

# THE CENTRALIAN

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Number 17



TENTH ANNIVERSARY

... of ...

*Dr. Benjamin Franklin Hall*

as Pastor of

CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

January 2, 1938 . . . January 4, 1948

## A TRIBUTE TO DR. HALL

This number of the Centralian is dedicated to Dr. B. Frank Hall, in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of his installation as pastor of Central Presbyterian Church. In order better to understand the anniversary, let us go back to events that preceded that day in 1937 when Dr. Hall first assumed the leadership of our church.

In the late 1920's the leaders of Central were keenly aware that they should move the church from its location at Clara Avenue and Delmar Boulevard. Ambitious plans were laid for a new building program, and work was started on the present edifice in 1930 for the combined congregation of Central and Clayton Presbyterian Church, the latter then located at Hanley and Forsythe Boulevard.

However, the men who wisely planned Central's expansion unluckily found their program caught in the vise-like grip of the 1930 depression. Their plight was the rule and not the exception for enterprises caught in the midst of an expansion program by the depression. Good company, however, did not lessen the church's burden.

A debt of \$265,000 hung over the church, and its troubles were further complicated by the seeming inability to find a pastor capable of taking care of both the spiritual and temporal needs of Central. As a result for a period of ten months the church did not have a regular pastor. The fact that the church held together at all during this trying period was due to the untiring efforts of the trustees, deacons and elders, supported by a congregation that made up in loyalty and effort what it lacked in numbers and financial strength.

It was about this time that a member of the congregation mentioned the name of a young minister not quite out of his twenties who, with the possible exception of his youth, seemed to have all the qualifications needed for the position. His biographical sketch mentioned that his name was Dr. B. Frank Hall, born in Wilmington, North Carolina, February 26, 1908. He was educated in North Carolina and Virginia, receiving the A. B. degree from Davidson College of North Carolina in 1929 where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa (scholastic), Alpha Phi Epsilon (forensic), and Sigma Upsilon (literary), honorary fraternities. He took his theological training at Union Theological Seminary in Virginia, receiving the B. D. degree in 1932 and being awarded the Hodge Fellowship. In 1933 he received his degree of Master of Theology and of Doctor of Theology in 1937. Dr. Hall was ordained in 1932 and held a pastorate in Morehead City, North Carolina. He was the youngest minister (at that time) on whom the Union Theological Seminary had ever conferred the Doctor of Theology degree. Dr. Hall represents the eighth generation in his family in the Presbyterian ministry.

Dr. Hall was married to Adelaide Peiffer October 10, 1933, and they now have three children; John Tannahill born January 8, 1940; Michael Hoke born September 12, 1941, and Frank Peiffer born October 5, 1947. All three children were born at the Deaconess Hospital in St. Louis.

After careful deliberation B. Frank Hall was unanimously selected as pastor. He moved to St. Louis December 30, 1937, and preached his first sermon as minister of Central, on Sunday, January 2, 1938. His topic was "Marching Orders for a New Year," Scripture—Joshua I.

On January 5, 1938, at 7:30 p. m. an informal reception was given in the church parlors to welcome Dr. and Mrs. Hall. (Sunday, December 21, 1947, a surprise reception was given to celebrate Rev. Dr. Hall's completion of ten years as pastor of the church.)

Dr. Hall's pastoral message in his first service on January 2, 1938, was as follows:

"Together we begin, with this New Year, a new era, in the life of our church. Old things are passed away, old discouragements are forgotten, old sins of sloth and faithlessness are put behind us. All things are new. It is for us to determine how the new shall be shaped. We can mold it, if we will, after the pattern of old failure; or we can build, by God's grace, a glorious temple to His praise. But if we are to meet the challenge of new opportunity, we must meet it as new men. We must put off the old man of self-seeking, and put on the new man of self-sacrifice. That will not be easy. Only humble reliance on God's strength will make it even possible. Therefore, I ask each one, at this hour of opportunity, when the past is gone and the future looms bright before us, to join me in a solemn re-dedication of ourselves to the Will of God, that during this new year we may know the joy of those that serve Him wholeheartedly, and may see the task He has given us to go forward toward success."

The immediate task that was undertaken ten years ago is an accomplishment today. A congregation which numbered less than 700 when Dr. Hall came to Central Presbyterian Church now numbers over 1,400. About 1,100 of these have joined since Dr. Hall became its pastor. (The difference in figures results in the removals, deaths and retirements.) The debt which once looked so formidable at \$265,000 has been reduced to \$67,000.

In Dr. Hall, Central Presbyterian Church found a man of dynamic personality who projects his own feelings and sincerity of purpose right into the hearts and minds of his listeners. He is possessed of boundless energy and a depth of understanding that has lightened the burden of his parishioners uncounted times when the weight of their troubles threatened to overwhelm them.

Dr. Hall, by his example and his works, has enabled Central Presbyterian Church to extend and enlarge its capacity to do the Lord's work during the trying years encompassed by his sojourn here. The list of his attainments could be prolonged indefinitely, but it would be superfluous after outlining the record that has been made in that ten-year period. He was wisely selected to do a job and he is doing it. His congregation hopes and believes that the job is just at the beginning, that new avenues of service will open up so that Central Presbyterian Church can continue its steady growth and continue to find favor in the eyes of the Lord.

**THE WEEK'S ACTIVITIES**

Sunday, January 4

9:30 a. m. All Departments of the Church School.

11:00 a. m. Morning Worship. Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

5:00 p. m. Vesper Service.

6:30 p. m. Fellowship Group meets for Supper, Devotion and Recreation.

6:30 p. m. Seniors will hold their meeting at the church.

7:00 p. m. Young Married Group will meet in the Church Parlor.

Tuesday, January 6

10:15 a. m. Woman's Auxiliary Devotional.

Luncheon and Board Meeting follows.

Thursday, January 7

6:30 p. m. Church Night Dinner.

7:30 p. m. Choir Rehearsal.

Friday, January 9

6:30 p. m. Couples' Club Dinner.

**Communion Service**

Our regular quarterly Communion Service will be held at the morning worship hour Sunday, January 4th. Please make every effort to be present at this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

**Meeting of the Session**

All Elders are urged to be present at the Session meeting following the Church Night Dinner on Thursday evening.

**Ladies of the Auxiliary**

Auxiliary meetings will be resumed on next Tuesday morning beginning with 10:15 devotions. Following luncheon a Board Meeting will be held.

**January Couples' Club Dinner**

Don't forget to make your reservation for the January Couples' Club Dinner. The guest speaker has been announced as Mr. E. J. Putzell of Monsanto who will relate his experiences as an officer in the Office of Strategic Services (OSS).

Make your reservations NOW for the Church Night Dinner on January 8th.

**Church Directory**

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Organist and Choir Director  
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Mrs. Martha C. Daniels.....Hostess  
5696 Kingsbury — Parkview 5056

Mr. Al Satterfield.....Custodian  
Parkview 2777

Dr. and Mrs. Frank A. Brown, Jr., Medical  
Missionaries—Hsuchowfu,  
Kiangsu, China

Mr. William A. Langtry.....Clerk of the Session

Mr. Harry Wuertenbaecher...President, Board of Deacons

Mr. Robert P. McDonald.....Treasurer

Mr. Sam Hall.....Chairman, Church School Commission

Mrs. R. L. Mernagh.....Secretary and Treasurer,  
Church School

Mrs. L. Peter Wetzell.....President, Women's Auxiliary

Mrs. Arthur Woerheide.....Librarian

Mr. Carl G. Buder.....President,  
The Fellowship Young People

Mr. Brainerd LaTourette, Jr.....President,  
Senior Young People

Mr. Harry C. Williamson.....President,  
Central Couples' Club

Mr. Charles S. Johnson, Sr.....Men's Class

Mrs. M. A. Webb.....President, Mothers' Class

Mr. Edward Chatham.....President, Ambassadors' Class

Mr. Jack Taylor.....Choir President

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