

CBC in the '70's

Community Bible Chapel was beginning a new year and a new decade with a new pastor of just a few months. In September of '69, Pastor Ken McGee, his wife Sherrill and four young children moved into the parsonage at 902 Iron Street. The church was paying \$75/month on land contract for this house while renting out the upstairs apartment. The youngest McGee child, a babe still in diapers, was Mark McGee the missionary pilot from Alaska whom we now support.

In one of the first business meetings of the new year, Pastor McGee said that he would "take over the youth group for the present time". This would prove to be a main focus of his ministry until the mid '70's. "Young Peoples" met every Sunday night in various homes after church around 8:30 for an hour or more. We'd head down to Waucedah to the Alfredson farm or just up the hill to Sundstrom's or Hulce's. After home basketball games on Friday nights, we met at church for a "5th Quarter"—food, games, fun. The Spring Youth Banquet the night of the prom was a much looked forward to event. During the late 70's we took summer camping trips to Fayette State Park or the Porkies with sponsors Judy & Jerry Sundstrom. Our church was a member of the I.F.C.A., which held annual youth conventions including Bible quizzing and music competition. Packed in vans and station wagons, we went to places such as Lancaster, PA, Schroon Lake, NY, Winona Lake, IN, Anaheim, CA, Portland, OR, Muskegon, MI. We also had a girl's quartet in the mid 70's which competed in the national competition.

And a musical decade it became. Shortly after Pastor McGee came, he organized and directed a choir. They practiced every Wednesday night after Prayer Meeting and sang most Sunday mornings. This also became the practice for the annual Christmas cantata. We never lacked for special music talent with soloists such as Mrs. McGee, Judy Sundstrom (Carlsen) or our men's trio. Several college music groups visited with such names as The Musical Messengers, The Melody Messengers, The Internationals (at Immanuel Baptist and we promoted), The Symphonettes, The Southland Bible Institute Music Group, The Agape Players.

Outreach and testimony in the community were important and deliberate. Both in activities we sponsored and in community activities from which we "separated" ourselves. We questioned the ecumenical movement popular at the time. While nearly every year we had a ministry at the fair usually showing a film and counseling folks, we did not endorse the Billy Graham movies being shown at the Braumart theatre until late in 1978. Though we had our youth and adult choir, we didn't choose to participate in the community Christmas concerts. We did lend our voices to the huge choir which sang at the Jack VanImpe Crusade in the fall of 1971—"Nothing Is Impossible"—one of the favorites. We also had a half hour radio program on

WMIQ each Sunday morning named "Chapel Time" with our men's trio, Jerry Sundstrom, Dick Swanson, and Bob Danielson, singing the theme song, *'In Times Like These'*. Our children's outreach programs had also changed as we had dropped our association with Pioneer Girls and adopted other clubs. Yet our heart was still beating to reach kids in the community and grow our own spiritually.

Our start as a missionary-minded body continued. In 1972, Lyle and Gloria Hulce and their four girls headed to Honduras for a year of short-term missionary work. Tim and Joan Cumings (one of our own) headed to Austria in the mid 70's. By the end of the 70's, Bill Sundstrom, who often referred to CBC as his home church, would begin his work with Campus Crusade for Christ. We had monthly supported missionaries, some whose names are still on our list today, and a Faith Promise Program to gather extra funds for extra gifts and needs.

One telling of our Chapel's history is in the building itself. More changes would come during this time happening, interestingly, while pursuing plans for a new building. Pastor McGee was quite determined in the pursuit and projection of the need for this despite the fact financially money was forever tight. The first change came in 1970 remodeling the front of the auditorium to make a classroom on either side. The need for nursery space led to the use of a borrowed house trailer for a time. Ask Mary Ann Zahn the story of those months. In 1977 we added a nursery addition which today is the office and pastor's study. We had other expenses involved with remodeling and updating the parsonage, blacktopping the parking lot, and the ever persistent problem of the roof. Near the close of this decade, the "new building" idea had been replaced with expansion plans for classrooms on the west side of the building.

There were undercurrents of so much more reflected in the minutes of business meetings. Cottage Prayer Meetings were started, a form of small groups, appreciated by some though not by others. Eventually, we would vote narrowly to leave the I.F.C.A. There was a continual search for someone to hire to be the janitor.

On July 12, 1978 Pastor McGee's letter of resignation was accepted by the board. Earl Funderburg filled in as an interim until nearly one year later when a special board meeting was called on July 4, 1979. A call was extended to Tony Adams to be our next pastor.