

Florida Baptist Historical Society Biography Collection

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Stair, George R. served as pastor of churches in Chicago, Maryland and Florida including Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, St. Petersburg; First Baptist Church Lakeland from 1935-1937 and Main St. Baptist Church, Leesburg.



CONSOLIDATION EFFECTED; NEW CHURCH BUILT

Two Baptist Congregations
Join; Tabernacle Is
Completed

By DOROTHY MAYER

CONSOLIDATION of the Grace Baptist church and the Calvary Baptist church, now known as the Fifth Avenue Baptist church, Fifth avenue and Sixth street south, and the construction of the First Baptist Tabernacle, Second street north, between Second and Third avenues, were the most outstanding steps taken last year by church organizations of St. Petersburg rightfully called "the city of churches."

The Fifth Avenue Baptist church, of which the **Rev. George B. Stair** is pastor, has a membership of nearly 600. The temporary building is fully equipped and more class rooms were recently added. The Sunday school under the direction of H. L. Parker and R. B. Freeman has a corps of 42 officers and teachers.

Organized In 1903

The Grace Baptist church was organized in 1903 by the late Dr. J. W. Harria. Dr. W. H. Hubbard served as pastor for several years followed by Dr. W. A. Hobson, formerly pastor in Jacksonville, who served until last summer. The congregation of the Grace Baptist church made only one change in its house of worship throughout a long period of years. The original building was a small frame house constructed on the site at the northwest corner of Fourth street and First avenue south. In 1907 the building was torn down and the present structure erected.

The Calvary Baptist church was organized in 1925 by 20 Baptist residents in St. Petersburg. The **Rev. W. C. Foster** was the first pastor and was succeeded by the **Rev. Louis Entzminger**, who took the membership of 20 and in 10 months raised the membership to 325, led the congregation in the purchase of the site at Fifth avenue and Sixth street south and erected a large tabernacle. Dr. Entzminger resigned to re-enter the evangelistic field and it was upon his recommendation that the Calvary church turned to Dr. **George R. Stair** as leader.

Temporary Name Picked

The name Fifth Avenue Baptist church was selected by the separate congregations as a temporary name for the consolidated churches and will be used until such time as committees working on the matter shall have selected a permanent name and site for a new building.

ALL TO RESUME NIGHT SERVICES AT EARLY DATE

Consolidation of Calvary and Baptist Churches Takes Effect Today

With the coming of the tourist season great changes and progress have been shown among the churches of the city. Owing to increase in congregations several churches have been forced to move or expand and almost all of the institutions have resumed their evening worship.

One of the most important events to be recorded in the pages of history concerning the church movement in St. Petersburg, was the consolidation of the Grace and Calvary Baptist churches into one large institution. For several months it has been the aim of many members to bring about this change and it came to a climax at the Wednesday night prayer meeting of both churches. At that time a popular vote was taken and the resolution was unanimously agreed upon in the congregations of both.

Final arrangements were made Thursday afternoon with the result that the Rev. George R. Stair, former pastor of the Calvary Baptist, will have as his pastorate the newly organized organization, Fifth Avenue Baptist church. At present services will be conducted in the old headquarters of the Calvary Baptist church on Fifth street and Fifth avenue south. Dr. Stair has announced as his topic for the morning sermon "The Unfelt Hand." He will also occupy the pulpit at the evening services, using as his theme "The Face We Fear."

RESTLESS AGE, LIFE OF DAVID TO BE THEMES

Illustrated Sermon Slated
Today; Interesting Sub-
jects Selected

CONTINUATION of a series of evangelistic sermons by the Rev. W. T. Watson at the Gospel Tabernacle, the deliverance of an illustrated sermon on "The Life of David" by the Rev. Charles Winner, pastor of the Central Baptist church, and the discussion of "This Restless Age" at the Fifth Avenue Baptist church by its pastor the Rev. George Stair are a few of the many sermons scheduled to be delivered by local pastors at the morning and evening services today.

"What We Owe God" has been

REV. G. R. STAIR TO CONDUCT REVIVAL

Will Hold Services At
Calvary Baptist

Rev. George R. Stair, who has been conducting successful revival meetings in a number of cities in Florida, comes to the Calvary Baptist church, peninsula drive and Earl street, peninsula for a 10-day meeting to open Thursday, Nov. 18, and last through Sunday, Nov. 28, except Saturday nights when no service will be held. The meetings will start at 7:30 p. m., nightly.

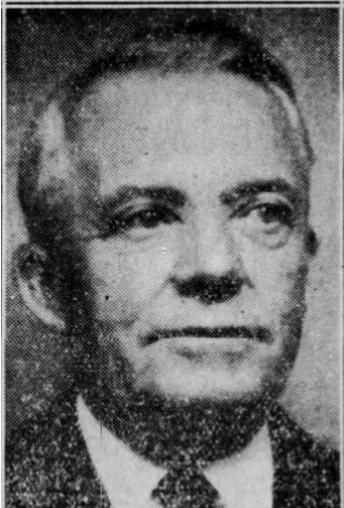
Rev. Stair has been in Florida during the past two years and has conducted revivals in Orlando, Eustis

and other cities. He comes to Daytona Beach from Dade City. His home is in Clermont.

Prior to coming to Florida, Rev. Stair was pastor of churches in Boston, Chicago and Portland, Me., and was also chaplain of the Alexander Evangelist corps.

Rev. George R. Stair, now of Clermont, Fla., formerly pastor of churches in Boston, Chicago and Portland, Me., will be in charge of revival services to be conducted at the Calvary Baptist church, peninsula for 10 days, commencing Nov. 18 and ending Nov. 28, exclusive of Saturday nights.





**SPECIAL
REVIVAL SERVICES**

**Palm Avenue
Baptist Church**
Palm and Florida Ave.
March 25th to April 8th
Every night 7:45 o'clock
Conducted by
Dr. George R. Stair
Noted Evangelist

Good Music—Good Singing
Come, bring a friend
You are welcome here, al-
ways

CALVARY—Sixth street and Fifth
avenue south.
Harry Parker, Sunday school super-
intendent, **Rev. George Stair, D. D.,**
Pastor.

FBC, Lakeland (South Florida)

These include, Central Avenue, Calvary, Dixieland, Edgewood and Westside Baptist Churches. Both the Southside and the Webster Avenue churches were formed of members of the First Baptist church and with their assistance both in leadership and by the donation of a lot. The church now has almost \$10,000 in a mission account toward the purchase of a new mission site when deemed advisable. Last year the First Baptist Church ranked fourth in the Florida Baptist Convention in gifts to World Missions through the Cooperative plan.

Pastors who have served the First Baptist Church since its organization are: Rev. James G. McCasky, Rev. A. A. Keith, Rev. P. C. Drew, Rev. W. W. Bostick, Rev. A. C. Turner, Rev. W. B. Dye, Rev. J. C. Robey, Rev. O. J. Frier, Rev. L. D. Geiger, Rev. P. W. Corr, Rev. J. H. Tharp, Rev. G. W. Sheppard, Dr. W. D. Nowlin, Rev. R. S. Gavin, Rev. Wallace Ware, Rev. Louis Entzminger, Dr. W. J. Bolin, Rev. Porter M. Bailes, Rev. C. M. Crosswy, Dr. **George R. Stair**, Rev. James W. Jelks, Rev. T. S. Boehm, Rev. Byron M. Wilkinson, and the present Pastor, Arthur W. Rich, since November 1957.

As we face the future confidently we remember the words of our Living Lord in Revelation 3:8: "Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

HISTORICAL SKETCH OF MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

LEESBURG, FLORIDA

By Miss Ossie Davis

Main Street Baptist Church, Leesburg, Florida, was organized November 26, 1926, with sixty members, under the leadership of Dr. Henry W. Battle, past president of the Southern Baptist Convention and known throughout the South as one of the most brilliant men of the Baptist denomination. For several months worship was held in the auditorium of the Elementary School while plans were being made and perfected for the erection of a place of worship. The building of such a house was the first major effort of the membership, the church in which we are today gathered. This was completed in June, 1927.

In April of 1928 Dr. Battle was forced to resign due to failing health. The first of the following July, Rev. C. C. Long became our pastor, remaining with us seven years. During this time the church grew and prospered in all phases of its work, each department becoming well organized and enthusiastic. To the regret of his membership, Rev. Long resigned in May of 1935 to accept a pastorate in another state.

In October of 1935 Rev. E. P. Fendley was called to the pastorate of our church. Rev. Fendley, known throughout the state as an evangelistic singer, spent three successful years with us, resigning to accept a call to the Delray (Florida) Baptist Church. The Brotherhood which he organized has never missed a monthly meeting since its organization and has become one of the outstanding factors of the church's activities.

Dr. George Stair, a most able preacher, supplied the pulpit during the winter of 1938. It was the wish of the church that he become its regular pastor, but because of failing health he was unable to accept the call.

Rev. E. C. Lerch, a young consecrated minister, came as supply pastor during the spring of 1939, accepting a call to become pastor in September of the same year. He resigned in February, 1940, to accept an associate pastor's place with the Winter Garden Baptist Church.

In April of 1940 Rev. L. B. Johnson accepted a unanimous call to Main Street. Surely this man of God, never faltering in his loyalty and faith, was an answer to prayer that we might have a shepherd who would lead us beyond our discouragements and out to a fruitful harvest. Under Rev. Johnson's ministry the church not only had a steady growth in efficiency, strength, and numbers, but, working according to the will of God, cleared itself of indebtedness. On May 3rd, 1942, the happiest day in the history of the church, the building was dedicated. One year later the basement, hitherto unfinished, was completed. In January of 1945 three additional lots facing High Street, were purchased, thus extending the church property from Main Street to High. A recreation building was erected in the spring of 1946 and on June 12, 1946 a dedicatory ses-

vice, dedicating the building to the four young men who paid the supreme sacrifice in World War II, James Milam, Propes Edlin, Edwin Dudley, and Thomas Benton. After seven very successful years, Rev. Johnson resigned to accept a pastorate elsewhere and in February, 1947, he took up his work in his new field of service.

On April 26, 1947 Rev. John W. Moffatt, our present beloved pastor, agreed to become interim pastor, and on October 1st, 1947, he accepted a unanimous call to become regular pastor. Many material blessings have come to us during his ministry — the major ones being the building of a pastorium, remodeling the church auditorium, installing a pipe organ, and converting the first floor into Sunday School departments and class rooms — but more than these are the manifold spiritual blessings that we have been privileged to enjoy. Rev. Moffatt's fundamental interpretation of the Scriptures and his fine preaching and teaching have led his congregation into a deeper understanding and appreciation of the true values of life. His ministry is not confined to his own people. He stands ready at all times to serve through counselling, giving comfort to those in need, or whatever service may be sought.

As the years have come and gone the way has not always been easy. There have been many obstacles to overcome; but we have been a church with everyone working together and we feel that this splendid cooperation and our faith in the will of God has brought us down to the present when we can say, "The Lord hath done great things for us." We pray constantly that we may do great things for Him, ever trying to carry out the Great Commission to be His witnesses "both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the world."