



Orval D. Peterson

Washington- Northern Idaho Disciples

By

ORVAL D. PETERSON

Published by
CHRISTIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION
St. Louis, Mo.

CHAPTER FOUR

First Churches and Leaders

THE first churches of the Restoration movement in the Northwest were at Dixie, Castle Rock, and Sumner. Early records are not complete, and there is some dispute as to which church was the first to be established. However, these churches came into being in the same general period. They were the result of the westward trend of population and the development of the Northwest Territory.

DIXIE

Sometime in the sixties, the Kershaw Brothers settled at the confluence of Mud and Dry creeks, about ten miles from Walla Walla. The Kershaws had sung their way across the plains to the tune of "Dixie" and to this settlement they gave the name "Dixie Crossing," which later was shortened to "Dixie." Just when the church was established in this community is not exactly known since the church records were destroyed by fire several years ago. The pioneer members had passed away without leaving available accounts, but it is known that the first congregation was organized several miles from the present town of Dixie. A group of pioneer Disciples from the Midwest had settled there.

Roy C. Jacobs, former secretary of the Inland Empire Christian Missionary Society, believes that the Dixie church was organized in 1856 or 1857. This organization continued for about twenty years. In 1876 the church was moved to Dixie and met for a time in the schoolhouse. The present church building was dedicated in 1883. The congregation was ministered to by Cornelius Cheetham from 1884 to 1886. He served this church

while he was pastor at Waitsburg. Other pioneer pastors were **S. Hamilton**, J. B. Daisley, and a Mr. Crawford.

Dixie is still a small community, and the membership of the church has been greatly reduced by removals and deaths. However, the church still carries on. Ministers of the church in Walla Walla and others have given supervision to this pioneer congregation. Fred Riehle, a student of Northwest Christian College, had a short pastorate in 1943.

CASTLE ROCK

The organization of the Castle Rock church is associated with the life and work of William Huntington, one of the first brethren in Cowlitz County. He was born in New York in 1816. When news of the gold discovery in California was received in 1849, Mr. Huntington was one of the first to become enthusiastic over the West and to start across the plains. He returned East in 1852 but came back to the coast of Washington Territory the same year, accompanied by his three brothers, James, Benjamin, and Jacob, and their families. He persuaded several of his friends to join his train, and as a result eight families with horse teams made the journey from St. Joseph, Missouri. They were on their way from May 21 to October 25. On that date they reached The Dalles on the Columbia, where the wagons and teams were left for the winter.

In the spring of 1854, Mr. Huntington took up a donation claim on the ground which is now the site of Castle Rock and began to clear the land around the log house which he had constructed for his wife and children. His only thoroughfare to and from his home for a distance of twelve miles was a rapid and dangerous river and a rough Indian trail.

Mr. Huntington had joined the Christian church early in life, and his faith was a matter of daily conduct. The first organization of the Christian church in Castle Rock came about as a

In 1933 the church celebrated its eightieth anniversary. C. B. Osgood was then pastor but passed away in June of that year.

SUMNER

This church was organized in 1858 by Stephen Guthrie on the prairie west of the city of Tacoma. The site was between Longview and Gravelly Lake in Pierce County. The organization took place in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Israel Wright. There were fifteen members in the new church. The first converts were Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Wright, who were baptized in Gravelly Lake. The members of this church moved to the Puyallup and Stuck valleys and continued to meet in a schoolhouse on the Ryan place, where the town of Sumner now stands. Worship was continued in this building until 1883, when the first section of the present building was constructed. There were eighty members in the church at that time. Since that date the building has been enlarged a number of times.

Through the years the church has continued to grow and now has about 200 members. Ministers who have served this pioneer congregation are S. C. Espy, A. M. Sweany, K. H. Siafoose, W. W. Watson, T. O. Morgan, Bruce Wolverton, Thomas Sweeney, H. Cogswell, W. O. Hayes, F. M. Walden, Judge Gaus, Clark Braden, Alfred Brunk, Eugene Skyles, E. C. Sanderson, C. M. Lane, Harry Watkins, H. T. Peck, Neal Cheetham, Mr. Glascock, Mr. McKnight, David Husband, Roy L. Dunn, Frederic Grimes, J. T. Eshelman, Mr. Miller, O. P. Burris, A. C. Corbin, O. J. Law, Thomas Plunkett, Claude H. Lorimer, J. Eric Carlson, J. Miller Ice, Albert Hartley, W. A. Moore, Lee Furgeson, A. Jackson Bailes, and Burton Brown.

EARLY LEADERS

The work of Christ in the Northwest has been mediated through the lives of many faithful Disciples who were called into places of pioneer leadership. There are also many whose names and records are known only to God. Of the early min-

isters and evangelists who laid the foundations of the church in the Northwest we list the following:

J. M. Allen	S. B. Letson
K. Bailes	M. F. Luark
N. E. Beach	J. S. McCallum
John Boggs	W. L. McCullough
Judson Brown	Charles McDonald
J. T. Cannon	W. H. Maloney
Neal Cheetham	R. Milne
W. F. Cowden	T. M. Morgan
W. D. Craig	R. H. Moss
W. S. Crockett	F. D. Muse
W. R. Cunningham	J. A. Pine
J. B. Daisley	L. N. Richardson
A. W. Dean	Linus Rogers
J. E. Denton	Morton L. Rose
R. E. Dunlap	E. C. Sanderson
C. B. Edgar	F. B. Sapp
Jacob T. Eshelman	Eben Sherwood
Isaac Flint	K. H. Siafoose
Jason Fry	A. D. Skaggs
C. C. Gibson	C. E. Smith
W. A. Giffins	J. N. Smith
C. F. Goode	Leroy F. Stephens
A. W. Green	George F. Stivers
Steven Guthrie	A. M. Sweany
S. Hamilton	F. E. Taylor
E. D. Holman	M. A. Thompson
G. S. O. Humbert	B. E. Utz
William Huntington	A. C. Vernon
J. S. Kincaid	F. M. Walden
E. A. La Dow	C. J. Wright

was dedicated in September, 1888, by F. M. Walden. The building and lot cost about \$2,800. The next pastor was G. W. Ross, who was succeeded in June, 1892, by J. M. Allen. In 1899 the building was moved to the corner of Third and Stevens, the present site of the church. The present building was erected and dedicated in December, 1903. The dedicating minister was James S. Myers. B. E. Utz was pastor.

During the course of this congregation's history it has participated in and contributed to the forming of the Dean Avenue Church, which became, in turn, the Jefferson Street Church, Pacific Avenue, Kenwood, and Hillyard. Ministers of this church since J. M. Allen have been B. E. Utz, C. F. Stephens, J. E. Davis, George W. Knepper, and Henry A. Van Winkle. Dr. Van Winkle has been the pastor since 1923.

TACOMA, WASHINGTON

First Church. In 1878 the first members of the Christian church began to arrive in Tacoma, but it was not until 1882 that the first preaching services were held. These were conducted in the Burns schoolhouse, and in 1883 Bruce Wolverton began preaching semimonthly. March 2, 1884, saw the formal organization of the church with twenty-four charter members. The first meeting place for the new church was in a dingy room over a shop owned by A. S. Black, but in 1886 a small church building was erected at 1305 South E Street. The building was dedicated on August 1. In 1895 an addition was made to this building. On September 10, 1906, ground was broken for a new church building at South Sixth Avenue and K Street. The cornerstone was laid on February 2, 1907, and on July 7 of that year the first services were held in the basement. The building was completed and dedicated on June 21, 1908. Ministers who followed Mr. Wolverton have been A. M. Sweany, K. H. Sicafoose, M. F. Redlein, Professor T. F. Campbell, J. T. Eshelman, Morton L. Rose, W. A. Moore, Hermon P. Williams,

Harry C. Munro, William Paul Reagor, S. Grundy Fisher, Joseph D. Boyd, and Carl A. Johnson.

This congregation helped to establish the Lincoln Park, Pine Street, and McKinley Park churches. It also gave encouragement to the Roosevelt Heights Church. For many years the church also carried on Bible school work in the Adams Street Chapel. This congregation has ordained the following ministers and missionaries: Peter and Susie Reijnhart, Ray E. Dew, Mr. and Mrs. Hugh J. Williams, Kenneth S. Helm, and Mrs. Cloma Norton.

WAITSBURG, WASHINGTON

The first effort to assemble the scattered Disciples of this community was in June, 1867, when Elders Hamilton and Granville Goldstein called them together in a schoolhouse. In 1876, Mr. Hamilton organized a church at Spring Valley, a country district adjacent to Waitsburg. There were forty members here and thirty-five members at Bundy Hollow, north of Waitsburg. The Waitsburg congregation was organized temporarily in 1880 in the schoolhouse where the first meetings were held. They had occasional preaching services by visiting evangelists.

In 1883 a permanent organization was effected, and both the Spring Valley and Bundy Hollow organizations merged into the Waitsburg church. The church had a membership of sixty in 1884, and Cornelius Cheatham was called to be the first pastor at a salary of \$700 a year. In the same year the first church building was erected at a cost of \$3,000, but until it was finished, the church met in the Methodist building. The Sunday school had an enrollment of about eighty. James Nelson was superintendent. Mr. Cheatham gave three-fourths of his time to the church at Waitsburg and the remainder to the church at Dixie.

In 1905 the present building was constructed. It was dedicated on February 4, 1906, with D. C. Kellems as dedicating minister. A special train carrying about 150 people came from

Benton, Walter Callison, Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Baker. Miss Gertrude Shoemaker went from this church into the mission field in Africa.

DAYTON, WASHINGTON

When the pioneers began to settle in the Dayton section, around the year 1870, there were those among them who believed in the Restoration plea. Although there is no definite record, it is believed that meetings of the brethren were held in schoolhouses and in the homes. Some of the early preachers at those services were Elder Elliott, W. F. Cowden, Dan Eldridge, and C. J. Wright. In 1882 the first organization of these scattered Disciples was completed at Baileysburg, a point about three miles southeast of Dayton. The church was called together by T. O. Morgan, and the church building dedicated by G. W. Richardson.

In 1885 about a dozen Disciples rented an upper hall on Main Street and began holding Sunday services. Bruce Wolverton, principal of the high school, became superintendent of the Bible school. S. Hamilton, who lived in Dixie, preached occasionally. A pioneer member wrote of these meetings as follows, "There were some great prayer and praise services in that dingy little hall on Main Street."

In 1885 the congregation at Baileysburg united with the group at Dayton, and the church was completely organized under T. M. Morgan. In 1886 a building was erected, and J. B. Daisley preached for the church. In 1903 the membership was 275, and the building was inadequate. During the ministry of H. G. Morrison it was enlarged at a cost of \$2000, and the membership increased twofold. In 1904, Mr. and Mrs. L. F. Stephens held a meeting resulting in 161 additions. During the ministry of J. A. Pine, in 1907, plans were made for a new building, which was completed during the following ministry of W. H. Harris. On January 26, 1908, the new structure was dedicated by Ellis B. Harris, son of W. H. Harris.

Ministers have been J. B. Daisley, Neal Cheatham, C. M. Barnes, George Barneby, P. D. Hollis, W. L. McCullough, W. W. Pugh, O. J. Gist, H. G. Morrison, Peter Burnett, Neal McCallum, David Lyon, J. A. Pine, W. H. Harris, F. T. Porter, J. E. Slimp, H. L. Bell, W. G. Seates, R. E. Jope, D. J. Howe, I. E. Metcalf, S. L. Jackson, Leslie Zimmerman, Frank Van Doren, and H. J. Jones.

ELLENSBURG, WASHINGTON

In the early part of 1877, Keithly Bailes settled in Ellensburg. Mr. Bailes, the first Christian minister in Kittitas County, preached in homes and log schoolhouses. This marked the beginning of the Disciples of Christ in and around the Ellensburg community. The Bible school was first organized in 1882, with E. G. Grindrod as superintendent.

On April 12, 1886, the church was organized by Mr. J. H. McCorkel, an evangelist from California, assisted by J. T. Eshelman. Mrs. W. H. Rader and four other women organized what is believed to be the first women's missionary society in the state.

J. E. Denton became the first pastor at a salary of \$75 a month and held the services in an upstairs hall. The first church building was constructed in 1887. The lumber was made from logs brought from the mountains on bobsleds to the Ellensburg mill by men of the church. The building and the parsonage were constructed by volunteer labor. Neal Cheatham held a meeting in the new church building, which was located on the corner of Fourth and Sampson streets. The converts were baptized in a creek in front of the building.

The first Washington state convention was held in Ellensburg, October 4-8, 1888. The present brick structure was erected during the ministry of F. E. Billington and was dedicated in 1919. Other ministers of this congregation have been J. E. Denton, E. C. Sanderson, G. M. Wiemer, B. F. Norris, F. M. Walden, Ernest Thornquist, W. M. Kenney, Neal McCallum, Elder Tritt, C. H. Hilton, Ralph Sargent, A. L. Crim, John