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## VII. MEMOIRS

### MINISTERS

#### LEVI H. ZERR

The Reverend Dr. Levi Hoffman Zerr, Founder and first Administrator of the Methodist Church Home in Cornwall, now Cornwall Manor, died in the Health Center of Cornwall Manor at 6:00 a.m. June 17, 1981, at the age of 84 years, 11 months and 13 days.

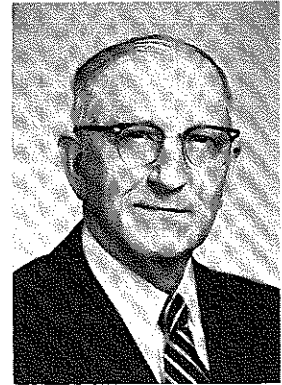
Dr. Zerr assumed the position of the Home's first Administrative Director in 1949 after completing six years as District Superintendent of the West District of The Philadelphia Conference. In 1964, at his own request, he was relieved of the administrative duties and at the request of the Board of Directors, continued to serve in the capacity of Founder-Consultant.

It was while serving as Superintendent of the West District that Dr. Zerr discovered the magnificent property known as the Buckingham Estate in Lebanon County. He realized the potential possibilities of the property as a Home for retirees. Without a single dollar he entered into negotiations for its purchase. The Home was opened on October 8, 1949 with eleven guests. Today over 350 residents enjoy life in retirement on Cornwall Manor's beautiful campus. During Dr. Zerr's administration the home which began with the original Buckingham mansion, gradually expanded to include five major units, fourteen cottages, three modern apartment buildings, a completely equipped modern Health Center and a Chapel named in Dr. Zerr's honor. The equity has increased from a mere nothing to a value of more than thirteen million dollars. Despite the misgivings of some of his best friends and closest associates, Dr. Zerr believed the founding of the Cornwall Home was of God and he never wavered from that belief.

Dr. Zerr was born in Berks County, Pennsylvania, the twelfth of thirteen children. He was the son of Jacob Luther Zerr and Elizabeth Zerr, nee Hoffman. He was a graduate of Albright College and Theological Seminary and held the degrees of Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Divinity from that institution. He was granted the degree of Doctor of Divinity by his Alma Mater in 1945. He was a member of The Philadelphia Conference of The Methodist Church for more than fifty years and held numerous responsibilities as a member of that body. He was a reserve delegate to the General Conference in 1944 and delegate to the General Conference in 1948. He served as a member of the Jurisdictional Conferences in 1944-48-52, and was President of the Philadelphia Conference City Missionary Society and President of the Philadelphia Conference Education Society. He was a member of the Board of Sustentation, Conference Board of Trustees, Board of Ministerial Training, and Vice-President of the Tract Society. Prior to his founding of the Cornwall Home, Dr. Zerr served pastorates at Coventryville Circuit 1917-1922; Elverson and Mt. Carmel 1922-1924; Hamburg 1924-1927; Fritz Memorial, Bethlehem 1928-1933; Trinity, Chester 1933-1939; and West Chester 1939-1943. His home church was St. Paul's, Geigertown, one of the oldest Methodist churches in America dating back to 1773. During his term as District Superintendent 1943-1949 he was instrumental in the establishment of the Grandview Heights Church, Lancaster, and Trinity Church, Havertown.

Dr. Zerr was a member of the Rotary Club of Lebanon and the Howell Lodge, F. & A. M., Honey Brook. Dr. Zerr is survived by his wife Hazel Bitler whom he married in 1917. Two sons, Jesse B. of Paoli and Levi H. Jr. of Coatesville R.D. 4, as well as three grandchildren, Patricia, wife of Rev. Charles Weigel, Jr. of Springfield; Craig of Paoli, P. Bradley of Paoli, two step grandchildren, Barbara and Jay Stroup, and one great granddaughter, Melinda Allison Weigel of Springfield.

Memorial Services were conducted in the Levi H. Zerr Chapel at Cornwall Manor on Sunday evening June 21 and Monday morning June 22, 1981. The Rev. Allan Sumerfield, Chaplain of Cornwall Manor presided at both services in accordance with the wishes of Dr. Zerr. Bishop Fred Pierce Corson preached the sermon at both services. Other participants at the Sunday evening service were Dr. Robert Daugherty, Lebanon-Reading District Superintendent; Dr. F. Lewis Walley, President of Cornwall Manor Foundation; The Rev. Harold Baseshore, pastor of the Cornwall United Methodist Church; The Rev. Charles E. Weigel, Jr., pastor of Epworth United Methodist Church, Bethlehem and grandson-in-law; Dr. Price Collins, former Administrator of Cornwall Manor. Sharing in the Monday morning service were Rev. Robert H. Wright, Lancaster District Superintendent; Rev. Charles S. Kerr, former pastor of First United Methodist Church, Lancaster; Rev. Charles Weigel; Rev. William



A. Sharp, pastor of First United Methodist Church, Lancaster; and Rev. Donald F. Miller, former Administrator of Cornwall Manor. Mr. Harrie G. Schimmel and the Cornwall Manor Board of Trustees served as Honorary Pallbearers. Graveside services were conducted by Rev. Charles Weigel at the St. Paul's United Methodist Church Cemetery, Geigertown.

The Prayer offered at the Sunday evening Memorial Service epitomizes the spirit of Levi Zerr:

"His faith was simply lived and clearly expressed. His assurance of salvation was deeply felt and readily shared. His hope in the face of adversity, pain and difficulty was steadfast through the grace of Jesus Christ. His devotion to others throughout his ministry was significant enough to make his name blessed to countless persons in many places and circumstances. His vision and courage, his audacity and determination, identified him as one of whom Joel spoke: he dreamed dreams and had vision sufficient to bring to fruition this haven of comfort and care. Lord, impart to us this selfsame spirit of our brother Levi."

We, his friends, miss Levi! He possessed a radiant personality, kindly friendliness, willingness to undertake almost anything for Cornwall Manor and a deep spiritual insight. Praise God that he lived among us. Praise God that he and we shall live again!

—Douglas I. Cloud

**EDWIN B. HARRIS**

Edwin Bergstresser Harris was born November 26, 1896 in Pottstown, Pa., the son of William S. Harris and Emma (Sands) Harris. His father and grandfather (Mathias Harris) were both ministers. The fourth child in a family of five children, he spent most of his school years in Harrisburg, Pa. and graduated from Harrisburg Technical High School in 1917. In 1918, during World War I, he served as an enlisted man in the United States Navy. As a young man, he spent five years learning and working at his trade, prosthetic dentistry.

The years 1923 through 1931 were devoted to studying, preaching, and working. He graduated from Albright College (B.A.) in 1927 and from the Evangelical School of Theology (B.D.) in 1931. During these years, he supplemented the family income by working part-time in several dental laboratories, one of which he started, established, and later sold. In 1933 he received his M.Th. degree from Crozer Theological Seminary.

At the East Pennsylvania Conference in 1924, he was licensed to preach, but did not receive an appointment until a year later. In 1928 he was ordained a deacon, and two years later he was ordained an elder. His first appointment was to Charlton 1925-1927, followed by Kleinfeltersville and Ono 1927-1929; Rothsville and Millport 1929-1930; Bethany Church, Shenandoah 1930-1933; Grace Church, Philadelphia 1933-1939; Grace Church, Millersburg 1939-1942.

In 1942 he enlisted in the United States Navel Reserves and served as a chaplain for four years. His tour of duty took him to Portsmouth Naval Hospital, Va., Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and aboard the U.S.S. Whitney in the South Pacific. He was discharged in 1946 as a Lieutenant Commander. After being discharged from the Navy, he was appointed to serve St. Paul Church, Mt. Carmel 1946-1956. It was here that he initiated and, with the help of volunteers, completed construction of the church social hall, named Harris Hall. Other projects at St. Paul included the renovation of the children's department and the addition of a secretary's room and rest rooms. During his retirement years, he designed and built the altar which is now in the church. In 1956 he returned to Grace Church, Millersburg where he served his last years before retiring in 1962. It was during this period that the church celebrated its 100th. Anniversary in 1961. His interest in sports, carpentry, oil painting and playwriting helped to enhance his service in the ministry as well as providing personal joy.

He married Mary Ethel Dando, May 31, 1918. Their only child, Mrs. Clyde Day (Gayl Dando), continues to live in the house he built for his retirement at Mt. Valley Lake near Ashland, Pa. Mrs. Harris died on March 18, 1971. Four years later he married Carrie Miles Reinhart and moved to Riverview Manor, United Methodist Homes, Lewisburg, Pa. where they played active and supportive roles in the many activities there. His second

