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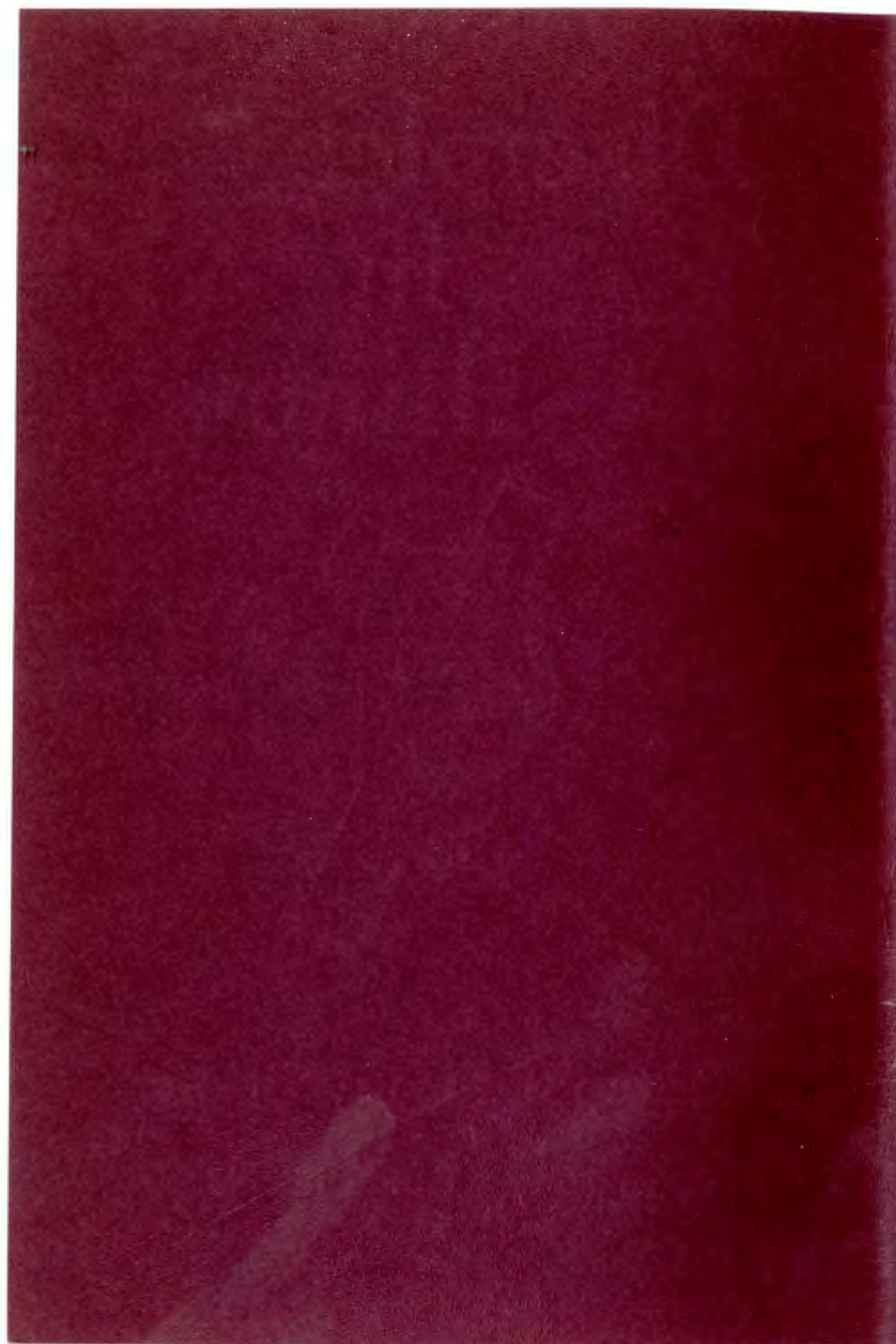
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Disciples in Illinois



Prepared for the
Centennial Convention
of the
Disciples of Christ in Illinois
1950



Disciples
in
Illinois

1850-1950

Centennial Convention
Disciples of Christ in Illinois
JACKSONVILLE, ILL.
1950

*Into the acres of the newborn state
He poured his strength, and plowed his ancient name,
And, when the traders followed him, he stood
Towering above their furtive souls and tame . . .*

*Here lie the dead, who gave the church their best
Under his fiery preaching of the word.*

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*Who can pass a village church
By night in these clean prairie lands
Without a touch of Spirit-power?
So white and fixed and cool it stands.*

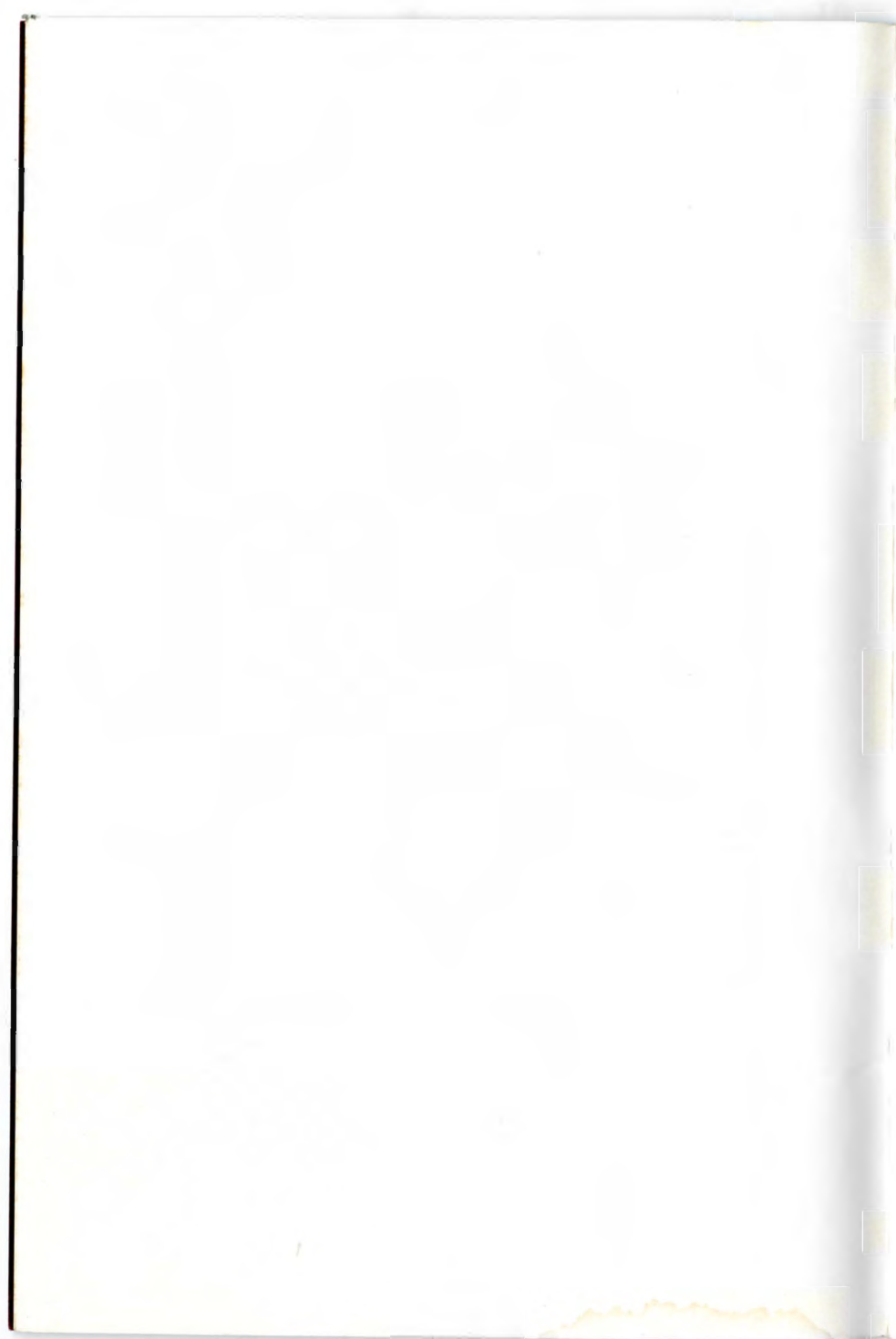
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*Some city on the breast of Illinois
No wiser and no better at the start
By faith shall rise redeemed, by faith shall rise
Bearing the western glory in her heart.*

VACHEL LINDSAY

FOREWORD

The few lines which form the frontispiece of this souvenir are an outline of the history of the Disciples of Christ in Illinois: from farmer preacher to village church to the city struggling for its redemption. They were written by Vachel Lindsay, renowned American poet, native of Illinois, member of the First Christian Church, Springfield. The pages which follow expand that outline and tell something of what the Disciples of Christ have done in Illinois, and something of what Illinois, with its great prairies and its immense city on Lake Michigan, has done to them.



Chapter 1

THE SETTING

The miracle of the North American Continent is a faint ridge of land that runs from the headwaters of the Ohio, westward and north for twenty-five hundred miles to the vicinity of Glacier Park. South of this ridge lies the vastness of the Mississippi Valley. North and east lie the waters of the St. Lawrence system, forming a chain of the world's largest lakes before they tumble over the Niagara cliff into a thousand mile gulf that meets the Atlantic. Either one of these two great watersheds alone would suffice for the home of a great nation upon the face of the earth. The miracle is that for all the intents and purposes of civilization, these two vast areas are one. Nowhere else in the world do two comparable valleys lie with neither physical nor cultural barriers between them to hinder the passage of man and his goods and his ideas.

If you study the Great Lakes, three points suggest themselves as the major crossroads. The head of Lake Superior is in a cold clime, however, and adjacent to the one section where the dividing ridge rises somewhat mountainously. The head of Lake Erie has equitable climate, but it is not in the center of the whole system. Three hundred miles to the West, and virtually at the center of the continent lies



the end of Lake Michigan. And at this point, the dividing ridge is more faint than anywhere else. You can hardly find it; twenty miles from the shore of the Lake you can stand in a flat field and know that on one side water flows to the Atlantic, and on the other side to the Gulf. As you face south, there is a land of prairies. Nearly four hundred miles long, and one hundred and fifty miles wide, this land is bounded by the waters of mighty rivers and traversed by large ones. Across the broad center of these prairies is laid a belt of earth's richest soil. Before the white man came, the grasses grew lush, and the pioneer knew that nowhere else would that giant grass he called corn grow so well. It was a blessed land; it was accessible; it was at the heart of a new world.

It was inevitable that Illinois would have a double development. Its rich earth would teem with farms; the faint ridge at the end of Lake Michigan would teem with commerce, and industry would come in to serve both.

When Illinois was populated, two great streams of migration poured into it. One came from New England, through the valley of the Mohawk and up the lakes to form a northern tier of counties. Another stream of settlers came off the Alleghenies and out of Kentucky, up the rivers into the central and southern parts of the new state. Among the latter settlers were many who had recently been awakened to a new vision of the church of Christ. They were aflame with the desire that this church should find again the unity of its earliest days. Bearing their New Testaments

which told of that early church, these settlers came onto the prairies and began to preach and establish congregations. Their enterprise was most successful numerically in those sections of the state to which migration carried them in greatest numbers. In the great crossroads city of the north they did not succeed so well in terms of numbers. Yet that city was to be important for their movement. It was to confront them with a challenge and an opportunity. Chicago was to become a challenge because it came to contain in the twentieth century the key problems of American urban civilization in their most complicated form. These problems were to be duplicated not only throughout Illinois, but across the continent. Chicago gave the Disciples an opportunity to translate their gospel into terms that would be appealing to the man of the twentieth century and capable of solving the predicaments of the modern world. In the middle of the twentieth century, the state of Illinois remains exceedingly important for the whole brotherhood of the Disciples of Christ. Its great agricultural section with flourishing towns and cities is the backbone of the nation. Its great metropolis is the epitome of American civilization. Each confronts the Disciples of Christ with work to do. This booklet tells something of the way in which Disciples in Illinois have worked together so far to accomplish their tasks, and of the situation in which they find themselves as the twentieth century enters its second half, and as they enter their second century of cooperative endeavor in the name of Jesus Christ.

Chapter 2

THE BEGINNINGS

From the beginning, the course of history favored the cause of the Disciples in the state of Illinois. The new religious movements centering around Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell were born in the Ohio River valley in the states of Kentucky, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. Within a few years, a mighty tide of migration began which carried hundreds of thousands of pioneers from these lands into the newly organized states of the Northwest Territory.

Several factors cleared the way for a tremendous influx of population into Illinois. The Indian menace was not as great as in other frontier territories. The Indian treaties of 1795 and 1804 had pacified many tribes and had opened much new land for settlement. Later the Black Hawk War (1832) ended in



a decisive defeat for the Indians and resulted in their complete removal from the state. The lure of the wide, fertile prairies attracted many pioneer farmers especially after the 1818 action of Congress lowering the price of land to \$1.25 an acre. Also in 1818, the new territory was accepted into the Union as a state with all the rights of full citizenship for its residents. But the greatest

stimulant to migration was the appearance of a new form of transportation. In the 1820's, the slow, tedious travel by foot and oxcart was giving way to the relatively safe and easy journey by riverboat. Now powered by steam, these boats could take their passengers upstream from the Ohio into the Wabash, Mississippi, Kaskaskia, and Illinois rivers. An easy access had been found to many new territories.

The slow trickle of migration from the Ohio River valley which raised the Illinois population from twelve thousand in 1810 to fifty-five thousand in 1820, soon became a flood which tripled the population in each of the succeeding two decades and brought it to almost a million in 1850. Here and there among the settlers were men whose spirits flamed with the new faith in religious unity through a creedless Christianity. The Disciples moved into Illinois by oxcart and riverboat, planting their roots deep in the soil of the new land. This was not a planned campaign of expansion but the simple result of the migration of pioneer converts who built their homes on the fertile prairies of our state.

On July 17, 1819, the Barney's Prairie Christian Church was organized in Wabash County, eight miles north of the site of Mt. Carmel. This church in the southeastern part of the state, near the Wabash River, has remained active down to the present day and is recognized as the oldest Disciple congregation in Illinois.

Six weeks later, the nearby Coffee Creek church was constituted with seven charter members. In

1882, the place of worship was moved a half mile to the town of Keensburg and the church has been known by that name ever since.

A third church appeared the following year in the center of the state in the territory now known as Sangamon County. It was established under the leadership of Stephen England, a native of Virginia who grew to manhood in Kentucky where he became a friend of Barton W.



Stone. This church was first known as Antioch but later as Cantrall when it was moved to the town of that name.

The next eight years saw the founding of five more Disciple congregations which are still in existence. Two of these are near the Wabash River: Little Prairie (located near Albion) in Edwards County and Little Grove in Edgar County. The other three are in the central part of the state: Berlin in Sangamon County, Sweet Water in Menard County, and Armington in Tazewell County. By the close of the decade of the 1820's, the church was firmly planted in two sections of the state by a handful of early congregations of which there are at least eight still in existence.

The decade of the thirties brought a sharp increase in the rate of establishment of the new churches. In ten years the territory of the Disciples expanded from two small areas to a broad band a hundred miles wide reaching across the state from White and Edgar Counties in the southeast to Pike and McDonough Counties in the west. We know of fifty long-lived churches that sprang

up in these years. There probably were many others that have ceased to exist and still others whose age is not known.

In the 1840's, the Disciples spread into the northwestern and southern parts of the state, leaving only the northeast and a smaller area in the southwest to be conquered after the mid-century: About the same number of churches were established in this decade as in the previous one. By the beginning of the year 1850, there were 106 churches of which we have record. The Disciples had come to Illinois to stay.

The Illinois Disciple churches of this period were predominantly rural and small, struggling valiantly in an atmosphere charged with sectarian strife. The misunderstanding and malicious distortion of their teachings on the part of other groups are hard for us to comprehend. On the other hand, many of their members were won over from other churches. The average size of Illinois Disciple congregations in 1850 was 61 members as compared to 241 today.

It was customary among many of the older churches for the charter members to sign an agreement describing the purpose of their fellowship. Typical of the simplicity of these documents is the one signed at Hittle's Grove (Armington) in 1829:

We, the undersigned, do give ourselves to the Lord and to each other as a church of Jesus Christ to be governed by his word contained in the Old and New Testaments.

The covenant of the Pittsfield church, signed in 1836, represents a slight change in position from

that of the earlier document by the omission of a reference to the Old Testament:

We Whose names are hereinafter written, acknowledging ourselves as subjects of the King of Kings the Lord Jesus Christ, having submitted in humble obedience to his command, and taking the New Testament Scriptures as our only rule of faith and practice, do hereby associate ourselves together as disciples of Christ, to keep the ordinances of the Lord's House and to be known as the Church of Christ at Pittsfield.

The earliest Illinois churches were established before the followers of Stone and the followers of Campbell had agreed to unite. Hence some of the churches were "Stonite", some were "Campbellite" and some were mixed. Jacksonville and Carrollton, at least, each had two churches, one "Stonite" and one "Campbellite." However, there were only a handful of Illinois churches established before the January 1, 1832, agreement between the leaders of the two groups and these without a known exception, soon joined in the united movement. When Barton W. Stone came to Jacksonville in the latter part of the year 1832 and found the two separate groups, he refused to join either until they united. As N. S. Haynes puts it in his *History of the Disciples of Christ in Illinois*, "he laid his strong but tender hand upon the two separated bodies and left them united in one." The same thing occurred in Carrollton soon afterward.

The Disciple churches in Illinois were still young and few in number when they began searching for ways to do together what they could not

do separately. One of their greatest needs was for traveling evangelists to aid in the establishment of new churches and assist the weaker ones. Very few, if any, were in a position alone to hire a man for such work. As early as 1834, a group of men including Barton W. Stone met in Jacksonville to face this problem. This meeting resulted in the hiring of John Rigdon as an evangelist for a period of six months and an appeal was sent out to all the congregations in the state to unite in a voluntary association for the spread of the gospel. One response to this need was the establishment during the 1840's of a number of "cooperations", a loosely knit type of organization among the churches of a given area. Several of these lasted for a number of years and kept a good many evangelists in the field. Typical of the meetings held by these groups was the one in 1851 in the Bethel meetinghouse in Shelby County. At this gathering, six churches from Shelby, Moultrie, and Macon counties subscribed a total of \$260 and chose two evangelists to hire for work in this area.



To fill another need as well as the need for co-operative evangelism, another type of gathering arose which became known as the "State Meeting" or the "Annual Meeting." As stated in the call sent out for the 1843 meeting, the objects were "to cultivate acquaintance with each other,

to hear of the success of the labors of our teaching brethren, to promote brotherly love, advance the cause of union among the followers of Jesus, and, by teaching the truths of the Bible, edify and instruct each other and all who may attend." The records indicate that at least the following of these fellowship meetings took place:

- 1836 in Jacksonville
- 1839 in Pittsfield
- 1840 in Springfield
- 1842 in Springfield
- 1843 in Bloomington
- 1845 in Pittsfield
- 1848 in Walnut Grove (Eureka)

By the turn of the mid-century, it became evident to many that a more concerted and continued effort was necessary to meet successfully these needs for evangelism and a strong, united fellowship. Consequently, on September 20, 1850, the first State Convention of the Christian Church in Illinois convened in Shelbyville with nineteen members present. These delegates represented not only local churches but counties and "cooperations" as well. Other congregations were represented by letters. The first and principal business transacted was the formation of "The Bible Society of the State of Illinois, auxiliary to the American Christian Bible Society" and "The Illinois State Missionary Society." For the latter, a constitution was adopted and officers were elected.

Chapter 3

THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY, THE CONVENTION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Within a year after the establishment of a national convention among Disciples of Christ, the cooperative spirit led to the formation of a convention and state missionary society in Illinois. The century for Christ which these pages commemorate, is the century which began when Illinois Disciples made the decision that there should be a formal organization for the promotion of the gospel across the prairies between the Wabash and the Mississippi.

An important part of the story of that century is the struggle of Illinois Disciples to discover a structure for their convention which would truly reflect their fundamental beliefs about the Christian church.

The Illinois Christian Missionary Society and the Convention of Illinois Disciples of Christ came into existence together a century ago. By 1858, at the latest, a written constitution regulated these organizations. This document is the oldest of its kind among interchurch groups of Illinois Disciples. It provided for an "annual meeting" of the state society. The min-



utes of the annual meeting of 1858 show that the yearly assembly of the state society considered itself the only "authorized mass meeting" of the Churches of Christ. In other words, the society and the convention were identified with each other. Quite early in the life of the convention the question was raised whether, since it was the assembly of the state missionary society, it could receive the reports of other societies of Illinois Disciples. The question remained unsolved except that in 1883 an amendment to the constitution made it perfectly clear that the state society was the "Illinois Christian Missionary Convention."

So definite was this assertion, that it is little wonder that the Illinois women's missionary society which began its vigorous life in 1874 continued to hold its own assembly in distinction from the assembly of the I.C.M.S.; the meetings were held at the same place each year, and one immediately followed the other. Nonetheless, two distinct conventions were really being held. As the organized life of Illinois Disciples grew, the confusion only mounted.

Fortunately, the process of alteration and amendment of the constitution had been accepted from the earliest days. The constitution of 1858 states that the "society shall have the power to alter and amend this constitution" at the discretion of a "majority of two-thirds in convention." This flexibility enabled Illinois Disciples, in 1922, to vote a new constitution. It established the convention of Illinois Disciples of Christ as the

primary and autonomous gathering to which the several societies and organizations could report. This is the structure which pertains today.

The new constitution has as its object the promotion of increasing cooperation among the missionary, benevolent, and educational agencies of the brotherhood within Illinois, and, in addition, it seeks "to affiliate in every way possible with the International Convention." The convention functions by holding "an annual convention which shall receive reports of all cooperating agencies and make recommendations to said agencies."

The question of the constituency of the convention has remained, throughout a century, an important question. During the first fifty years a clear distinction was maintained between delegates and visitors. More recently, the only differentiation which has held has been that between those who pay registrations and those who do not. Registration is not, however, a credential qualifying one to vote. Any Disciple in attendance at sessions may vote.

From one point of view the present procedure may be considered the more democratic. From another point of view it may be considered the more irresponsible and unbusiness-like. At any rate, the problem of the convention constituency reflects a persisting tension within the brotherhood between the desire to maintain individual and congregational autonomy at the same time that cooperative enterprise is carried on. In 1945 it was recommended that a committee be appointed "to study a plan for more representative pro-

cedure." The suggestion favored "conventions of representatives selected by our congregations." Some feel that such a move would be in the direction of what H. H. Peters called a "super-organization." Others feel that without some degree of centralization Illinois Disciples will continually have to face the question raised by John T. Jones in 1865: "Must we never use a power because it may be abused?"

These constitutional and convention concerns are important because they are for the body of Illinois Disciples the structure which upholds their activities. Just as the past century has seen earnest efforts to discover the best possible structure, so it is to be hoped that the new century will be characterized by a similar flexibility of mind regarding formal arrangements, that they may be constantly brought into the best possible plan for the promotion of the Christian cause.

The growth among our churches which convention and society have made possible is part of the living process that the constitutional structure has made possible. That growth must be understood in two ways, and it is difficult to decide which is the more important kind of growth. There has been, by virtue of the Illinois Christian Missionary Society, a growth in the total number of churches and members in the state. There has also been growth in cooperation and brotherhood.



During the early days of the society, there was exceedingly rapid growth in sheer numbers. Those were the days when the whole state of Illinois was expanding rapidly. Chicago increased 400 per cent in population in the ten years between 1850 and 1860. It is, therefore, not surprising to learn that in 1862 when the total membership of Disciples in Illinois did not exceed 35,000 there were 5,394 additions to the churches in that single year.

While the new towns were being established on the prairies and on the routes of travel, the I. C. M. S. was nurturing new and struggling churches. In 1920, J. F. Jones was quoted as having said that "not less than 300 of our 700 churches owe their existence to the Illinois Christian Missionary Society." Among those churches, some which have risen to later importance are the Englewood Christian Church, Chicago; University Place Christian Church, Champaign; First Christian Church, Joliet; First Christian Church, Quincy; Central Christian Church, Peoria; First Christian Church, Waukegan; and the churches in Harvey, Princeton, Galesburg, Sterling, Pekin, and Cairo.

The second kind of growth which convention and society have promoted has been growth in cooperation. This kind of growth has conserved and enhanced the gains made in the earlier periods. To the quantitative advance it has added the qualitative values of cooperation and brotherhood in vital and real ways.

During the 1860's, the churches were organized into district cooperations. In 1875, county units for cooperation were established. Under the leadership of evangelists and superintendents reports were made to the state conventions. Of these geographical units, the one with the most continuous record of achievements is the association of churches in Chicago. For nearly fifty years the Chicago Disciples Union has been vigorous enough to maintain its own full-time executive secretary.

Perhaps the most dramatic instance of the way in which the Illinois Christian Missionary Society has served to deepen the spiritual and cooperative life of Illinois Disciples is seen in the story of the growth of missionary zeal. In 1889 only 10 per cent of all the churches showed evidence of a



true missionary spirit, and together they contributed only \$1,272.00 to state missions. By 1926, 50 per cent of the churches had been awakened to missionary responsibility. They contributed \$26,000.00 in that year. By 1949, the total which Illinois Disciples were contributing for all missionary and benevolent purposes was \$394,093.00; the total for local expenses was \$2,485,277.

Another indication of the way in which society and convention have heightened the sense of brotherhood among Illinois Disciple churches is the increased proportion of those churches which have adopted a responsible attitude toward re-

porting their statistics so that all might profit by an understanding of the condition and welfare of our total state brotherhood. In 1894 there were 735 congregations in the state. Only 211 responded to the request for statistical information for an annual report. By 1910, 511 churches were reporting. Since the advent of the national yearbook in 1920, the state yearbook has been discontinued, but the responsibility of Illinois churches of Disciples toward the matter of reporting remains high.

From early days, Disciples have exploited the printed page to further their fellowship. The church paper has been one part of the answer of a democratically inspired people to the alternative of a closely knit central hierarchy.

The earliest papers were private ventures with a high infant mortality rate. The pioneer effort was probably *The Christian Sentinel* published in Peoria. A monthly, *The Bible Advocate*, which appeared in 1861 was "the recognized organ of the state society." The *Advocate* became *The Weekly Gospel Echo* in 1862 and existed for about three years. By 1873 *The Christian* had become the voice of the state cause. Since 1910 there have been five different papers issued consecutively from the state office. *The Illinois Christian* is now the state paper for all the cooperative agencies of the state.

After the initial stage of evangelism to the rapidly increasing adult population of the new state, the major channel for the expansion and conservation of the churches became the Sunday

School movement. In 1865 a district report stated that "there was little interest taken in this matter of the Sunday School enterprise." Yet it was only ten years later that interest had grown to such an extent that a new State Sunday School Association held its first convention, and by 1890 there were five hundred schools enrolling 47,075 pupils.

From 1875 to 1899, the State Sunday School Association held its own conventions. By 1889 attendance at these meetings rivaled or surpassed that of the state missionary convention. The two conventions were merged. In 1918, through an agreement with the American Christian Missionary Society, the state Sunday School work became a part of the Bible School department of the national organization. This kind of relationship continued when the United Christian Missionary Society was formed; the Illinois Christian Education Commission, founded in 1932, is, by its constitution of 1933, an Illinois branch of the United Society.

On December 31, 1950, O. T. Mattox will have completed twenty-five years of service to religious education among Illinois Disciples. Under his leadership the youth conferences of the state have emerged as an important evangelical force. Beginning in 1925 with one conference of ninety students and fifteen leaders, the movement grew by 1940 to six self-supporting conferences with 519 students and 105 faculty members. There were 948 students in the youth conferences in 1949. Over one hundred young people have

made the decision while at conference to become full-time Christian leaders.

The longest continuous record of service in the annals of organized work among Disciples of Christ in Illinois is that of Miss Leta Davis who came to the office of the State Missionary Society in 1916. In the subsequent thirty-four years, under three state secretaries she has served as the state office secretary. During this period, she also served for a time as state leader for Christian Endeavor.

Such is the outline of one hundred years of cooperative accomplishment among Illinois Disciples of Christ. Behind this social achievement, and essential to it, has been the personal devotion of unnumbered and unnamed hundreds and thousands. When N. S. Haynes resigned as state secretary in 1885 he said, "I have probably accomplished neither what you expected nor I desired. . . . Such as the work has been, it is submitted to the considerate judgment of my brethren and in the fear of God, who only knows the thorough conscientiousness and unknown anxieties that have entered into it."


Chapter 4

ILLINOIS CHRISTIAN WOMEN AT WORK

"The love of Christ constraineth us." For seventy-six years this text has inspired the women among the Illinois churches of Disciples of Christ. Just as the women of his own day found in the way of life of Jesus of Nazareth an inspiration to worship and service, so the women of this century have been inspired by his words. In the early days of his church, women discovered the work that they could do on behalf of his religion: Priscilla opened her home to house a church; Dorcas was full of good works and almsdeeds; Phoebe was a servant of the church; Lydia, a seller of purple, was a businesswoman given to Christian hospitality.

In the early days of any church of Disciples of Christ in Illinois, women worshiped and served. Churches and Sunday schools were in their homes.

Ministers and brethren were the recipients of their hospitality. They were teachers, helpers in Christ, and evangelists. Though seldom listed



as members of the church board, or even of church committees, these women with little money of their own became businesswomen for the church. They cooked, they served, they decorated agricultural booths at fairs. They were working to pay

for church buildings and parsonages, and often enough to raise money for the minister's salary. Many stories could be told of churches saved for their communities because a few women continued to set the table of the Lord therein until new leadership could be found. The women, constrained by the love of Christ, became servants of his church.

They reached beyond the church to help the needy of the community when occasion arose. Through Dorcas societies, Ladies' Aids, and Willing Workers' groups they met those needs with food, clothing, hospitality, the work of their hands and their needles, and the sympathy of their hearts. No historical record has been kept of such groups, but every church knows the significant contribution that they made to its own life.

Impelled by fundamental Christian convictions and virtues, it was inevitable that Illinois women would become active in forming an organization which would endeavor to obey Christ's command to "Go ye into all the world." Out of the prayers of Caroline Neville Pearre there came the conviction that she must rouse Christian church women to their responsibility for publishing the tidings of Christ's love and his message of salvation to all the world. Early in 1874, Mrs. Pearre sent letters to friends in several states, calling them to a meeting during the National convention in Cincinnati.

Caroline Neville was reared at Mackinaw, Illinois. She received her education there and at

Walnut Grove Academy (now Eureka College). She taught school near her home town and at the Academy. Naturally, one of her letters was sent to a friend in Eureka, Elmira J. Dickinson. Miss Dickinson wanted to be a missionary. Since the Disciples had as yet no successful foreign work, she had applied to two boards of other communions. But she had been rejected. Caroline Neville's letter opened her eyes to a new road to missionary service—the establishment of missionary enterprise by women among the Disciples of Christ.

As a result of Mrs. Pearre's letters, societies were organized during the summer of 1874 in Eureka, Jacksonville, Bloomington and Chicago. Fortunately, accurate records have been made of the progress of this movement; even the minutes of the first state meeting have been preserved. At noon, August 12, 1874, at the close of the state convention meeting at Eureka, an announcement invited the women "to meet at the church at half past two o'clock this afternoon to consult about engaging in missionary work." About forty women came to this meeting where they learned of Mrs. Pearre's proposal and of the four Illinois societies already in existence. They were asked to form societies in their own churches, and to send delegates to the national convention where, it was hoped, a central women's board for missions might be formed. After discussion it was voted to form a state organization. Officers were elected with Miss Dickinson as president. A collection of \$5.41 was taken as the beginning of a state fund.

Thus, the Illinois Christian Woman's Board of Missions was formed, the first such state organization to be formed, antedating the national Christian Woman's Board of Missions by about six weeks. When the national board was formed at Cincinnati, of the seventy-five women present, at least ten were from Illinois. In this way our Illinois women shared in the formation of "the first women's organization in the country to carry on both home and foreign mission work, to employ both men and women, and to be managed entirely by women."

The purpose and program of the Board were study, service, and systematic giving, undergirded by prayer and consecration. Their watchword became, "The love of Christ constraineth us," and with the courage of that dedication they moved ahead in a day when women's place in the church definitely bore the sign, "Blessed are the meek."

By 1880, thirty local church societies were reported in Illinois. It was decided that a state organizer was needed. Miss Dickinson undertook that task, meeting much antagonism since Paul's admonition concerning women in church was often legalistically observed. However, there were many friendly welcomes, and some amusing experiences. The minutes of the Board meeting for 1881 tell that Miss Dickinson had proved "that a woman of tact, sense, and intelligence, as well as piety, was needed to do this work." Succeeding workers have had much



of the spirit of Elmira Dickinson of whom it was said, "Her work in the state cannot be estimated in figures—it is written in the hearts that she touched and wakened."

Illinois was the first state to engage full-time field workers, later known as state secretaries. Many fine women served in this capacity. Part-time volunteer workers are numbered by the hundreds. Because of their years of service and contribution to state, national and interdenominational work, a few women must be specially mentioned: Anna Mae Hale was a state secretary and national worker in the first twenty-five-year period; Lura V. Thompson, gave twenty-nine years to state and national work; Jennie Call served eight years as state secretary; Henrietta Clark was state treasurer for seventeen years; Mrs. Lulu C. Hunter devoted thirteen years as a board member and state secretary; Helen Spaulding after four years as state secretary and several years as a national youth worker is now in interdenominational work; Mrs. Stella C. Peck served for twenty-three years, fifteen of them in the office of state secretary. The present state secretary is Mrs. L. A. Crown.

Through close cooperation with the national board, the Illinois Christian Women's Board of Missions (I. C. W. B. M.) shared in the planning and building of the program of home and foreign mission work. Many suggestions for the work came from Illinois, and were often first tried out in Illinois. Board minutes for 1878 report correspondence suggesting a woman's missionary paper. In 1882 *Missionary Tidings* was begun. In

1901, a state paper called the *C. W. B. M. Quarterly* was launched; later it was enlarged and re-named *Illinois Mission Leaves*. It has continued in varied format till the present time.

Perhaps the greatest single contribution to missionary activity which has come out of Illinois began in 1882 when Mary Kingsbury went out to India. Her great example has been followed by many other Illinois girls.

In 1889, the Illinois state board recommended to the national board that one day be set apart annually as C. W. B. M. day. Such a day was observed in Eureka one year before it became a national observance by vote of the convention. It is now known as Woman's Day in our churches.

Through their organization, the Christian women of Illinois have consistently promoted missionary education for children, young people, and adults in our churches. Because they have helped in every major missionary enterprise of our brotherhood, the women of Illinois today look with gratitude upon their past achievements. At first the sums of money which they gave seemed small and unpromising. The initial plan of systematic giving was ten cents per month. The "brethren" were first amused, but were later amazed when the sums grew mightily! It was a far cry from the original \$5.41 to the \$56,000.00 offering of the Golden Jubilee Year. Gifts have fluctuated with economic



conditions, but they had reached more than \$59,000.00 by 1949. Major projects in which the women of Illinois have shared have been the Golden Jubilee celebration, the Centennial advance in which Illinois showed the largest growth in membership among the states, the sending of the steamer "Illinois" to the Belgian Congo, contributions to buildings of Home Missions institutions, a full share in the Emergency Million, and the "Fields Are White" campaign during which Illinois societies increased their gifts by one-third for each of two years in order to send out new missionaries.

In 1919 the C. W. B. M. joined with other foreign and home missions boards to form the United Christian Missionary Society. The I. C. W. B. M., in line with this development, became the I. C. W. M. S. At that time the women were contributing half of the total sum given by our people for missions. They do so to this day. Through the years, Illinois women have continued to share in the planning and work of the United Society through membership on its boards of managers and trustees.

Although from the first an autonomous group, the I. C. W. M. S. has always maintained active cooperation with other state organizations of Disciples of Christ. For many years, a separate session was held during state and district conventions for women's work. With the reorganization of the convention in 1922, the I. C. W. M. S. became one of its reporting and sustaining agencies. A glance at the audience of the convention is proof

that the support of the women is by no means only financial.

Always alert to the interests of church women, young matrons' groups, and business and professional women's guilds have been promoted. In many churches women's councils have been established to coordinate all the women's groups of the congregation.

The story of the I. C. W. M. S. has been one of continual growth on behalf of the original purpose and program of study, service, and gifts, undergirded by prayer and consecration. It has been a story of growth also because of continued cooperation with all the state and national work of the Disciples of Christ.

It is in accord with this spirit of cooperation that in 1950 the Illinois Christian Women's Missionary Society has become the Illinois Christian Women's Fellowship. Illinois women are joining hands and hearts with the women of the whole brotherhood of Disciples of Christ in an enlarged program of study and service for all women of the church. With prayer and consecration, they move forward under the watchword, "That which we have seen and heard we declare unto you, that you may have fellowship with us, for truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his son, Jesus Christ."

Chapter 5

HIGHER EDUCATION

In 1847, a pioneer Disciple preacher living at Walnut Grove established a school for girls and enrolled a number of scholars from adjacent communities. In its first midwinter, an epidemic collapsed the venture. Nothing daunted, in the following year the citizens of the community started the work again through an agreement with Asa Fisher, a recent graduate of Alexander Campbell's Bethany College in West Virginia. The success of the new school in its first year led to its formal organization in 1849 as Walnut Grove Academy. Several years later, Walnut Grove became Eureka, and the Academy became a college.



Today *Eureka College* keeps alive the traditions which over a century ago launched Illinois Disciples of Christ on their way to building a system of institutions of higher education.

The need for higher education was quickly recognized by church leaders of a century ago. The academy was endorsed by the state meeting at Abingdon in 1852 both as a school for the liberal education of young men and women, and as a school for the preparation of Christian ministers. It was in 1855 that the state legislature granted the charter whereby Walnut Grove Academy became Eureka College. Greatest credit

for this advance step probably belongs to Mr. Ben Major who had moved to Walnut Grove from Kentucky in order to free his slaves.

During its first forty years, the college graduated only one hundred and seventy-six men and women, but among them was an unduly large proportion who were to become state and national leaders in missionary work and great preachers among the Disciples, not only in Illinois, but across the nation.

From 1890 to 1907, the college grew in enrollment, resources and curriculum under the presidencies of Carl Johann, J. H. Hardin, and R. E. Hieronymus. Advancement continued under H. O. Pritchard who was president from 1913 to 1919, and during the presidency of Bert Wilson from 1923 to 1928. In 1939 the Single Subject Study System was adopted. Resources for the study of religion have been increased and an increasing number of prospective church leaders enrolled. Dr. Burrus Dickinson has been president since 1939.

Eureka College is today the one church-related college of Disciples of Christ in the state of Illinois. Like Disciple pioneers in other states, early Illinois Disciples tended to overreach themselves in the establishment of schools. Abingdon College was opened in April, 1853, by Patrick H. Murphy and John C. Reynolds. After a few prosperous years its troubles began to accumulate. In 1884 it saved its traditions by merger with Eureka College. Six other Disciple collegiate institutions were shortlived. Berea College,

founded at Jacksonville in 1854 was suspended after four years. A young ladies seminary founded by William T. Major at Bloomington in 1856 was closed a decade later when public schools became numerous. Southern Illinois College at Carbondale had lasting significance in so far as its three years set the stage for a state normal school established in 1869. Bastian Seminary, Sullivan, opened in 1868, but lack of support led to its close in five years. An industrial school flourished at Alma from 1896 to 1900. From 1881 to 1887 Christian Collegiate Institution offered courses in Bible, business and teacher training at Metropolis.

Illinois Disciples are fortunate that, amidst the trials and tribulations that beset so many schools, the college which reaches back to the origins of educational interests among Illinois Disciples has been the one that has been chosen for survival. The continuing affection of Illinois Disciples for Eureka College is best marked by its annual commencement which is the occasion of a pilgrimage of Disciples from many parts of the state to the college.



During the 1890's, by good fortune a vigorous group of young Disciples became related, in various ways, to the new University of Chicago. Graduate education for the ministry of the

churches was just beginning to be accepted as the ideal. These young men realized and laid hold of the opportunity to make the graduate facilities of the new university available to Disciple ministerial students by the establishment of *The Disciples Divinity House* in 1894. Herbert L. Willett was elected as dean and served until 1921.

The Disciples Divinity House, from the first, attracted strong students, but through three decades it was looked upon with some suspicion by the churches. It took a whole generation for the Disciples of Christ in general to discover that the level of education represented by the Disciples House is not only a safe level, but the level necessary if Christianity is to remain abreast of the problems of the modern world.

Today, the Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago remains unique among Disciples' educational ventures; it is the one institution for ministerial training which the Disciples have succeeded in establishing in direct affiliation with a major American University. Consequently, it has become a rallying point for the intellectual leadership of the Disciples throughout the nation through lectureships, seminars and institutes.

In 1921, W. E. Garrison became dean of the Disciples Divinity House, inaugurating the building fund which reached its culmination in 1928. Dr. Edward Scribner Ames became dean in 1927, and his name is imperishably united with the way of life that was established in the building that was erected during his first year in office. A rapid development of the endowment funds through the

next dozen years placed the House in good financial condition by 1940. The adequate living quarters of the House, its select library of Disciple literature, and the Chapel of the Holy Grail, an outstanding example of small chapel architecture in America, further the major interests of the House in ministerial education and research into the history and meaning of the brotherhood of Disciples. An appreciable number of scholarships are available to worthy aspirants for ministerial training. Dr. Ames retired as dean in 1945, becoming dean emeritus. After one year as acting dean, Dr. W. B. Blakemore became dean in 1946. In the centennial year of 1950, the Disciples Divinity House has the largest enrollment of candidates for the graduate degree of Bachelor of Divinity in its history. Its summer session, and other opportunities for advanced study, serve ministers, missionaries, state secretaries, and others already engaged in the practical work of the churches.



Soon after Dr. Stephen E. Fisher became minister of the University Place Christian Church, Champaign, in 1903, he became concerned for the needs of Disciple students at the University of Illinois. He often spoke of their needs, and those of other students, to Dr. James Baker, minister of the Trinity Methodist Church which was also close to the campus of the University. As a result of their

mutual hopes, Disciples and Methodists were the first to establish foundations adjacent to the campus. The *Illinois Disciples Foundation* was officially organized in 1916. By 1920 a full-time worker was employed to direct student work in association with the University Place Christian Church. As early as 1922, the university recognized courses in religion which were offered by the Foundation.

The first permanent funds for the Foundation were provided by a joint campaign of the Foundation, Eureka College, and the state society in 1925-1927. More recently, funds have been secured which will enable the construction of a building for the Foundation in the near future. Since 1948, W. J. Jarman has been director.

Within the last ten years, the need for adequately supported *student work* at colleges where there are a significant number of Disciple students has been recognized. These colleges include Bradley University, Illinois State Normal University, Millikin College, Southern Illinois University, Knox College, Eastern Illinois State Teachers College, Western Illinois State Teachers College, and MacMurray College.

During the last two years the State Missionary Society has been able to augment the funds previously provided only by the churches adjacent to these schools. Plans are being made for a joint fund whereby the work at these centers may be enhanced.

From a beginning in which the Disciples of Christ had only a small academy at the high school

level, the state enterprise on behalf of higher education has grown consistently if not rapidly. Since 1855 the need for a strong liberal arts college with an emphasis on ministerial training has been recognized. Since 1894, there has been the possibility of graduate level training for the ministry through the Disciples Divinity House. More recently, the sense of responsibility among Illinois Disciples has grown to include the student work both at the State University and at many other colleges and universities.

Chapter 6

INTERDENOMINATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Most of the interdenominational agencies in American Christianity have emerged during the last fifty years of the century which is commemorated in this booklet. The Disciples of Christ, in 1900, were just beginning to accept an unwanted role as a distinct brotherhood separate from other communions rather than as a reformation movement within existing churches and denominations. Until almost 1870, Disciples of Christ had little concern about relationships with other churches. They did not admit separate church status for themselves and could not therefore seek relations with "other" churches.

From 1870 onwards, forced by the recognition that they were a distinct communion, and spurred anew by their zeal for Christian unity, Disciples of Christ began to seek out possibilities for cooperative action with other Christian groups. Not all Disciples favored cooperation or federation, or even friendly conversations with the "sects." In the first decades of the twentieth century, debates on "federation" were warm and lengthy; the middle decades similarly debated the question of "organic union." However, the basic plea for unity has moved



Disciples toward the attitude which Alexander Campbell adopted in his later years: "Approaches are better than reproaches." The majority of Disciples have moved beyond even this point to become enthusiastic in support of all cooperative Christian movements, and many Disciples have found positions of outstanding leadership in those movements.

The story of the interdenominational activities of Illinois Disciples may be investigated in three places: 1, the actions of the Illinois convention in resolutions and recommendations; 2, the record of individual churches in budget support and program participation; 3, the record of individual Illinois Disciples in the leadership of interdenominational agencies and activities. The data for retelling the story are scarce, and scattered in minutes and record books. What is here recounted is a general survey; the rich detail will someday be filled in by a fuller research for a more lengthy document. But the general survey reveals the persistent and sincere attitude which Illinois Disciples have taken with regard to interdenominational work.

The first area in which the Disciples of Illinois began to cooperate with other communions was *religious education*. This cooperation was made easy because the Disciples early began to cooperate with each other in this area. As early as 1868 there was an Illinois Assembly of Sunday Schools. In 1874 it became the Illinois State Sunday School Assembly which united with the Illinois Christian

Missionary Society in 1899. Such unified activity among our own churches made cooperation with other brotherhoods interested in Sunday School work desirable and easy. Disciples were active in the city and county Sunday School associations which flourished in the 'twenties, and were among the first to cooperate in the Illinois Council of Religious Education. Stimulus to this cooperation was added by the choice of Chicago for the headquarters of the International Council of Religious Education. O. T. Mattox has had a large share in the work of the Illinois Council, and W. C. Bower, for many years a resident of Chicago, was a prominent leader in both the Religious Education Association and the International Council of Religious Education. Since 1936, the latter organization has had a Disciple, Roy G. Ross, as its executive head.



Interdenominational *youth work* began in Illinois with the advent of the Christian Endeavor movement which first began in 1881 as a single unit in a New England Congregational church. Disciples of Christ adopted the Christian Endeavor movement so heartily that just fifteen years later the Illinois convention of 1896 boasted "four hundred and twenty-three Senior Christian Endeavor Societies placing the Disciples of Christ in the lead." It was not until 1938 that a separate brotherhood youth program was begun with the appearance of the Christian Youth Fellowship; even then, however, the new program was closely

united with the interdenominational United Christian Youth Movement, a project of the International Council of Religious Education.

Illinois Convention action has been most consistently behind one particular agency, namely the *Anti-Saloon League*. Its work was commended by a resolution in 1899, and almost every succeeding convention has renewed the endorsement. The convention annually appoints representatives to the League.

In 1905, the first steps looking toward a *Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America* were taken. Illinois Disciples shared in the first plans which bore fruit in Illinois in the Chicago Church Federation Council, and the Federation of Churches in Illinois. The 1911 Illinois Convention sent eight representatives to this group which became part of the midwestern branch of the Federal Council with headquarters in Chicago. In 1928, the convention passed a resolution urging cooperation and support for the Federal Council. Dr. Herbert L. Willett, Illinois Convention President for 1908, was one of the originators of the program and served for many years as leader of the midwestern branch of the Federal Council. He was succeeded by Perry J. Rice, who was also executive secretary of the Chicago Disciples Union. Also prominent in federation activities were O. F. Jordan and Austin Hunter of Chicago. The 1949 Year Book of Disciples of Christ indicates that thirty-nine churches contribute directly each year to the budget of the Federal Council.

In addition to the federal council, there were *city and local councils* by the early decades of this century. As a general rule, Disciple ministers and churches shared in the activities—to such a degree, in fact, that an accurate documentation will never be possible. The largest of these groups within the state is the Church Federation of Greater Chicago. The earliest recorded activity of the Disciples in the forerunners of this federation was their work in the Cooperative Council of City Missions, “an experiment in comity” which, in 1923, became part of the newly formed Church Federation. Before any cooperative agency was established at all, the Christian Ministers’ Association in Chicago had engaged in many civic activities involving other communions. Today, the Church Federation of Greater Chicago is under the executive leadership of John W. Harms, a Disciple of Christ.

In 1939, the *Illinois Church Council* brought a state-wide interdenominational work to its present form. Its predecessors were the Illinois Council of Religious Education and the Illinois Council of Churches. Disciples of Christ had worked with these earlier units from their beginnings, and when the Illinois Council of Churches was young, the Disciple Convention annually recommended that its membership support the Council. Since 1943, the Illinois Church Council has been led by a Disciple of Christ, C. W. Longman of



Springfield; representatives from the state convention are appointed annually, and many individual churches support the budget of the Council.

The most recent interdenominational agency to receive the support of Illinois Disciples of Christ is the *World Council of Churches of Christ*. The convention has recommended support of the World Council, and in 1949, at least seventeen congregations of Disciples were contributing to its budget.

The present attitude of the Disciples in Illinois toward future cooperative activity is best represented in the recommendation of the 1946 convention that: "the unity plea be given practical expression in local councils of churches, our state council of churches, the Federal and World Council of Churches."

Chapter 7

PERSONAL ENTERPRISE AND LOCAL CHURCHES

At eleven o'clock on any Sunday morning in Illinois a half thousand ministers mount to their pulpits in churches of the Disciples of Christ. It is at those pulpits that the foundations of the story of the Disciples in Illinois are constantly relaid. In a small booklet the stories of all the local churches cannot be told. The story of organizations can be told because they are fewer in number. Yet it is the local church that is the real power of the Disciples and it is only because of its successes that any progress has come to the brotherhood as a whole.

Of all the statistics that have been given in the preceding pages, there is one that is a fundamental fact: from an average membership of sixty, one hundred years ago, the local churches have grown to an average membership of two hundred and forty. That growth is not insignificant when multiplied by the total number of churches. Then it becomes obvious that the real basis of the success of the Disciples is the unending faithful conduct of the life of congregations. A local church is maintained only through a prodigious amount of work, but the work has been done. Thousands of ser-



mons have been preached. The table of the Lord has been spread Sunday after Sunday. The musical progress of the churches has been built up through endless hours of rehearsal and performance. Through the faithfulness of men and especially of women Sunday School classes have nurtured the children and young people until they were strong in their faith. No one could know the visits that have been made to those who were sick and in trouble, nor the times that ministers and their helpers have gone into the haunts of wretchedness and need. Unnumbered too are their visits into homes of prosperity to waken Christian charity and find the resources for carrying forth the kingdom of love. There would be no history of the Disciples in Illinois if there had not been faithful attendance by elders, deacons, trustees and department heads to the Board meetings of the churches. Committees and sub-committees have been faithfully attended, especially the building committees, which in each generation have rebuilt the meeting places of the Disciples across the land.

Among the churches in Illinois, several have passed the one thousand mark in membership: University Place Church in Champaign, First Church in Mattoon, First Church in Paris, First Church in Galesburg, both Central and First Churches in Decatur, the church in Centralia, Central Church in Jacksonville, in Peoria both Central Church and the Glen Oak Church, First Church, South Side and West Side in Springfield,

First Church in Lincoln, First Church in Charleston, and Central Church in Danville. A dozen others crowd in with nine hundred or more members. The Negro churches in the state are not numerous; perhaps there are a dozen altogether. Their most prosperous congregations are in Chicago where two churches have about five hundred members each. Danville and Springfield each have four churches of Disciples of Christ. Peoria has five. The Chicago area has a score.

It has been the local church also which has borne the brunt of working out internal problems which have from time to time appeared within the brotherhood. The Disciples have been trying to give expression to at least four primary aspects of their faith. 1) They want a pure, simple, and understandable gospel. 2) They want to exemplify the brotherhood of all believers and a sense of personal responsibility in every member for the welfare of the church. 3) They believe in free and democratic procedures for church government. 4) They desire the unity of the church. These four aims have not always harmonized easily. The Disciples carry within themselves both an emphasis upon the individual and an emphasis upon the total body of the church. While they exalt the authority of God over all, they also emphasize the responsibility of each to interpret religion for his own condition. They want a full gospel, but at the same time they recognize that much church activity is no more than an expediency. At the very outset our brotherhood faced the problem of harmonizing two movements. The followers of

Campbell and the followers of Stone did not always come together easily. Fortunately for Illinois the presence of Barton W. Stone in our state during the last years of his life guaranteed that the unity between these two strands of our heritage would be consolidated.

Early Disciples liked to debate the issues of religion and Illinois was the scene of many famous disputations. Unfortunately, the spirit of controversy sometimes invaded the brotherhood itself. In 1865 at least four issues were threatening to divide the brotherhood. These issues were the amount of power that should be given to the preacher of the local church, the use of the organ in worship, the place of philosophical speculation in religious thought and the question of open communion. Only the second, when coupled with the issue of cooperative mission enterprise, resulted in the voluntary severance of a group of congregations which became known as the Church of Christ. While the separation was of considerable proportions in some areas of the nation, in Illinois only a few churches became part of the separating group.

Probably the most plaguing of the tendencies to separation has been the question of the validity of missionary or other administrative societies. Although Alexander Campbell was converted to the pro-society viewpoint, there has been a segment of our brotherhood down through its entire history which has been opposed to missionary societies. Based upon a fear of clericalism, and a

desire for a literal detailed authority for all organization, it has opposed all cooperative endeavor at various times and in various ways. It prefers independent projects. The Lincoln Bible Institute at Lincoln, Illinois, trains leaders with this independent philosophy conditioning its curriculum.

The questions which have caused concern on the part of some, particularly in the twentieth century, are higher criticism and open membership. With the increase of biblical knowledge and the scientific approach to all fields of knowledge, and with the need for a more highly trained ministry, there came a clash between those of the "old school" and those of the "newer learning." There is no easy solution to the problem. Nevertheless, it tends toward divisiveness.

Open membership, the acceptance of non-immersed believers in Christ to full fellowship in the church, is at the point of our greatest confusion—our loyalty to the plea for a united church clashes with one of the items of our basis for unity. Although we have found ways to cooperate in interdenominational enterprises, there is no unanimity of opinion as to the solution of the open membership question.

When the Disciples first came to Illinois they lived, like all pioneers, in log cabins and frame cottages. As they grew prosperous their homes became more comfortable and more beautiful. Similarly, their first churches were log structures. Next they built the frame churches which brighten

the countryside. Then they began to build with stone and brick. Their churches were not always comfortable nor beautiful. As time went along the Disciples began to erect buildings of beauty and strength that are worthy of very long usage. Leading the way in the twentieth century came the magnificent Gothic sanctuary of the First Church in Springfield. In the twenties, the University Church in Chicago erected a



church building which is an intimate expression of the faith and religion of its congregation. Soon thereafter came the University Place Church in Champaign, the masterpiece of the beloved Mr. Wickes, architect to the brotherhood through the Board of Church Extension. Twice in Illinois, when great sums of money were not at hand, imagination and courage combined to build churches of amazing beauty and utility. Eureka showed what could be done in a small town, and Coldbrook what could be done in the open countryside. Even as these lines are written, new churches and educational units are rising, stone upon stone, brick upon brick. Maywood and the Central Churches at Danville and Decatur will soon be in new homes. O. F. Jordan, one of the venerable Illinois preachers among the Disciples, recently saw the crowning of his life work when his Community Church in Park Ridge broke ground for a magnificent new sanctuary. At Centralia an outstanding educational unit has just been completed.

Within a few months it is expected that work will begin on the building of the Illinois Disciples Foundation. Adjoining the University Place Christian Church the two buildings will enclose three sides of a garth, the fourth side of which will be enclosed by the Stephen E. Fisher Memorial Chapel, which in its beauty will fittingly enshrine the memory of one of Illinois' greatest ministers.

The buildings of Eureka College show forth its century long history. Its administration building is a stately example of Victorian academic architecture. One of its most beloved buildings is Lida's Wood. While it is a frame structure whose lifetime is perhaps nearly run, the spaciousness of its porches and its great public rooms have provided a setting for sociability and hospitality which have been enjoyed not only by the students of Eureka, but by the ministry and great numbers of laymen who have used it many times for conference meetings. The comforts of the twentieth century are represented by a woman's dormitory erected prior to World War II.

The Disciples Divinity House is almost without peer in academic architecture. Its dormitory provides an unusual degree of privacy and comfort. The graciousness of its Common Room has made it beloved of the hundreds who have used it for meetings. Within the House there stands the greatest single architectural treasure among the Disciples of Illinois—the beautiful Chapel of the Holy Grail. The Chapel is so designed that it expresses in every possible way the significance

of the Lord's Supper, which is exalted by our brotherhood through its weekly observance.

The cooperative activities of Disciples in Illinois have prospered despite criticism because they have received the endless devotion and significant support of thousands of lay people. They constitute an organizational structure which it has taken many years to build up. Each succeeding generation has passed on to the next as a heritage the structure which it has fashioned and each new generation, despite discussion, has decided that the cooperative work of its forefathers must be preserved and enhanced. It has been within the local congregations that soul searching regarding the validity of organizations beyond the churches has gone on, and decade after decade the victory has gone to those who declare we must cooperate even more than our fathers and grandfathers did.

The benevolent spirit of Disciples in Illinois has led them to contribute to many charitable enterprises in the various towns and cities of the state. Their greatest pride, however, is in their own Home at Jacksonville, Illinois, maintained through the National Benevolent Association. This enterprise has become home for a number of the more elderly members of the brotherhood. Illinois Disciples also have an interest in the National Benevolent Association's Home for children maintained just across the state line in St. Louis.

The history of the Disciples in Illinois cannot be told without mentioning certain instances of individual enterprise which have had their root

inspiration within our Illinois brotherhood, but have grown to serve the brotherhood and World Christianity. Certainly the name of W. E. M. Hackleman should not be forgotten. A writer of hymns, he published early in this century a hymnal entitled *Gloria in Excelsis*. A work of remarkable musicianship, it was widely used throughout the brotherhood. It has been succeeded by *Christian Worship*, a hymnal published jointly by the Disciples and Baptists. The editor of the hymnal was B. Fred Wise, minister of music of the University Church in Chicago for more than a quarter of a century. Mr. Wise has frequently been musical director for the state conventions in Illinois and for the international convention. He has given lectures on hymnody at various conventions and ministerial institutes throughout the brotherhood. A unique contribution in this area has been made by Mrs. Rosa Page Welch of Chicago. A Negro gifted with a soprano voice with both lyric and dramatic power, she has sung her way into the hearts of Disciples not only in Illinois, but in every section of our brotherhood. She has been particularly sought out for work with women and youth groups, but the door is open to her everywhere because of the depth of religious interpretation with which she endows both classical music and the great spirituals.

The roster of Illinois Disciples who have found their way into interdenominational work is not completed by mentioning only those who have worked in this area within our own state. Jesse Bader, who heads the Department of Evangelism

for the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America came originally from the Illinois countryside. C. W. Cummings went from the First Christian Church in Springfield, Illinois, to a brilliant period of service as leader of the Church Federation in St. Louis. The publishing enterprise of Henry F. Henrichs, a layman of the Union Avenue Church in Litchfield, has spread across the country a magazine of spiritual cheer and joy entitled *Sunshine*. A group of scholars who found a place on the faculty of the University of Chicago rose to national and world esteem in their respective areas. W. C. Bower made a permanent contribution to the Philosophy of Religious Education. E. S. Ames was one of the great pioneers in the Psychology of Religion and S. C. Kincheloe continues his pioneer work in the Sociology of Religion. All of these men have been and continue to be in demand among circles far beyond our own brotherhood. Certain other Illinois Disciples have been particularly sought out for their counsel in the deliberations of the ecumenical movement in this country. Outstanding in this respect have been H. L. Willett, C. C. Morrison, and W. E. Garrison.

If this question were to be asked outside of Illinois and of non-Disciples, "What is the best single contribution which Illinois Disciples have made to Christianity as a whole?" the answer would undoubtedly be *The Christian Century*. *The Christian Century* began in 1884 as a weekly news journal entitled *The Christian Oracle* for Disciples in Iowa. In 1888 it moved to Chicago.

With the beginning of the twentieth century it took the hopeful name of *The Christian Century*. The magazine was not a great success until it came under the editorship of Charles Clayton Morrison. While it retained its denominational emphasis until the first World War, the excellence of its contributed articles, the clarity of its news reports and the sagacity of its editorials was slowly winning interdenominational reading. In 1918 its editor rightfully declared it to be an interdenominational journal of religion. Around himself Mr. Morrison had collected a most distinguished editorial staff. It included from time to time H. L. Willett, Silas Jones, O. F. Jordan, Alva W. Taylor, John Ray Ewers and Joseph Fort Newton. The literary excellence of the *Christian Century* has been assured through the years by the presence on its staff of two outstanding Disciples. Thomas Curtis Clark often referred to as the poet laureate of our brotherhood, and W. E. Garrison, who since 1921 has become known not only as the dean, but as the genius of American reviewers of books in the religious field. To the *Christian Century* he also brought his learning as one of the great American historians of religion. The names of Willett and Clark were also joined together for a considerable period of years in an enterprise for the publishing of religious books. It was this circle of Illinois Disciples who picked up an editorial torch that was dropped with the passing in 1934 of Peter Ainslie of Baltimore, Maryland. Mr. Ainslie for a quarter century had published the *Christian Union Quarterly*, which had become

one of the major vehicles of communication for the Faith and Order Movement. Within a year of Peter Ainslie's death his editorial tradition was re-established in a new periodical entitled *Christendom*. Begun in 1935 this journal was under the temporary editorship of C. C. Morrison. It became a tremendous force in the deliberations leading to the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948. By that time *Christendom* had been turned over to the American office of the ecumenical interests and in 1948 it emerged as the *Ecumenical Review* now published from the central offices of the World Council in Geneva, Switzerland. Illinois Disciples have by no means passed over to others all of the spirit of ecumenical endeavor that is in the tradition of the men who have been mentioned in this paragraph. In 1945



there was established by the Disciples Divinity House the William Henry Hoover Lectureship on Christian Unity. It was the first lectureship of its kind anywhere in the world and has served as a model in part for the Peter Ainslie Lectureship on Christian Unity which has been

established in South Africa, and the Bishop Brent Lectureship on Church Unity, an enterprise of one of America's great charitable foundations.

The ecumenical spirit finds its expression among Illinois Disciples through personal ministry, as well as through organizations. There is a Disciple on the chaplaincy staff of the great Veterans'

Hospital at Hines. He ministers to any who are in need; without reference to denomination he performs, in the name of Jesus, an open ministry to all. Through the Church Federation of Chicago another Disciple serves as counsellor to delinquent children in a correctional school. Here again, the spiritual ministries are given without any consideration of the religious affiliation of the needy child. In other parts of the state, Disciple ministers serve as best they can in both the mental hospitals and the prisons. The spirit of the Kingdom is reflected not only in the great churches that the Disciples have built, but in the quiet service of its ministry far beyond the borders of our own brotherhood membership.

On any Sunday morning in Illinois, at twelve o'clock, with the hymns sung, the communion distributed, and the sermons preached, a half thousand ministers raise their hands in benediction, and the Disciples in Illinois know that they are blest—blest by the heritage of one hundred years of working together, by the challenges of this mid-century year, and by the opportunities which a new century for Christ places before them.

Appendix

CHURCH SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 1880-1904 | Knox P. Taylor, state Sunday School evangelist |
| 1905-1907 | Marion Stevenson, state Bible School Sup't |
| 1907-1915 | Clarence L. DePew, state Bible School Sup't |
| 1915-1918 | H. H. Peters, state Sunday School Sup't |
| 1918-1925 | Garry L. Cook, sec'y of the Regional District |
| 1925- | O. T. Mattox, director of the Illinois Christian Education Commission |

STATE SECRETARIES

(Partial List)

| | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|
| 1860-1863 | W. J. Houston |
| 1863-1865 | J. S. Sweeney |
| 1864-1865 | A. H. Rice (field work) |
| 1865-1866 | H. C. Latham (office work) |
| c.1866-1868 | Dudley Downs |
| c.1870 | J. C. Reynolds J. W. Allen |
| c.1873 | John Lindsey W. T. Maupin |
| 1879-1880 | J. H. Wright |
| 1881-1885 | N. S. Haynes |
| 1885 | W. J. Ford |
| 1886-1891 | N. S. Haynes |
| 1891-1896 | G. W. Pearl |
| 1896-1913 | J. Fred Jones |
| 1914-1916 | John R. Golden |
| 1916-1935 | H. H. Peters |
| 1935-1946 | W. H. Walker |
| 1947- | Chester P. Hensley |

PRESIDENTS OF EUREKA COLLEGE

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| William M. Brown | 1855-57 |
| C. L. Loos | 1857-58 |
| George Callendar | 1858-62 |
| B. W. Johnson | 1862-63 |
| H. W. Everest | 1864-72 and 1877-81 |
| A. M. Weston | 1872-75 |
| B. J. Radford | 1875-77 |
| J. M. Allen | 1882-87 |
| Carl Johann | 1887-96 |
| J. N. Hardin | 1896-1900 |
| R. E. Hieronymus | 1900-09 |
| A. C. Gray | 1909-12 |
| C. E. Underwood | 1912-13 |
| H. O. Pritchard | 1913-19 |
| L. O. Lehman | 1919-22 |
| Bert Wilson | 1923-26 |
| Clyde L. Lyon | 1930-36 |
| Raymond F. McLain | 1936-39 |
| Burrus Dickinson | 1939- |

DEANS OF THE DISCIPLES DIVINITY HOUSE

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| Herbert L. Willett | 1894-1921 |
| W. E. Garrison | 1921-27 |
| Edward Scribner Ames | 1927-45 |
| W. B. Blakemore | 1946- |

DIRECTORS OF THE ILLINOIS DISCIPLES FOUNDATION

| | |
|-------------------|---------|
| Stephen E. Fisher | 1916-48 |
| W. J. Jarman | 1948- |

STATE CONVENTIONS AND PRESIDENTS

N. S. Haynes' history gives this information from 1850 to 1913, p. 102.

| Date | Place | President |
|------|--------------|--------------|
| 1850 | Shelbyville | H. D. Palmer |
| 1851 | Walnut Grove | H. D. Palmer |
| 1852 | Abingdon | W. W. Happy |
| 1853 | Jacksonville | W. W. Happy |

| Date | Place | President |
|------|---------------|------------------|
| 1854 | Decatur | W. W. Happy |
| 1855 | Charleston | W. W. Happy |
| 1856 | Mechanicsburg | W. W. Happy |
| 1857 | Jacksonville | W. W. Happy |
| 1858 | Bloomington | W. W. Happy |
| 1859 | Lincoln | W. W. Happy |
| 1860 | Carrollton | W. W. Happy |
| 1861 | Eureka | John T. Jones |
| 1862 | Abingdon | John T. Jones |
| 1863 | Bloomington | John T. Jones |
| 1864 | Lincoln | John T. Jones |
| 1865 | Springfield | John T. Jones |
| 1866 | Eureka | John T. Jones |
| 1867 | Jacksonville | Enos Campbell |
| 1868 | Winchester | Enos Campbell |
| 1869 | Macomb | Enos Campbell |
| 1870 | Chicago | Enos Campbell |
| 1871 | Bloomington | Enos Campbell |
| 1872 | Bloomington | Enos Campbell |
| 1873 | Jacksonville | A. A. Glenn |
| 1874 | Eureka | J. H. McCullough |
| 1875 | Bloomington | A. I. Hobbs |
| 1876 | Eureka | S. M. Connor |
| 1877 | Springfield | A. I. Hobbs |
| 1878 | Eureka | A. I. Hobbs |
| 1879 | Princeton | J. W. Allen |
| 1880 | Bloomington | A. I. Hobbs |
| 1881 | Jacksonville | N. S. Haynes |
| 1882 | Macomb | A. J. Thompson |
| 1883 | Springfield | G. M. Goode |
| 1884 | Eureka | S. M. Connor |
| 1885 | Eureka | S. M. Connor |
| 1886 | Sullivan | J. G. Waggoner |
| 1887 | Decatur | J. A. Roberts |
| 1888 | Eureka | Hiram Woods |
| 1889 | Eureka | A. N. Gilbert |
| 1890 | Eureka | J. H. Gilliland |
| 1891 | Eureka | F. N. Calvin |
| 1892 | Eureka | A. P. Cobb |

| Date | Place | President |
|------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1893 | Eureka | W. A. Maloan |
| 1894 | Eureka | W. A. Humphrey |
| 1895 | Eureka | T. T. Holton |
| 1896 | Eureka | L. B. Pickerill |
| 1897 | Eureka | N. S. Haynes |
| 1898 | Eureka | J. H. Hardin |
| 1899 | Eureka | J. H. Smart |
| 1900 | Bloomington | N. S. Haynes |
| 1901 | Springfield | R. F. Thrapp |
| 1902 | Jacksonville | W. W. Weedon |
| 1903 | Eureka | J. E. Lynn |
| 1904 | Champaign | W. H. Cannon |
| 1905 | Decatur | Geo. A. Campbell |
| 1906 | Paris | F. W. Burnham |
| 1907 | Jacksonville | O. W. Lawrence |
| 1908 | Chicago | H. L. Willett |
| 1909 | Eureka | J. H. Gilliland |
| 1910 | Springfield | J. W. Kilborn |
| 1911 | Danville | J. R. Golden |
| 1912 | Centralia | Silas Jones |
| 1913 | Jacksonville | W. W. Weedon |
| 1914 | Decatur | Stephen E. Fisher |
| 1915 | Bloomington | W. G. McColley |
| 1916 | Peoria, Central | Edgar D. Jones |
| 1917 | Taylorville | H. E. Sala |
| 1918 | Eureka | J. F. Bickel |
| 1919 | Charleston | J. F. Rosborough |
| 1920 | Benton | A. LeRoy Huff |
| 1921 | Decatur, Central | J. P. Givens |
| 1922 | Rock Island, Memorial | C. C. Carpenter |
| 1923 | Gibson City | N. H. Robertson |
| 1924 | Jacksonville | John I. Gunn |
| 1925 | Shelbyville | M. L. Pontius |
| 1926 | Mt. Carmel | Samuel E. Fisher |
| 1927 | Springfield | W. B. Slater |
| 1928 | Peoria, Central | W. G. Johnston |
| 1929 | Oak Park | L. G. Huff |
| 1930 | Galesburg | Chas. R. Oakley |
| 1931 | Decatur | J. T. Shreve |

| Date | Place | President |
|------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1932 | Bloomington, First | Clyde M. West |
| 1933 | Charleston | John E. Foster |
| 1934 | Carbondale | Carrel W. Flewelling |
| 1935 | Canton | Frank E. Davison |
| 1936 | Champaign | Clark W. Cummings |
| 1937 | Lawrenceville | C. C. Carpenter |
| 1938 | Quincy, First | Chester B. Grubb |
| 1939 | Springfield, First | Russell E. Booker |
| 1940 | Bloomington, First | Raymond G. Aylsworth |
| 1941 | Jacksonville | R. L. Thorp |
| 1942 | Galesburg | I. E. Metcalf |
| 1943 | Decatur, First | L. Hadaway |
| 1944 | Peoria, Central | Chas. B. Tupper |
| 1945 | Champaign | Donald M. Salmon |
| 1946 | Springfield, First | William A. Askew |
| 1947 | Bloomington, First | Frank Kennedy |
| 1948 | Shelbyville | Colin J. Robertson |
| 1949 | Decatur, First | Irvin E. Lunger |
| 1950 | Jacksonville | T. William Simer |

CHURCH MEMBERSHIPS IN CENTENNIAL CLUB AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 1950

Ten per cent of resident membership registered for the Illinois Centennial Convention at Jacksonville, September 17-20, 1950:

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Blue Mound | Maywood |
| Cameron | Mt. Morris |
| Chapin | Pine Creek |
| Eureka | Rock Island, Memorial |
| Harvel | Taylorville |
| Harvey | Virden |
| Jacksonville, Central | Virginia |
| Keithsburg | Winchester |
| Mason City | Woodson |

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This souvenir is the work of a committee which began under the chairmanship of Claude E. Cummins. After Mr. Cummins moved from Illinois, Mr. Robert L. Lemon of Lima assumed the chairmanship of the group which has included Mrs. C. W. Longman (secretary), Leslie Heuston, Harold Wiltz, Benjamin F. Burns and W. B. Blakemore. Mr. Lemon has borne the major work of guiding the booklet through its publication and printing phases. Mr. Blakemore has served as general editor. The chapters of the book were written by the following persons: Robert L. Lemon, Chapter 2 ("The Beginnings"); Royal Humbert, Chapter 3 ("The Missionary Society, the Convention and Religious Education"); Stella C. Peck, Chapter 4 ("Illinois Christian Women at Work"); Burrus Dickinson, Chapter 5 ("Higher Education"); Benjamin F. Burns, Chapter 6 ("Interdenominational Relationships"); W. B. Blakemore, The Foreword, Chapter 1 ("The Setting") and Chapter 7 ("Personal Enterprise and Local Churches").

Chapter 7 contains a considerable amount of material on tendencies toward unity and separation contributed by Mr. Leslie Heuston.

The line drawings which adorn the book are the work of Miss Winifred James of Eureka, Illinois.

The quotation which forms the Frontispiece of the souvenir is from Vachel Lindsay's "A Gospel of Beauty" from *General Booth Enters Into Heaven*, copyright 1913 by The Macmillan Company and is used with their permission.

The original manuscripts which were the basis of this document carry full references to sources of data. In order to relieve the souvenir of textbook appearance all footnotes have been deleted. In order to preserve the research that has been done the original manuscripts have been deposited as *Disciples of Christ in Illinois 1850-1950, Original Manuscripts*, in the Herbert L. Willett Library of the Disciples Divinity House.

CHURCHES KNOWN TO BE 100 YEARS OLD

(According to N. S. Haynes' History)

| Year Founded | Church |
|--------------|---|
| 1819 | Barney's Prairie, Keensburg |
| 1820 | Cantrall |
| 1823 | Little Prairie |
| 1825 | Berlin, Sweetwater |
| 1826 | Little Grove (Edgar Co.) |
| 1828 | Armington |
| 1830 | Lick Prairie, Lima, Mulkeytown |
| 1831 | Cameron, Shelbyville |
| 1832 | Ash Grove, Carrollton, Cuba, Eureka, Hallsville, Jacksonsville, Lovington, South Fork, Winchester |
| 1833 | Laurenceville, Lynnville, Mt. Pleasant (Hancock Co.), Rushville, Springfield First, Ursa |
| 1834 | Decatur Central, Pleasant Ridge, Tallula, Washington |
| 1835 | Camp Point |
| 1836 | Carlock, Pittsfield, Toledo |
| 1837 | Bloomington First, Lilly, Mackinaw, Smyser |
| 1838 | Athens, Eminence, Mt. Sterling |
| 1839 | Coldbrook, Ingraham, Monmouth, Seven Mile, Virginia |
| 1840 | Buckeye, Charleston, Grayville, Mt. Auburn, Princeton, Quincy, Russellville, Sullivan |
| 1841 | Albion, Hutsonville, Little Grove (Jefferson Co.), West Twin Grove |
| 1842 | Barry, Ipava, Lancaster, Ripley, Union (Jefferson Co.), Williamsville |
| 1843 | Four Mile Prairie, Lanark, Pleasant Hill (Laurence Co.), Walnut Corner |
| 1844 | Columbus |
| 1845 | Macomb, Mechanicsburg, Peoria Central, St. Joseph |
| 1847 | Coleta, Rapid City, Vermont |
| 1849 | Blandinsville, Old Bedford |

CHURCH MEMBERSHIPS IN CENTURY CLUB AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 1950

One hundred per cent of resident membership registered, or one hundred registrations, or the entire official board and Sunday School staff registered for the Illinois Centennial Convention at Jacksonville, September 17-20, 1950:

Charleston
Eureka
Harvey
Jacksonville, Central
Keithsburg
Rock Island, Memorial



