

The Next Piece—the 1980's—Part I

We were about to step in to the 1980's, a decade where two different pastors would lead the congregation of CBC—Tony Adams from July of 1979 until early 1986 and Jeff VanGoethem from 1986 to October of 1990.

Tony, his wife Sandi and two small boys, Nathan and Seth, moved into the parsonage at 902 Iron St. the summer of 1979. During their years with us, two more sons, Torrey and Luke would be born. The Adams's had previously been at a pastorate in North Dakota so we were his second congregation. Tony was our first seminary-trained pastor having graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary, consequently, bringing a greater depth to the teaching of God's Word.

From the onset of his time as pastor, Tony used his gifts of organization and administration. He worked with the board to set goals, restructure the constitution and move to a flow chart to be more efficient in business, goals and outreach. A change in pastorate provided prime time to evaluate so the board had some desired improvements in mind: better communication between the board and the congregation, board meeting minutes to be posted for public view which would include the current financial needs, a Christian Ed board, more planned informal gatherings, a suggestion box, and putting CBC on a budget.

There was a continual deep desire to see the church grown numerically. The Oct. 22, 1979 board meeting set a goal to double attendance in the next year. By the next summer they had established ideas of how to achieve this goal—a bus ministry, better song leading, home Bible studies, and community outreach through such means as a fair ministry.

This decade did bring growth in a different way—the expansion of the building itself. Imagine the current Chapel without the entire back portion (gym, kitchen, bathrooms), the west side rooms (library, nursery and classroom), and the overflow room on the east side of the auditorium. When the Adams's came the west side rooms and the back area were in the rough. This would be an unending, ongoing project. Business meeting notes are full of the tight finances to finish these expansions and keep up with the ever needed maintenance of the parsonage. The work was done by volunteers and some hired. Lyle Hulce's hands have been part of every part over the years. The big push to complete the gym area came with an anticipated 20th anniversary celebration planned for July 30-August 1 of 1982. In June they were still doing drywall, septic, insulation and wiring.

During the 80's we began some traditions which carry through still today. After years of supporting a variety of Bible camps, we chose to support and encourage church families to attend Lake Lundgren. We began a camp scholarship program and in the summer of 1981 had

our first Lake Lundgren Sunday service. Wayne Funderburg initiated the idea of an Easter morning sunrise service followed by breakfast. We've dropped the sunrise part but kept the breakfast! We began to increase our missions giving as we could and gave each missionary a special monetary gift at Christmas.

The Women's Missionary Fellowship was strong and a vital part of the functioning CBC body. They had a weekly ladies Bible study with members rotating the lead each month, a monthly business meeting, quarterly cleaning bees, missionary projects from collecting pill bottles to soup labels and more, one social event per month, and responsibilities of the prayer chain and hospitality. These same ladies were the leaders for Pioneer Girls which was our outreach for girls. For the boys there was a Tree Climber Club for K-2, and Stockade for young boys.

In the very early 80's the Young People's group was still very large and youth led. A revival among teens in Norway in the mid to late 70's, due in part to the influence of Christian teachers in the high school, grew into a growing Bible study called Maranatha. This spilled into our youth group and our Sunday night meetings in homes of the youth could have up to 30 kids many of them from outside our Chapel family.

Yet the records bear the other colors of this time—there's the ever leaky roof, the organ damaged by the mice, starlings nesting up in the roof, the need to increase attendance—to keep those attending, suggestions to the pastor for improvement, dealing with a parsonage that had big needs, the property line issue to the east, a very stretched budget which included a loan to pay back on the back addition. From plans of increased membership, the minutes from one meeting reported that 40 people had left the Chapel while 21 and come to the fellowship.

By late 1985 the board and Tony realized that his time as pastor was coming to a close. He formally announced his decision to resign on Nov. 10, 1985 and voluntarily filled the pulpit through February of 1986.

**Please note this is my rendering of the story based on the board meeting minutes and my memory. There are others in this congregation who lived the story and could add to give a more complete picture.*