The Golden Years

If the last few years of Dr. Vance's long pastorate had been marred by delays in completing some of the main goals and by controversy over his retirement arrangements, the first years of his successor were spectacularly eventful.

On September 20, 1960 the Pulpit Committee requested October 16 to present Dr. Cortley Hugh Burroughs as candidate at one service at 10:45 a.m., that a congregational meeting follow, and that a coffee be held the evening preceding to meet members of the boards and heads of organizations. Dr. Burroughs was elected unanimously.

He took office with an annual budget of $49,080, and with a membership of 1234, with 420 in Sunday School. His installation was at 7:30 p.m. on February 12, 1961.

During the first meeting Dr. Burroughs activated a long-range planning committee which was to have great influence over events of the next several years. Dr. Robert Lynn was appointed chairman of the executive committee, Mr. Francis Kaar was chairman of the Program Committee, and Dr. J. B. Johnson was appointed chairman of the Physical Plant Committee.

During the Spring and Summer of 1961 a number of plans were suggested and then pushed forward personally by the pastor including a review of the church programs by an outside consultant. A survey of the building found it "to be in bad repair, not producing the type of atmosphere we want to express to the community." Then too, he had ideas on staff development "for a church of 1200 members, suggesting an assistant minister and a christian education director in addition to the music director and secretary." On June 27 the session approved the plan for staff development. By August 15 the Planning Committee had clarified three options for the future: (1) remodel, (2) relocate, or (3) merge. It was decided to communicate with Elm Street Presbyterian Church about the possibility of a merger.

Early in the evening of November 21 the combined Boards voted at their annual meeting that the Planning Commission was to report to a January 16, 1962 meeting of the combined boards before giving any report to the congregation. Nevertheless, later that same evening at a separate meeting of the session "the Moderator reported that he had approached the Rev. Dr. Ralph Lynn on the possibility of serving as Minister of Evangelism and Visitation." There seemed to be some urgency since the pastor's "findings were that retired ministers were very much in demand and Rev. Ralph Lynn was highly recommended." The session proceeded to vote to extend a call to the Rev. Dr. Ralph Lynn to become Minister of Evangelism and Visitation. Terms of the call were set at $3800 for his expenses.

Dr. Burroughs' move-ahead style of leadership was probably refreshing in those days. Certainly, his ignoring his own Program Committee of the Long Range Planning Committee, in hiring Dr. Lynn was forgiven, and Dr. Ralph Lynn was one of the most beloved persons ever to serve on the pastoral roster of the congregation.

In rapid succession the old church organ was replaced with a four-rank Moeller "Artiste" pipe organ and an architect for a building program was selected. Dr. Burroughs then went to England on a pastoral exchange with the Rev. Sidney Evans of Trinity Church at Bromley, Kent, England, who came to Alton to serve for the summer.

The combined board meeting on November 19 must have been exciting. The architect showed slides. A proposal was made to purchase a Reuter or Moeller 31-rank pipe organ at an estimated cost of $38,500. It was moved to remodel and expand the present site. And it was moved to form a committee to work with the National Missions program of the denomination for raising the funds. When it came to a vote at the congregational meeting the plans, procedures and cost estimates were approved by a standing vote without a single vote in opposition.

Dr. Burroughs wrote of the evening in a brochure in behalf of the building fund, "On Sunday evening, January 13, one of the largest congregational meetings in the recent history of the church approved enthusiastically and unanimously -- in a manner that brought tears to the pastor's eyes -- the proposal to go ahead. This included authority to arrange for a financial campaign...." A central building committee was elected with Elder Robert Lynn, chairman, Mrs. B. E. Bassett, vice-chairman, and Mrs. Donald Bottom, secretary. By April 1963, 352 pledges, averaging $700, had produced a total of $247,989. The drive slowed at 355 pledges two months later for a total of $250,000.

Then the first test of the rapid progress came when it was reported that the bids were all higher than expected, and some deletions had to be discussed. Just the same, the Building Committee was authorized to proceed on the remodeling and expansion program not to exceed the sum of $390,000. At last, four elders rose to record their opposition as it became clear that a loan would be needed, in an amount higher than the church had ever gone before. Still, progress continued.

Almost twenty years after Dr. Vance had suggested that the interior of the sanctuary be remodeled as a "Gothic auditorium" the project was finished. The sloping wooden floor was replaced with a level reinforced concrete floor, and the wooden folding doors that had separated the Sunday School room on the north were removed. That area was developed as the chancel, by erecting a wooden platform above the old hardwood floor. Rooms to either side of the chancel were built as passageways and sacristy area. The Moeller pipe organ was installed at the front (now the north) end of the sanctuary with a Christian Education storage room below it. The organ was fully enclosed behind a wooden screen upon which was mounted a fifteen-foot tall 650 pound celtic cross. The "Gothic" design called for a divided chancel with the pulpit on the west side and a smaller lectern on the right. Behind these there were two tiers of choir pews facing the center of the chancel. The open area in the center included a raised platform to

the rear on which the nine-foot communion table stood. The nave now faced north with a wide center aisle. The chancel and aisles were covered with a red carpet. The change, of course, was astonishing. The number of people who could be seated was increased to four hundred, with seating for perhaps 200 more if folding chairs were added along the sides and rear. But the most extraordinary difference was the replacement of the east stained glass window and the addition of a new one on the west behind the space formerly occupied by the pulpit and pipe organ. These windows were predominantly rich reds and blues with symbols of the Old Testament on the east and of the New Testament on the west. When the roof of the Sunday School room was raised to accommodate the new elevation of the now lengthened sanctuary, that expanse was supported by massive arches in a European style, following Link's original design, except that the wood which created the effect of hand-hewn beams in the new beams encased structural steel, whereas in 1897 the wood had been wrapped around 2 x 8's bolted together. A few purists turned up their noses at the new design as being imitation gothic, and some, naturally, preferred the old sanctuary, particularly its intimacy. But overwhelmingly the effect was praised, and the room quickly became the choicest place for weddings in Alton, when beautiful surroundings were wanted for a large crowd.



Sanctuary 1963 - 1988

In addition to the sanctuary, the room below was finished at last with a concrete floor with posts removed, to create a large Fellowship Hall. Under the chancel a modern

kitchen with facilities to feed up to several hundred people, was added. At the same time, the parish house which had stood immediately to the west of the church was torn down and a new wing was added. Along Fourth Street this wing included a new chapel with four stained glass windows representing the history and ministries of the Presbyterian Church, with the relocated "Artiste" organ, and with pews to seat about 70 people. Immediately to the north of the chapel a large reception room was added, with a fireplace which immediately got the room named the "Fireside Room." Into this west wing also went church offices, studies for the pastor and associate, and three rooms for pre-school children who were in super-abundance.

The last communion services before builders took over was held on Sunday, July 14, 1963. While construction went on the congregation had services in the first floor of the education wing, which in those days did not have a wall separating the north from the east rooms. Construction continued throughout the fall and winter and the rebuilt sanctuary was ready for use, as was the new organ, for the first time on Palm Sunday, March 21, 1964. The service of dedication took place on Pentecost Sunday afternoon, May 17, 1964. The Rev. Jack Zerwas preached the sermon, entitled "Fulfilling Our Heritage." Part, at least, of that heritage was particularly well known by Dr. Zerwas since he was born, raised and ordained to the ministry twenty years before as a member of First Church.

The Building Committee consisted of Dr. Robert B. Lynn, Chairman, Mrs. P. E. Bassett, Vice-Chairman, Mrs. Donald Bottom, Secretary, Mrs. Robert Levis, Mr. Eugene Elfgen, Mr. George Chandler, Mr. Kenneth Kelly, Mr. Howard Rhoads, Mr. Richard Cousley, Mr. Rolland Wiegand, and Mr. Robert Rugh. The architects for the project was Rex L. Becker of Froese, Maack & Becker of St. Louis; the contractor was J. C. Wohnlich & Son of Godfrey.

Meanwhile, in January, Richard Wagner resigned as Director of Music and Christian Education. It was recorded that "he had not been happy in the field of Christian Education; that he had been offered and had accepted a position with the Alton School System." Without delay, on June 28, 1964 the session voted to hire Mr. Maurice Clelland Bone as youth director at a combined salary and auto allowance of $6500. Richard Wagner had been persuaded to retain some of his role as choir director. He continued to be Chancel choir director for four years, until the summer of 1968 when he moved to Glen Ellyn-Lombard in the Chicago area. Mrs. Prudence Bussey was hired as organist prior to the renovation and assumed short-term directorship of the Westminster choir following Mr. Wagner's departure. Children's choirs during this time were directed by Helen Fjerstad. Dr. Robert Oldham assumed the position of organist and responsibility of the Westminster Choir when Mrs. Bussey retired in 1967. Of more than passing interest to the congregation was the 50th anniversary of the ordination to the ministry of A. Ralph Lynn, which was celebrated on May 26, 1968. The congregation provided him a color TV as a gift.

With several years to go before the building program was fully paid off and the $270,000 debt retired, a number of efforts began to be made in terms loosely related

to mission. For the first time in more than three decades mission began to occupy center stage from time to time. One by one, projects were introduced, beginning on June 28 with the explanation of a tutoring program which had been initiated by members of the church, to assist students having difficulty in maintaining grades in school. Six months later the women of the church were reported to be tutoring 92 students in three schools. At the same time it was moved to have the Alton Co-op Nursery School use the kindergarten department three mornings a week during the usual school term. This was the beginning of one of the largest day care centers in the city, which was operated out of our building until December 1987. Later, a large number of other projects would be undertaken including a nearly new shop, providing used clothing free to those in need of it; from which grew the Crisis Food Center, originally jointly sponsored by the Presbyterian Churches in Alton. Housing rehabilitation was begun by a group that came to be known as Better Homes for Alton. Behind all these programs, somewhere, was the influence of Dr. Burroughs and his energetic wife, Kathleen. Each of the programs which were begun by members of the church were kept free of church governance, and even of church oversight. They grew to be community sponsored projects, with independent boards and gradually had less and less connection with First Presbyterian Church.

No doubt, a variety of factors propelled the building and organizational projects of First Presbyterian Church and other churches of the time. Included among them must have been the issue of the long-range survival of the congregation in its central city location. Across the country, churches left in the centers of deteriorating cities were faced with a dilemma. As one author puts it, "Rather than subject themselves to a lingering death, many churches elected to follow their congregations and erect new edifices in the areas to which their members had moved." This approach was certainly considered by First Presbyterian Church, but it was rejected and an option to purchase land on Delmar (at the intersection of what is now Homer Adams Parkway) was dropped. The congregation was faced with what to do IN a downtown building and WITH it. The latter was dealt with boldly in the building program completed in 1964. The question of ministry remained, as it did with many city congregations.

> The problem was to entice new arrivals in changing neighborhoods into existing churches. The solution put forward was for churches to provide the newcomers with a variety of "services" or "added attractions." Edward Judson was the pre-eminent theoretician of an institutional ministry. He defined an institutional church as "an organized body of Christian believers, who, finding themselves in a hard and uncongenial social environment, supplement the ordinary methods of the gospel -- such as preaching, prayer meetings, Sunday school, and pastoral visitation -- by a *system of organized kindness*, a congeries of institutions, which, by touching people on physical, social and

> intellectual sides, will conciliate them and draw them within the reach of the gospel."[59]

In many ways First Presbyterian Church did become an institutional church. But the programs and organizations of ministry which were begun in the early 1960's mostly were not integrated into the institution of First Church.

By 1964, four years after Dr. Burroughs' arrival, the church budget had doubled to $92,790 in receipts and $83,451 in expenses. Membership, however, was virtually the same as four years earlier, or as ten years earlier, for that matter. In effect, the membership had peaked at just over 1200. Attendance, however, was not static at all. It climbed steadily during the first half of the decade of the 60's. Lenten attendance averaged 502 in 1962, 682 in 1964, and back down to 594 in 1966. The membership was reported at 1291, although "the pastor reported that the church actually ministers to 1860 people and this number should be our attendance goal."

By a vote of 15 to 12 the session decided to carry on our own financial campaign to reduce the $175,000 indebtedness. By the end of 1967 a total of $113,851 had been given in the second campaign leaving $51,100 to be taken from annual income at a rate of some $6000 a year. A year later that was addressed by asking the members to continue their debt-retirement pledges another year.

By January 1969 the indebtedness had been practically wiped out and a $120,000 budged was subscribed. Furthermore, the building additions and improvements had been finished some time ago. Now it was time, the pastor said, to "stress the importance of the members of the church carrying out the Mission of the Church." He suggested that a special committee be established to serve as a Mission Education Committee to be made up of members of all three church boards. Later that year it was decided to support the Middletown Neighborhood Center, by taking up a voluntary offering on November 23, the church's Thanksgiving Communion Sunday. Despite the blue ribbon committee the Neighborhood Center was virtually the last new project added to the list of community service missions claimed by the church.

Other concerns arose to take the attention of the church leadership. Staff and properties, as they generally had over the last fifty years, moved into center stage when other things were more stagnant.

Living in St. Louis since his retirement, Dr. Vance died and was remembered in the session record of June 29, 1969.

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[59]Hudson, p.280, with a quote from Edward Johnson, "The Church in Its Social Aspect," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 30 (Nov. 1908), p.436.

> In Honor and Memory of the Reverend E. J. Vance.
> Dr. E. J. Vance served as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church from June 13, 1929 to January 1, 1961.
> We give thanks for this minister of the gospel.
> For the inheritance of convictions and ideals to which he was born and the godly influences which shaped his early years.
> For the dedication of himself to the service of Christ in the Church with high visions of his calling.
> For the pastor who shepherded the congregation with fidelity and the preacher who with painstaking preparation brought the message of the gospel.

Mrs. A. Ralph Lynn died in July, 1971 and Dr. A. Ralph Lynn died two months later. By October the session was ready to present the Rev. Lawrence E. Jackman, Jr. as a candidate for associate pastor. He was called by the congregation on November 14, 1971 at a salary of $9000, plus housing allowance of $2400 and auto allowance of $1000. Then Mr. James Simpson retired as custodian at age 83. Dr. Robert Oldham retired from Lewis and Clark Community College, and consequently as church organist, on July 1. They were replaced temporarily. Mary Ann Knutson served as interim organist from July 1973 until William Memmott was hired as Minister of Music on November 19, 1974.

In September 1973 a discussion of the declining church school enrollment was held. There are many factors impinging upon this decline, the report stated. "Some of the factors are the declining birth rate and while there are many young couples joining the church there are fewer children. These factors will affect the future of the church," the report prophesied.

Simple answers to the now steady decline would not do, of course. Any attempt to keep the level of activity up by simply exhorting the congregation to be more active was doomed (and that is precisely what the session records say the session did suggest). The reason for the decline was deeper than *simple* analysis would fathom. In a monumental analysis of the whole American personality, completed in the very influential book Habits of the Heart an attempt is made to see why the religious movement of the sixties declined for churches like the Presbyterian Church -- and why, perhaps, that decline is continuing. The authors conclude that the heart of the matter is a matter of the heart, namely, an inherent individualism that is taking a particular virulent form these days. For example:

> American cultural traditions define personality, achievement, and the purpose of human life in ways that leave the individual suspended in glorious, but terrifying isolation. In a world of potentially conflicting self-interests, no one can really say that one value system is better than another. It is easier to think about how to get what we want than to

know what exactly we should want. Americans tend to think of the ultimate goals of a good life as matters of personal choice.[60]

If this individualism is as pervasive as the hundreds of interviews of the authors seems to indicate, it would tend to explain why the church has lost first its authority, then its loyalty, and consequently a percentage of its membership.

This analysis suggests that what happened to First Presbyterian Church in the 1970's is part of what happened to most mainline Protestant churches.

> ...the "mainline" Protestant churches have ... offered a conception of God as neither wholly other nor a higher self, but rather as involved in time and history. These churches have tried to develop a larger picture of what it might mean to live a biblical life in America. They have sought to be communities of memory, to keep in touch with biblical sources and historical traditions not with literalist obedience, but through an intelligent reappropriation illuminated by historical and theological reflection. They have tried to relate biblical faith and practice to the whole of contemporary life -- cultural, social, political, economic -- not just to personal and family morality. They have tried to steer a middle course between mystical fusion with the world and sectarian withdrawal from it.[61]

Particularly cogent is the analysis of the reduced role in society as a whole of mainline churches.

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[60]Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, Steven M. Tipton, Habits of the Heart (New York: Harper & Row, "Perennial Library" ed., 1985), pp. 6, 7, 21, 22.

[61]As it happens, one of the persons interviewed was a Presbyterian, whose view of religion could represent most of the members of the Alton church as well. The book reports: "I believe I have a commitment to God which is beyond church. Church to me is a community, and its an organization that I belong to. They do an awful lot of good." Her obligations to the church come from the fact that she has chosen to join it, and "just like any organization that you belong to, it shouldn't be just to have another piece of paper in your wallet." As with the Kiwanis or any other organization, "you have a responsibility to do something or don't be there," to devote time and money, and especially to "care about the people." It is this caring community, above all, that the church represents. "I really love my church and what they have done for me, and what they do for other people, and the community that's there." Concerned as an association of loving individuals, the church acquires its value from "the caring about people. What I like about my church is its community.", p. 228.

> Through the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the mainline churches were close to the center of American culture. But for a generation or more, the religious intellectuals deriving from mainline Protestant Churches have become more isolated from the general culture. This is in part because they, like other scholars, have become specialists in fields where only specialists speak to one another. Their isolation also derives in part from the long pressure to segregate our knowledge of what is, gained through science, from our knowledge of what ought to be, gained through religion, morality and art. Finally, the religious intellectuals have themselves lost self-confidence and become vulnerable to short-lived fads.[62]

Another commentator makes the same charge, that the whole leadership of mainline Protestant churches became increasingly obscure in everything from their type of liturgy, to their Church School curriculum. This also, of course, included their immensely obscure manner of reasoning about such "flashpoint" issues as came before the Presbyterians in the so-called Angela Davis affair.

At the 1971 General Assembly it was learned in a routine report that a grant of $10,000 had been made from denominational funds to the legal defense of Ms. Angela Davis of Marin County, California. The grant had been made because, it was argued by the Presbyterian group in Marin County that had made the original proposal, the Black woman would need financial and moral resources to be insured of a fair trial. But the grant caused an immense furor because Dr. Davis was a self-proclaimed communist. The session of First Church reacted to the grant with urgency and forcefulness that was unusual for it. At a meeting in June 1971, only a few weeks after the Assembly, a five point resolution displayed the anger of the board. After rejecting the procedures by which the grant had been made in the first place, after rejecting the rationale by which it had been justified and explained, after denying that repayment of the fund by private individuals had addressed the principle of the matter, and after calling for a change in policy, the session voted to withhold all payments to the Presbyterian Church until further consideration. Six months later payments were resumed. But real long-term damage had been done. [More than fifteen years later that damage is still evident in the way people remember what had happened]. People decided they could no longer identify with a denomination which could "let the Angela Davis grant happen." For the first time, many of them openly questioned being Presbyterian. In this one event the simmering resentment of dozens of members of First Presbyterian Church toward the national church leadership [still mistakenly called "The Presbytery" by many members] boiled over. Along with thousands of others, the session and probably most members of First Church could not understand how the church could make the grant to the legal defense of "an avowed communist!"

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[62]Ibid, pp. 237-238.

Resentment toward other policies of the church mounted as well, and from then on it became a test of will between those who pulled for a populist run church and those who fought for one with "theological integrity" (or "integrity" of some other kind). Many members simply decided that a church which is run like that deserves an **optional** loyalty. This group of members did not immediately drop out, for the most part, but they canceled their trust in the denomination, and along with an even wider group whose identification of themselves as Presbyterians had always been tentative and now began to erode, they felt themselves to be permanently alienated from "Presbytery" or from the "Presbyterian General Assembly." In effect, they were waiting, either for their trust to be healed or for yet another demonstration that "Presbytery" is insidious. Overnight the church seemed to cease to speak for scores of people, and their membership and participation became matters of personal choice.

For a long time, First Presbyterian Church sustained a high level of participation because of its social prestige, its style of presentations, its plethora of organizations and opportunities, and because of personal loyalties among the members and between members and the pastors. It may be argued that the individualist trends of the times were simply catching up with First Church. Pride and loyalty as Presbyterians had grown dry and had been waiting for a spark. Pride as a member of First Presbyterian Church, on the other hand, remained high. First Church attendance had only just begun to slip, the music program was actively producing musical extravaganzas with the youth and children, and recruitment of members was carried along by the church's popularity among management people of several industries which were still thriving in the upper end of Metro East. But through it all, the essential nature of what it means to be a church had changed. One change that became increasingly important was the change toward inflated pluralism, in which an individual's conscience and choices are paramount, which resulted in the church ceasing to be a movement or an institution (with a corporate mentality and resilience). The church became yet another voluntary association whose value to members increasingly became narrowed to the services it could provide. Another change was the loss of a rich tradition for the church.

> By the 1960's a rich devotional tradition of personal piety, involving regular Bible reading, family worship, and disciplined habits of prayer and piety had vanished along with the mid-week prayer meeting, leaving a void both in the arena of public worship, where the sense of the holy became increasingly dim, and in the arena of personal devotion and discipline, for which professional religious leaders were now claiming responsibility.

The pastor made one more attempt to turn around the situation regarding mission, in May 1974. A report from the Long Range Planning Committee regarding mission was entered in the session minutes, as follows:

> The church is in the world and community to serve as God's witness. It must share God's message with all people and labor in the healing of dissensions and enmities which separate man from God and from

> each other. Christ has called the church to this mission. The Church must serve all the community as well as its own congregation. The Church is a congregation wanting to worship God as a body of people. It is a congregation desirous of reaching people for worship, fellowship and mutual aid.

In making the report Elder Robert Lynn, "...stated that we are doing pretty much what the committee believes should be done." But, "How are we implementing service to the community as well as the congregation?" it was asked. The minutes state, "The Moderator ... gave a brief rundown on the many projects for serving the community. These included Tutoring, Nursery and Day Care, Better Homes for Alton, Parents Without Partners, Nearly New Shop, and as a location for various organizations -- Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Brownies, etc."

In 1974 a fund drive was mounted to raise $100,000 to buy some residential properties on Alby street for use as parking, or possibly as an apartment for elder citizens. On July 16 the session agreed to purchase the McAtee property facing Alby on the west side of the street between Fifth and Sixth Streets, and the Trabue property on the north east corner of Alby and Fifth, as well as a bus for $9,200. The session was polled in writing. The result was 38 voting yes and pledging a total of $20,000 and one voting no. A year later the property on the east side of Alby was sold to Miller's Mutual for $47,500 and an agreement [in writing] that First Presbyterian Church members can use the lot for parking on Sunday and other non-business hours. The $100,000 campaign fell short by about $11,000 but it was decided not to cut back the annual budget by freezing salaries or cutting out positions on the staff.

On September 13, 1977 Gregory S. Fletcher was hired "as Organist and Choir Director of the Chancel and Westminster Choirs at a salary of $6000 per year," when William Memmott resigned as Minister of Music. When Jerre Nord resigned as Assistant in Education after only five months, for personal and health reasons, the session voted to agree with the Personnel and Education Committee and with the Music Committee "to employ Greg Fletcher as a full-time Minister of Music and Education as of April 1, 1978 at a salary of $10,500. When Larry Jackman was called to the Grace United Church in September 1980 the way was clear to downgrade that position from associate to assistant pastor. At that time Carol Fletcher was asked to serve as part time Assistant in Christian Education.

The last previous major fund raising campaign had been begun in 1974. In October 1978 the pastor introduced the Major Mission Fund of the denomination, and the session voted we participate. Throughout 1979 there was no further action on that. Meanwhile, funds from the Emma Horn Estate had been designated for a carillon and that was diverted with the consent of the heirs to an Antiphonal Organ. A contract was signed on January 15, 1980 with the Moeller Co. to install the antiphonal organ. Then at the annual meeting on January 27 the Major Mission Fund goal of $45,000 was set for a period of three years. In the Spring of 1981 at a combined meeting of the session and trustees:

> Elder Fred T. Renshaw and Trustee Frank Webb outlined the financial needs and commitments of First Church for building maintenance and repair, and for Major Missions. The joint bodies approved a special capital fund drive to be completed by June 21, 1981. The goal of the drive is to raise $100,000 in pledges during the next two years .... "

This drive and the installation of the Antiphonal Organ was to be part of the celebration of the Sesquicentennial of the Congregation in June 1981. It was a resounding success.

The organ was completed and dedicated. On June 20 Presbytery met at the church, and Brad Wigger was taken under care as a candidate for the ministry, the fourth person in the history of the church to be received as a candidate. (Just six months later Charles Spencer was accepted as a candidate to come under care of Lovejoy Presbytery for the purpose of entering seminary in the fall of 1982.) On June 21 the 150th Anniversary Celebration was held, and two days later Fred Renshaw reported that the Capital Fund Drive had received in pledges about 90% of the goal.

By the early 1980's Alton was a very different city than it had been in the 1960's. To a remarkable extent the dream of Dr. Burroughs and other visionaries had been realized. Much of downtown Alton was transformed from creeping slums and derelict buildings into safe and open areas, with most of the best old housing on the market for restoration. First Presbyterian was a "peg" keeping the city from getting away. Not only the architecture but also the quality of life was vastly improved in scores of ways, with some of which the church had much to do and with some nothing at all. At the same time, Alton was being attacked by the creeping industrial blight that had hit all the Ohio and Mississippi industrial belt. Old plants were being replaced elsewhere, away from rigid labor unions and increasing taxes (and higher costs of remodeling as compared to building all new somewhere that costs were cheaper), and some family owned businesses were sold by third-generation heirs to large corporations. Production fell at the oil refineries and steel mills. The glass factory moved, the box board company restructured, as had the tannery and shoe company long before. These changes had a radical impact on the First Presbyterian Church. It was almost as if the Mississippi River had changed course leaving downtown Alton high and dry. Only commerce prospered, and that was largely removed to the north rim of Alton where the mall and shopping strip kept the town alive. Alton fast became a residential community locked into the St. Louis orbit as never before.

Only in retrospect did the impact of these changes to Alton seem radical to First Presbyterian Church. The church continued much as it had for decades, except that women's participation in day-time activities dipped drastically as employment outside the home became normal for women. The Sunday School also continued to decline (out of sight of most members who were in worship at that hour), despite at least two temporarily successful attempts to reverse the sliding attendance. In fact, First Presbyterian Church was entering yet another era of history, although in 1980 it was

too early to notice it, and even in 1991 it is too early to be sure what the character of the new era will turn out to be.

More staff changes came when Carol Fletcher was engaged as Director of the Children's Choir as of September 1, 1981 at a salary of $100 per month for 9 months. Rev. Richard E. Crusius joined the staff in January 1982. He was hired for six months at a time. In October the session voted to offer the position of Assistant Pastor to the Rev. Ross J. Doyel. He was installed at worship on January 16, 1983. Mrs. Ethel Morgan retired after 30 years as church custodian [housekeeper]. C. B. Rippley retired after 42 years as treasurer of the church. Helen Slaten resigned as of June 15, 1984 after 24 years as Church Secretary. And finally, Dr. Burroughs "notified the Session of his intentions to retire from the ministry during the 1985 year." The formal action was taken on February 25. The congregation concurred on April 21. On July 7, 259 persons received communion. Dr. Burroughs served until the end of July, preaching his last sermon as pastor on July 28, 1985.

The exciting career of Cortley Burroughs, and the Golden Years of First Presbyterian Church saw many changes to the congregation. Perhaps the largest crowds of presbyterians ever to assemble in Alton were part of the worship services during those years. Dr. Burroughs built and inspired others to build. But most of all he is remembered as the pastor during the Golden Years when things were big and abundant.

In effect, Dr. Burroughs' last words to the session were in the form of a prayer he wrote, which was read on April 28, 1987 at the session meeting after he died.

> *Almighty God, You have called each one of us from our separate lives to form one congregation; grant us a spirit of unity and love we pray. Help us to live a common life in which our differences enrich rather than divide us, our mistakes unite us in forgiveness rather than exclude us in judgment, and our goal is to serve rather than to be served. Give us courage and faith to be the church we profess, as we express our Christian love through our concern for others, in the name of Christ. Amen.*