

January 10, 1960

1200th Church Symbol
Of Great Lakes Area

By Theo Sommerkamp

ELYRIA, Ohio--(BP)--Ocean-going vessels, using the new St. Lawrence Seaway, expect to open the eight Great Lakes states to a new boom of commerce and growth.

This is a region, too, which Southern Baptists have found fertile for implanting a Christian witness which has grown stronger with each passing year, especially during the decade of the 1950's.

Two of every five Americans live in these states.

Victory Baptist Church in Elyria was the first Southern Baptist Church to be organized in the new decade in Ohio and only the second to be organized in the Great Lakes area in the 1960's.

Its constituting service Jan. 3 was a milestone in Southern Baptist growth. While every church organized in the region has its own thrilling story, Elyria's Victory Church gets attention as the 1200th church among Southern Baptists in the eight states which border the Great Lakes.

It is the 200th for Ohio, enabling them to attain early in the year a long-awaited goal of 200 churches within their state convention.

Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York make up this territory of at least 65 million population. Southern Baptists have churches in each state, and co-operating state conventions in Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana.

Ten of the country's top 20 cities are in these states. New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia rank 1-2-3. Detroit is fifth, Cleveland seventh, Pittsburgh 12th. Milwaukee, Buffalo, Minneapolis, and Cincinnati are the others.

Yet in these states, church membership sometimes runs below 50 per cent of the people while the national average is about 60 per cent. This demonstrates the need.

Elyria basks in the evening glow of steel mill furnaces at Lorain, on the shores of Lake Erie seven miles away. It is in the shadow of Cleveland, and members of the new Victory Baptist Church manufacture truck trailers, air brakes, Ford auto parts, and machine tools.

The Great Lakes states offer a contrast in Baptist work. Southern Baptists have been organized in a state body in Illinois since 1907, but the strength has been concentrated in downstate Illinois. Southwestern Ohio and Southern Indiana, along the Kentucky border, have had Southern Baptist churches for a couple of decades or more.

In Dayton, Ohio, attendance at Westwood Baptist Church runs over 1000. Its pastor receives a salary comparable to churches of the same size in the traditional South and the church has a budget of \$130,000 a year.

The new Elyria Church is typical of one on the growing edge of Southern Baptists. It has 48 charter members, four of whom are Pastor Harry Powell, his wife, and two of their four young daughters.

Powell, 33, and his wife are natives of Panama City, Fla. Powell was called to preach in his mid-20's and received a diploma in Christian training from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. This is the first church of which he has been pastor.

Ten years' of experience in Post Office employment supported Powell at New Orleans, for he worked nights, and has furnished his living in Elyria where he

is "swing" man on the mail routes. As "swing" man, he carries a different route each day, walking sometimes 15 miles, and reaches 2500 homes a week.

The mail carrying has been a blessing in another way. It has given him a knowledge of the people of Elyria, its unchurched and its newcomers. After working hours, he has spent endless hours visiting prospects.

He will give up the \$4875 a year mail route job as soon as the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board votes him a salary "supplement" of \$150 a month (which will later decrease to \$100). The association of churches at Panama City, Fla., will add \$100 per month as salary aid.

The church, already barely meeting expenses with its \$230-\$240 a month offering, pays a token salary, all it can afford. It does however pay \$115 a month for rent and utilities at the five-room parsonage.

Powell figures his income will decrease \$1200 when he becomes a full-time pastor. This is sacrifice for a family of six in a region of high living costs. Powell is a dedicated man who feels God wants him on a "frontier" field.

The church meets in the North Elyria Grange Hall which it rents for Sunday and Wednesday services at \$12 a week. The Grange meets twice a month on Thursday nights, and by timing it right, the church can hold uninterrupted one-week revivals and study courses.

Bible Study Week, generally observed the week beginning Jan. 3, had to be deferred till late January at Elyria because of Grange meetings.

The sponsor church in Cleveland, itself small and pressed financially, could aid Victory at Elyria only with a \$250 donation to the building fund. An option has been taken on property and Victory Church hopes to build in a year or two.

The new church's budget provides 11 per cent to the Cooperative Program, 2½ per cent to associational missions, and a subscription for every church family to Home Missions, the Commission, and the state Baptist newspaper.

Victory Church is the fifth Baptist church in Elyria. The churches of American Baptist Convention and General Association of Regular Baptists are each two miles away, in different directions in the city of 50,000. There are two small Baptist churches for Negroes.

Leadership in the Great Lakes states is outstanding. Noel M. Taylor, Carbondale, executive secretary of Illinois Baptist State Association, has been the man of vision in the area. Because Illinois work is well-established, Taylor has not only been able to aid new work around Chicago in his own state but has been a booster in the other states.

He was present for organization of the Elyria Church.

Ray E. Roberts, Columbus, executive secretary for State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, came from Asheville, N. C., by way of a pastorate in Danville, Ky. He saw the need in Ohio after preaching a revival in Dayton, and returned to Dayton as associational missionary in 1952.

Ohio Baptists became the second Great Lakes convention in 1954 and called Roberts as secretary. Ohio has affiliated churches in western New York, western Pennsylvania, and West Virginia including Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Syracuse, and Rochester.

Forty students from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth came to Ohio to aid in nationwide simultaneous revivals in Southern Baptist churches. After graduation, 12 of them returned to the state as pastors. "They are typical Texans," Roberts observes.

One of the Texas men is jointly supported for salary by contributions from two Texas churches--the church he once belonged to and his wife's former home church.

Southern Baptists' churches are not often downtown because of lack of available property and the cost if it were available. They have "ringed" the big cities of Cleveland and Chicago by locating in growing suburbs.

Already Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio have summer assemblies where future leaders will receive the challenge for Christian witnessing. Ohio's 152-acre Seneca Lake, valued at \$50,000, will soon have \$50,000 worth of improvements.

57 Churches Attain
Woman's Union Honor

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.--(BP)--57 churches in the Southern Baptist Convention have been given special recognition for maintaining an honor Woman's Missionary Union during the year 1958-59.

An honor Union is achieved by following the "aims for advancement" which give a plan of work for the year, national Woman's Missionary Union offices here reported.

To qualify for this recognition, a church must maintain an honor Woman's Missionary Society, one or more honor Young Woman's Auxiliaries, one or more honor Girls' Auxiliaries, and one or more honor Sunbeam Bands, with all other youth organizations except Sunbeam nursery in existence in October qualifying as "advanced" or "approved."

The churches by states receiving honor certificates from Woman's Missionary Union, Southern Baptist auxiliary, are the following:

Alabama---Lakewood Baptist Church, Birmingham; Salem Baptist Church, Brundidge; First Baptist Church, Abbeville; New Hope Baptist Church, Montevallo; Elkdale Baptist Church, Selma.

Arizona---First Southern Baptist Church, Phoenix; Elsinore Baptist Church, Phoenix.

Arkansas---First Baptist Church, Fordyce; First Baptist Church, Siloam Springs; First Baptist Church, Blytheville; First Baptist Church, Ozark; First Baptist Church, Carlisle.

Colorado (convention)---Oak St. Baptist Church, Kimball, Neb.

Florida---Webster Ave. Baptist Church, Lakeland; Main St. Baptist Church, Jacksonville.

Georgia---Chamblee Baptist Church, Chamblee; Blackshear Baptist Church, Blackshear.

Illinois---Rosemont Baptist Church, East St. Louis.

Kentucky---Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Owenton; First Baptist Church, Danville.

Louisiana---Homer Oil Field Baptist Church, Homer; First Baptist Church, Sicily Island; Woodlawn Baptist Church, Rayville.

Mississippi---First Baptist Church, Picayune.

Missouri---First Baptist Church, Hornersville.

New Mexico---Northside Baptist Church, Hobbs; House First Baptist Church, House; First Baptist Church, Tucumcari; Oil Center Baptist Church, Oil Center; Trinity Baptist Church, Tucumcari; Crestview Baptist Church, Albuquerque.

North Carolina---Snyder Memorial Baptist Church, Fayetteville; High Peak Baptist Church, Valdese; Calvary Baptist Church, Albemarle.

Oklahoma---Trinity Baptist Church, Lawton; Phoenix Ave. Baptist Church, Tulsa; First Baptist Church, Hickory; Calvary Baptist Church, Lindsay.

Oregon-Washington---Trinity Baptist Church, Lebanon, Ore.

Texas---First Baptist Church, Palestine; First Baptist Church, LaMarque; Simpson St. Baptist Church, Brownsville; First Baptist Church, Alice; First Baptist Church, Goliad; First Baptist Church, San Antonio; Houston Terrace Baptist Church, San Antonio; First Baptist Church, Iraan; Calvary Baptist Church, Brownfield; First Baptist Church, Wilson; Lums Chapel Baptist Church, Littlefield; Cliff Temple Baptist Church, Dallas; Colonial Baptist Church, Dallas; First Baptist Church of Oak Cliff, Dallas; Calvary Baptist Church, Denison; First Baptist Church, Abilene; First Baptist Church, Rule; Trinity Baptist Church, Sweetwater.

Editorial Supports
Birth Control Data

BIRMINGHAM, Ala.--(BP)--Leon Macon of Birmingham, editor of one of Southern Baptists' largest weekly newspapers, writes that "it is morally wrong to bring more children into the world than we can feed, clothe, and educate."

In his editorial in the Alabama Baptist, with a circulation of more than 100,000, he takes issue with the Roman Catholic Church position opposing birth control on any grounds.

His statement does not represent an official position either of Alabama Baptists or Southern Baptists as a whole, for neither convention has taken a position, for or against.

"The general position of most every other (than Catholic) religious body in America is that people should be given information on birth control in order to help solve the overpopulated areas of the earth and at the same time to keep other areas from getting too populated," he adds.

Macon reports "Catholic pressures upon President Eisenhower have led him to declare that this government would not take part in any promotions of birth control throughout the world (and) . . . projected the issue into the national political scene . . ."

The editor says that God once permitted polygamy "which was totally forbidden by the time of Christ and it follows that birth control now would be acceptable to God.

". . . we feel that when the earth is replenished, God's admonition to multiply and replenish the earth has been met."

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Alabama Helping Ohio
In Campus Ministry

(1-10-60)

MONTGOMERY, Ala.--(BP)--The Alabama Baptist State Convention has allocated \$800 to be used for a part-time student worker among Baptists attending Ohio State University in Columbus.

Ohio State, largest of five state-supported universities in Ohio, has over 20,000 students.

Ray E. Roberts, Columbus, executive secretary of State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, reported that a Baptist student now attending a college in Alabama would likely transfer to Ohio State to complete his education and to serve as part-time student worker on campus.

This is the second indication of Alabama interest in Ohio student work among Southern Baptists. Earlier, a campus student secretary from Alabama came to Ohio at Alabama Baptists' expense to help organize a Baptist Student Union chapter.

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Folks & facts.....

.....Editor R. G. Puckett of the Ohio Baptist Messenger, Columbus, Ohio, announced that a special effort will be made to place complimentary copies of the twice-monthly newspaper in all public libraries in Ohio.

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.....Crusader, denominational newsmagazine for American Baptist Convention, has started 1960 with a printing order of 350,000 copies. Issued monthly, Crusader thus will attain its highest circulation since 1954.

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