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IX. MEMOIRS

A. MINISTERS

REV. WEBB AYERS

Rev. Webb Ayers left a rich and varied life of service for his Master and whatever community was home, passing to his reward December 9th, 1988 in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where he had resided for the past 10 years.

Little is known of his growing years other than he went to work in a print shop at age 13 and struck out on his own 2 years later, working for various Country newspapers while finishing high school. Eventually his path led to Monmouth College, intending to prepare for the ministry. After 2 years, finances forced him to withdraw. After his marriage to Pearl Murnam in 1920 and through the encouragement of her pastor he returned to college to resume his preparation for the ministry. This study was short, too, for he took time out to serve his country in World War I for 2 years, 16 months of that time was overseas. After his discharge he was urged to again resume his studies for the ministry and complete his studies while serving churches. This he did. His first two churches had been closed for two years, one at Covington and the other at Greigsville, where he served as a local preacher. He was admitted on trial into the Genessee Conference in 1924 and into full membership in 1928. He continued to serve in the Methodist Episcopal and United Methodist Churches until retirement in 1961.

After his retirement he supplied at churches as he was called. His last service for the Master was to teach a comradeship class at the First United Methodist Church in Kenosha.

In addition to ministering he served in whatever community he happened to be through the Rotary Club. He had perfect attendance as a Rotarian for 34 years. From 1934 to '38 he was a member of the Rotary Round Table section of the Institute of Public Affairs. From that he was invited to the membership of Political and Social Science. In 1946 he went to Poland with American Relief shipment of horses and conducted Seminar Evening Sessions on the structure and purpose of the United Nations as outlined in the Rotary Study, "From Here On."

It was noted in 1970 that Rev. Ayers had said, "When I'm completely retired I've got to have something to do — I'll gather up some of the materials I've kept over the years and do pamphlet work." He did this under the title "Valley Echo," writing a delightful combination of homespun philosophy, fiction and fact.

HELENA LORRAINE CHAMPLIN

July 7, 1896-November 17, 1988



Helena L. Champlin was born in Roxbury, New York to the Rev. Loren Jay Champlin and Helen Moore Young Champlin. She graduated from Stamford High School at 16 with an advanced regents diploma, valedictorian of her class, and with a scholarship to Syracuse University. She earned her B.A. degree there in 1917. She then enlisted in the Board of Home Missions and became a director of religious education. She worked in that capacity until 1924. At that time she completed her studies for ordination and was ordained a deacon. She was ordained an elder in 1926 after doing graduate work at Boston University. After ordination she returned to Boston to attend Boston University School of Theology. She received her M.A. degree in 1927 and her M.Div. degree cum laude in 1930. In 1933 she completed all course requirements for a Ph.D.

Helena decided at that time to devote her life to pastoral ministry rather than teaching in the university setting. She remained a scholar and maintained her interest in education all of her life. She was a true pioneer for women in ordained ministry, but her high standards, professionalism, and devote life remain an inspiration to the many persons of both genders she touched in her years of ministry.

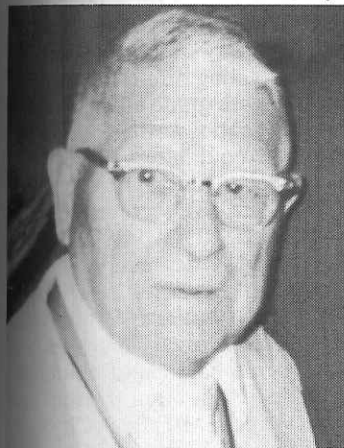
Helena served the Board of Home Missions, the North Gainesville, Jasper, Avoca & Wallace, Springwater & Canadice, Konona, Wheeler & Towlesville, Andover, Dalton, Prattsburg & Pulteney, Wyoming & Covington, Gainesville, and East Otto charges with distinction.

She also had a profound influence on this pastor's life, ministry, and spiritual discipline.

Larry R. Baird

PETER GORDON GOULD

July 8, 1900-November 23, 1988



P. Gordon Gould was born July 8, 1900 at Unga, Alaska. His father was a Lay Speaker in the Russian Greek Orthodox Church at Unga and took Gordon with him as he attended to his duties during the absence of the Priest. When Gordon was five his father died. As he neared his sixth birthday, his mother began to tell him about the Jesse Lee Home at Unalaska saying, "If you want to grow up to be a good man, you will need to go to the home."

In the fall of 1906, Gordon was outfitted in new clothes which his mother had made. She then took him by the hand and led him to the shore where a boat was waiting to take him to the home. His last memory of his mother was seeing her standing on the shore waving goodbye to him.

Arriving at the Jesse Lee Home, Gordon began a whole new way of life. Here he learned some very fundamental lessons of life from Dr. and Mrs. Newhall who were in charge of the home. He remained here until 1913 when he was sent to a farm in Ohio where he joined his sister Anna.

While on the farm he attended a revival meeting where he accepted the call of God to become a minister. Shortly after this experience he found a page from a catalogue of Syracuse University. He did not know where Syracuse was but he was determined that he would graduate from that University.

From the farm in Ohio he went to Williamsport, Pennsylvania where he attended Williamsport Dickinson Seminary, now Lycoming College. During his stay in Williamsport he attended Third Street United Methodist Church and was befriended by Ethel Guinter who was to become his wife on August 18, 1925.

Following his graduation from Williamsport Dickinson Seminary he attended Syracuse University and received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1927. When he became an ordained member of the Central New York Conference, he was the first native of Alaska to become a fully ordained Methodist Minister. He served churches in that conference until 1941 when he transferred to the Western New York Conference. In 1948 he became a member of the Board of Home Missions with responsibility for Methodist work in Alaska.

After assuming his position with the Board, he spent three months in Alaska surveying the needs of the church. He discovered that there were six basic needs which the church needed to address . . . one of them being the establishment of a four year liberal arts college. From this came the foundation of Alaska Pacific University which is located in Anchorage, Alaska.

In 1965 he retired from the Board and became Vice President of the University where he served for three years. He then served several churches in the Philadelphia area. In 1979 he and his wife Ethel moved to Albion, New York.

Gordon was given a "Captain's Chair" as the outstanding alumnus of Lycoming College. Syracuse University awarded him the George Arents Pioneer Medal for excellence in Education. Alaska Pacific University bestowed upon him a Doctor's degree and the University's Gold Medal.

He is survived by his wife Ethel who resides at Orchard Manor Nursing Home in Medina, New York; three sons, Ardell, Edward and Robert; seven grandchildren; fourteen great-grandchildren.

A service of celebration was conducted by Dr. Gregory Van Dussen at the First United Methodist Church in Albion, New York, on November 26, 1988.

CHRISTIAN WILLIAM KOCHER



Chris William Kocher was reared on a large farm in North Dakota. His father died young and his mother was stone deaf. One day as he was herding cattle he heard God's voice calling him to preach. He had no money and just an eighth grade education. He had attended a one room school and a one room church. He told the Lord he couldn't even talk, but God supplied his need, opened doors for him and gave me to him for a helpmate. We were married in 1935 after graduation. He then attended Asbury seminary, finishing his B.D. and M.A. degrees.

We started our ministry in the Iowa Des Moines Conference; then to the North Indiana Conference. Both of us sang and I played the organ and piano so we had a lot of music in our home and churches. Chris served Albany and New Paris circuits, churches in Sheridan, Elkhart, Ft. Wayne, Michigan City and

Indianapolis. Then the Bishop sent us to Grace Church in Rochester. We retired from the Western New York Conference and moved to Florida. Chris was the assistant pastor at Beymir in Florida for 7½ years and served 14 years as chaplain of the Arians Shores mobile park, Auburndale.

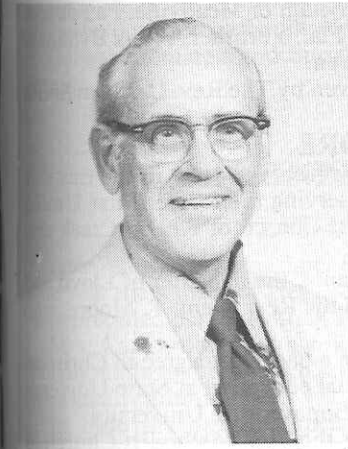
We entertained 7 Bishops and many missionaries including Dr. E. Stanley Jones plus Tamio Muto who planned Pearl Harbor but who later became a Christian and a preacher. Dr. E. Stanley Jones' meetings in Grace Church in 1970. Large crowds came to hear him — even Catholics and many nuns. That week with us it was heavenly just to talk with him.

Chris loved his Lord and the Methodist Church. His people loved him especially his funeral sermons for he had been to the Holy Land and walked where Jesus walked, died and rose again.

Survivors include the four talented children God gave us; Dorothy, a nurse, David, an airplane pilot, Joy, a minister's wife in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and Ruth a talented mother and part time teacher.

Lois Kocher

EDWARD READ

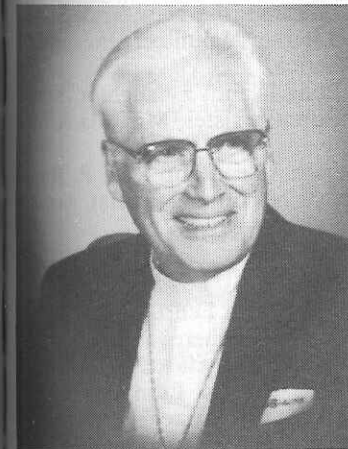


The Rev. Edward T. Read, 79, retired United Methodist Minister died Thursday, May 25, 1989 in the Beechwood Residence, Getzville, N.Y. He was born in Niagara Falls and was graduated from Niagara Falls High School in 1929. He attended Cornell University Agriculture School and later received his bachelor of Divinity Degree from Alfred University.

Edward joined the conference in 1944 as a probationer and became a full member in 1948. He faithfully served his Lord in the following churches: Whitesville, North Nigham, West Union; Springwater, Canadice; Portville, Weston Mills; Buffalo Central Park; Wellsboro; Webster; Rochester Covenant. He served as Conference Treasurer from 1969 until his retirement in 1972.

A memorial service was held in Christ United Methodist Church, Snyder with Bishop Forrest C. Stith, The Rev. Vernon C. French and the Rev. Dr. Donald L. Weaver officiating. He is survived by his wife, the former B. Ruth Searles; a son, George; two daughters, Dorothy R. Jeffery and Susan R. Andrews and a twin brother, William P. Read of Niagara Falls.

REV. WAYNE C. BYHAM



The Rev. Wayne C. Byham of Lompoc, California, formerly of Niagara Falls, died August 1, 1988 at the age of 74. He had lived in Lompoc since his retirement in 1979. He had served in the Methodist Churches of Hinsdale, Ischua, Arkport, Bishopville, S. Dansville, Little Valley, Napoli, and Niagara Falls. He had been ordained at age 55.

After many years as a dedicated and effective layman, Wayne felt called by his Lord to go into the preaching ministry. It is an awesome thing to behold what the Lord can do with a committed life; either in the pew or in the pulpit. In Wayne's case it was a ministry that combined his years of experience in the pew with the skills of communication in the pulpit with such effectiveness that many lives were strengthened, straightened and made whole by the power of the Gospel. The widening influence of Wayne's life

was like the ripples from a stone cast into a pond, which travel outward and effect changes on a distant shore. His parents, Charles and Mabel Byham had given him a rich foundation in Christian orientation and personal values of integrity and caring.

The other part of Wayne's separation for ministry was his life experiences of which the words of Luther's hymn speaks: "Our helper, he amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing." Of mortal ills Wayne had a plenty. Out of his painful experience on the loss of his oldest son and in his personal health he could understand and relate to the pain of those around him.

Another plus for his ministry was having a dedicated and talented spouse, Dorothy, who survives him.

Through his times of trial and upward struggle toward the goals of his Faith-Journey one has seen a Christian walking in the Light and will again. Thanks be to God!

In 1978, he was awarded a residency to study the holistic care of cancer patients and their families at Roswell Park Memorial Institute and Buffalo General Hospital.