility, and coverage of the entire United States by radio and television. In November Paul Rogers spent two weeks in the hospital recovering from a second back surgery. The Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes began to meet in the Fall with Doug and Maxine Shepherd. December 28 was a 30th Anniversary Celebration for the Rogers family, having served the Centerville congregation three decades. Writing for all the elders, Dr. Parker Elrod said, *"Looking back, I feel sure that the Lord was looking after us and answering our prayers when he was the one selected. We have seen the church grow in numbers, in buildings, in the Lord's work, and in Christian attitude during the last thirty years. We as elders would like to thank you, your wife and your family for what you and your family have meant to each of us as elders and members of the Centerville Church of Christ. May the Lord bless you and keep you continuing in His work. Many thanks."* As a gift of appreciation for his years of service Paul Rogers was presented with a trip to the Holy Land.

1987 HAD AS ITS THEME *"The Church, The Family of God."* A Winter Dinner brought together the elders, deacons, ministers and their wives. A beautiful Silver Communion Service, costing $2,100, was given by the members as a memorial gift to Doyle Bowen and Bob O'Guin. In early March Paul and Judy Rogers traveled to Egypt where they saw the pyramids, to Athens where Paul stood at the top of Mars Hill, and to Israel where the country was toured for several days. They worshipped with the Jerusalem congregation and brought back to all the young children at Sunday School an Olive wood gift from the Holy City. Doug Poling, CBS News radio announcer, spoke on March 22. Charles Coil conducted a successful gospel meeting May 3-7 and John Plemmons, Jr. celebrated his 10th Anniversary as Song Director on May 3. Mladen Jovanovic returned to speak on June 21 and was given $1,524 for his work in Yugoslavia. Vacation Bible School featured the popular Bibletimes Marketplace. Mike Brown assumed the leadership of the Singles Ministry and D. Ellis Walker returned in October to speak on "Growing Older With Christ". The first annual Thanksinging with Ray Walker was held on November 29, with 828 persons overflowing the auditorium. At the closing of 1987 it was reported that there had been 36,000 calls to Lifeline, 3000 visits by the teams, 4000 requests for clothing filled, 1,723 cans of food brought to the Outreach Center, and the second largest contribu-

tion in the history of the church was given on the final Sunday of the year, $22,010. The city also ended the year optimistically, with a new City Hall under construction and a four-lane bridge across Duck River nearing completion.

1988 SAW AN 8" SNOWFALL JANUARY 10. The telecast of our service began in Dickson county on March 6. Over 100 of our members purchased and began to read their One-Year Bible. The church entered the computer age with a computer given by Dr. Parker D. Elrod. Earl Lavender reported that attendance had reached 60 at Highland, Illinois. A tape duplicator which would make three cassette copies jointly was given in memory of Pete Ferguson by his family. 1,500 tapes are mailed out annually. Gottfreid Reichel, of Munich, Germany, spoke March 27. He had been a part of the Hitler Nazi Youth Movement in World War II and was baptized by American soldiers in 1948. Three brotherhood congregations were spotlighted at the David Lipscomb Summer Lectureship, one of these being Centerville. Joseph Worndle spoke in March and $3,000 was given toward the purchase of his boat. He would begin a ministry that would take him first to the Turks and Caicos Islands. Mike Kelley and Marty Rowe were employed as summer youth leaders. The church building and educational wing were re-roofed in July at a cost of $14,000. 126 campers were at Meribah for the largest week ever. The Worndles docked at Provodenciales to begin working with Christians in the Turks and Caicos Islands in August. Steve Flatt preached August 28-31. A special contribution was made for the Richard Taylor family following his death. In late August the 250,000th caller to Lifeline was registered. Mark and Jennie Hayes began their work with the Centerville Church on September 1. He would serve as Youth Minister and Song Director. 36 Centerville members assisted with the construction of the church building in Highland, Illinois the weekends of September 10-11 and 17-18. Volunteers from across the United States joined in the effort and the building was erected in two weeks time. The cost was $160,000, a savings of $100,000 due to volunteer labor. Thirty persons returned to Highland on December 11 for the dedication of that facility. Jim D. Bates celebrated his 40th Anniversary as an elder of the congregation on October 9. In his message to the church, he urged the congregation to remain faithful and united. Paul Rogers, Doug Shepherd, and Lonnie Gilliam journeyed to the Turks and Caicos Islands November 28 to study the building needs and conduct services. The island of North Caicos had one unpaved road and one telephone. The church was meeting in the community center and six persons were baptized in 1988. The Thanksgiving with Ray Walker brought together an audience of 824 worshippers. It was reported in December that mail from 400 cities and 30 states had

come through our WCKY broadcasts. Also, the powerful WBHL-FM in Florence, Alabama had been added to our radio network.

1989 BEGAN WITH AN EMPHASIS ON BIBLE READING. 312 persons ordered copies of the One-Year Bible and resolved to read through the Book in twelve months. The new Yearbook and Directory was published, with 365 family units pictured. On January 29 Bill Kittrell resigned as an elder after twenty years of faithful service. A Building Drive to complete the building on North Caicos was begun. Silverplate offering plates were given to the church in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Granville Whitwell. Thirty-one persons attended the Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes Convention at Opryland Hotel March 24-26. Gene Stallings, then Coach of the NFL Phoenix Cardinals, spoke on April 2 and at the Preacher's Forum the following day. In signing his autograph, he added the words, *"Always have good friends."* He later became Head Coach at the University of Alabama. $12,575 was given for continued construction of the North Caicos building. A Fund was established to assist with the medical expenses of Mark Vaughan following a serious automobile accident. $3,570 was given in Centerville and approximately $30,000 raised from 197 separate congregations. A Scholarship Fund was established by the Hickman County Associated Ladies for Lipscomb. In 1995 the principal exceeds $50,000. Mike Kelley joined the full-time staff of the church for the summer. A new Tour Bus was purchased in June at a cost of $47,000. The annual Vacation Bible School was woven about the theme, *"Moses, the Man of God."* Mark Hayes directed the Summer Camp and led eighteen young people in a mission meeting in Boca Raton, Florida. On August 20 Wayne Qualls and Bill McDonald were added to the eldership. Jimmy Adcox preached in a gospel meeting September 24-27. A special contribution to assist victims of Hurricane Hugo in Charleston, South Carolina netted $1,902 locally. On October 12, Jean Qualls joined the church staff as Education Coordinator and Director of the Day School. Hattie Delk celebrated a 25th Anniversary as Supervisor of the Nursery on October 22. A Beautiful cherry Grandfather Clock was placed in the vestibule in memory of Bud Garner by his relatives. The annual Thanksgiving brought 820 persons together. Edward Loveless was honored on December 7 for his thirty-one years of service as Church Treasurer. He estimated that he had signed some 20,000 checks. His son, Ralph L. Loveless, was appointed as the new Treasurer. Joseph Worndle spoke on December 17 regarding the Turks and Caicos work. The building was filled that day with 133 poinsettias which were then taken to shut-ins of the community. An additional $3,500 was sent for construction of the North Caicos building. It was noted that over 50,000 visits had been made by our teams from 1969 to 1989. A year-end contribution amounted to

$17,017. And the rainfall in Centerville during 1988 was a bountiful 64.62 inches.

THE 1990's...THE LAST DECADE IN THE SECOND CHRISTIAN MILLENNIUM

AS 1990 BEGAN Paul Rogers wrote in the *Centerville Messenger,* "Now let us press on to victory in this final decade of the Second Christian Millennium." In requesting the support of the congregation for every good work, he mentioned that eleven persons in the congregation, including the elders and minister, had stated their intention to give a total of $50,000 to the cause of Christ in 1990. This amounted to an average of $4,582 per family. On January 14 Involvement Sunday was held, with the membership requested to fill in Work Forms indicating which activities of the church they preferred to be a part of. Twenty-two young people traveled to Jonesboro, Arkansas for Youth-in-Action and Mike Kelley was added to the part-time staff as Associate Minister, though yet a student at Freed-Hardeman University. Joseph Worndle reported that he had baptized eighteen Haitians on the Island of Provodenciales. Over 100 persons from the Centerville congregation attended the Lipscomb/Belmont Basketball game at Vanderbilt University gymnasium. 15,000 fans were in attendance, well-surpassing the NAIA record for a game. The Church received a $4,000 bequest from the estate of Harlan and Nettie Chessor. Mladen Jovanovic spoke on April 1 and was given $3,059 for his work in Yugoslavia. A former Catholic Nun, Joanne Howell, of Laurel, Maryland, addressed the ladies class in March. A modern Broadcast Center was added to our television production, providing five TV monitors, two TV cameras and two video recorders. It was noted in the Spring that Boy Scout Troop 772 had twenty-two young men to attain the rank of Eagle Scout in the past twenty-two years. The Troop was begun by men of the congregation. A Summer Scholars Program was begun in June with a goal of learning 100 names, 50 places, 25 events, and 25 verses in the Bible. Thirty-one boys and girls would be honored for having achieved this goal. Earl Lavender returned to Italy in the Summer to bolster the mission work he had begun there. B. Ratnam, of India, spoke on July 22 and another $4,659 was contributed for his work. A Men's Fish Fry was enjoyed by a large group of brethren and was held at the W. E. McDonald home. In August Paul Rogers spoke at the Yellowstone Bible Encampment near Yellowstone National Park. Pauline Parris left to the Centerville Church an estate gift of $10,538. As plans for the 120th Anniversary approached, several men of the congregation built a replica of our 1870 Meetinghouse. Representatives of the Decade were chosen and 1,235 persons attended on September 9 for this Anniversary Celebration. This was a new all-time

attendance record for any small-town Church of Christ in America. Dr. Gayle Napier delivered lectures on the home October 7-9. The men of the Church enjoyed an Octoberfeast at the Old Whitfield Store Building near Coble, with fifty attending. At Christmas gifts were mailed to servicemen around the world and the Thanksinging brought together 865 persons. Joseph Worndle spoke December 12, reporting that as many as 80 persons had attended the services on North Caicos but that the building was not yet fully completed. Jack Durham was honored at the All-Church Night as the Volunteer of the Year. On December 16 the congregation was challenged to expand our facilities, including a new Educational Building, Fellowship Hall, Day School, and increased office space. In 1990, Minister Paul Rogers reported that he had addressed audiences in four states and fifteen cities.

1991 SAW WAR WITH IRAQ BREAKING OUT IN JANUARY. 450,000 American troops were in the Middle East, including three young men from our congregation. The Men's Winter Dinner was held January 24, featuring an Italian Feast. A mission work was undertaken in Farmville, Virginia where some nineteen persons were attending services at the VFW Hall. Among them was a young man from our congregation, Bill Kittrell, Jr. Jim D. Bates died on February 19 after forty years of faithful leadership as an elder and Bible teacher in the congregation. A special Operation Desert Storm Prayer Service was held on February 24 and the telecast of our services began in Columbia on March 3. The Master Plan for the enlargement of our facilities was adopted, with an announcement on March 3 of a goal to quickly reduce our $125,000 debt. Dinners were held to acquaint the members with various details of the construction and March 24 was set as a day to greatly reduce this indebtedness. $42,676 was given on that Sunday. Paul and Judy Rogers journeyed to the Turks and Caicos Islands for the opening of the new church building on North Caicos April 14. Some 150 persons were present. April 26 brought the 350,000th call to Lifeline. It was noted on May 5 that in four months of time the indebtedness had been reduced by $85,000. Seventy-seven children graduated from Day School in May, fifty-two of these coming from families outside the congregation. On May 25 a rainfall of historic proportions hit Centerville, with some twelve inches of rain in a twenty-four hour period. Craig Shelton became the Summer apprentice Youth Minister. A Campaign was held in Farmville, Virginia, with a busload of workers traveling together. Paul Litton was employed as Custodian. The June Vacation Bible School was woven about the story of Joseph in the Old Testament. A Men's Fish Fry on July 18 was held in the backyards of John Plemmons and Dr. Parker Elrod on West Swan Street. Paul Rogers spoke at the Yosemite Bible Encampment at Yosemite National Park in July. On September 8 the congregation observed the 25th Anni-

versary of our entry into the new building in 1966. 801 persons were present. It was stated that only 146 persons from the 1966 membership were still part of the congregation and that $5,270,000 had been given for the Lord's work in that quarter of a century. John Smith became a part-time Associate Minister, with special emphasis on work with single adults. 822 persons attended the Day of Praise in December with Ray Walker. At the closing of the year, it was reported that 62 persons had been baptized or restored and that $120,000 had been paid on the indebtedness, reducing it to some $20,000. A major expansion was at hand!

AS 1992 BEGAN, PAUL ROGERS WROTE FROM THE CARDIAC UNIT AT BAPTIST HOSPITAL: *"Life on this planet is very often a series of unexpected twists and turns. The unthinkable suddenly becomes thinkable and the unexpected becomes raw reality."* Facing quintuple coronary by-pass surgery, he stated, *"Never, never, never have your participation and prayers been more crucial than right now. We must begin 1992 triumphantly and confidently. Each of us must pray fervently, attend faithfully, and support financially the work which God has placed before us...And pray for me that the Great Physician will grant a full recovery, with no lingering liabilities or side-effects. There is much, much more that I hope to accomplish before the sun goes down."* The 35th Anniversary of his ministry in Centerville scheduled for the first Sunday in the year was postponed. It was reported happily in January that the indebtedness had been reduced by $130,000 over the previous twelve months. Mike Kelley, Associate Minister, would fill the pulpit through much of February and early March. The church in Highland, Illinois ordained elders on January 19. In mid-January, Mrs. B. B. James died. Her husband had served this congregation as Minister for seven years in the 1940's. On January 26, the forty-one elders and deacons of the Centerville congregation were introduced publicly. Alan and Leanne Thomas began their work with the church in Farmville as our fully-supported missionaries. On March 15, Paul Rogers delivered his 35th Anniversary address. 714 persons were present, including Frances Meeker, Religion Editor of the *Nashville Banner,* and a photographer who recorded the events of the day. An article later appeared in the Nashville afternoon newspaper. In March the community was jolted by the closing of Tencon with its loss of 172 jobs, including several members of the Centerville congregation. Joe Johnson, President of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, was guest speaker on March 29 and at the Preacher's Forum the following day. A Youth Rally was held on May 8 and on May 22 sixty-four children graduated from Day School. Vacation Bible School June 21-25 featured the story of Noah's Ark, with a major production headed by Roger Dotson. Nancy Leathers was honored during VBS

for having taught thirty consecutive years in this Summer program. On June 8, B. B. James died suddenly. He had been involved in an automobile accident several weeks before and had not fully recovered. He had moved to Centerville in 1943 as a young man of twenty-six years. He was a gospel preacher for fifty-eight years. The elders announced a major expansion of the church facilities on Sunday, July 5. A new educational building, Day School, Fellowship Hall, along with expansion of the office and Library would be undertaken. It was anticipated that construction would begin in September followed by a bond issue in December. A special contribution on July 26 brought an all-time record offering of $83,156. $18,740 additionally was purposed, making a total for the day of $101,896. The Bond Drive began on December 12, with $1,100,000 offered. By the end of December, $681,000 had been purchased. On August 4 a group of workers traveled to Farmville, Virginia to conduct a mission campaign and Vacation Bible School. In August Lifeline crossed the 400,000 threshold. A Drive in September was made to assist hurricane victims who had been decimated by Hurricane Andrew in South Florida. $1,417 was raised. The family of Andy W. Rogers, of Birmingham, Alabama, donated $11,600 to provide a Chapel in the new building. Over 1000 food items were brought in November for the Fall Harvest Drive. 912 persons attended the Thanksinging with Ray Walker and on December 10 All-Church Night was held at Camp Meribah. Sewell Sawyer was honored as Volunteer of the Year. For years he had faithfully led the Outreach Mininstry which provides assistance to 5000 persons annually. As the year ended, seventy Care Boxes were sent by the congregation to Christians in the country of Croatia.

1993 OPENED WITH A PRAYER SERVICE FOR THE NATION JANUARY 17. The teenagers enjoyed Winterfest February 19-21 in Gatlinburg. The financial demands involved in the expansion program made it mandatory that we close out the Sunday night broadcast over WCKY-Cincinnati. It was reported that correspondence had been received from 500 cities, 31 states, Canada, and the West Indies over the course of the program. In addition, a congregation had begun on the island of North Caicos in the Caribbean Sea. A report from Farmville, Virginia in February indicated that attendance had reached fifty persons and that four acres of prime land had been purchased for future expansion. After fourteen years of use, the sound system and broadcast equipment were replaced. In addition, a Marti Microwave Transmitter was added to our broadcast system. Bill Skelton led in making this improvement a reality. The Bill Lawson property on Hackberry Street was sold and $9,125 given to the Centerville church. In March Paul Rogers spoke to 2,132 persons, an all-time record at the Homewood Church of Christ in Birmingham, Alabama. Dr. Milton Sewell, President of Freed-Hardeman University, addressed

the Centerville congregation on March 28 and the Preacher's Forum the day following. It was reported on April 1 that the bond sale was complete, with $1,100,000 having been placed. The final bonds were purchased by Aubrey Burns, of Tulipwood. The cost of the project would be $1,200,000. 844 sweaters were sent to Rampachadovaram, India. On June 1 a Teacher's Appreciation Dinner was held as the first public event in our new educational facility. It was hosted by the teenagers. The new building was entered on June 6, 1993, with 761 in attendance. An additional 700-800 persons toured the facilities in the afternoon and evening. Dr. Carl Holladay, author and Bible scholar from Emory University, led a series of studies in I Corinthians the weekend of June 11-13. The largest VBS attendance in years was present in June as Jonah and the Whale were spotlighted. Mark Hayes resigned on June 27 to begin work as Family Minister and Song Director for the Southwest Church of Christ in Jonesboro, Arkansas. He had led a growing youth program for five years. It was noted in July that the new facilities of the church were being used by such diverse groups as the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Red Cross, support groups, anniversaries, teas, showers and multiple youth activities. It was stated that "It is our desire to have a seven-day-a-week ministry, doing all the good we can in every place we can so long as we can." It was reported on July 29 that the church had 800 members, 204 of whom were retired, 163 of whom were unmarried, 39 were shut-in, and 52 were school teachers. A hand-crafted oak lectern was made by Ronnie Newberry and presented to the Chapel in memory of Willie Shepard. Rosa Nell Loveless donated $5,600 for the construction of a Conference Room. The first of many Men's Breakfasts was held in the Fellowship Hall on September 11. Greg and Paula Vanderveer joined the church staff on October 14, coming from a five-year ministry with the Central Church in McMinnville, Tennessee. Working as Youth Minister and Song Director, he stated his goal was, "To help young people in all age groups to realize their full potential and value to God and to have fun in the process." On Sunday morning, December 12, the congregation was stunned by the announcement of the sudden death of Dr. Parker D. Elrod. With elders Bobby Bates and Bill Davis, he had traveled to Highland, Illinois to encourage the congregation which we had established there several years before. He died in his sleep on Saturday evening. Serving the community forty-one years as a surgeon, he had been for thirty-one years an elder of the church, a stabilizing and energizing force for decades. The Centerville congregation experienced a season of sorrow, with eleven deaths in ten weeks that Fall. At the All-Church Night in December, Brown and Wilburn Chessor were honored as Volunteers of the Year. At the year's end, Paul Rogers had preached in twenty communities and six states.

1994 UNFOLDED IN A SEA OF CHANGE. Mike Kelley, Associate Minister, announced his resignation to become the full-time Pulpit Minister of the Flatrock Church in Lewis County. His statement was greeted with a mixture of gladness and sadness, glad for his opportunity to lead a new work but sad at his departing from our midst. The congregation had watched Mike develop from his baptism as a teenager into a capable young gospel preacher. It was reported in January that the Bible Correspondence Course had enrolled 324 students since 1987. Boyd Worley, Pauline Parris, and Dorothy Bowman had faithfully graded these lessons. Lowell White became the new preacher for the Farmville, Virginia church on January 20. Previously he had worked in foreign mission efforts in both Africa and South America. It was reported on January 20 that the total offering across the last five years (1989-93) amounted to $2,092,895. A Men's Community Breakfast on January 29 in the Fellowship Hall enjoyed hearing Mike Smithson, Centerville native who for several years was a major league baseball pitcher. Fifty-one Care Boxes were gathered and sent to victims of the Los Angeles earthquake in February. Also in February, the new Directories were distributed. John Plemmons had been the efficient Coordinator of the publication. An ice storm in the middle of February left eighty percent of the homes in Hickman County without electricity for a time, some for days. Fallen trees and broken limbs were the rule rather than the exception. This was said to be the single most severe electrical outage in Middle Tennessee history. During the long recovery, the Centerville congregation provided meals twice for the work crews. In that same week Centerville experienced its first space shuttle! A sonic boom heard on Friday afternoon was the shuttle making its approach for a Florida landing. Joe Paul Bryant, soon to be a missionary to Moscow, spoke on February 21 and was given $1,767 by the people. On March 6 the *Gospel In Word and Song* celebrated its 35th Anniversary on the local radio station. The speakers on the first program, March 1, 1959, were Ward Mayberry and Dr. James Blackwell. F. LaGard Smith, an Author and Law Professor at Pepperdine University, addressed the congregation April 17 and the Preacher's Forum the following day. On May 8, mothers in the community to whom babies had been born in the past twelve months were honored at the morning service. Each was presented a book on the topic, "Mothering." A D-Day Community Men's Breakfast was attended by 130 persons on June 11. 105 children graduated from Day School on May 26. This was the largest class since the School began in 1977 with fifteen children. The June Vacation Bible School featured the story of "Daniel and the Lion's Den." An eleven-foot tall lion statue was made, the entrance to Babylon re-created, and an actual 460-pound lion was on display. The attendance was the largest in many years. July 10 saw the 25th Anniversary of Camp Meribah. Over

100,000 persons had used the facility since 1969 and 6,500 had attended our July sessions. Paul Higgs, first convert on the Turks and Caicos Islands, was a guest on July 17 and indicated a continuing interest in preaching the gospel among his people. Phil Griggs began his work as custodian in August. And a mission trip to Farmville occurred August 4-8. In late summer, Dr. B. L. Holladay retired after forty-two years of medical practice and was honored with a Reception in the Fellowship Hall. On Sunday night, August 28, a surprise birthday party was given by the entire congregation in "honor" of the 60th birthday of Paul Rogers. A Revival with Willie Franklin October 23-26 was the best-attended gospel meeting in the history of Hickman County. 1,088 were present Sunday night, with an average of 844 per evening, five baptisms, eleven persons requesting prayers, and chairs in the aisle at every service. The city had never seen such crowds at a gospel meeting before! A gift of $17,266 was received by the congregation from the estate of Jim D. and Lillian Bates. Ray Walker returned for the eighth consecutive Thanksinging in November and Ralph Stout was a guest speaker on December 11. As part of the 125th Anniversary Celebration, an 1870 Pageant was held December 15. The reenactment of the congregation's beginning involved dozens of persons and was highly appreciated. Before the year's end, computer networks had been installed in the offices with three terminals and up-to-date equipment. Once again it was a wet, wet year, with 61.59 inches of rain recorded in Centerville.

1995, STILL ACTIVE AND ALIVE! On a cold night in January, the youth of the congregation prepared and served a steaming hot Chili Supper following the evening worship. Parents' Night Out was begun on January 14 as a service to families in the community. Two classes, one for men and one for women, woven about the "Facts of the Bible" were taught by the elders early in the year. A January 2, 2000 A. D. Vision Committee was formed to study the possibilities and potentialities which lie just ahead. A 1995 survey of the congregation was made and continuing discussions are focusing upon all needs and opportunities as we approach the first Sunday in the third Christian millennium. A Budget of $464,986, the highest in our history, was proposed to the congregation on January 29. It was noted on February 9 that fifty persons had responded to the invitation over the past twelve weeks, amounting to a Revival in our time! Forty teenagers and sponsors attended Winterfest in Gatlinburg, surrounded by 5000 young people from across America. The Day School reported a waiting list of ninety-five children and the teenagers enjoyed spring retreats. Six men of the congregation journeyed to the Turks and Caicos Islands late in May to preach, visit, counsel, and encourage the congregation there. They returned with a renewed zeal for evangelism in these Caribbean Islands.

LEADERS IN 1995

The Centerville Church of Christ has been greatly blessed with generations of able, Christlike leaders. From John Nicks to E. J. Beasley to the current elders the work has continued largely undisturbed by controversy and chaos. They have maintained a close relationship with those who have been part of the "flock of God." The Church, in turn, has given double honor to its bishops, remembering *"Those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct"* (Hebrews 13:7).

The elders of the Centerville congregation in 1995, its 125th year, are as follows:

BOBBY BATES has for many years been the owner of Bates Engine Rebuilders, one of the most respected companies of its type in all of Middle Tennessee. Reared in Centerville, he is part of a father/son combination that has given a combined sixty-five years to the eldership. He has served as an elder since 1969, active in teaching, visitation, bus ministry, mission efforts and every good work.

DR. JAMES BLACKWELL has served as an elder since 1969. His dental practice in Centerville, begun in 1951, has become a pacesetter for small-town dental offices across Tennessee. A nationally-known runner, his achievements have been featured in national magazines and television. On a single day he jogged 68 miles and on another day rode his bicycle 150 miles! He has encouraged the entire community toward a healthful and joyful lifestyle. For decades he has taught the auditorium class, worked in visitation, preached on occasion, and for forty years been active in every forward thrust of the congregation.

BILL DAVIS has served as an elder since 1978. He is a former Vice-President of Tencon Incorporated and presently works in sales with Data Supplies, Inc. For over twenty-five years he has been the Director of a highly successful visitation program, with approximately 75,000 visits reported during this time. He has taught Bible classes, chaired the Budget Committee, and served as leader of the Camp Committee.

BILL MCDONALD has been an elder of the Centerville congregation since 1989. The McDonald family owns and operates four funeral homes in Middle Tennessee. He is past President of the David Lipscomb University Alumni Association and serves on the University Development Council. He has also served on the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Children's Home. A well-trained motivational speaker, he has addressed youth and adult groups throughout the United States. For eleven years he was Minister of the Anderson's Bend Church and for eight years was Youth Minister at the Centerville congregation. He teaches the young

adult Bible class, preaches on occasion, and is actively involved in youth activities and summer camp at Meribah.

WAYNE QUALLS has been an elder of the congregation since 1989. He is a highly-respected educator, formerly Commissioner of Education for the State of Tennessee, School Superintendent in Hickman County eleven years, President of the Tennessee Organization of School Superintendents, and presently a Director of the Tennessee Board of Regents which oversees the forty-six school University of Tennessee system. He has preached widely and served for many years as Educational Director of the Centerville Church of Christ. He regularly teaches young adults and is involved in all the activities of the Church.

ALFRED WILLIAMS is owner of Printing Unlimited, an office supply and printing establishment in Centerville. He has served as an elder since 1991. Prior to his move to this city, he was an elder of the West Nashville Heights congregation in Nashville. He has served the congregation as a Bible teacher, Sunday School Supervisor, Director of the Bus Ministry, and an active promoter of evangelism. He and his wife have opened their home to several foster children through the years.

DEACONS DEVOTED TO DUTY

The Centerville Church has been favored through the years with competent, consecrated men who are servants of the congregation. The deacons in 1995 are as follows: Charles Arnold, Alan Bates, Byron Bates, Fred Bowman, Robert Bowman, Steve Chapman, Don Chessor, Lamar Chessor, Wayne Chessor, Eric Coleman, George E. Dotson, Roger Dotson, Daniel Dressler, Jack Durham, Lonnie Gilliam, Joe Harper, Dr. B. L. Holladay, Foy Hudgins, Elton Johnson, Edward Loveless, Mike Maples, Ward Mayberry, Willie Powers, Delbert Roder, Sewell Sawyer, Bill Skelton, David Talley, Len Womack, and Bryan Woods. These brethren are involved in the day-to-day activities of the church and make possible to a great degree the progress which is enjoyed.

CHURCH STAFF

Serving on the Staff in 1995 are: Paul Rogers, Minister; Greg Vanderveer, Youth Minister; Annis Womack and Ruth Reece, Secretaries; Jean Qualls, Educational Coordinator; Paula Vanderveer, Day School Director; Phil Griggs and J. T. Bates, Maintenance Engineers. Each person performs faithfully his or her tasks, making possible the extensive schedule of activities presently underway. They labor to fulfill the Biblical mandate, *"For the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ"* (Ephesians 4:12).

WM. WALKER
TO) DEED
TRUSTEES OF CHRISTIAN CHURCH , CENTREVILLE,
FILED FOR RECORD
NOV. 12, 1873, AT 1, P.M.
E. G. THOMPSON, D. REG.

(COPIED FROM OLD DEED BOOK S, PAGE 443)

FOR AND IN CONSIDERATION OF THE INTREST I FEEL IN SPREADING THE GOSPAL &RELIGION OF OUR SAVIOR JESSUS CHRIST AND ENCONVEYING THE WORSHIP OF GOD I DO HERBY TRANSFER AND CONVEY TO J.H.MOORE, J. A. CUNNINGHAM, JOHN NICKS SR. T. J. WALKER, AND LON WALKER, TRUSTEES OF THE CHRISTAN CHURCH AT CENTERVILLE & THEIR SUCCESSORS IN OFFICE FOREVER THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED FRACTIONAL PART OF TOWN LOT NO. 1 IN THE TOWN OF CENTERVILLE BEING A PORTION OF THE LOT UPON WHICH THE RESEOINCE LEONEDAS WALKER IS SITUATED BEGINING ON MAIN WHERE IT IS INTERSECTEDBY ANOTHER STREET RUNING NORTH AND SOUTH DESIGNATED IN THE PLANOF CENTERVILLE AS STREET RUNES NORTH WITH SAID STREET 52 FEET TO A STAKE THENCE WEST 35 FEET TO A STAKE, THENCE SOUTH 52 FEET TO MAIN STREET THENCE 35 FEET WITH SAID STREET TO THE BEGINING, SAID FRACTIONAL LOT IS DONATED FOR THE PURPOSE OF HAVING HOUSE OF WORSHIP BUILT UPON IT FOR THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, TO HAVE AND TO HOLD THE SAME TO J.H.MOORE, J. A. CUNNINGHAM, JOHN NICKS, T. J. WALKER, AND LON WALKER, TRUSTEE AND THEIR SUCCESSORS IN OFFICE FOREVER, I COVENANT AND AGREE FOR MY SELF AND HEIRS TO WARRANT AND AND DEFEND THE TITLE TO THE SAID FRACTIONAL TOWN LOT TO J.H.MOORE, J. A. CUNNINGHAM, JOHN NICKS S T. J. WALKER, & LON WALKER, TRUSTEE AND THEIR SUCCESSORS AGAINST THE LAWFUL CLAIMS OF ALL PERSONS WHAT EVER WITNESS MY HAND, THIS 8 DAY OF NOVEMBER 1873. WM. WALKER

STATE OF TENNESSEE, HICKMAN COUNTY.

PERSONALLY APPEARED BEFORE ME JAMES D. EASLEY, CLERK OF THE COUNTY COURT OF SAID COUNTY, THE WITHIN NAMED BORGAINOR WILLIAM WALKER WITH WHOM I AM PERSONELLY ACQUAINTED AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE EXECUTION OF THE ATTACHED INSTERMENT, FOR THE PURPOSES THEIRIN CONTAINED.
WITNESS MY HAND AT OFFICE, IN CENTERVILLE THIS 8 DAY OF NOVEMBER 1873. J. O. EASLY CLERK



Day School



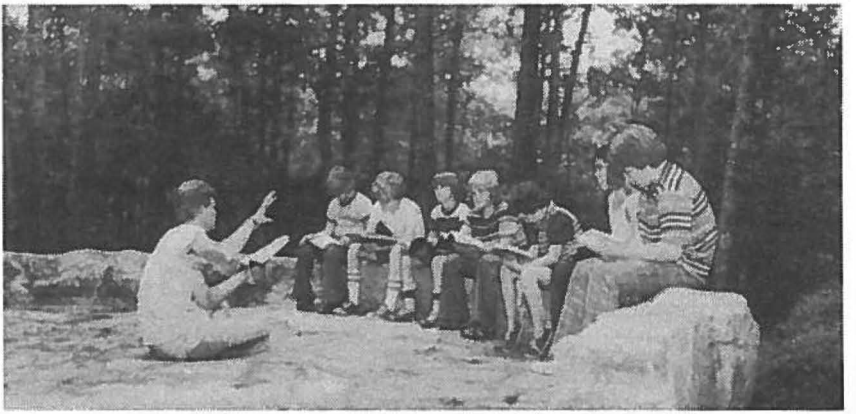
Byron Bates, Wayne Qualls



Bible Teachers, 1980

Camp Meribah







Youth For Christ



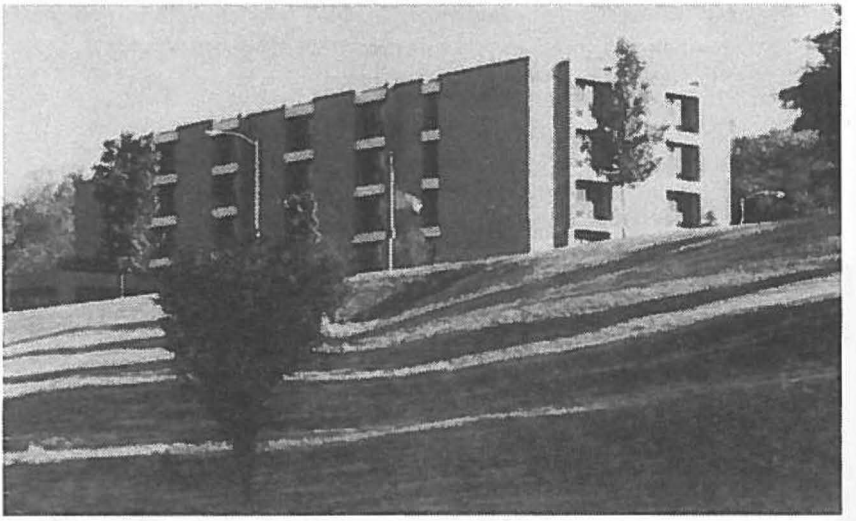




Tulipwood...



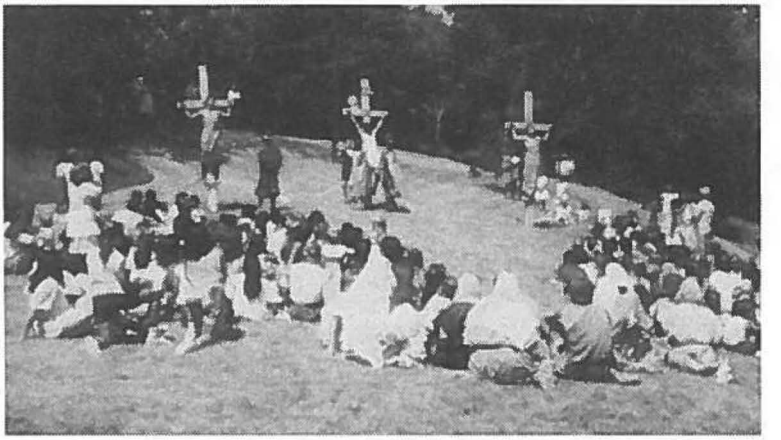
Groundbreaking Ceremony, 1980

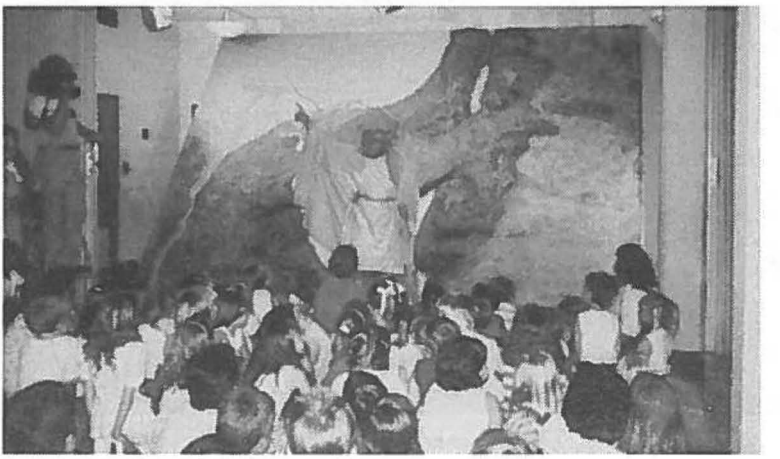


Housing for the elderly and handicapped

Vacation Bible School





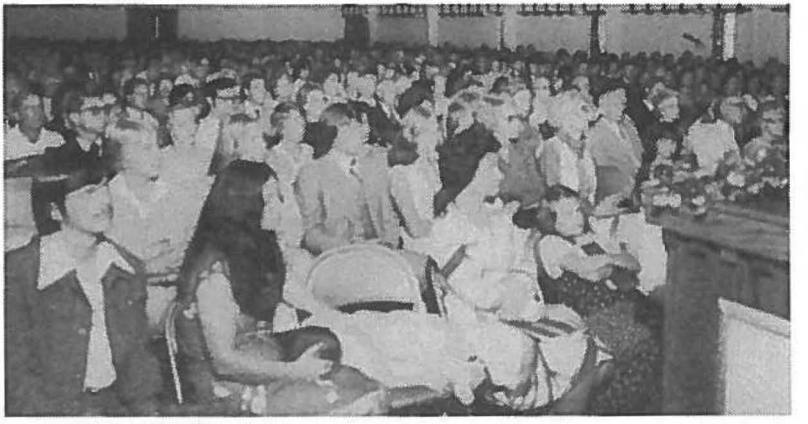




Vacation Bible School, Late 1950's



1966 Church Building



Homecoming Crowd



Bible Teachers, 1975



Ken McDonald Hall Dedication, 1970



Television Chorus, 1976



Jim D. Bates 40th Anniversary as an elder
Pictured left to right: Bill Kittrell, Edward Shepard,
Dr. Parker D. Elrod, Jim D. Bates, Lillian Bates,
Bobby Bates, Dr. James Blackwell





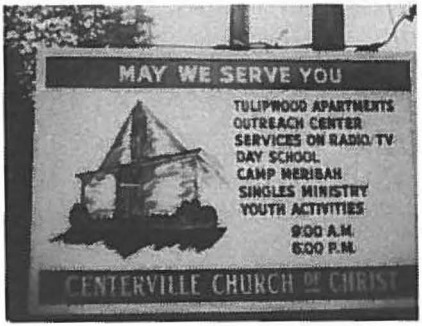
Happy Days...

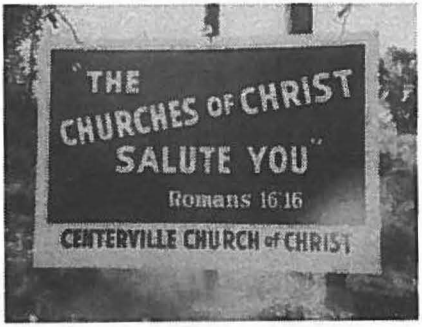







1983 THE YEAR OF THE BIBLE
COME WORSHIP WITH US
Centerville Church of Christ


MAY WE SERVE YOU
TULIPWOOD APARTMENTS
OUTREACH CENTER
SERVICES ON RADIO/TV
DAY SCHOOL
CAMP MERIBAH
SINGLES MINISTRY
YOUTH ACTIVITIES
9:00 A.M.
6:00 P.M.
CENTERVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST


"THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST SALUTE YOU"
Romans 16:16
CENTERVILLE CHURCH of CHRIST


LET THE EARTH HEAR HIS VOICE
Campaign
THIS SUMMER
CENTERVILLE CHURCH of CHRIST



Outreach Workers



North Caicos Meetinghouse



Centerville Children's Home



1985 Office Staff



Greg Vanderveer, Youth Minister and Song Director, with his wife Paula, Director of the Day School



Church Secretaries Annis Womack (since 1971), Ruth Reece (since 1980)

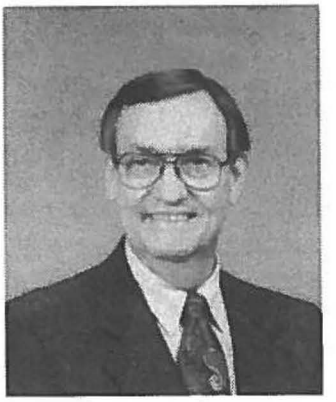
1995 Elders



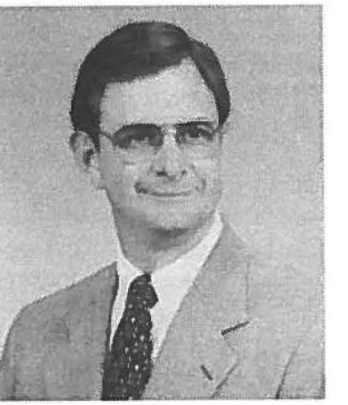
Bobby Bates



Dr. James Blackwell



Bill Davis



Bill McDonald



Wayne Qualls



Alfred Williams

5

People And Places

The Centerville Church of Christ is believed to have begun in 1870, with the building constructed in 1873. Dr. T. J. Derryberry, the Clerk in September, 1901 reported that several years after the beginning of the congregation, "The Clerk, Hood Thompson, died and the records were lost. Afterward, J. H. Russell was an Elder and Clerk. About 1894 J. H. Russell left the country leaving no record of either finances or membership." *So much for our old records!* In the first sixty years of our existence, the congregation had but scant records either of membership or activities. However, we do have in those records the names of 325 persons, 120 men and 205 women, who were part of this congregation somewhere in that six-decade span. For the contributions of each one we give God the glory! For the foundation they laid, for the faith they exercised, for the steadfastness they illustrated, we shall never cease to be grateful.

On the pages that follow we seek to introduce many of those who have played a significant role in the life of this church. There are others about whom we have only scant information and space forbids a description of all. However, each is known to God and each is appreciated by the congregation on its 125th birthday.

No family in Hickman County history has been a more constant force for good among Churches of Christ than the Nicks family. The JOHN NICKS family apparently was converted in the earliest days of the Restoration Movement. No one knows where or when or at the feet of which gospel preacher. Soon after the turn of the 19th Century, they were in Hickman County, settling near the head of Mill Creek. Some of the family then moved to Shady Grove, where they were instrumental in beginning the Church of Christ.

WILLIAM NICKS, son of John, was born in 1789, wed to Sallie Pugh, and fathered some seventeen children.

ABSOLAM DOAK NICKS, another son of John, was the father of twelve children. They also were prominent in the spread of the gospel.

It is believed that William Nicks, Barton W. Stone, and Tolbert Fanning preached at Shady Grove by 1825. The first deed of property owned by

the Shady Grove Church of Christ is dated January 13, 1827 and it is assumed that work on the building began at that time. William Nicks also was an apparent influence in the establishment of the Little Rock Church of Christ on Mill Creek in 1848.

Among the children of William Nicks was yet another JOHN NICKS, born on April 2, 1829. He died on May 11, 1909, and is buried in the Nicks Family Cemetery on Grays Bend Road. His wife's name was Susannah Elizabeth Easley Nicks. They were married on January 2, 1853, and she died on February 2, 1917, at the age of 90.

John Nicks was a tall man, 5 feet 11 inches, with auburn hair, light complexion, and blue eyes. During the War Between the States he enlisted in the Confederate Army on December 1, 1861, at Centerville, Tennessee. He was a member of Company D, 9th Battalion, Tennessee Cavalry. It is known that he was captured on December 25, 1863, in Hickman County and was released on June 12, 1865 at Fort Delaware, Delaware.

JOHN NICKS seems to have been a major force in the beginning of the Centerville Church of Christ. He preached, served as an elder, and was a Trustee, along with J. H. Moore, J. A. Cunningham, T. J. Walker, and Lon Walker in the construction of the building. The property was deeded to the above brethren by William Walker. He was known as Captain John Nicks and Elder John Nicks. In all the years that Captain John Sabastian Nicks preached, he never accepted any pay whatsoever. He always said that he had a 200-acre farm and a sawmill and did not need the money.

JOHN S. NICKS, son of Elder Nicks, was also active in the congregation. He was born in 1854, died in 1929, and was wed to the former Sally Adair.

MISS EMMA NICKS, along with her brother HENRY and her sister LINDA, none of whom married, were grandchildren of John Nicks. Both of the ladies were popular school teachers. Miss Emma, Mr. Henry, and Miss Linda lived much of their lives in the Rock Field community and were instrumental in the beginning of a congregation there. In her later years Miss Emma lived in Centerville and was part of the Centerville congregation. At her death, she left an estate of $64,000 to the Centerville church to be used in assisting young people in obtaining a college education. In 1995 the Fund exceeded $80,000 and is a constant encouragement to the young people of the church who wish to attend a Christian college. Norma Mayfield, who with her late husband Hugh, lived and worked in many parts of the world, including South America, is also active in the Centerville Church and is a great-granddaughter of John Nicks. In addition, Tom Lambert and Charles McClanahan are members of the Centerville Church of Christ and is a descendent of the Nicks family.

The WILLIAM WALKER FAMILY. William Walker donated the land one block off the courthouse square for the first meeting house of the Centerville Church of Christ. Several of his children were active in the early days of the congregation, including Leonidas Walker, Thomas Walker, and Mollie Norris. The Walker home continues to stand proudly in the Anderson's Bend community and is now occupied by the Fred Douglas Baker family.

MOLLIE WALKER, born in 1845 and died in 1888, was wed to Dr. Andrew Norris, born in 1839. They and their seven children all attended Centerville and were actively involved in the life of the church. The beautiful brick home just off the Public Square which is now occupied by the Bill McDonald family was a gift to Dr. and Mrs. Norris by her father, William Walker. The house was built in 1884, the same year First National Bank was constructed.

T. J. WALKER, a son of William Walker, served as a Trustee of the original building and worked zealously in behalf of the Lord's church. He was a courageous Confederate soldier, having been wounded at Shiloh and suffering the loss of an arm at the Battle of Murfreesboro. He was given the nickname "Old Reliable" for his devotion to duty while in the Armed Services. Upon his return to Hickman County, he was a greatly honored citizen, the County Register of Deeds from 1874 to 1882, and built a two-story home next door to the Centerville Church of Christ. He gave a portion of his property to the church for a later addition.

PLEASANT WALKER was an early member of the Centerville church. He was born in 1843, died in 1919, and was married to the former Mattie Ward, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. J. C. Ward. They were wed in 1870.

WILLIAM WALKER fought in the Mexican War in 1847. With that exception, he made a crop on his Duck River Farm from age 14 until age 80. He was robust and healthy even in old age. He and his wife, Matilda Baker Walker, are buried in the Walker Cemetery on his farm in Anderson's Bend.

Another son of William Walker, LEONIDUS, also known as Lon, was a Trustee on the original church deed and an active member of the congregation.

JENNIE FLOWERS, the wife of James David Flowers, was born in 1861 and died in 1948. She and her husband operated a grocery store. She was baptized in 1879 by a blind preacher, Brother Smithson. This is the first date on record as to a baptism in Centerville, although there were many others prior to this time.

In the late 19th and early 20th Century the terms "Church of Christ" and "Christian Church" were often used interchangeably. Thus there was a sign for many years which said simply, "Centerville Christian Church." D. ELLIS WALKER, minister in the 1930's, took down the old sign for

repair and re-painting. When it was put back up, it said "Centerville Church of Christ!" An early hymnal of the congregation, given by Mary Hill Horner, is dated September 11, 1900. On the inside of the cover are the words, "Christian Church," Centreville, Tennessee, September 11, 1900.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS. Over the past eight decades they have been Claude B. Stephenson, Varden Chandler, Douglas Arnold, Jim D. Bates, Edward Loveless, Byron Bates, and Roger Dotson. Each has served with distinction and has sought to have the best teacher in the best classroom situation with the best teaching materials and aids. A $1,200,000 expansion in 1994 was largely an attempt to have the finest educational facilities possible for the 21st Century student.

JAMES E. (UNCLE JIM) CHESSOR was born on Sulphur Creek on August 10, 1889. His early educational opportunity was limited, but was supplemented by two-and-a-half years study at the Nashville Bible School, now known as David Lipscomb University. He graduated from that institution in 1917 and then served as a teacher of Bible and English at Burritt College, a Christian school in Spencer, Tennessee. He was the author of two books, hundreds of religious articles, and many unpublished manuscripts. Through the course of a lifetime, he worked on the farm, at a sawmill, as a school teacher, as a printer, and preacher. No fewer than 180 of his religious articles appeared in the *Gospel Advocate*. His book *Old Testament Stories* was published by the British and Foreign Bible Society of London. During World War II he published at his own expense a monthly mimeographed paper entitled *Uncle Jim's Letter* and sent it to Hickman County soldiers scattered around the world. Edward Dotson, Hickman County Historian, wrote of Uncle Jim: *"He was more than a preacher and writer. He was a country philosopher, whose words and writings were enjoyed by all who received the benefits of their wisdom. The greatest testimonial to his life is the respect, admiration, and love which his entire family held toward him. No man during his lifetime contributed more to the daily life of his people than 'Uncle Jim'. It can truly be said that Hickman County was a better place to live because he lived here among us."* He is buried at the Chessor Cemetery and his epitaph reads, *"He died as he lived, a Christian, and was a friend of all mankind."* James E. Chessor died in 1953 at age 64 and was a source of much encouragement to the Centerville Church of Christ.

JOHN MOODY MCCALEB was born September 25, 1861 in the Shady Grove community. He was the youngest of six sons and the second named for his father, John. His father had been a conscientious objector during the Civil War but had been accidentally shot and killed during the course of the War. J. M. McCaleb entered the College of the Bible in Lexington, Kentucky, at age 27. In 1892 he and his wife, Della, set out as missionaries to Japan. His labors became a standard for missionaries

among Churches of Christ in the next 100 years. In Japan he preached, founded an educational institution, and worked zealously among the people. He remained there almost fifty years, returning in 1941 just before the outbreak of World War II. He then served as a Professor at Pepperdine University in Los Angeles, California. His wife having died earlier, he was married in January, 1942, to Elizabeth Reeves, of Murfreesboro. At age 81, he became the father of an infant daughter, who died after but a few months. His residence in Japan, built of Hickman County yellow poplar for $2,200 in 1907, has become a museum, having been purchased by the government for $3.2 million. Over $1 million was spent to renovate the 3,500 square foot home which is now being used for international receptions and public tours. It is regarded as a monumental example of wooden buildings. McCaleb died in Los Angeles on November 7, 1953, at age 92 and is buried there. His second wife died in 1994 in Murfreesboro at age 94. Brother McCaleb once wrote that, *"Life is but a span between two eternities, the one from whence we came and the one to which we go."* He was the author of a well-known religious song which exemplifies his life, *"The Gospel Is For All."* He also wrote seven books and four poems.

The BAKER FAMILY. WILLIAM CATHEY BAKER AND VIRGINIA WOODY BAKER were faithful workers in the Shady Grove Church. All of their sons were talented singers and led congregational singing from an early age. In the 1920's this family moved to Centerville and was affiliated with the Centerville Church of Christ. W. C. Baker preached on occasion. A son, James Baker was for several years the regular songleader for the Centerville Church. Another son, Rufus Allan, became associated with the Montgomery Bible College in Montgomery, Alabama in January, 1945. He taught classes, served as Principal of the High School, and was a founder of Alabama Christian School of Religion. In time he was the Registrar of Faulkner University. He preached for various rural churches in the State of Alabama and spoke on radio broadcasts originating in Montgomery. At his death in 1994, Rex A. Turner, Chancellor of Southern Christian University wrote: "R. A. was a dedicated Christian and a humble, unassuming man who was full of peace, unity, humility, and love for all."

DOUGLAS AND MATTIE ARNOLD were wed in 1910 and faithfully attended services at the Centerville congregation until their deaths. A daughter, Mary Morton Cooper, wrote of her mother, *"Mother set aside each Saturday afternoon to bake the bread for the Lord's Supper the following day. She baked it over and over until she was satisfied that it was just right. She also taught classes until the early 1950's. Each summer the anticipated gospel meeting was an exciting time. So many*

times the visiting preacher stayed at our house. Brother Ira Douthitt stayed there each time for many years."

FUNERALS OF NOTE. The funeral service for Captain John S. Nicks was held on June 5, 1929, and the eulogy was delivered by S. P. Pittman. The funeral service for yet another John Nicks was conducted by D. Ellis Walker on August 19, 1937.

According to church records of that decade, MRS. T. A. BURKETT *"United with the Church of Christ from the Christian Church" in November, 1935. She was the preacher's wife at that time.*

E. J. BEASLEY was born in 1883 in Williamson County. He was wed to Lecie Fly in 1908. For nineteen years they lived in the Lick Creek Community of Hickman County, moving to Centerville in 1927 to operate a grocery store. For twenty-four years, from 1934 to 1958, Early Joseph Beasley was the proprietor of Beasley Furniture Store. The family lived on Columbia Avenue, where a daughter, Miss Jewell Beasley, continues to reside. The Beasley family has occupied this home for more than sixty years. E. J. Beasley served the Centerville congregation as Sunday School Superintendent, Bible teacher, Treasurer, Songleader and was an Elder for over thirty years. He also served on the City Board and the Hickman County Board of Education. Three of his daughters, Inis Puckett, Jewell Beasley, and Allene Houston have been a vital part of the Centerville church for a lifetime. A son, Horace, after serving with the Armed Forces in World War II, returned to Centerville and the furniture business. He died of cancer in 1952 at the age of 36. E. J. Beasley died in 1958 and Lecie Beasley in 1981. They are buried in the Centerville cemetery by the side of their son, Horace.

IRA DOUTHITT was Centerville's favorite revival preacher in the decades of 1920 and 1930. He returned summer after summer to preach in this community and renew friendships. Although he was a huge man weighing over 300 pounds, it was said that he could outrun any boy in town and was as agile as a jack rabbit! James Wells, Centerville Minister in the early 1940's recalls a day when he and Douthitt were seated together in an automobile. As brother Wells watched in amazement, the imposing gentleman reached down and took hold of his huge leg, placing it directly behind his neck! Upon his arrival in the community, Ira Arthur Douthitt would carefully check out the designated place of lodging to be sure the bed was sufficiently strong and firm. If not, he would pass on to the next house, quite often that of Sam and Ann Nall, who themselves were large people with strong "bedstids." Ira Douthitt was one of the first preachers among Churches of Christ to tour the Bible Lands, in 1923 and again in 1949. He often told of having lain down in the supposed tomb of Christ. During his 60th year he received gospel meeting invitations from more than 150 churches.

JAMES PATRICK THOMPSON was born in Shipps Bend and moved to Centerville in 1915. He was a school teacher, merchant, for four years the City Recorder, and was a long-time elder of the Centerville Church of Christ. He was first wed to Beatrice Prince in 1895 and after her death to Ina Long in 1907. Thompson was born shortly after the Civil War and was named for General Pat Claiborne, a friend of his father.

PATRICK THOMPSON AND A SUPPOSED ASSASSIN. President James A. Garfield was assassinated on July 2, 1881, by Charles Julius Guiteau. It was said that Guiteau was hanged for this crime on June 30, 1882. However, Patrick Thompson stated that a stranger came into this community and taught school under the name of Charles McHenry in 1893. He never revealed anything about his personal life except that he had two brothers in the North. Patrick Thompson enrolled in the school and became a close friend of the teacher. The teacher said that he knew personally that Guiteau was not hanged but that sympathizers had rescued the assassin and hanged a dummy. McHenry never explained his past life any further and died a few years later. Shortly after his death two men arrived in Centerville seeking Charles J. Guiteau, whom they said was their brother. The brothers remarked that the actual assassin of Garfield had a silver plate covering a wound in his ankle. According to Thompson, several prominent citizens, including the late Dr. C. V. Stephenson, talked of disinterring the body for an investigation, but finally decided against it.

MRS. MAUDE PARRIS did not miss a single Sunday at worship or Sunday School from 1923 to 1963. She was a Bible Class teacher for more than fifty years and often kept visiting evangelists in her home. Pauline Parris, Douglas Arnold, Willie Loveless, and Jessie Lee Burns attended services in Centerville for over seven decades. Mrs. Burns was baptized by T. B. Larimore in Indian Creek in the year 1912 and began attending in 1895, the year of her birth. She was a part of the Centerville Church family for over ninety years.

MRS. LOUDIE PEELER lived to be 101 years of age. Shortly before her death she called Paul Rogers to her bedside one evening in January, 1983. She spoke lucidly and vividly of her experiences and exclaimed, *"It has been a great life! It has been a hard life!"* As a young lady she felt duty-bound to care for her parents and did not marry until age 26. She was wed to Jess J. Peeler, a pharmacist trained in Baltimore, and together they operated a drug store on the Public Square. They purchased the second automobile ever owned in this city. Even as a young girl she was deeply religious, reading the Bible constantly, and she never recalled a day in her life but that she prayed several times. Her parents were not members of the Church of Christ, and she was taught secretly by an older sister, Ann Nall. As a teenager she was baptized under the old Duck River Bridge by the well-known evangelist R. P. Meeks. She went down into

the water wearing a bright new white dress and came up a muddy brown! She was active in the teaching of teenage girls and ladies and stood like a stonewall for the gospel until her death at age 101.

SERVING IN THE TENNESSEE STATE LEGISLATURE from the Centerville congregation since the turn of the Century have been Robert Brown, Wilma Brown, Harry H. Blackwell, James R. Brown, Edward Dotson, and Tom Lambert.

MRS. NOAH CHESSOR, widely referred to as "Mama Chessor," grew up on Cane Creek in Hickman County. At age 22 she married Noah Chessor. They lived on Sulphur Creek, rearing four daughters and two sons, worshipping at the Lower Sulphur Church of Christ. On some Sundays it was necessary for her to lead the singing from her seat near the front of the auditorium. Upon the death of her husband in 1944, Mattie Chessor moved to Centerville where she was a source of rich encouragement to fellow Christians until her death at age 93. Seldom did a visitor enter the church house without speaking to this friendly and enthusiastic Christian lady. She had a continual "open house" and never knew for sure how many people were coming for lunch. She loved to sing and whistle and stayed happy *"as a pig in the sunshine"* even through the darkest experiences of life. Her favorite saying was, *"This too shall pass."* Her children and grandchildren have been a source of constant blessing to the Centerville Church of Christ for some fifty years.

COMMANDER LEVIN JAMES WALLACE was born on the eastern shores of Maryland and in early life joined the Navy. He attained the rank of Commander USN. His voyages carried him to China and Japan and at the Battle of Manila Bay his ship was directly behind the Flagship of Admiral Dewey. He was married in 1904 to Elise Sandels Nunnelly, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Nunnelly, of Vernon. Commander Wallace returned to Centerville to live upon retirement from the Navy and often told exciting stories of his life on the open sea. He was a member of the School Board and a good student of scripture. He taught an adult Bible class and sometimes spoke at the worship service of the Centerville Church of Christ.

HARTIE LEE COBLE was an inspiration to all who knew him. He was born in 1907 and reared in the Brushy community of Hickman County. In 1928 he was wed to Georgia Bessie Garner and to this union five children were born. At age 24 Hartie Lee was paralyzed from the waist down after a swimming accident. At age 26 he was elected County Registrar of Deeds and served in this office for thirty-two years. He taught himself to type and became an expert on legal matters even though he had but a sixth grade education. He was a noted fisherman and could often be found at Kentucky Lake. For many years he served as a deacon of the Centerville Church of Christ and in 1968 donated some 150 acres

of land just outside the city limits for a Christian camp. The facility is known as Camp Meribah and in the past quarter of a century has served an estimated 100,000 young people. It is one of the most popular Retreat Centers for Churches of Christ anywhere in the southern United States. Hartie Lee Coble died in May of 1978. His family has also been a blessing to the cause of Christ in this community and elsewhere.

DOCTORS AND MORE DOCTORS! Since 1870 the following physicians and dentists have been part of the Centerville Church of Christ: Dr. Andrew Norris, Dr. J. C. Ward, Dr. J. L. Ward, Dr. J. W. Thompson, Dr. W. D. Cagle, Dr. T. J. Derryberry, Dr. C. V. Stephenson, Dr. Mulliniks, Dr. Ogle Jones, Dr. Parker Elrod, Dr. Bertie L. Holladay, Dr. James Humphreys, Dr. Lloyd Jones, Dr. Doug Wilburn, Dr. Rad Stewart, Dr. Bob Etheridge, Dr. James Blackwell, Dr. Bobby Morrison, Dr. Barry Pendergrass.

JIM D. BATES served the Centerville Church of Christ as an elder for forty years, having been appointed on October 17, 1948. In those years he saw the attendance grow from 150 to 650 persons. He witnessed the remodeling of the old auditorium, the construction of the former educational building on College Street and the building of a new church plant on the Nashville Highway. He was a much-loved Bible teacher, counselor, example, and a man of unusual vision and faith. He was reared in the Sulphur community and began attending the Centerville congregation in 1939. He was a master automobile mechanic and lost practically everything during the depression. At a dinner of church officers on January 23, 1986, he remarked, *"I wish you could appreciate as I do the Centerville Church. I think you have a rich heritage."* He recalled drives to have as many 50 persons in Sunday School and monthly electric bills that did not exceed $1.35. After retirement he delighted in driving his 1924 Model T Roadster. Both he and the vehicle were featured in a Walt Disney Movie filmed in Franklin, Tennessee and entitled *"Love Leads the Way."* The movie was seen across America on the Disney Channel. Brother Bates' sidekick on that excursion into Movieland was Paul Horner, also a member of the congregation. The event was of special interest because it was in a Model T Roadster that he had courted his wife, Lillian, many years before. The Bates family, including his wife, children, and grandchildren have been of inestimable worth to the Centerville Church. One son, Bobby, has served as an elder for twenty-six years, since 1969.

DR. IRA NORTH was likely the most popular preacher among Churches of Christ in the mid-twentieth century. He served as Minister of the largest congregation in the brotherhood, Madison, Tennessee. He had an unusual power over an audience, able to make you laugh and make you cry in the same sermon. The best-attended meeting the Centerville church had ever known up to that time was held with Ira North in

1959. Fifteen persons responded to Heaven's invitation, and the congregation was left with a spirit of hope and optimism that lingered long after the final amen. Record crowds attended Sunday School and the final Sunday night. On several other occasions Ira North spoke at Centerville and Camp Meribah. Hidden away in his heart was a very special place for the Centerville congregation.

WILLARD COLLINS, PRINCE OF PREACHERS among Churches of Christ in the 20th Century, held two meetings in Centerville and spoke on numerous other occasions as well. His huge voice filled the house throughout and revival followed in his wake. It was Willard Collins in the fall of 1956 who recommended to the elders that the next Centerville preacher be a twenty-two-year-old Lipscomb graduate who was presently an Associate Minister at the Church Street congregation in Lewisburg, Tennessee. Paul Rogers and Willard Collins worked together in a gospel meeting that fall of 1956 in Lewisburg. Church Street was at the time one of the largest Churches of Christ in the world, with an attendance of 700. During that meeting, Brother Collins asked the young preacher if he would be interested in moving to Centerville. His reply was in the negative, as he was very happy in Lewisburg and had reason to believe that he might someday be their regular Pulpit Minister. However, the recommendation was made and several days later the voice of a certain Dr. Parker Elrod was calling to inquire as to the possibility of a trial sermon. That sermon took place on October 31, 1956, and the rest is history.

JOHN DALTON BREECE AND HIS WIFE, BESSIE LOU, members of the Centerville church, began operating a Pie Wagon on the Square in 1939 with plate lunches, sandwiches, chili, and homemade pies. Little did they imagine that three generations of the Breece family would operate one of Middle Tennessee's most popular restaurants, Breece's Cafe. Edward and Lucille Breece, also members of the local church, assumed operation of the restaurant in 1946. The original Dr. Pepper clock, installed in 1947, is still on the wall. The restaurant is operated today by Linda Breece Bates and her husband, Jerry Bates. In July of 1984 Governors from six states, along with famed entertainer Minnie Pearl, had lunch at Breece's Cafe.

CENTERVILLE MAN OF THE YEAR. Since 1963, the Centerville Board of Aldermen has designated a Man of the Year for the City. Of those receiving the Award, the following at the time of their selection were members of the Centerville church: *Bill Kittrell, William F. Lawson, Danny Goodpasture, Clarence Bates, Lonnie Gilliam, Paul Rogers, Edd Lancaster, W. E. McDonald, Bill Steber, Edward Dotson, Dr. Parker Elrod, Edward Loveless, Wayne Qualls, Dr. B. L. Holladay, Jerry Dixon and Joe Harper.*

THE TENNESSEE ORPHAN'S HOME. Serving on the Board of the Home in Spring Hill have been the following members of the Centerville Church of Christ: Dr. C. V. Stephenson, James R. Brown, Bill McDonald, Wayne Qualls, and Elton Johnson.

MRS. LACY ELROD was born in 1892 and died in 1982. As an infant she had been carried across the West in a covered wagon and as a young lady she returned to the East in a stagecoach. She was the first female to be admitted to Vanderbilt Law School. Her husband, Dr. Lacy Elrod, was a Professor at David Lipscomb College, President of Georgia Christian School, Superintendent of Jordonia Reformatory, and was a full-time elder at the Central Church of Christ in Nashville. Upon her husband's death, Lucy Elrod made her home in Centerville where she served as a teacher of both ladies and teenage girls. She was an avid student of scripture who for more than twenty-five years made it her practice to read the Bible an hour each day.

THE GOODMAN FAMILY. For almost 100 years there was a business on the Centerville Public Square called "Goodman's." Included was the F. P. Goodman Barber Shop and Jewelry Shop, the G. G. Goodman Barber Shop, and Goodman's Cleaners. F. P. Goodman devised a means of pumping water into his business. G. G. Goodman built the first homemade air-conditioning system in the town. Guy Jones Goodman installed the first elevator in the city. The Goodman family lived in an apartment overlooking the Square and actively participated in the life of the Centerville congregation.

HARRY "BUCK" BUCKENHIZER moved to Centerville in 1985 at age 90 and immediately made himself right at home. The people loved him and he loved the people. He arose each morning, put on a white shirt, tie and coat, and was ready to go somewhere and do something. Through the efforts of Nellie Cooper and her husband, he had been led to the Lord in 1978 in Taylor, Michigan. As a young man, he played football for Michigan State University and was a successful Real Estate Agent. He continued buying and selling property until age 90. While yet young, he became addicted to alcohol and was practically destroyed by the habit. However, he joined Alcoholics Anonymous and from the first meeting never took another drink. That continued for more than fifty years, and he openly spoke to others locked in that struggle of his determination and resolve.

THE LOVELESS FAMILY. James Newton Loveless and his wife, Jeanettie, raised a large family of eight children. No fewer than 53 of their direct descendants are members of the Church of Christ, and if the mates are added, that number swells to 88 members. No fewer than 29 of those descendants, and if mates are added, 47 have been members of the Centerville Church of Christ during the ministry of Paul Rogers. They

stand as living testimony to the immense possibility for good residing in one man's family.

JAMES ROBERT BROWN was born in 1903 at Pinewood, educated in the local school system and graduating from the YMCA School of Law in June, 1931. He was wed that same year to his childhood sweetheart, Vera Redden. Both he and Vera were baptized in the Piney River on the same day. He served as City Recorder in Centerville, was a member of the Tennessee House of Representatives and the State Senate, and was Chairman of the Tennessee Department of Employment Security Board of Review. For twelve years he served faithfully as an elder of the Centerville Church of Christ, as well as a member of the Board at Tennessee Orphan's Home.

BOYD WORLEY was baptized in 1914 at Antioch and served 34 years as an elder of that congregation. He was for more than half a century a public teacher of the Bible, ten of those years teaching the Men's Class at Centerville. Serving with the United States Infantry during World War I, he fought night and day in the muddy, bloody trenches of France. His ability to quote entire chapters of the Bible thrilled audiences. Retiring as a rural mail carrier, Boyd and Mae Worley moved to Centerville and were a vital part of the local congregation there. Their daughter, Audrey Cooper, lived and worked in Detroit for 11 years. She recalls that her father made it a practice every day to write her either a card or a letter.

RAY SEMORE served 21 months with the United States Navy in World War II, fighting in the Pacific Theatre of Operations. He was for two continuous months engaged in the awful struggle at Okinawa. He was a gunner on a naval ship and on one occasion felled a Japanese Kamakazi plane just before it collided with the vessel. He walked across the ruins of Hiroshima shortly after the atomic blast in that city, not fearing the dangers of radiation. For fifty years he was wed to Arlene Mathis Semore and worked as an auto mechanic. On September 6, 1960, at age 36 he obeyed the gospel of Christ and zealously served many years as a Deacon. Shortly before his death in June, 1994, he assured his Minister, Paul Rogers, that *"I am ready to go today."* His final request came just moments prior to death as he whispered, *"Let's have a word of prayer."*

DR. PARKER DAVID ELROD. For thirty-two years, 1961-1993, he served as an energetic, visionary elder of the Centerville Church of Christ. He was highly devoted to evangelism, Christian education and the restoration of New Testament Christianity. He died in Highland, Illinois, where he and two other elders, Bill Davis and Bobby Bates, had gone for a weekend missionary survey tour. The 1994 Elder's Workshop at David Lipscomb University was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Elrod. An article

written by Paul Rogers was distributed at the Workshop and printed in the *Hickman County Times.* It is included below:

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

Parker David Elrod (1919-1993) was a legend in his own time, a man for all seasons and situations. His footprints were large and imposing, everywhere visible...at our modern Hickman County Hospital and Clinic (there was only a small office with a six-bed hospital at his coming in 1952)...at Hickman County High School, where he served four decades as team physician and where a large physical training center was built in his honor...at Tulipwood Apartments...at Camp Meribah...and at the Centerville Church of Christ, where he served as an elder since 1961.

He was reared in Nashville, Smyrna and Donelson, the son of Dr. Lacy Elrod, a brilliant educator and minister. His mother, Lucy Jones Elrod, was also a strong Christian leader and was the first female student to be accepted for admission to Vanderbilt School of Law. The Elrod family devoted itself to Christian service at David Lipscomb College, Dasher Bible College, Central Church of Christ, and other locations. They lived not in "the lap of luxury", but in "the hollow of God's hand!"

As a youth, Parker Elrod graduated from Donelson High School at age 16. He attended David Lipscomb College, Vanderbilt University and Vanderbilt Medical School. During World War II, he was stationed in Asheville, N. C., where he served as Assistant Chief of Surgery at a 2,000-bed hospital. Upon his return to Nashville at the close of the war, he was Chief of Surgery at Thayer Hospital (now known as Veteran's Hospital).

In 1952 at age 32, Parker and Sammye Elrod, with their growing family, moved to Centerville to enter a practice of medicine with his uncle, Dr. Ogle Jones. A young surgeon with his training and talent would likely have been welcomed in any community in America but, thankfully, he chose Centerville. He often said it was because this was "a good environment in which to rear children"! He never regretted that decision.

A man for all seasons, Parker earned four different letters in college sports, played on the 1938 Vanderbilt football team, and reached the finals in the Norfolk, Virginia City Tennis Tournament. As a surgeon he was affiliated with the highest order, a member of the American Board of Surgery. Articles from his pen appeared in various national medical journals

and for years he taught at Vanderbilt Medical School one day each week. He was elected by his peers as Vice-President of the Tennessee Medical Association. An official of that particular organization once told me that he was regarded as "one of the best surgeons in the state." At one time some years ago, only one surgeon in the United States had performed more lung surgeries than he. Several weeks ago, in a private conversation, he estimated that he had performed a total of 15,000 surgeries.

A man for all seasons. Dr. Elrod maintained a keen interest in everything from competitive sports (almost never missing a Vanderbilt home game in forty years) to computer science. He memorized the Morse Code and became a licensed ham radio operator. He brought together into his files one of the most complete family genealogical records to be found anywhere, having in his computer the names of more than 42,000 Elrod relatives stretching back to the 1600's. He was a master story-teller, with a vivid recall of practically everything he had witnessed. His tales were legendary and unforgettable...how he chased runaway boys through the streets and alleys of Nashville when his father was Superintendent of Jordonia Reform School...how, as a child of five, he interrupted his father's sermon at Smyrna to inform him that the car had a flat tire...-how he drove an automobile across the Cumberland River...how he once delivered a baby at a house far back in the woods, and holding the baby over a pot-bellied stove, dropped it, only to catch it in mid-air before any damage could be done...how he traveled from Nashville to Linden, 90 miles, in 60 minutes to perform a life-saving operation...how as a young doctor in Asheville he treated a young up-and-coming evangelist named Billy Graham. And there was more, much more.

For 50 years, Dr. Parker Elrod was married to Sammye Malone Elrod, an accomplished artist, horticulturist and homemaker. On the morning of his death, she insisted on teaching her Ladies Bible Class, an act she felt was in keeping with Dr. Elrod's life goal. He once said to me that he was wed to "a perfect woman."

The Elrod children have all excelled in their chosen fields and were a source of great pride and thanksgiving to their father. Speaking of them on one occasion he said, "Paul, my cup runneth over."

A man for all seasons, Parker Elrod was a lifelong servant of God, an elder, a part-time preacher, a Bible teacher, an

enthusiastic supporter of missions (his death occurred while on a mission trip with other elders). He was a diligent student of scripture, having recently made an intensive study of both Genesis and Leviticus. When I visited him at Baptist's coronary care unit a day or two following his heart attack several years ago, I found him propped up in bed reading his Bible. With all of his learning and accomplishments, he never lost his child-like faith in the Bible as God's word. The last entry he made into his computer was a passage of scripture, Philippians 4:6,7.

In the fall of 1956, I was a 22-year-old Youth Minister, fresh out of college, living in Lewisburg. On a never-to-be-forgotten October day, I answered the phone and heard someone say, "I'm Dr. Elrod, in Centerville, and we are wondering if you would be interested in trying out to become our preacher?" Without any doubt, from that day until this, no preacher ever had a truer friend or more faithful co-worker than I did in Parker David Elrod.

MALINDA LUCILLE MULLINIKS HUDDLESTON died in April, 1989 at the age of 95. Her family had moved to Centerville in 1910 and she attended Fairview Academy. In 1915 she was married to Nixon Huddleston, a grocer, County Court Clerk, and for a time the President of Security Bank and Trust. Following his death in 1942, Mrs. Lucille was elected to the position of County Court Clerk. The family built and occupied two of the most imposing homes in the county, one in Shipps Bend and the other on Columbia Avenue. Moving away in 1950, Mrs. Huddleston owned and operated for a time the Graystone Hotel in Dickson, then a 69-room Inn in Sarasota, Florida. But the great love of her life was Centerville, and it was back home she returned for her last years. Her grandfather had been a pioneer gospel preacher, and she regarded herself a member of the Centerville Church of Christ from 1910 to 1989. On her deathbed, barely able to speak or breathe, she listened as her Minister, Paul Rogers, quoted the words of Romans 8:28. He then added, *"Miss Lucille, it will all work out for good."* To which she faintly smiled and answered in a confident whisper, *"I know it."*

SLAYDEN LEATHERS departed this life in April of 1983. As a child growing up in Lyles, he was frail and often ill, stricken with typhoid fever and frequent asthma attacks. In middle-age he struggled with major cancer, but managed to survive to age 73. As a youth it was the great desire of his life to be a gospel preacher. At age 21 he enrolled in David Lipscomb High School in Nashville to study the Bible and receive training. He worked his way through by mopping floors and cleaning buildings. Upon his return to Hickman County he preached in several rural churches, sometimes walking several miles to meet an appointment. It was at one of these

preaching services that he met his wife, Lillian Worley, at the old Lawson Schoolhouse. For thirty years he served the Centerville church as its Custodian, and it was not uncommon to find him resting a moment in the furnace room with an open Bible in his hand. His wife, three daughters, and grandchildren have all been a faithful part of the Centerville congregation.

JAMES DEWITT TALMADGE ARNOLD was named for two well-known preachers. For many years he was the oldest member of the Centerville congregation. At age 94 he tended his own garden and drove his automobile to the church service. He and his wife were the oldest married couple in the congregation, 68 years until his death at age 95. The great-great-grandfather of Dee Arnold came over the mountains from North Carolina to settle in Hickman County when it was yet a wilderness populated by Indians and wild animals. Dee lived the last 60 years of his life in Centerville in the same house on the same street, one that was named for his family. He was baptized late in life's day, in his mid-60s, but was granted an additional 30 years of service to the Lord. Arnold Street was named for his mother.

ELIZABETH SESLER died in 1978 at age 78. She was the long-time nurse for Dr. Edwards and lived for 50 years on the Public Square. For 70 years she attended the Centerville Church of Christ, serving as a teacher, Church Librarian, and a supporter of every good work. As she lay dying, she expressed a wish that the Church Library had more books designed for children to read. Her every thought, it seemed, was for others.

CAFES AND MORE CAFES. ANNIE LOVELESS was a long-time member of the Centerville Church of Christ. With her husband Lon, she owned and operated some of the most popular restaurants in Middle Tennessee....including the famed Loveless Cafe, Beacon Light, Fairfield Cafe, and Blue Front Cafe. There seemed to be a general consensus of opinion that no one could make biscuits (made with buttermilk and pure lard) or fry ham to compare with Annie Loveless! Her famous peach and blackberry preserves consisted of a one gallon can of fruit and five pounds of sugar boiled slowly until they reached the right consistency for serving.

FONDLY ELKINS lived 90 years, dying in February of 1991. He was born in the Blue Water community of Hickman County and as a young man joined the Marine Corps, traveling around the world and even meeting Aviator Charles Lindbergh. Being an exceptional athlete, he advanced to the Class A Kitty League in the Carolinas. He married Johnnie Hedge in 1930 at age 30. The marriage continued for 60 years, and a son, Delbert, grew to maturity and became a preacher of the gospel of Christ. After his retirement in Detroit, Michigan brother Elkins returned to Centerville in 1964. He served the church as a deacon, a teacher, Director of the Outreach Ministry, and visited 2,920 persons from 1972 to 1989. He

and his wife made it a practice to encourage the sick, the sad, the dying, and the crying. The last words he spoke to his wife were especially prophetic, *"I'll see you tomorrow!"*

BECKY MCCORD had many friends and no enemies. She lived cheerfully, loved unsparingly and chose to be an encourager. Across the years she took flowers to the hospital, maintained the record of attendance, served as Church Librarian and mailed Bible Correspondence Courses around the world. While doing all this she still managed to read through the Bible no fewer than thirty times.

THOMAS MOBLEY came from a pioneer family that entered Hickman County prior to 1840. His great-grandfather served on the County Court during the Civil War. Brother Mobley was a Duck River farmer in the Anderson's Bend community and walked many a mile behind his mule. For fifty-one years he was married to Kathryn Scott Mobley and to their union were born seven children, three of whom have been part of the Centerville Church. He was a teacher, a deacon, a man devoted to faith, farming, and family. He was never quite so happy as when his children or grandchildren passed through the door to his home. It was fitting that his final words to his wife should have been, *"I love you."* And to one of the children, *"Take care of your mother."*

AUBREY BURNS lived in Tulipwood from its opening in 1981 until his death in 1994 at age 89. He attended every service of the church, including the Sunday morning worship period on the day of his death. In 1994 the congregation was financing a major expansion with a $1,100,000 Bond Sale. He took pride in the fact that he had purchased the final church bonds which put the Drive over the top. Aubrey loved the word of God and in the last portion of his life read through the Bible five times in a single year. He was especially glad that his son, James, had devoted his life to being a Minister of the gospel.

THE WRIGHT FAMILY. The Wrights entered Hickman County in 1806 and for several generations lived on the same farm in Lowe's Bend. On the same afternoon in the early 1940's, Louise, Kathleen, Pauline Wright and their mother were all immersed into Christ under the Lowes Bend bridge at Duck River. The family moved to Centerville and five of the children became active in the congregation, Louise, Pauline, Kathleen, Kelley, and Jim Allen.

JAMES E. "PETE" FERGUSON was a volunteer in every conceivable way. He gave his time to the Civil Air Patrol, the Rescue Squad, the local hospital, and a state-wide Ham Radio Network. His technical background made possible the beginning of the church radio broadcast, as well as the Tape Ministry which now reaches into thousands of homes nationwide. He married Morell Temple when she was but sixteen years of age. The

marriage continued until his death 55 years later, with three daughters, all of whom have been a part of the Centerville church.

PAUL PUCKETT was born near Shady Grove into a pioneer family that has been in the county over 150 years. Both of his parents were Christians, worshipping at the old Leatherwood church. He was baptized as a child near Gordon's Ferry in Duck River. For sixty years he was an active worker in the Centerville church and died on his 60th Wedding Anniversary in April, 1994. He was married to Inis Beasley, a long-time school teacher and Sunday School teacher, and was associated with Beasley Furniture Store for many years.

WESLEY WEATHERSPOON died in 1995 at age 85. He had been married to Mary Lee Wherry since 1931, with the ceremony performed as they were seated in a Model A Ford. Wesley became a Christian in 1956 and was appointed a deacon in 1961. He raised faithful children and was active in the life and work of this church.

CLYDE AND WILLIE LOVELESS were a modern-day "Aquilla and Priscilla." It is no accident that the preachers of this church across the past 50 years counted among their choice friends and supporters, Clyde and Willie. She was a triplet, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Webb, members of the Centerville congregation. She herself became a Christian in 1916 and continued faithful until her death in 1992 at age 91. In 1930 she was wed to Clyde Brown Loveless and at age 40 became the mother of a son, Tom Brown Loveless. Clyde passed into eternity on March 11, 1970. He was a fireman, a fisherman, a hunter, and a supporter of every good work. For years he was Paul Rogers' right-hand man in the annual county-wide Vacation Bible Schools. Clyde searched the county over to find sufficient buses, drivers, and students.

EVERETT TOTTY was born in 1902 in Totty's Bend but moved to Centerville in 1920 with his parents. In 1929 he was wed to Thelma Totty. For 66 years he was a member of the Centerville Church of Christ and was an influence for good continually. He poured himself into his work as a painter and at age 80 was still on the job. He painted the old Shipps Bend Bridge, the tall steeple of the church building, and many of the homes in Hickman County. Buddy and Thelma Totty moved in with his parents on East Ward Street, purchasing the home after their death. Thelma has continued at this same residence for more than 63 years. Buddy and Thelma were the parents of two fine sons. She has attended services at the Centerville congregation since 1926 and continues to be active in the work. For 48 years and 3 months, Thelma taught pre-school Bible classes, both Sunday and Wednesday. She worked in the benevolent center of the church and was the first Day School teacher.

NATHAN GEORGE entered Hickman County as a slave of Hezekiah George and lived on Swan Creek. Following the War Between the States,

Nathan purchased 200 acres of land in the Fort Cooper community and soon a settlement of former slaves had begun. They worked hard to make this a growing and prosperous community. Nathan gave to the little band of Christians a plot of ground on which was built a one-room log building for worship. It was located at the mouth of Fort Cooper Hollow and the present building sits on that same plot of ground. The congregation was known as George's Chapel Church of Christ and later changed its name to Fort Cooper Church of Christ. In November, 1899, land was deeded to "The Christian Church, Colored, Centerville, on Columbia Avenue." The congregation there continues to be an active band of disciples.

ROBERT L. WHITESIDE, COLLEGE PRESIDENT, was born in Hickman County in December, 1869. He attended school three to four months each year, with the exception of two teenage years. As a young man he enrolled in the West Tennessee Christian College in Henderson and then was a student in the first class at the Nashville Bible School (now David Lipscomb University). In 1908 he was preaching for the College Church in Abilene, Texas, and serving as an Instructor of Bible at Childers Classical Institute (now Abilene Christian University). He was selected to become President of the School for two years, during which time he inaugurated what is today the large Abilene Christian University Lectureship. He was the author of Bible School Literature for the *Gospel Advocate* and penned a popular Commentary on Romans.

PAULINE PARRIS was for her entire life, 77 years, part and parcel of the Centerville Church of Christ. Although employed several years in Nashville with the Veteran's Administration, she made it her practice to return to Centerville for the weekend. She was for 50 years a Bible teacher, a Director of our Correspondence Course, Church Librarian, and she kept at her side a list of sick and elderly persons to check on each day. At her passing she left a $10,538 bequest to the Centerville Church of Christ in January, 1990.

HOWARD GILLIAM was born near Manchester, Tennessee, but left home at age 17 to work in bridge construction. At age 29, while building a bridge in the Brushy community of Hickman County, he met and married Lula Mae Loveless, daughter of a store keeper. They were wed in the parking lot of the Twomey Church seated in an A-Model automobile. Howard became a prominent bridge builder, constructing over 25 bridges in Hickman County, including the Council's Bend Bridge which spans Duck River. At age 60 he was baptized and became a deacon of the Centerville Church in 1969, a position he held for 24 years. He was a major figure in the development of Camp Meribah and in various improvement projects at the church building. His son, Lonnie, also owns a construction firm and is a long-time deacon and Bible teacher of the

congregation. He built the $1,100,000 addition which was completed in 1994.

DOUGLAS ARNOLD, JR. attended the Centerville Church of Christ 73 years and was a member for 63 of those years. The Arnold family operated a hardware store on the Public Square and built a large two-story home at the end of Huddleston Street. Douglas once remarked that they never locked the door to their house through all the years. There was no fear of an intruder or thief on the Centerville streets!

J. L. WORLEY was baptized as a young man at the Antioch Church. He was one of 12 children, all of whom were active in the Lord's Church. Three of the boys became elders and two of the daughters were wed to elders. Loyal Worley was made an elder of the Centerville Church of Christ on October 17, 1948 and continued faithful until his death in January, 1970, at age 67. He had begun attending services in Centerville in 1926 and with his wife became a vital part of the work. Brother Worley was a man of vision and played a key role in the expansion program of 1966. He saw the attendance of the church increase from 150 to 550. He was a respected merchant, the Manager of Young's Department Store, and a man of great spirituality. His wife, Oma, now in her 90th year, continues to live at her home on East Ward Street.

BOB O'GUIN obeyed the gospel in mid-life and became an active worker in the Centerville Church. He was raised in the Sulphur community and moved to Centerville in 1945. He was wed in 1933 to Louise Pinkerton, and their marriage continued until his death 54 years later. During World War II he was Crew Chief on a C47 Airplane and was involved in the invasion of D-Day. He taught Bible classes, folded church bulletins for mailout, and assisted in every way possible. He was a Genesco employee, a barber, a soldier, and a Christian.

W. L. DOWNEY moved to Centerville in 1914 from Pleasantville, having been elected to the post of County Court Clerk (serving 8 years), and was later employed as Cashier at Security Bank and Trust, remaining there 29 years and retiring in his 70's. He brought with him nine children and six wagon teams filled with belongings. The family rented a house for $10 a month and in 1915 purchased a two-story home on Columbia Avenue for $950. A son, Paul Downey, continues to live in that home in 1995. Brother Downey served the congregation for forty years as an Elder and Treasurer. He also led singing and presided on occasion when there was no preacher present. He was said to be the last to leave the building, closing the church doors. He was the father of eleven children, ten by his first wife and one by his second. He passed away on August 18, 1954.

MR. AND MRS. REEVES PACE were among the earliest members of the Centerville congregation in the 1870's. He was born in 1830 and

died in 1900. His wife was the former Sarah Lucrecia Griner (the name was later spelled Grinder). They were wed in 1853 and Sarah died in 1917. Her grandfather operated the famous Griner's Inn on Natchez Trace near Hohenwald where the legendary explorer, Meriwether Lewis, took his own life. The Griner family then moved to Hickman County and lived in Shipps Bend on the property now occupied by the Paul Rogers family. The Paces were the great-grandparents of David Talley, a deacon of the Centerville church.

JAMES BAKER, from strong Christian stock that produced numerous preachers, missionaries and Christian College educators, was our song leader for quite some years and operated a 5 & 10 Store downtown. In 1970 he read the New Testament through four times.

DR. T. J. DERRYBERRY opened Derryberry Drug Store on the north side of the Public Square early in the 20th Century. He dealt in such things as Sloan's Linement, Syrup of Pepsin, Calomel, Caster Oil, and Asafodita. In 1991 he moved to Columbia where he established another landmark Pharmacy. His son Jim, along with Hub Hoover, operated a new drugstore in the same building. Mrs. Jim Derryberry named the store "The Liberty Pharmacy" in honor of the soldiers who had fought in World War I. For decades Liberty Pharmacy had a long soda fountain down the left side which was the popular gathering place in the city. About 1926 Mr. and Mrs. Charles Burns purchased the business and operated it until 1950. Later, another member of the Centerville congregation, Bill Lawson was a co-owner of the business.

IDA TWOMEY died in September, 1972, at age 94. She was at that time the oldest member of the congregation. Her full name was Ida Luradene Chrisy Crysie Josephine Harris Twomey. Her last spoken words to Paul Rogers were these three, *"Pray for me."*

MR. AND MRS. W. P. GRINER lived in a log cabin in Shipps Bend just below the trestle. He served in the Confederate Army. Their son Dan became a major league baseball player, pitching for the St. Louis Cardinals and other teams for approximately ten years.

IVAN ARNOLD was a barber by trade and taught the Men's Bible Class at the Centerville church. In later years, he moved to Nashville and barbered in the famous old Arcade.

ED JOHNSON was a bachelor who for many years was Custodian at Hickman County High School. He even lived in the school building and served as a trusted watchman. During the first half of the twentieth century, he was a tireless worker in the Centerville congregation. He often stated that there were numerous Sundays across the years when he was the only man present to teach the class, serve at the table, lead the prayer, and begin the songs.

DR. C. V. STEPHENSON maintained an office above Goodman's Barber Shop on the public square. He raised an intelligent, accomplished family and lived in the beautiful home on East Swan Street which is now occupied by the John Plemmons family. He served on the Board of the Tennessee Orphan's Home at Spring Hill and was a faithful elder of the congregation for many years. He delivered many babies in Hickman County, including one of our deacons, Delbert Roder. The cost was $25!

JOHN NICKS, II was said to wear practically every Sunday a blue suit with a white shirt. He had white hair and a long white beard. Sunday after Sunday he rang the church bell, calling the people to worship prior to the beginning of services. The rope hung down from the steeple and was a constant temptation to the young people who passed by. They frequently yielded to the temptation and another peal of the bell reverberated through the town.

D. ELLIS WALKER was the first located preacher to work with the Centerville congregation, assuming that post on the first Sunday in 1931. His topic on that morning was, *"I Am Ready To Preach The Gospel."* Born in McMinnville, Tennessee in 1907, he began preaching in 1924. He frequently told of being singled out for "public recognition" by the illustrious T. B. Larimore when he was but a child. Seated on the front row, misbehaving, he and a companion were told by brother Larimore, *"You boys be quiet!"* He was recommended for the Centerville pulpit by H. Leo Boles. He later served congregations in such places as Montgomery, Alabama; Sparta, Tennessee; Jacksonville, Florida; Lewisburg, Tennessee; Dickson, Tennessee; and Cullman, Alabama. His wife, the former Laura Eloise Vaughan, preceded him in death. The last words she spoke to him were, *"I'll see you in the morning."* Those words became the watchword of his life. He once told Paul Rogers that he had never owned a plot of ground except his burial plot. He was a minister of the gospel of Christ pure and simple. Frequently through six decades he spoke in the Centerville pulpit and continually encouraged the church in its progress.

WALLIS BEASLEY preached for the Centerville congregation beginning on October 2, 1938 and continuing three years. In 1942, he was the evangelist for the Radnor Church in Nashville. In time he became a Professor at George Peabody College and the Executive Vice-President of Washington State University. He taught on that campus for thirty-four years and, upon his retirement, had the Coliseum named in his honor. His retirement years have been spent in Ft. Ludlow, Washington.

T. A. BURKETT worked with the Centerville congregation as its Minister from November, 1935 to May, 1937. It is thought that he moved to the area of Rockwood, Tennessee.

LEROY THOMPSON also preached for the Centerville Church of Christ in the mid-1930's, succeeding D. Ellis Walker.

JAMES E. WELLS preached in Centerville during the war years of 1943-44. He was born at Campbell Station, Tennessee in 1917 and baptized by Cecil Douthitt. He was wed to Ronelle Caldwell and attended Freed-Hardeman College. He began preaching in 1939, serving in such localities as Sheffield, Alabama; Paris, Tennessee; and Bowling Green, Kentucky. He conducted well over thirty gospel meetings in Hickman County. He writes of his years as Minister of the Centerville congregation: *"My association with the Centerville Church of Christ dates back to December 1941. I had an appointment to preach on that date. When we awoke and looked out, we were greeted by at least a 6 inch snow; but we decided we were going to Centerville anyway. Due to the snow they were not expecting us and asked, 'Who are you?', but at least we were there. Though very cold outside, there was warmth and worship on the inside. That day we ate dinner with the Beasley family, and that was the beginning of a friendship with the Beasley family and especially Brother E. J., who was the song leader, an elder, and who helped us in so many ways. Brother Thompson and Downey served with Brother Beasley as Elders of the church. They invited me to preach on a regular basis, but the Sunday before we had promised to move to Rives, Tennessee and preach there and I had to keep my promise. They called me again the following December and invited me to preach for them. This time I was in a position to accept. The events of war left few in the city, but we were there in February of 1943 to preach for the church. We began a work with some of the best people in the world. I remember distinctly the following who showed great interest in the church and were so helpful to me. I mention Sister Maude Parris and daughter, Pauline, The Loyal Worleys, The Bates, The Downeys, The Beasley's, The Thompsons, The Nalls, The Arnolds, The Stephensons, The Adairs and The Barbers, and I must mention Brother Fad Henley, who was a very unusual character and a faithful Christian. He attended my meetings with regularity, and also I must mention Brother James E. Chessor, a great man in the community and the church. He gave me great encouragement as he visited the meetings I held in Hickman County. While preaching for the church in Centerville, on Sunday afternoons, I preached for the following congregations: Shady Grove, Shipps Bend, Wrigley, Little Rock, Lyles, Tatum, Defeated Creek, Flat Rock, Springer Ridge, Fairview, Slippery Creek, Nunnelly, Coble, Bells Branch and Mill Creek. In the short two years we were there I held many meetings. My records show that in 1943 I held seven meetings with 32 baptisms and three restorations. The brethren supported me*

with $1,949.80. A summary of 1944 shows seven meetings, 46 baptisms, 12 restorations. The number of sermons preached were 230, receipts for the year amounted to $2,842.90. The Centerville Church was made up of wonderful, faithful people, however the great war brought on a large shifting of population which affected the church greatly. Those who were not in the army went to war works across the country. I do remember that one Sunday there were 100 in Sunday School and everyone was excited at that number. Though I have no records, there must have been between 90 and 100 in attendance on Sunday. As I recall the city held up pretty well. Around the Square there have not been many changes until this day. On Saturday evenings, there was a county reunion around the square. Almost everyone was there, good, friendly people. They were talking, laughing, and visiting. The ending of the war brought a swelling of the population of the county and, of course, the church. In the fall of 1944 Brother B. B. James moved to Centerville. Soon the building was filled with those returning from war and war works. It was a period of growth on every hand. I remember when the young preacher, Paul Rogers, became your preacher. Paul has made a record–being with the church now for 40 years. The Centerville Church is a great church, with a new building, great crowds, and known throughout the country. Though it has been fifty-one years since I was your preacher I still have many warm friends there. God bless each of you."

BUFORD B. JAMES was Minister of the Centerville Church from 1943-1950. Born in Humphreys County, Tennessee in 1917, he was wed to the former Mildred Dunagan in 1935. He began preaching at Bold Springs in 1934. He served congregations in Henderson, Hohenwald, Paris, Mobile, Alabama, and Christiansburg, Virginia. Upon retirement he moved to Hohenwald where he continued to preach and hold gospel meetings. A powerful pulpit proclaimer, B. B. James was in great demand for gospel meetings and preached hundreds of funerals. He was a soul-winner who baptized all four of his brothers. His wit, humor, and pleasing personality won for him many thousands of friends along the way. In the years immediately following World War II, his work in Centerville laid the foundation for the growth and expansion which would afterward follow.

RALPH D. STOUT served as the Minister of the Centerville Church from 1950 until December 31, 1956. A native of Louisville, Kentucky, he was born in 1926. He was wed to Martha Nadaine Love and began preaching in Indiana in 1947. He attended Freed-Hardeman College and served the Nunnelly congregation while getting his education. Moving to Centerville in 1950, Ralph led a growing, enthusiastic work. The church grew in number and eventually began two morning services to accommo-

date the crowds. He published a church paper entitled, *"The Pillar"* and was an excellent personal worker. He was well-liked on the streets of the city and made a host of friends during his seven-year stay. He preached for congregations in Tuscumbia, Alabama; Glasgow, Kentucky; and for a quarter of a century served the Grant Street Church in Decatur, Alabama. Across forty years he has frequently spoken at the Centerville congregation and is remembered with much appreciation for seven years of successful work in this community.

PAUL ROGERS became Minister of the congregation on January 1, 1957 and has continued in that position until this date. He was born in Birmingham, Alabama in 1934, wed to Judith Anne Johns in 1955 and served the Old Jefferson Church while a student at David Lipscomb College. He later received a M. A. Degree from Harding University School of Religion. He has only served one congregation as a full-time Pulpit Minister, having worked eight months with the Church Street Church in Lewisburg as a Youth Minister in 1956. Across the years, he has seen the Centerville church grow from 350 to 650 in attendance. He was selected as Centerville Man of the Year in 1978, as Alumnus of the Year in 1975 at Harding Graduate School of Religion, and received the Distinguished Christian Service Award from Harding University in 1988. In 1992 he was honored by the Tennessee State Legislature for his work in Centerville.

SERVING THE CENTERVILLE CHURCH AS ASSOCIATE MINISTERS HAVE BEEN THE FOLLOWING: Ray Walker, George Goldtrap, Dick Brackett, Larry Walker, Ron Ingram, Tim Walker, Jeff Henry, David Craig, Phil Patton, Toby Hamann, Teb Batey, Larry Keen, Putnam Reeves, Bill McDonald, Wayne Qualls, Earl Lavender, Mark Hayes, John Plemmons, Jr., Mike Bradley, and Greg Vanderveer. Greg is the current Youth Minister and Song Director, having begun his work in 1994. Each of these has made a significant contribution to the Centerville Church and is appreciated by its membership.

CHURCH SECRETARIES have been Ann Wharton, Nancy Durham, Jane Talley, Sandy McFarlin, Joyce Pace, Sherry Breece, Ruth Reece, and Annis Womack. The current secretaries are Annis Womack (since 1971) and Ruth Reece (since 1980). They too are greatly appreciated for their faithfulness and efficiency.

EDUCATORS WHO HAVE SPOKEN at the Centerville Church include: Dr. Joe Johnson (President of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville); Dr. William S. Banowsky (President of the University of Oklahoma); Athens Clay Pullias, Willard Collins, and Dr. Harold Hazelip (Presidents of David Lipscomb University); N. B. Hardeman, H. A. Dixon, E. Claude Gardner and Dr. Milton Sewell (Presidents of Freed-Hardeman University); Dr. Jack Evans (President of Southwestern Christian College).

NATIONALLY-KNOWN ATHLETES who have spoken at the Centerville Church include: Clyde Lee, Bailey Howell, Jeff Pyburn, Jim Pyburn, Gene Stallings, Don Meyer, and Willie Franklin.

GOSPEL PREACHERS FROM OTHER LANDS who have preached in the Centerville pulpit include: B. Ratnam (India); Mladen Jovanovic (Yugoslavia); Gottfried Reichel (Germany); Paul Higgs (Turks and Caicos Islands); Juan Monroy (Spain).

MANY OF THE MOST POPULAR EVANGELISTS among Churches of Christ in the Twentieth Century have preached in Centerville. Included in that number are: N. B. Hardeman, T. B. Larimore, Ira Douthitt, S. P. Pittman, Foy E. Wallace, Jimmy Allen, Batsell Barrett Baxter, Willard Collins, Ira North, Otis Gatewood, Marshall Keeble, J. C. Bailey, and Willie Franklin.

W.E. MCDONALD, A FRIEND TO ALL
* 1909 - 1995*

Willie E. McDonald **died May 31, 1995. His life reads like an American classic, overflowing with success while mingled with sorrow. Reared in Wayne County, pushing a plow through the heat of the day, walking seven miles daily to attend elementary school, boarding in Waynesboro where he swept floors and built fires to attend high school, he held steadfast to his dream of becoming a licensed Mortician. He studied by correspondence and during World War II lived in Nashville, employed at the Vultee Aircraft Factory by day and the Booth Funeral Home by night. He was wed in March, 1944 to Mable Boling and in 1945 opened his funeral establishment in Centerville. With but $5,000 to his name, he ordered a new ambulance, began a new business, and fulfilled a life-long dream. In time he owned four funeral homes in three counties and buried approximately 14,000 people across fifty years. He also established a 10,000-grave cemetery known as Memory Gardens.**

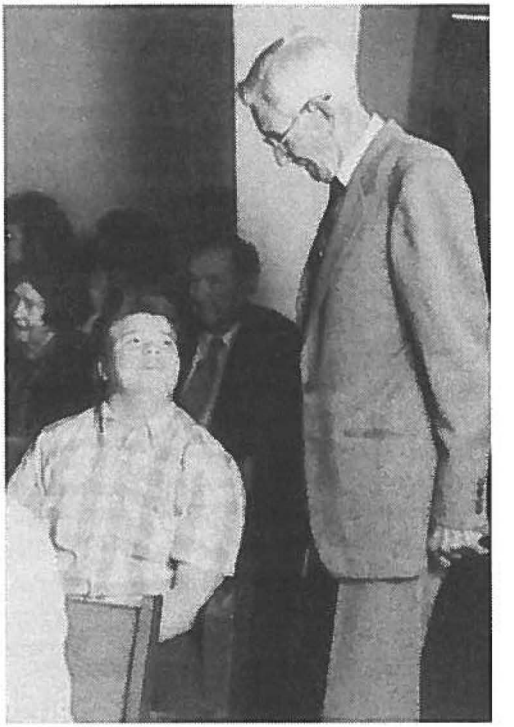
W. E. McDonald and his family have been at the forefront of every forward movement in this church. Soon after his arrival, the old building was bricked, then enlarged, then air-conditioned. He was an avid promoter of our move to the new location in 1966 and purchased several pieces of property surrounding our building which he in turn donated to the church. His investment in Camp Meribah has made possible a major portion of the progress which has been experienced, with over 100,000 boys and girls already having used the facility. Even in death he is providing an Endowment Fund to aid in day-to-day expenses at Meribah. His support of the Centerville Church has been exemplary and sacrificial. We thank God for having sent such a family into our midst. We rejoice in the "*exceeding precious promises*" found in His Word and look forward to a reunion over there.

The passing of W. E. McDonald, like that of Dr. Parker Elrod, Jim D. Bates, and others, has, in the words of Carl Sandburg, "*left an empty place against the sky, as if a great tree had fallen.*" But now we press on, confident that God buries His workmen, but continues His work. He who was "*our help in ages past will be no less our hope in years to come.*"

—Paul Rogers

W.E. MCDONALD

SERVANT OF GOD AND MAN





6

I Remember I Remember

With the passing of years there is nothing so precious as the sweet and sad memories of yesteryear..."*Precious Memories, Unseen Angels, Sent From Somewhere To My Soul.*" Jesus challenged the rich man of Luke 16 with these words, "*Son Remember*". The Ephesian Church of Revelation 2 was instructed to "*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen.*" In the Paradise of God we shall remember and "*Know each other better when the mists have cleared away.*"

On the pages which follow are brief, but beautiful, memories of those who have passed before us. May we be challenged to go up higher, pressing on the upward way as we remember those whom we have loved and lost.

PAUL DOWNEY...I REMEMBER our family moving from Pleasantville in 1914 in six wagon teams. There were nine of us kids. I remember John Nicks with a long, white beard...In 1914 it seemed that we did not have more than twenty-five people present with a $3.00 contribution....The church building was always open and continued to be apparently for 90 years...Men and women sat together more than they did in many of the rural congregations. The building had no electric lights until the 1920's. There was a wood stove on each side of the auditorium, with pipes that went upward and across, meeting in the middle with a single flue. On many Sundays there was no one to preach, but someone would read a passage from the Bible...My brother and I were paid 25 cents a month each to build a fire in the building Sunday mornings....My father was a strict disciplinarian and if we nine children so much as moved down the seat or touched something out of the way while the service was going on, we would get a paddling upon our arrival home....We were having a meeting once when a skunk came in the open door at the back, followed by six baby skunks. She walked down the aisle with her brood, up to the front and then down the aisle on the other side and back outside. I was sitting at the end of the pew and could have touched the skunks as they passed by. The preacher stopped preaching, not a word was spoken, and no one moved. The crisis passed and the service resumed.

JOSEPH B. NALL, OF ATMORE, ALABAMA...I REMEMBER that it was about this time of year, 41 years ago, I was transferred to Centerville, Tennessee, to build electrical power lines for the local R.E.A. I arrived late on a Saturday afternoon and was into the night finding a place to stay. It was miserably cold and raining. I had been married only nine months and had been a Christian less than a year. Sunday morning the weather was no better and my religious background prior to being baptized into Christ was denominational, and at first I felt no need to attend worship services. But the closer time to assemble drew near the more urgently I felt the need to worship. And no matter how hard I tried to dispel the thought the more the feeling persisted. To remove the struggle inside me, I got dressed and went and I am forever glad I did. You see, it was at that worship service that I met Jim D. Bates. The people were so nice and made me feel right at home. But I was there without Sybil, my wife, who with her parents had taught me to be a Christian. At the conclusion of the service, my uppermost thought was to go to the apartment and call Sybil. There was a delay. Standing at the door greeting people on their way out was this man with a warm smile and hearty handshake..."*My name is Jim D. Bates.*" The moment I met him I knew he was for real...He was genuine. Even in my haste to leave and my desire to call home I couldn't refuse to answer his questions. What's your name? Where are you from? Why are you here? How long will you stay? Are you married? Are you a member of the Church? Can you lead singing? Lead prayer? Teach a class? Wait on the Lord's Table? Then he asked, "*What can I do for you? How can I help?*" I told him the most important thing right now was to find a place so I can move my wife up here. By 3:00 that afternoon he called me to say he had found a place, and for me to call my wife. Suffice to say that without this man's life and influence, I probably would not be the man I am today. He came into my life at a very crucial point, giving me spiritual guidance and leadership I needed so desperately. I have taught and baptized over 300 people since I last saw him, all as a result of having met this spiritual giant who showed love, kindness and a big interest in a troubled boy many, many years ago. I cannot close this letter without expressing my love to Sister Bates whom I considered a marvelous Christian lady. Also, one can determine the height of the stature of a man and woman such as brother and sister Bates by observing the lives of their children. I was not familiar with all their children, but I did know Bobby and Mary Katherine. They were just the best.

D. ELLIS WALKER...I REMEMBER that during my work here in the early 1930's it was possible to buy, on the streets of Centerville, five dozen eggs for 25 cents.

ANN EASLEY NALL. According to her daughter, Sammie Dot Finch, Mrs. Nall was warned as a young lady to "stay away from those people. They preach dangerous things." This was in reference to the churches of Christ and their preachers. However, this only made Ann Nall more determined to hear and learn. In time, she became a member of the New Testament Church, converted her husband Samuel to Christ, as well as her sister, Loudie Peeler, and reared her daughters to be servants of God. She was a woman of large frame and a large heart. With her husband Samuel, who operated a landmark shoe repair business downtown, she sought to truly be a "light of the world".

MRS. LOUDIE PEELER remembered vividly the tornado which swept through Centerville, down Columbia Avenue, moving their house some thirty feet. The house landed against a tree and was later placed back on the foundation. She and her husband were in the house ready to go to bed when they heard terrible thunder and the noise of a "cyclone". They met at the foot of the bed and held each other tightly. They were thrown into the corner of the room but survived. However, Mr. Peeler's nerves were never the same again...She avowed that T. B. Larimore was the best preacher she ever heard and next to him was Ben Harding.

MARTHA JO BRIDGES...I REMEMBER growing up and having a wonderful childhood. My parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lem Allen, owned a General Store on the Square and a farm. I completed high school in 1932 and attended the Centerville Church of Christ from 1914. I was baptized in Duck River below the old bridge which led to Shipps Bend. We all wore white dresses for the baptismal service. We had few regular preachers except for the "big meetings". At Christmastime there was a tree in the building which reached all the way to the ceiling with presents for all the children underneath. The church bell rang every Sunday morning and could be heard clearly throughout the community. We all drank out of the same cup in the observance of the Lord's Supper and no one thought a thing about it. There were no classrooms, only the large auditorium. Across from the church building was the County Jail which had a dungeon that was reserved for the worst prisoners or for those who were insane. We lived across from the meetinghouse on the property now owned by First Farmers and Merchants Bank. We had on that lot a two-story house, a barn, a smokehouse, a woodhouse, and servants' quarters. My marriage ceremony was conducted by S. P. Pittman. I was wed to Edward Bridges, who later returned to Centerville and operated for many years a Dollar Store on the Public Square. He was a football player at Mississippi State University and especially remembered with pleasure scoring a touchdown at Legion Field in Birmingham against the University of Alabama Crimson Tide...I remember that the funerals were held at the meetinghouse, for there was no funeral home. Fairs and circuses were held on the Square.

There were no paved streets, no radios and no indoor plumbing. I remember that Commander L. J. Wallace was a perfect gentleman who called his wife "Dearie" and wore a white coat and white shoes...And I don't know anything in the world that could be better than to live your life in Centerville, Tennessee!

H. C. THOMPSON, Dickson, Tennessee, writing in the *Hickman County Chronicle*, March 29, 1946. Back in my early newspaper days a small circus came to town and pitched tents in a field just east of Centerville. The performance got underway and everything moved along smoothly for a time. When an effort was made by some intruders to cut down the tent, some of the stock spirited away and confusion reigned with the show people and the crowd that gathered. Richard N. Tarkington, printer and writer, and I occupied a room facing the Public Square and had returned to our domicile and had retired for the night. About 11:00 P.M. we were frantically aroused from our slumber by a stamping noise and the falling and breaking of glass, apparently a short distance away. I jumped from my couch, exclaiming, "Tarkington, someone is tearing up the printing office." We went down into the street, made a circle around the block, waking up and telling the people what we thought was happening. We reached the home of Dr. K. I. Sutton, aroused him from his sleep, borrowed a double-barreled shotgun from him, and hastened to the printing office. We found the double door intact, but the pavement was covered with broken glass and the tramp, tramp, tramp going on incessantly on the inside. I whispered to Richard to unlock the door, strike a match, and I would do the rest. Complying with my request he quietly opened the door, the muzzle of my gun was leveled towards the noise, and the unwelcome guest proved to be a mule! Not a shot was fired. We left the mule securely tied in the office and on our way to the showground heard a *rumbling, stamping noise in the Church of Christ edifice. Making our way into the church, we were greeted by a dark gray mare standing in the aisle, but no damage had been wrought here of any consequence.* An effort was made to house one of the animals in the Court House. No clues as to these outrages were ever brought to light, and until this day, so far as the writer is concerned, remain a mystery.

KATE LEEPER, writing in 1978...I REMEMBER Brother J. M. McCaleb. When I was just a little girl in Centerville he came and spoke about his work in Japan as a Missionary. He stayed the night with us, and I was just fascinated to hear him talk about an Oriental country... W. S. Morton was daddy's "cousin Willie". For several summers *Cousin Will conducted our protracted meeting at the church in Centerville.* One day our mother had been busy seeing about dinner, but finally got herself ready and rushed into the guest bedroom to get her best dress out of the wardrobe. There sat cousin Willie Morton smoking his pipe! She

cried out: "Oh, Brother Morton, don't you know it's time to go to church?" His reply was, "They can't have preachin' till I get thar"...Paul Slayden preached for us while we were in Centerville. He was quite a young man at the time. At supper he asked for a glass of buttermilk which mother served him and he then stirred sugar in it!

BROWN CHESSOR...I REMEMBER that my mother, Bonnie Chessor, was hard of hearing in her old age. Finally she bought a hearing aid for what seemed to be a huge price of $700. When we asked her why she got a hearing aid, she would always answer, *"To hear Paul Rogers preach."*

EDWARD DOTSON...I REMEMBER when there were not more than three houses on the Nashville Highway between Centerville and Nashville. Prior to automobile traffic, a journey to Nashville was on a winding wagon road. The travelers would normally stop at Whippoorwill Hill, where there was a spring, near to Fairview today. They would reach this point by dark, arise the next morning, arrive in Nashville, returning to Whippoorwill Hill for the night. Then they would arise early and return to Centerville. It was a three-day excursion to make even the simplest journey to the State Capitol.

AMANDA PARKER, faithful Christian lady from the past....told of sitting by the side of her sister, Mae Worley, shortly before her passing into eternity. She suddenly roused herself just long enough to whisper these words, *"I have always loved the church."* What a fitting capstone for the lives of both Mae Worley and Amanda Parker.

PAUL ROGERS....I REMEMBER Roy Blackwell sharing with me shortly before his death in March, 1979 a dream that had excited him. He saw his old mother, long dead, standing and calling out, *"Come on home, Roy, come on home."* And that is precisely what Mr. Roy did just a few days later. I reminded him that a man's death is both a separation and a reunion, that there are some on this shore who say "He goes" and some on that shore who shout "He comes."

THELMA TOTTY, an active member of the congregation since 1926...I REMEMBER that we never had any real trouble in the church. If there was a true church anywhere, we were it! We would peel apples at the Downey home and carry them to patients in nursing homes. We would have a dinner on the Square, sell food to those passing by, and then use the money to purchase needed items at the church building. We had a Christmas tree in the church building for the children each year. However, B. B. James put an end to both of those things!....Mrs. Douglas Arnold would frequently invite the young people to her house. She had a grape arbor and delighted in making grape juice and cookies for the children. She would keep preachers, prepare the Lord's Supper, and teach classes....We had two cups for the observance of the Lord's Supper, one on each side. In the earliest days, the men sat on one side of the

building generally and the women on the other. At Totty's Bend Church we had a partition right down the middle of the auditorium....Patrick Thompson would pat his foot as he sang and you could hear it all over the house. He and his wife always sat in a particular corner seat and everyone knew not to get brother Patrick's seat!....E. J. Beasley was our songleader for years....I recall a John Nicks, referred to as "Uncle John", with white hair and long white beard....The small table now in our vestibule was given by John Nicks to the Centerville church as its first communion table. The larger table in the lobby, with glass knobs at its feet, was presented to the church by the beloved evangelist T. B. Larimore.

NINA HARWORTH, who attended from 1926. I REMEMBER...hearing the church bell every Sunday morning at our home in Eason's Bend (close to Cedar Park today). It was a reminder that Sunday morning had come and it would soon be time to go to the church house. We had large wooden, beautiful collection plates. One lady would always thump the basket as she put her contribution in it!...When I attended George Peabody College for Teachers in Nashville my history professor was none other than Wallis Beasley, who had been our preacher in Centerville in the 1930's.

MORELL FERGUSON...I REMEMBER the men who frequently sat in the "Amen Corner" and the two cups we passed in observance of the Lord's Supper, and the classes which met in the four corners of the auditorium...Everybody loved Ed Johnson. He was the custodian at the high school, living in the building, and a faithful Christian man...The janitor once gave a bar of soap to a woman who badly needed a bath, but she gave it back to him!

WILMA RICH...I REMEMBER that in 1928 there was only one large auditorium with no classrooms and hardly any of the men sat with their wives. There were not very many young people or male members in the congregation until D. Ellis Walker came...T. B. Larimore had to break the ice at Indian Creek on one occasion for baptizing...Everybody loved D. Ellis Walker. He had electricity in him! He would obtain a truck and fill it with food to take to the Orphan's Home in Columbia....Loudie Peeler was a good Christian woman all of her life. She loved young people and took them into her home...In the 1930's Hickman County was known as "Keg County," and where there was a spring in a hollow there was a still!

BOBBY BATES...I REMEMBER...that the baptistry was under the floor in the 1940's with a pulpit stand above it. When there was to be a baptism the floor would be removed for the occasion. If there was a Sunday morning response, we would heat the water all afternoon, using a basement stove underneath, and then have the baptismal service in the evening.

B. B. JAMES...I REMEMBER...that Patrick Thompson somehow misunderstood the purpose of the Cry Room speaker that was being installed in the 1940's. The innovative new room would allow mothers to sit with

their babies and participate in the service without disturbing those about them. Brother Thompson told the preacher that he was opposed to it and one reason he offered was simply, *"The women will be listening to that thing instead of the preacher!"*

R. L. WHITESIDE, reared in Hickman County, President of Abilene Christian University...I REMEMBER...that I was born into a fight. But in spite of bitter and unreasoning opposition the number of believers gradually increased. At the age of eighteen, I was baptized in Swan Creek by Brown Godwin. About a half-mile up the creek was an old Methodist Church; beyond that, perhaps a mile-and-a-half, was a Cumberland Presbyterian Church; a mile or two beyond that was another Methodist church. Down the other way less than a quarter of a mile from Salem was a Primitive Baptist Church; on a small tributary of Swan was a sort of highbred Baptist Church; about three or four miles was another Methodist Church. It was the farthest away of any of them, but close enough to do some long distance fighting. I think about the time that I came on the stage of action these churches reached their climax of bitterness in their fight against us. An old lady said, *"The Campbellites are worse than the devil. The Bible says, resist the Devil and he will flee from you. But you resist a Campbellite and he will flee right at you!"* R. L. Whiteside was the great-grandfather of Eugene Hutchison, a member of the Centerville congregation.

J. M. MCCALEB, born in Hickman County in 1861, missionary to Japan fifty years...I REMEMBER....when I was in my fifteenth year I began to think seriously about becoming a Christian. I was not considered a bad boy but I was good only in the sense of not being so bad as some others. As in all the neighborhoods, I grew up in the midst of lying, deception, vile language, vile conduct, and profanity. I fell in with many of these evils, but not with the sin of profanity. Sometimes I would use bywords, which I shall not repeat here, for if you have ever heard them you know what I mean, and if you haven't, I don't want you to know. But I am, even to this day, happy to know that I have never taken the name of God in vain. Neither have I, even from childhood, ever violated the chastity of woman. Some other things I have committed once, but never again. Sin has always been repulsive to me, and I never in all my life committed a sin, great or small, but what I afterwards regretted it. It was only some enticement of the flesh that drew me on, but my conscience always rebelled. About as bad a thing as I have done thus far was to enter a neighbor's melon patch. This was one other of the sins that I never repeated.

I REMEMBER....Old-timers remember to this day the afternoon at the University of Sewanee when Tom Lambert kicked a football from one

end zone to the other. It went about 80 yards in the air and bounced into the opposite end zone. No one had ever seen such a kick before!

EDWARD DOTSON, County Historian and member of the Centerville congregation...I REMEMBER when protracted meetings were held in school houses or brush arbors. People would walk or ride horseback or ride in buggies and wagons. It was not unusual for someone to take a wagon load four or five miles to attend worship. Most of the meetings would start on Sunday and continue through the following Saturday night. Services would be held during the day and also during the night. Baptismal services would be held late in the afternoon at a nearby stream or millpond for those who obeyed the gospel that day and the previous night. There were very few conveniences in the church buildings. We had no upholstered seats, no screens on the windows or doors, no electric fans or air-conditioners. Men would use their hats to fan, and the women would bring pieces of cardboard made into a fan. Flies swarmed during the day and candleflies swarmed around the lights at night. Very few of the rural churches had electricity. Kerosene lamps and lanterns would be placed around the walls and on the pulpit to furnish light. We had no nurseries; pallets were placed on the seats or floor at the feet for the small children. If a child cried, the mother had to carry it outside or the preacher just had to preach louder. In many of the churches the men would sit on one side of the building and the women would sit on the other side. The minister would sometimes have to lead singing, do the praying, and preach. Most of the sermons exceeded one hour.

PAUL ROGERS...I REMEMBER...that on Sunday morning, January 28, 1968, our Custodian Slayden Leathers came walking down the aisle right at me during the invitation song with a determined look on his face. He whispered that the school bus garage directly across the street was on fire and that cars parked against it needed to be moved instantly. I stopped the invitation song and instructed all drivers of those vehicles to immediately go to their cars. We were fortunate that no automobiles were lost, but the garage was gutted by fire...And I remember Sunday morning, November 24, 1963. On the previous Friday *President John F. Kennedy* had been assassinated while riding in a motorcade in Dallas, Texas. It seemed that time stood still and we were witnessing firsthand a turning point in the history of the world. Everyone was glued to the television screen and no detail was too tiny but what it was eagerly grasped and discussed. The Centerville radio station played religious and somber music all day for several days running. On that Sunday morning I spoke on the need for respecting authority at all levels. Four hundred persons were present and I reminded them that *"the incredible events of the past few days have caused us to focus upon the current disrespect for authority that is seen not only in the face of this assassin who has cowardly*

slain our President, but has spilled over into the streets and towns across the United States." As the second service was closing that morning and people were leaving the building, the second chapter in that unthinkable plot was unfolding. The accused assassin, Lee Harvey Oswald, was being slain that moment by Jack Ruby, whose actions were never fully understood or explained. It was a never-to-be-forgotten Sunday in the lives of all Americans...And I remember the Tuesday night, October 29, 1963 that *Gus Nichols* spoke in the Centerville auditorium. The house was virtually filled, with 334 persons present to hear this brilliant expositor of scripture. His topic was "The Work of The Church". A few moments prior to the service he and I had visited in the office where he wrote four or five words on the back of an envelope. That would be his outline. *He then stood and preached to our people for one hour and forty-five minutes!* The church was not accustomed to such long doses of preaching, but it was a memorable night and the impact of Gus Nichols upon our brotherhood was unmistakable...I remember *Sunday morning*, May 20, 1990 and the awful agony of it all. As we were gathered for worship at 9:00 A.M., midway through the service sirens began to blow, whistles pierced the air, law enforcement personnel, firemen, school officials, and city employees began to exit at all doors. At the conclusion of the sermon I learned that a fire set by an arsonist was at that moment raging at Hickman County High School. Soon thereafter someone whispered that the Assistant Principal, Ron Wallace, had been maliciously murdered. The entire community was thrown into mourning and the Baccalaureate Service for that afternoon was cancelled. The assassin turned out to be a disgruntled school teacher who evidently was seeking to blow up the facility and was caught in the act. The citizens of Hickman County, rich and poor, black and white, young and old, were brought together into a supportive network by that tragic event. Prior to that Sunday morning there had not been a murder within the Centerville city limits in fifteen years.

MARY HILL HORNER...I REMEMBER Mrs. Jennie Flowers, who was born the year the Civil War began and lived 87 years. She sold eggs and used the money made to support the church. At her death, her obituary stated that "she and her husband were liberal donors to the original fund which enabled the weak and struggling congregation to build the present church edifice."

PAUL ROGERS...I REMEMBER in the summer of 1970 at Camp Meribah teaching a class of small children. I asked "How many railroad cars would it take to hold the entire contents of Noah's Ark?" One little boy, Phillip Holland, answered immediately, "522". Exactly right. Next I asked, "If all the water in the atmosphere suddenly precipitated, how deep would that water cover the earth?" And again he spoke up, "2 inches".

Exactly right! What made it all so remarkable was that I had included those numbers in a sermon quite some weeks before. I went away with a renewed appreciation of the fact that every now and then the kids do listen to the preaching.

MILDRED DOWNEY YOUNGS...I REMEMBER being baptized at the Centerville Church in 1927 by Ben F. Harding. I remember with much pleasure the Christmas celebrations they had for us as children. It probably would be looked on now with disfavor for we had a Christmas tree, Santa, gifts for the children, and skits for the children, all assisted by the grownups. My great-grandfather was E. A. Land....Growing up in Centerville has meant much to me and given me many fond memories.

7

Tomorrow, Better Than Today

In his old age, Joshua was told by the Lord that *"There remains yet very much land to be possessed."* (Joshua 13:1). There were battles to be fought, cities to be conquered and houses to be reared. And so it is with the church of our Lord. It is a living, breathing, changing, churning, shrinking, swelling organism, forever in a state of flux. Each new generation of believers has its own problems and possibilities, obstacles and opportunities. But always and forevermore there is much land left to be possessed.

DREAMS AND DREAMERS

It would not be far amiss to say that all human progress in the last five thousand years has come as the result of a dream. Christopher Columbus envisioned a new route to China and thereby stumbled upon the Western Hemisphere. Leonardo Da Vinci contemplated a flying machine that would be able to meet the resisting air current and rise above it, a thing that did not come to pass until four hundred years later. Albert Einstein dreamed of the day when mankind would be able to split the atom and thereby unleash an incredible new source of energy.

On page after page of scripture there is testimony to the fact that the Lord makes large use of dreamers. Abraham dreamed of blessing all generations of mankind and fathering a nation which would be as innumerable as the heavenly host. Joseph dreamed of leading and sustaining his people. Moses dreamed of new-found freedom for his long-enslaved people. David dreamed of building a house in which God would dwell above the wings of the cherubim. Paul dreamed of preaching the gospel as far as his feet would travel, even to the edge of the Atlantic Ocean in faraway Spain.

The marvelous achievements of the church in this incredible twentieth century have likewise been the unfolding of dreams and visions. Our strong

Christian colleges, homes for children and the aged, mission undertakings in well over one hundred separate nations, radio and television ministries which encircle the globe...all have become a reality because those who went before us dared to dream. To a great degree, today is but the echo of yesterday and tomorrow will be the echo of today, if Jesus tarries.

A TIME TO DREAM AGAIN

As the Centerville Church of Christ approaches the third Christian millennium, the outlook appears bright and clear. The State of Tennessee is predicted to be among the top ten states in population growth over the next decade. According to a study made by the U. S. Commerce Department, the Nashville area is expected to be among the top five cities in the nation in terms of economic growth.

The fields are white unto harvest and tomorrow will be better than today! God is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). We are limited only by our faith and fortitude.

Our dreams of yesterday have largely come to pass. In 1968, a published listing was made by the leaders of this church as to "some of the things we hope to accomplish in the years ahead." These included the development of Camp Meribah, building the Centerville Children's Home, the establishment of new congregations, the construction of a home for the aged, an improved program of visitation, sending groups of young people to work in campaigns. Wonderfully and gratefully have all of these come to reality! God has blessed us in the past and he will bless us in the future. May our young men continue to see visions and our old men dream dreams (Acts 2:17). May these visions be born in fervent prayer and nurtured by compassionate tears. May we have seeing power, staying power, and praying power.

Each member of the church body should prayerfully and purposefully begin to pray for God's blessings upon this congregation. Pray that he will raise up strong, visionary leaders. Pray that the church will continue to have that essential ingredient, *"The unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."* And pray, as a beginning point, that the congregation will be able to accomplish the following goals in the not-too-distant future.

* A congregation of 1,000 persons, determined to count as well as be counted.
* An enlarged, remodeled auditorium seating over 1,000.
* A Christian Camp that will be underwritten and sustained continually by gifts of love.
* A Day School that will bless the lives of thousands of children and their parents.

* A Scholarship Fund that will be substantial to provide meaningful assistance to every young person in the congregation desiring a Christian education.
* An expanded mission program that will continue to establish congregations both at home and abroad.
* A strong teaching and preaching program that will be true to scripture and determined to use the most effective means and methods.
* A youth ministry second to none that will undergird thousands of young lives.
* An expanded program of outreach that will serve the battered and bruised, the lowly and lonely, the downtrodden and distressed, the orphan and widow.
* A renewed commitment to soul-winning, determined to save all we can, where we can, so long as we can.
* A growing desire for spiritual development, refusing to be superficial, shallow religionists, but people of prayer and praise, resolving to share and declare the life of Jesus Christ.

Inscribed on the tomb of African Missionary David Livingstone in Westminister Abbey are these unforgettable words: *"God buries his workmen, but continues his work."* Thus it has ever been and thus it shall ever be. The Centerville Church of Christ, *"A City Set On A Hill,"* has a great past, a great present, and with God's help a great future.

TIMELINE

1820 - Shady Grove congregation begun
1827 - Shady Grove log meetinghouse
1870 - Centerville congregation begun
1873 - Centerville building constructed
1912 - T. B. Larimore meeting
1922-38 - Eight Ira Douthitt meetings
1930 - Sunday School average 110
1932 - D. Ellis Walker first located minister
1939 - 266 members
1941 - James Wells preacher
1943 - B. B. James preacher, Sunday School average 77
1944 - 227 members
1945 - Regular Business Meetings begun
1947 - Bricks placed around building
1949 - B. B. James resigns
1950 - Ralph Stout begins. Sunday School average 143
1952 - Addition to building
1954 - Building air-conditioned
1955 - Sunday School average 264
1957 - Paul Rogers becomes Minister. 345 members
1958 - $20,800 Budget
1959 - 1000 enrolled in VBS
1959 - Expansion program announced
1960 - Record number to hear Judge Sam Davis Tatum
1961 - Educational building completed $51,800
1962 - Motorcade to Nashville auditorium meeting. 10,500 attended.

TIMELINE

1963 - Marshall Keeble speaks

1964 - Bus Route, Correspondence Course, Mailing of Church paper
Property on Nashville Highway purchased for new facilities

1965 - Doors to building locked after 92 years
Building Committee appointed.
Bond Sale begun
Bids open for new church plant

1966 - Operation Doorbell
Kindergarten begun
Dedication of new building in September. 1,071 present

1967 - Budget $1,471 weekly
Speakers: Batsell Barrett Baxter, William S. Banowsky

1968 - 160 acres donated for church camp
40-passenger bus purchased

1969 - Organized Visitation Team meetings
Children's Home dedicated in October
Camp Meribah opens

1970 - Centennial Homecoming with 1,100 present
Ken McDonald Hall dedicated

1971 - Middle Tennessee Preacher's Forum begun

1972 - Record Sunday Night crowd of 512 to hear John Clayton
2nd bus route begun

TIMELINE

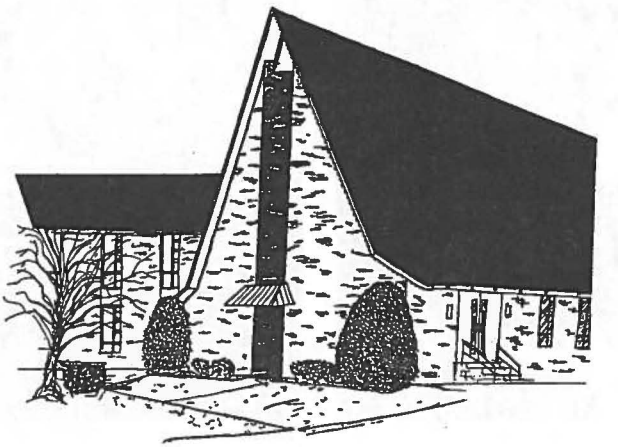
1973 - First Teacher's Appreciation Dinner
1974 - Willard Collins meeting
Sunday Night Campaign draws 515
1974 - Committee appointed to study elderly housing
1975 - 3rd bus purchased,all-time high of 121 riders
Children's Bible Hour begun
A-Frame Chapel Built
Paul Rogers preached in India
1976 - New Testament memorized, written by members
Chorus performs frequently on Nashville telecast
1977 - Tulipwood Corporation formed
New bus purchased
1978 - Outreach Center begun, $161,617
Funds secured for Tulipwood
Record contribution of $50,101
Day School opens
1979 - 60-acre addition to Camp Property
Work begun in Cervignano, Italy
1980 - Singles Ministry begun
Outreach Center opens
Jimmy Allen record revival
Ground-breaking for Tulipwood in September
1981 - Lifeline Telephone Ministry begun
Amazing Grace telecast locally
1982 - World Evangelism Forum
1983 - First scheduled telecast of service
WCKY Radio Broadcast

TIMELINE

1983 -Golden Rule Reading Club, 27,001 chapters read
Nicks Scholarship Fund established
1984 - First color Directory printed
Double Day sets record of 1,122
1985 - Turks and Caicos work begun
1986 - Camp Meribah remodeled
Highland, Illinois work begun
Homecoming '86 with 1,142 present
Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes begun
1987 - First annual Thanksinging with Ray Walker
Final Sunday offering of $22,010
Joseph Worndle began work in Turks and Caicos Islands
1988 - 250,000th caller to Lifeline
Building construction in Highland, Illinois by volunteers
WBHL-FM Broadcast added
1989 - 312 persons ordered One-Year Bibles
Funds raised for North Caicos building
Tour bus purchased
50,000 visits by teams since 1969
1990 - Modern TV Production Center added
31 children complete Summer Scholars Program
120th Anniversary - Record 1,235
1991 - Mission work begun in Farmville, Virginia
Announcement of plans for addition

TIMELINE

1991 - $120,000 paid on indebtedness
1992 - Paul Rogers 35th Anniversary
$1,200,000 expansion announced
Record $83,156 offering
5000 served at Outreach Center
1993 - Bond Sale completed, $1,100,000
New Facilities opened in June
Congregation has 800 members
1994 - 35th Anniversary of Radio Program
New mothers honored
100,000 at Meribah since 1969
Willie Franklin meeting best-attended in history of County, 1,088 Sunday night
1870 pageant in December
Computer network in offices
1995 - Record budget of $464,986
January 2 - 2000 A.D. Vision Committee formed
Celebration of 125th Anniversary





D. Ellis Walker
1932-33



James Wells
1942-43



Buford B. James
1943-50



Ralph Stout
1950-57



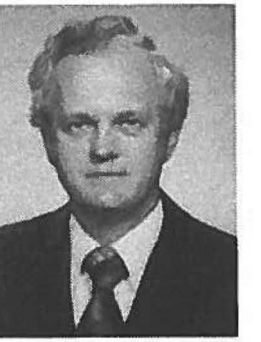
Paul, Larry, Judy Rogers







Paul, Judy, Emily Rogers





Paul Rogers, Minister

9

These 35 Years

Preached at the Centerville church of Christ, Centerville, Tennessee on March 15, 1992 by Paul Rogers on his 35th Anniversary with the congregation.

THESE THIRTY-FIVE YEARS..."I WAS NOT DISOBEDIENT TO THE HEAVENLY VISION" "And I said, Who art thou, Lord?" And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." (Acts 26:15-19).

One of the most beautiful cities in first century Palestine was Caesarea by the seashore. It was here that Paul was summoned to appear at the court of King Agrippa II. *"With great pomp"* did the King and his beautiful Bernice enter the palace. Present were all the *"chief captains, and principal men of the city"*. Never in his lifetime had the apostle Paul been granted such an opportunity to address royalty and riches. And never did he more eagerly and effectively seize the situation, relating in order the events leading to his own conversion....the noonday confrontation with Jesus Christ on the Damascus Road, the miraculous light brighter than the noonday sun, and the voice of Jesus crying out, *"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"* He told of the divine mandate given him *"to turn men from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God."* Then he added, *"Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."*

It would be quite presumptuous for any one of us to compare himself with Paul. He towers above the ages, head and shoulders, trunk and torso

over us all. Yet there is a sense in which each of us should seek to say, *"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision."*

Life, of course, is difficult at best. I have struggled and stumbled through life and would be the first to admit that when God called me into His ministry he picked up a crooked stick. But I have no greater goal than to be *"obedient to the heavenly vision."*

AN EARLY CHOICE

Almost exactly 40 years ago, in the spring of 1952, as a seventeen-year-old High School senior, I announced to family and friends that I intended to become a Minister of the gospel. I had never preached a sermon and had no real reason to assume that I was suited for such a calling. At that same time I was invited to a dinner in downtown Birmingham sponsored by Harvard University for prospective students. As I recall, the meal was delightful and the program compelling. But I could not go to Harvard for at least two reasons. The cost, $1700 annually, was completely out of reach for the son of a widowed mother. And beyond that was a kind of "heavenly vision" of what I believed God wanted me to do with my life. The fulfillment of that dream would begin that fall at a 900-student liberal arts college in Nashville, Tennessee, a city I had never visited.

MOVING TO CENTERVILLE

Five years later, on a cold Tuesday morning, January 1, 1957, Judy and I moved to Centerville, Tennessee. Thirty-five years later, I stand up to declare myself among the most blessed preachers of this generation. To my knowledge, I am one of only two men in our brotherhood who currently have labored thirty-five years consecutively with one congregation. And I suppose that I am the only person with such a tenure who has spent his entire full-time pulpit preaching ministry in one pulpit.

I hold no illusions about my ability to please all the people all the time. Nor do I imagine that my appearance in this city as a fair-haired twenty-two-year old with an expectant wife, who wore a pony tail, was universally appreciated! In fact, one older gentleman who was apparently not among my chief admirers confided to Edward Dotson, *"This is the worst preacher you have had. But he is a good man and if you keep him long enough he will be a good preacher!"* Now it may be debatable whether I am a "good preacher" or a "good man", but none can question the fact that I have been "kept long"!

THESE 35 YEARS

In these three-and-one-half decades, I have conducted 700 funerals and have witnessed 2000 responses (baptisms or restorations). I have spoken in 20 states and my ministry has taken me into 17 countries.

Our 1957 Directory contained 311 names, 92 of which remain in our midst. The current membership is 800, 90% of whom have come to us since 1957.

The total offering from January 1, 1957 to the present is approximately $5,524,476. The Annual Budget has grown from $20,000 to $406,039. The buildings and property secured in these 35 years would, if Tulipwood Apartments be included, exceed $5 million in value.

A preachers' tools are words and phrases. As the average sermon is said to be 5,000 words, a conservative estimate of the words which I have preached in this city would be 17,500,000, sufficient to fill 350 novels of normal length!

I speak for my family - Judy, Larry, David, Susan, and Emily - in saying that we are richly blessed in knowing and serving you. In fact, I could not imagine a finer place in which to raise children than Centerville!

YESTERDAY AND TODAY

A famous author wrote: *"It falls to each of us to live the life of our epoch."* And indeed it does. While we might wish to have lived in some other time and place, these are the years which God has granted and providence has allotted.

The world of 1957 was long, long ago and far, far away -- or was it only yesterday? The world population was 2.7 billion, half of today's total. A loaf of bread cost 19 cents...$1.39 today. A gallon of gas cost 24 cents...$1.00 today. A new, medium-sized automobile cost $2000...$17,000 today. The median price of an average home was $12,000...$75,000 today.

World War II was little more than a decade in the past and the entire nation was aflame with growth. In fact, more babies were born in America in 1957 than any other year in our history.

Dwight Eisenhower was President, Nikita Khruschev ruler of the Soviet Union, and Fidel Castro was mounting a Civil War in Cuba. Ted Williams was our highest-paid baseball player, making $100,000 with the Boston Red Sox. The Edsel rolled off the line in Detroit and the Civil Rights Movement had a major thrust forward as federal troops were sent to Little Rock to enforce school integration. The Soviet Union in 1957 launched the world's first man-made satellite. The Dodgers were still in Brooklyn

and the Giants in New York City. And there were only 48 states in the Union.

The world of 1957 knew no computers or nuclear power plants, no heart transplants or bypass surgery, no birth control pills or AIDS, no microwave ovens and very few Japanese automobiles. Two-thirds of America's women had not entered the work force and practically all the ladies wore a hat to church Sunday morning!

THE BEST OF TIMES

These 35 years have been indeed the best of times in which to preach and practice pure and undefiled religion.

In 1944 Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick wrote a book entitled *"A Great Time To Be Alive"*. But 1944 was a strange year to publish such a book. That was the year of D-Day, the Battle of the Bulge, the mass devastation of war. And yet it was a great time to be alive, with opportunities to make a difference abounding on every hand. Indeed, every year is a good year and every day a good day if it be lived in the light and love of Almighty God!

STANDING IN THE PULPIT

I stand this morning where I have stood almost every Sunday of my adult life - in the pulpit. The word *"pulpit"* is most interesting, for it is a nautical term having reference to the prow of a ship. There was a rail about it and a watchman upon it. The watchman stood in the *"pulpit"*, from which he was able to see more clearly than anyone else aboard the ship. And, as the prow bounced up and down on the angry waves, he absorbed the shock of the breakers more than the other seamen. Thus, the man who rode the *"pulpit"* had the advantage of seeing more clearly and absorbing the shock more perseveringly than others about him.

THINGS LEARNED

As one who has "ridden the pulpit" these thirty-five years, there are some things I have seen clearly. May I lay them at your feet on this day of celebration?

I HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT "THE CONCLUSION OF THE MATTER" IS EXACTLY WHAT SOLOMON DECLARED IT TO BE 3000 YEARS AGO. *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgement, with every secret thing whether it be good, or whether it be evil."*

Those words were true yesterday, today, and forever. Reverencing God and lovingly abiding in his commandments is the best way to live and die. When I was 30, I wanted to build a large church (and still do). When I was 40, I wanted to be a better preacher (and still do). But now, into my 50's, I want very badly to know God and be known of Him!

I HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT THINGS WHICH SEEMED SO SIMPLE AT 25 HAVE A WAY OF BECOMING TERRIBLY COMPLICATED AT 55. At age 25, a preacher can tell you how to raise a child, settle world problems, solve complicated marriage dilemmas, and explain the most difficult Bible passage. But, as we grow older, although black and white remain in focus, we discover that there are more gray areas than we had imagined. We become less critical, not because we lower our standards, but because our sight is clearer. Some of what we thought were blemishes turned out to be scars!

I HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT "THE GREATEST USE OF LIFE IS TO SPEND IT FOR SOMETHING THAT OUTLASTS IT" (William James). The only treasures that endure are those which are laid up in heaven and the only work outlasting the ages is work done for Jesus.

Dennis Levine, caught in the insider trading scandal on Wall Street, wrote of his regret in a book, *Inside Out.* His salary exceeded $2 million annually, with over $10 million in a hidden bank account and a $125,000 Ferrari automobile in the garage. Yet he said, "I looked with envy at the ordinary people driving their ordinary cars to their ordinary jobs." Wealth alone never makes for happiness. *"Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasures and trouble therewith."*

I HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT TWO THINGS ARE CERTAIN: I AM HERE TODAY. I WILL NOT ALWAYS BE HERE. *"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."* (James 4:14). *"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."* (I John 2:16).

Clocks and calendars do their work, thinning our hair, wrinkling our faces, wasting our muscles, and mocking our best-laid plans. But there is "a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." I dare not lose sight of it.

I HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT GOD MUST BE GLORIFIED, AND HE ALONE. The Benedictine Order has a practice of writing on every letter, note, or memorandum the initials S. D. G., an abbreviation of the Latin *sola Dei gloria,* "To God alone be the glory." And that is how we should live. Therefore whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31). "Unto Him

be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3:21). The glory always and forever belongs to God, not man.

I HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO AVOID THE ERROR OF ASSUMING THAT IF WE CANNOT SAVE THE WHOLE OF MANKIND WE HAVE UTTERLY FAILED. Jesus lived a perfect life, yet most of the people he met remained unsaved. He *"finished the work"* God gave to him, yet departed from this planet with but a handful of disciples. The same is true for every minister of the gospel. There is always more to do than can ever be done and more people lost than saved. Yet I, like the apostle Paul, can do what I can so long as I can, becoming all things to all men in the hopes of saving "some", confident that I will have finished my course and kept the faith. But the ancient question posed by Jeremiah will forever be heard where the masses of men mingle," *"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by?"*

I HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO SEE AT LEAST A FEW PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN HELPED BY SOMETHING I SAID, DID, OR WROTE. And that makes it all worthwhile. One little lamb safely in the Shepherd's eternal fold more than justifies a lifetime of ministry. I walk among the gravestones in the cemetery and review the names of those who heard the gospel under the sound of my voice. I recall with pleasure the day and hour when they gave themselves in loving obedience to Jesus as their Savior. My hope, my joy, my crown of rejoicing is their acceptance in His presence on that last great day.

This afternoon I speak at the funeral service of our beloved Pat Floied. At age 9 she contracted polio and spent a great portion of her difficult life on crutches. She has been in a wheelchair and on oxygen for some four years. Her twisted body was tortured by unremitting pain week after week, yet she was actively involved in this church, attending the services, working at the Outreach Center, teaching a Bible class, making handmade gifts for every baby born in the congregation and every patient in the local nursing homes. Wheeling her way into this house and into the hearts of our people, she has left an indelible impression. But I recall those first visits I made to the Floied home urging D. Ellis and Pat to attend services, involving them in the study of scriptures (Pat completed six Bible Correspondence Courses), and witnessing her baptism in August of 1985. It is *"joy unspeakable and full of glory"* to contemplate her acceptance this weekend into the paradise of God!

I HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO LOOK UPON CHANGE AS MORE OF A TREAT AND LESS OF A THREAT. The order of the day, the spirit of the age, is rapid change....in business, industry, home, and church. Those who cannot adapt may well be blown away! Old fences once thought to be permanent are coming down and new winds are whipping through the church doors! There is an openness and a frankness

that would not have been imagined a generation ago. And it demands that we carefully and prayerfully sift through the changes of our time. Matters of truth and apostolic teaching must not be compromised, but matters of tradition and preference will need to be viewed increasingly as opportunities, not obstacles. Our 21st Century children may well reject our 19th Century traditions.

I HAVE LIVED LONG ENOUGH TO LEARN THAT WE SOMETIMES DO MORE BY DOING LESS. Moments spent in meaningful meditation, prayer, and study, are never wasted. There is in every man's life a time to *"Be still and know that I am the Lord."*

I want to live until I die and I wish to die a schoolboy, still learning, thinking, reading and pondering those things that are eternal. The grand apostle Paul, with only months, if not weeks, to live on this earth, pled with his young friend Timothy to come quickly to his Roman cell and *"When you come, bring the books, but especially the parchments"* (II Tim. 4:13). A scholar and a student to the very end!

THE HEAVENLY VISION

We recall once more the words of our text, *"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision"* (Acts 26:19). What was that "heavenly vision?" It was a dream of world evangelism, a divine challenge *"to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me"* (Acts 26:18). Paul's commission, and ours, is to rescue the perishing, care for the dying, weep over the erring, lift up the fallen, and point a lost generation in the direction of Home.

In a recent speech, President George Bush insisted that *"the biggest thing that has happened in the world in my life, in our lives...By the grace of God, America has won the Cold War"* I would not for one moment wish to discredit the remarkable achievement of having accomplished the decline and fall of Soviet Atheistic Communism, but it is not *"the biggest thing"* that has occurred in my life. If there is a heaven to gain, a hell to avoid, and a God to serve, then the saving of lost men and women is life's greatest adventure and challenge. Indeed, it is a *"heavenly vision."*

A BETTER TOMORROW

In conclusion, I must say that my hopes and dreams for this congregation exceed and surpass anything hitherto witnessed. I believe that the best is yet to be and that tomorrow will be better than today. We are but

eight years from the third christian millennium. January 2, 2000 A.D. will mark the first Lord's day in the new century. And I hope to be here, either in the pulpit or pew. It is my prayer that this church on that day will be everywhere spoken of as a congregation which refused to look back, let up, slow down, or back off!

The much-needed expansion of our facilities must remain foremost in our hearts and prayers. Once again it is time to *"Arise and build"*, unafraid and unfettered, believing that our God will raise up others in the 21st Century to complete what we have begun in the 20th Century.

A HEAVENLY VISION

Thus do we go forth in pursuit of *"the heavenly vision"*. Albert Schweitzer, a brilliant author, composer, physician, organist, theologian, and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, left Europe in 1913 to serve as a medical missionary in the deepest jungles of French Equatorial Africa for 52 years. His friends and associates, visiting him in such forbidding circumstances, would often ask, *"Albert Schweitzer, what are you doing here?"* And he would reply, *"I was sent by Jesus Christ."* Thirty-five years ago, fresh out of college, I moved to this small Middle Tennessee town and I too wish to believe that *"I was sent by Jesus Christ."*

PAUL ROGERS' ADVICE TO MINISTERS

WHAT advice would Paul Rogers give to young ministers? The key, he says, is: "What you are is more important than where you are." But he quickly proceeds to offer these insights:

"**FOCUS** on 'what is', instead of what is to be-don't always look to the next place, the larger situation, the larger metro area. Do what you can where you are."

"**LABOR** to present yourself in the community as a nurturer rather than an adversary."

"**LOSE** gracefully. Having a cherished idea voted down doesn't mean you have to move away; some think they have to 'get out to get even.' You won't get everything you want, but if you keep the door open to the future, lots of dreams will come true."

"**LOOK** for the good in the lives of people and express it. You can always make a case for hope or despair. There's always something bad happening, but also something good. Be optimistic."

"**EXEMPLIFY** integrity. Keep your promises, pay your debts, maintain your confidences."

"**BE** available when a crisis arises; especially if you're working in a small town."

"**BALANCE** your commitments: be available, but not enslaved to people. Some peoples' needs are a bottomless pit."

"**DO** lots of phone calling -- you can accomplish a good result, instead of being constantly on the run. But I also make lots of visits."

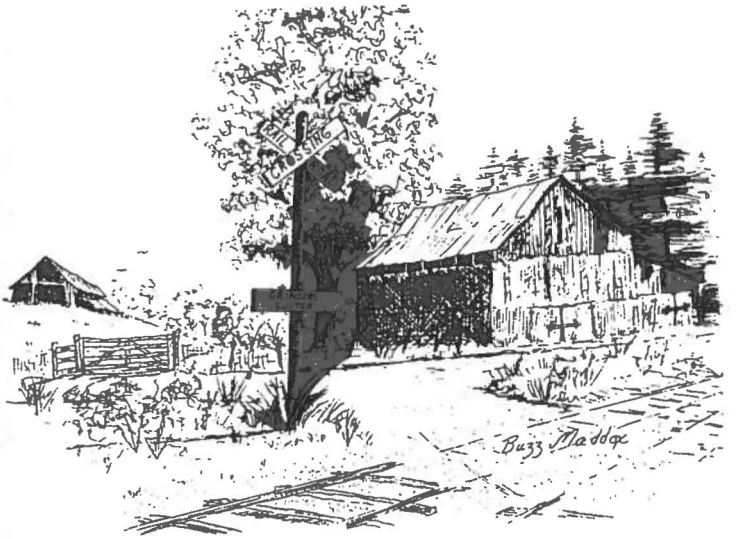
"**WORK** with the people you have. Don't run over them or away from them."

"**DON'T** labor under a constant load of unrealistic expectations. Pray for growth and work for it, but don't be obsessed by statistics. All that God requires is faithfulness, not success. All Noah did was remain faithful; he didn't have much statistical success."

"**DON'T** resign after one bad year. Our growth has been steady, but not sensational; work, pray and do the right things, then sooner or later there will be growth."

CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE JULY, 1992.

DINNER-ON -THE- GROUND



1870 - 1995

Hot Water Gingerbread.

Mix one egg beaten & add

½ cup sugar.

½ cup molasses.

1 Tablespoon melted oles.

½ cup hot water.

Sift flour - add 1½ cups F.

½ teaspoon soda.

1 teaspoon ginger.

½ teaspoon spice

½ teaspoon nutmeg

½ teaspoon mace.

1 teaspoon salt

add to batter Bake ~~?~~ for ½ hour

Mrs. Maude Parris

Mrs. Noah Chesser

Jam Cake

Cin, all spice, Clove

2 slices of margine

2 cups of Sugar

4 Eggs.

1 cup Blackberry Jam

1 cup Butter milk

Tea spoon Baking powder

Tea spoon soda

3 cups flour

Icing

1 cup pineapple

2 cup Sugar

Table spoon of flour

Small piece of Butter

CONGEALED SALAD

Mrs. James W. Derryberry

1 9 oz. can crushed pineapple
1 8 oz. carton cottage cheese
1 pkg. lime jello
1 c. chopped nuts
1/2 pt. cream, whipped
Empty contents of can of pineapple in a pan and boil 3 minutes. Make jello as directed on package and add to the pineapple and boil 2 minutes. Cool. Add nuts and cottage cheese and fold in whipped cream thoroughly. Chill in refrigerator until firm.

PERSIMMON PUDDING

Elizabeth Sesler

1 egg 1 c. sugar
Stir above thoroughly, then add:
2 Tbsp. flour-sifted into above
1/8 tsp. salt
1 1/4 tsp. baking powder
1/2 c. strained persimmon pulp— after being put through a strainer
1/2 c. chopped nuts (pecans)
1 tsp. vanilla
1/4 tsp. cinnamon 1/4 tsp. nutmeg
Pour mixture into a buttered pan, 7 1/2 X 7 1/2 X 2. Preheat oven to 325 degrees and bake 35 minutes or until done. Serves 4. Serve with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

Chess Pie

Mrs. James R. Brown

4 eggs
1½ cups sugar — Beat 5 mins.
½ cup butter
2 tablespoons cream (Carnation Milk) "
2 " corn meal
2 " lemon juice
2 teaspoons vanilla
⅛ teaspoon salt.

Bake 325° – 1 hr

of course this is read crust

LIGHT BREAD

Mrs. Douglas Arnold

2 1/2 cups boiled milk
1/2 cup sugar
Flour 1/2 cake F. yeast
2/3 cup shortening 2 teaspoon salt

At night, boil 2 1/2 cups sweet milk, cook to lukewarm, crumble up 1/2 cake Fleischmann's yeast and add to milk and stir until yeast is dissolved. Add enough flour to make a batter about the consistency of egg bread batter. Put in a deep bowl and set away over night (in winter it is best to set the batter where it will not chill). Next morning beat the batter thoroughly and add 1/2 cup sugar, 2 teaspoons salt, 2/3 cup shortening, work in more flour gradually and knead until dough feels velvety, make into loaves. When double in size, bake 50 minutes in moderate oven. If magic or homemade yeast is used add 1/2 teaspoon soda.

CRESCENTS

Mrs. G.C.Shipp

1/2 lb. butter 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla
2 heaping cups flour 1 cup nuts
4 heaping Tablespoons powdered sugar
Cream butter, sugar, add mixed flour, nuts and vanilla (dough real stiff) shape into crescents and bake, roll in sugar.

RIPE TOMATO PIE

Mrs. John Nicks

4 or 5 very ripe tomatoes-cut fine
1 cup sugar
Crumble 3 homemade biscuits over top
1 stick butter melted and poured over all.
Bake until warm through.

JELLIED CHICKEN

Miss Linda Nicks

4 lb. fowl cooked until tender
Decorate mold with parsley or hard boiled eggs. Pack in meat, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Pour stock and gelatine over chicken(2 T. gelatine to 2 C. stock)

CREAM SALAD DRESSING

Mrs. George Connor

2 eggs or 4 yolks
1 pt. vinegar
1 c. cream either sour or sweet
1 T. mustard 1 T. pepper 1 T. salt
1 T. flour 1/2 cup sugar
Beat egg, add vinegar, stir, add dry ingredients add to first mixture, add cream after the mixture has cooked.

GRAHAM CRACKER PASTRY

Mrs. Ollie L. Bates

16 graham crackers 3 T. sugar
4 T. butter 1 t. cinnamon
Grind crackers, mix thoroughly with butter,sugar and cinnamon and spread in well-greased pie pan.

SWEDISH SLAW

Mrs. Bertha Mathis

1 med. cabbage 1 green sweet pepper
1 onion 1/2 carrot
Chop this and make the following mix
1 cup vinegar 1 tsp. turmeric
1 cup sugar 1 tsp. ground mustard or mustard seed
Boil this for one min, pour over above. Mix together. Keep 2 weeks in covered dish in refrigerator.

CARAMEL ICING

Mrs. Mattie Arnold

2 cups sugar 1/2 cup buttermilk
3/4 stick oleo 1 tsp. soda
1 tsp. vanilla
In large pan cook stirring constantly. Cook until soft ball stage remove. Add vanilla beat until creamy.

OATMEAL COOKIES

Mrs. Harry Blackwell

1 1/2 c. sugar 2 c. flour
1 c. butter 2 c. rolled oats
2 eggs 1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. salt 1 tsp. cloves
1 tsp. soda 1 c. chopped raisins
3/4 c. sweet milk 1 c. broken nut meats
Drop from tsp. on greased cookie sheet and bake in hot oven. Makes about 6 dozen.

CORN LIGHT BREAD

Mrs. Willie Loveless

1 package yeast
2 cups self-rising corn meal
1/2 cup self-rising flour
1/2 cup sugar
1 egg
2 cups buttermilk
2 Tablespoons melted bacon grease
Grease loaf pan, mix dry ingredients. Add liquids. Bake 50 minutes at 375 degrees.

Golden Chiffon Cake

Mrs. E. J. Beasley

2 cups flour
1 1/2 cups sugar
3 level teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup cooking oil
7 unbeaten egg yolks
3/4 cups cold water
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 teaspoon lemon extract

Sift flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt together. Mix well. Add water, oil, and flavorings. Beat well adding one egg at a time. Add 1/2 teaspoon cream of tartar to the 7 egg whites and beat until stiff. Pour the first mixture over the beaten egg whites and fold in well—DO NOT BEAT.Bake in 10 inch tube pan at 325 about 60 minutes. Turn pan upside down, resting edge on something so air can pass under cake. When cook, loosen sides with spatula.

WAFFLES

Mrs. H.E. Dotson

2 1/4 c. flour
1/2 t. salt
2 T. melted butter
3 t. baking powder
1 T. sugar
1 1/2 c. milk
2 eggs

Sift all dry ingredients together twice, mix liquids and combine the two mixtures. Fry on hot, well-greased waffle iron. Serve with syrup or butter and sugar.

BUDDY'S DELIGHT

Mrs. Nixon Huddleston

Cream 1/2 c. butter and 1/2 box confectioner's sugar. Add 1 can crushed pineapple, 3 oranges, 1 cup pecans, 1 egg (whole) beaten together. Add to 1 pt. of stiffly beaten cream. Line pan with graham cracker crumbs. Fill with mixture, top with crackers. Delicious frozen.

BUTTERSCOTCH PIE

Mrs. John Breece

1 1/2 c. brown sugar
1/2 c. butter
2 scant c. milk
4 T. flour
4 eggs
4 t. vanilla

Cook sugar, milk and butter until thick as molasses. Beat yolks, add 2 T. cream, flour and vanilla. Stir slowly into first mixture and cook until thick.

CORN LIGHT BREAD
Elizabeth Caroline Smith Totty

1 qt. mush (1 cup meal)
Let water nearly boil, put meal in little at a time, stir but not boil then put in mixing bowl and add:
1 Tablespoon salt 1 Pt. cold water
Pour cold water over mixture, beat until batter is like corn bread. Put in warm place to rise over night.
Next day add:
1 cup flour 1 cup sugar
1 tsp. soda 1 cup buttermilk
2 Tablespoons melted shortening
If too thin add more meal to batter then add: 1 tsp. baking powder
1 egg
Bake for 2 hours(bake 1 hour at 400 degrees, 1 hour at 375 degrees.) Bake with lid on. Makes three loaves

STEAMED CORNBREAD
Mrs. W. L. Pinkerton

3 cups buttermilk
1 c. flour 3 c. meal 1/2 c. sugar
1 t. salt 2 t. soda 1 egg
Pour into greased baking powder cans and steam for two hours. Then remove tops and bake until brown.

Mrs. Willie Shepard



From Willie's
Recipe For
Broccoli Casserole

2 - 10 oz. pkg. Chopped Broccoli
1 - 10½ oz. Can Mushroom Soup
1 cup Mayonaise
2 eggs, Well beaten
Salt to taste
1 medium Onion, Chopped
Pepper to taste
1 cup Cheddar Cheese, grated
Cook Broccoli, drain well. Combine soup, mayonaise, Onion, salt (I omit salt) & pepper. Add Broccoli. Put in baking dish, Sprinkle Cheese over top.

Melt ½ stick oleo and add
½ pkg. herb seasoned Pepperidge Farm (Blue package)
Crumbs to oleo - Sprinkle over top Casserole -

Bake 45 min in 350° oven

HEAVENLY HASH

Mrs. Ivan Arnold

1/2 pint whipping cream
6 slices pineapple
1/2 cup sugar
6 bananas
1/2 lb. marshmallows
1/2 cup pecans

Whip the cream until stiff. Add sugar, cut the bananas, pineapple,marshmallows and nuts into small pieces and stir into the cream and sugar. Pour into the freezer tray of refrigerator. Do not freeze hard. Serve with Angel Food cake.

KARO DATE NUT CHEWS

Mrs. William Cochran

2 eggs 1 c. dates, cut
3/4 tsp. salt 1 c. nuts
1/2 tsp. almond flavoring
1/2 c. sugar 3/4 c. flour
1/2 c. Karo 1/3 c. powdered sugar

Beat eggs, add salt, almond, sugar, Karo, nuts and dates. Fold in flour. Bake at 375 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from oven and while still hot, cut into 1 1/2 inch squares, shape into ball and roll in powdered sugar.

OATMEAL MUFFINS

Miss Emma Nicks

Soak together for 1 hour:
1 c. rolled oats 1 c. buttermilk
Mix together thoroughly:
1/3 c. soft shortening
1/2 c. brown sugar 1 egg
Sift together:
1 c. sifted flour 1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. soda

Stir in alternately with rolled oats and buttermilk. Fill greased muffin cups 2/3 full. Bake until golden brown. Serve hot. Temperature 400 degrees, 20 to 25 minutes. 12 medium sized muffins.

UNLEAVENED BREAD

2 cups all-purpose flour, or 1 cup all-purpose flour and 1 cup whole wheat flour
2 teaspoons salt
1/2 pint whipping cream

Sift flour and salt together and add whipping cream. Stir until mixture balls and cleans the sides of the bowl. Turn out onto a lightly floured bowl and knead a couple of minutes. Cover a cookie sheet with foil and roll dough as thinly as possible over foil. Let stand 30 minutes and roll again. Continue in this manner until dough stops shrinking. Score in squares of desired size with a seam marker or other tool. Bake in a 300-degree oven for 30 to 40 minutes, or until browned. This bread freezes well. If frozen, place in a warm oven for about 10 minutes before using.

DEVILS FOOD CAKE
Mrs. Claude B. Stephenson

1 c. shortening
2 c. sugar
1 c. buttermilk
1 tsp. soda dissolved in 1 Tbsp. warm water
5 whole eggs, beaten
2 3/4 c. flour 1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 c. cocoa with water added to it to make smooth paste

Cream shortening and sugar. Add other ingredients in order named, adding eggs and flour alternately. Beat cocoa paste in last. Bake in three 8-inch pans at 350 degrees, 25 to 30 minutes.

CHOCOLATE FUDGE ICING

1/3 c. cocoa
1/3 c. white corn syrup
2 c. sugar
2/3 c. sweet milk

Cook until it forms soft firm ball in cold water. Add a pinch of salt and 1 Tbsp. butter. Beat until right consistency to spread.