

HISTORY
OF THE
Dalranda
CHURCH OF CHRIST

1953-2003

By
Jeff Powell and Bob McKee

INTRODUCTION

When Jeff Powell wrote his account of the Dalraida Church of Christ, he entitled it “The Dalraida Church Mission.” And as strange as it may seem today, when the congregation began in 1953 it was indeed a mission. The Forest Hills area was just developing, and where a strip shopping center stands right east of Watson Circle, you could pick cotton or visit the Montgomery Drive-In Theater. The former Lakewood congregation was the result of a further mission effort composed of some 75 Dalraida members who began that work in another new developing area in 1960. Later a group from Lakewood formed the Landmark congregation which was originally on the Atlanta Highway next to Frazer Methodist Church. So, in a true sense, Dalraida can lay claim to both Landmark and the Lakewood portion of the Vaughn Park congregation when that church organized.

Urban sprawl has pushed the center of town eastward, and now an “outer loop” is under construction which will continue the process of demographic rearrangement. Discussions are now underway to organize a congregation near the Antioch Plains industrial complex.

Merely growing old, either as a person or as a church, may not be cause for celebration. The question that matters is how much one has contributed to the benefit of our world in spiritual ways. And in that sense, the Dalraida Church of Christ measures up very well. For five decades – half a century – this church has stood strong and steady, faithful to God’s Word. It is my prayer, and the prayer of all who make up the fellowship, that Dalraida will continue to be a beacon in the world’s darkness, a fountain of hope for souls who are crossing the sands of time.

— *Bob McKee, Montgomery, AL, June 5, 2003*

*HISTORY
OF THE
Dalraida
CHURCH OF CHRIST*

1953 – 1988 *by Jeff Powell*.....Page 5

1989 –2003 *by Bob McKee*.....Page 25

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1953 - 1988*

By
JEFF POWELL

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PREFACE

A few years ago I ate a meal in a Chinese restaurant. In my fortune cookie I found these words: "You should have been a lawyer because you remember every detail." I readily admit that I am not a writer. I do, however, have a lot of details; and I have been encouraged by some who are aware of this fact to write something on the history of the Dalraida Church. If I had realized before I began just how much work might be involved, my lazy streak might have prevailed; but as I got into the task, I began to find it rewarding.

I am indebted to Charles Cline, who has served as my editor; to Jack Turner, who designed the cover (of the original volume); to Claude Flynn, who was my critic; to Jean Spiro, who so tirelessly did the typing; and to my wife, who was glad to get me out of the house for the many hours it took to search records and put this piece together. If this little book causes some to appreciate the Dalraida Church - and the Christ who is its owner - just a little more, it will have been worth the effort required to put it together.

—Jeff Powell, December 31, 1988

THE CONGREGATION OF OUR LORD'S CHURCH THAT NOW MEETS AT 3140 ATLANTA HIGHWAY HAD ITS BEGINNING AS THE BRANCH OF THE LEADERSHIP AT CATOMA STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST... especially that of Bro. Howard Foshee, who lived on Camellia Drive in east Montgomery's Dalraida area. In the Summer of 1953 there was no church of Christ east of Capitol Heights. But the city was growing eastward and Bro. Foshee saw his home community as a good place to establish a new church. So he took the lead.

With a promise that Catoma Street would send men to fill the pulpit three Sundays each month, a group of about 25 persons met on the first Sunday in July, 1953, in "The Studio" at the rear of Bro. Foshee's residence on Camellia Drive. He had furnished it with chairs, a Lord's table, and pulpit furniture. If my memory has not failed me, here is a list of those present on that date: Howard and Della Foshee, William and Edith Jones, Henry and Nan Raley, Frank and Earline Clayton, Bill and June Dodson, Grace Shelton, Charles and Lena Womack, Linda Lenahan, Martha Foshee, Tom and Alma Owen, Sister Reid, John A. Lawrence, Wayne Wright, Jeff and Fannie Powell, Faye Powell. (McKee), Bro. and Sis. Lenahan and daughter, Cathy.

There were at least five young children belonging to the those mentioned above, and Bro. Foshee allowed his house to be used as Bible class rooms.

We met in "The Studio" for two years, eight months. I don't recall any formal placing of membership. If someone showed up for two services in a row, it was assumed they wanted to belong; else, they wouldn't be there! Quite a number were added to our group in those early months. I will attempt to list some who came then and are now members, or who otherwise have played key roles over the years:

Handley and Jo Cook, Horace and Lenna Wright, Tom and Tinney Butts, Bill and Melba Jack-

son, Irene Rock, Lo and Martha Petree, Homer and Clara Mae Wright, Jean Spiro, J. B. and Lorraine Owens, Billy and Mildred Chesser.

On the first Sunday in August, when we had been meeting for one month, Bro. Foshee called a meeting of the men. They determined that the group should be scripturally organized; and inasmuch as everybody knew one another, saw no reason to delay. On that same day the names of Howard Foshee and Charles Womack were submitted to the congregation for approval as elders. Two weeks later, both having been approved by the members, these men were appointed to serve as elders.

A few weeks after this, the names of Frank Clayton, W. O. Jones and Jeff Powell were put before the group to serve as deacons. All were approved and appointed. Henry Raley became the congregation's first treasurer. He served for about four years. Martha Foshee, Irene Rock and Lorraine Owens taught the young children's Bible classes.

At the end of 1953 our head-count was sixty plus.

1954 Bro. Foshee purchased four residential lots at the corner of Hickory Drive and Hilltop Road; the plan being to build a meeting house there. Expenses were practically nil, so most of the contribution went towards the future building. Even though we ourselves were a mission in the full sense of that word's meaning, we determined that we should commence a mission program. So we began, this year, to contribute \$25 monthly to "Herald of Truth" radio.

Dalraida church had its first convert: I was teaching on Wednesday night. At the close, I offered the customary invitation and Virgil Shelton came forward. I got nervous!... my knees knocking "sugar in the gourd," as the old expression goes. Bro. Foshee came to my rescue and we baptized Bro. Shelton that same night at the Catoma Street

church. From that time forward, Virgil has shown much zeal. He taught Bible class and preached from time to time. Later, he served Dalraida as a deacon before resigning to go out to small rural communities as a part-time preacher.

It seems appropriate at this point to say that the Catoma Street brethren remained faithful to their commitment to send us preachers three Sundays each month. Such men as John Davis, Charles Herndon and James Britnell – all now gone to their reward – filled the pulpit. The remaining Sundays we drew upon the talents of Ben Slauson, Howard Foshee, Tom Butts, Handley Cook, Bill Dodson, Frank Clayton, Bill Jackson, and others... including yours truly. We functioned in this manner for almost three years.

Nineteen fifty four also brought Dalraida church its first great tragedy: Charlie Womack, who had been appointed an elder in 1953, was a professional airplane pilot. On December 31st, he flew his employer, a big-time road construction contractor named Vandigrif, to Jacksonville, Florida, where the party attended the Gator Bowl football game. Home-bound after the game, they learned by radio that the Montgomery area was fogged in, but for some unknown reason, they elected to continue on to Dannelly Field. Their airplane crashed in a little field near Grady between 8:00 and 9:00 o'clock that night. All on board were killed. Bro. Womack was humble and steadfast in his service to our Lord's church. His tragic death was difficult for our small congregation to bear.

Attendance at the end of 1954 was 75-plus. Bible school, Sunday nights and Wednesday nights were attended almost as well as the Sunday morning worship hour. The Studio was packed, but nobody complained!

1955 Even while Bro. Womack lay in his casket, Bro. Foshee called a meeting and said, "I cannot serve as a single in the eldership. If you do not appoint someone to serve with me, I must resign." That was Sunday, January 2nd, and that day Bro. Lo Petree's name was placed before the congregation for approval.

On January 6th, Bill and June Dodson became parents. Their son, Bill Jr., was the first child born to a Dalraida-member family. (In the months that fol-

lowed, Bro. Foshee experienced a problem which caused him to clear his throat repeatedly, and Bill Jr. would mimic him about fifty times during each service... much to the embarrassment of his parents and entertainment of others.)

Early in February, the necessary steps were taken to incorporate Dalraida Church of Christ "pursuant to the provisions of Article 3, Chapter i, Code of Alabama, 1940, Title 10, Section 124-132." Members signing the documents, dated February 14, 1955, as trustees were: J. R. Raley, W. O. Jones, Frank Clayton, Jeff J. Powell, and George T. Owen. J. B. Williams served as secretary early in the organizing process, then was replaced by Handley Cook.

In the Spring, when we set about making plans for a building, it developed that plat restrictions hindered building a church on the Hickory Drive property; so Bro. Foshee sold the lots at that location and gave Dalraida church a 95' x200' lot on Atlanta Highway.

In June, I was appointed an elder to serve with Bros. Lo Petree and Howard Foshee; also, I was named to chair a building committee. We invited all the men who were interested to participate in the planning process, and J. Streeter Wiatt was selected as our architect. Plans were completed about August 1st. Bear Lumber Company was successful bidder – the price, \$42,120 (heating and air-conditioning not included). Construction began in September.

We had enough cash to pay for the heating and cooling equipment (cost, about \$5,000), auditorium and classroom furniture (another \$4,000), and purchase some carpet. Union Bank and Trust made our mortgage loan; but, because Dalraida church had not established a credit line, each man was asked to sign for the loan. All did so, without exception! Monthly mortgage payments ran a little more than \$400.

1956 The new building was finished in February and we met in it for the first time on the first Sunday of March. We opened up with a gospel meeting, Bro. E. C. McKenzie, then at Catoma Street church, did the preaching; and we had a second gospel meeting in July, with Cecil Perryman, who was the regular preacher at Cloverdale church.

Our first full-time minister, Bro. Earl Hilbert, began his work in September. Troy Fakes, Bill Jackson and Virgil Shelton were named to serve as deacons. In December, Dalraida church mailed its first Bulletin. Growth was steady and things were GOOD!

1957 Parking became a problem! P. E. Trevarthen owned a vacant lot across the Atlanta Highway, and gave us permission to use it for parking. Bro. Raley resigned as treasurer in May and Bill Jackson replaced him, serving in that post for 27 years. Bro. Maurice Howell, then located at Central Church in Birmingham, conducted a gospel meeting for us in May; and Dalraida began giving monthly support to Herald of Truth and Childhaven – \$25 monthly to each.

July ushered in some troubled times. Bro. Foshee, who was peculiar in some ways but one who used his wealth and talents generously, resigned as an elder on July 7th. His departure resulted in serious financial problems and there was difficulty meeting mortgage payments. On the last Saturday of each month for the next several months, I had to get on the telephone to inform each head of a household just how “short” we were on making the next building payment. “Tomorrow we’ll need \$200 more than we normally collect,” was not an unusual theme! On Sunday, the money was there! Dalraida members have NEVER FAILED to respond to an eldership’s appeal for money!

Bro. Hilbert left Dalraida, effective the first Sunday in September, and Bro. Don Earwood was employed to occupy the pulpit. Bro. Earwood had recently returned from a tour as a missionary to Belgium.

Yes, ‘57 was a trying year! Bro. Petree and I spent as much time “eldering” as we did to make a living. Serving as deacons through this era were: W.O. Jones, Virgil Shelton, W. G. (Bill) Jackson, Frank Clayton, and Troy Fakes. These men were patient and cooperative. All members who survived this period are to be commended! Many are still at Dalraida today. As a matter of interest, it was during this era that those who were scheduled to participate in the worship service began meeting before the service in a back room for prayer and meditation... the practice has continued unto the present

time. In August of that year, Dalraida had its first wedding in the present building... Faye Powell was married to Bob McKee.

1958 A preacher’s home, located in Perry Hills, was purchased in January. The word “purchased” is perhaps a poor choice. How things happened were thus: A family that worshipped at Dalraida, the Oscar Brazzells, was being transferred to East St. Louis. They had this house in Perry Hills with very low equity, and the Earwoods needed a place to live. The church bought the Brazzell’s equity and took up payments on the mortgage. From its inception, the arrangement was viewed as a temporary one.

Dalraida held two gospel meetings in 1958: the first in March with V. P. Black, who was then preaching for the Plateau Church near Mobile; the second was held in July with Burton Coffman, of the Manhattan Church, New York. Both were great successes. Bro. Black drew crowds that over-flowed the auditorium and spilled onto the front stoop! Dalraida Church gave \$1,000 towards construction of a building to house Bro. Coffman’s work in New York City.

During the summer, Bro. Foshee began a new work located on Coliseum Boulevard and was joined by his family, the W.O. Jones family, Tom and Alma Owen, and Sister Reid.

In the fall, Troy Fakes was appointed as an elder to serve with Bro. Petree and myself. Nat Wiley, Handley Cook and Charles Cline were selected to serve as deacons. Alex Garrett and Howard Houston replaced W. O. Jones and Tom Owen as trustees.

1959 Mission-minded Dalraida began about mid-year to support the church at Montevallo in the amount of \$50 monthly. Support to Childhaven and Herald of Truth was continued; and we gave \$500, and pledged another \$100 each year for five years, to support a building program in Providence, Rhode Island.

Again, as in 1958, Dalraida held two gospel meetings. Bro. Maurice Howell was here in March, and Bro. Burton Coffman returned in August. Dalraida Church contributed another \$1,000 to Bro. Coffman’s building program at Manhattan Church in New York City.

Bro. Ben Slauson preached for us Sunday, June 8th, and was paid \$25. (In case you think that that was too much, I suggest to you that Bro. Ben was hard to get in those days!) Earl Hilbert and Robert Bradford also preached at Dalraida during the month of June.

By mid-year we were putting chairs in the aisles at many services. It was time to expand! Plans were drawn to extend the auditorium and add some classrooms. Jeff Powell, Contractor, was successful bidder. The project increased Dalraida's seating capacity by approximately 150; cost about \$31,000, and raised the mortgage payment to \$650 monthly. The work was begun early in the fall and finished the following spring.

1960 A busy year! Bro. Marvin Bryant, who had been pastor for the Oak Park Presbyterian Church before he was converted by the teaching of Bros. Rex Turner and Gus Nichols, spoke before a city-wide audience gathered at Dalraida one Sunday afternoon in February. After he had spoken, the brethren pledged funds to support Bro. Bryant until he could establish himself as a Church of Christ minister. Dalraida participated in this project and continued financial support for his evangelical efforts among denominational preachers for several years.

Quite early in the year, Bro. Earwood expressed interest in beginning a new work in the Lakewood community. The elders supported the idea, and an announcement was made to the congregation. Details were ironed out over the next few months and the Lakewood congregation was formed with a nucleus of about 75 members from Dalraida. The choice to go or stay was left to the individual. There were no hard feelings whatever!

In March, Bro. V. P. Black held another meeting. The missions program was expanded to include the church at Grand Bay, Alabama; the Herald of Truth, Childhaven, and the Montevallo church continued to be included in the Dalraida budget.

In June, we bought Lot C, the plot where the Annex now stands, from Atlantic Life Insurance Company. Bro. Adrian Freeman, member at Dalraida and vice president of Atlantic Life, helped us acquire the property. (Bro. Jim Allen, who later was elected to the U. S. Senate, was president of the

insurance company at that time.) Purchase price? About \$4,500.

In mid-summer the Lakewood people moved to their new building on Harrison Road. Dalraida hired A. E. Emmons, who had been at Catoma Street for about two years, to replace Bro. Earwood; and, we purchased a home for the preacher located on Rosedale Drive. Dalraida prospered during Bro. Emmons' tenure. He was an able preacher and mixed well with everyone.

Also, in 1960, Bro. Raley resigned as trustee and was replaced by Sherman Bozeman.

1961 Time to smooth up and consolidate some of the things done in a rush the previous year! The missions program continued unchanged. The budget included: Childhaven, Marvin Bryant, Herald of Truth, Montevallo, Grand Bay, and the pledge to the building project in Providence, R.I.

In the Fall, Charles Cline and Frank Clayton were added to the eldership; and Bill Bird, Hubert Furlong, Alex Garrett, and William Norris were installed as deacons. The expanded eldership adopted a policy of rotating the chairman every two months and meeting routinely on the first and third Sundays of each month, a practice still used today.

1962 A busy year in the "people" department: members moved out-of-town and across-town... a lot of moving about – an elder, a deacon, preacher, two trustees.

Howard Houston resigned as a trustee and was replaced by Hubert Furlong; Sherman Bozeman moved to Cloverdale Church – where he would serve as an elder for several years – and George McGough was appointed to the vacant trustee post.

Bro. Emmons accepted the pulpit at Central Church, in Tuscaloosa; and a young preacher from Rogersville, Alabama, Tom Estes, was hired to take his place at Dalraida. Bro. Lo Petree moved to Birmingham. He had served as an elder for eight years... a good man whom we loved. Bill Bird's job moved that family to Dothan. So in a few short months we had lost an elder, a preacher, a deacon, and two trustees.

This year's budget for mission work was expanded to include the church at Monroeville, Alabama, and a new work at Kittery, Maine; each receiving \$50 monthly. One-time contributions were made to: a Bro. Slaughter, who was headed for Thailand; a Bro. Stewart, who was working as a missionary in Jerusalem; and a Bro. Massey, who was working in Nigeria.

We held a gospel meeting in March with W.A. Bradfield doing the preaching and Richard Simon-ton leading the singing. (We older folks remember Bro. Bradfield as one who "laid it on the line.")

Bro. Estes began his work with Dalraida Church on the first Sunday in September. Also, it was about this time that we deeded the house in Perry Hills to the Lakewood Church. Those brethren had been making the mortgage payments since they began to meet on Harrison Road.

1963 Dalraida's leaders remained the same, and we continued to support those mission works with which we were already involved; but the congregation would add two more projects during the year. In May, Bro. Marvin Bryant began a mission work in Gaffney, South Carolina, to which Dalraida contributed \$50 monthly; then, in September, Bro. Jack Zorn's work at Donaldsonville, Georgia, was included. Both remained in the Dalraida budget for several years. Good things came out of both efforts.

From the South Carolina work came a story I want to share: Among members of the church who helped persuade Bro. Bryant to undertake the South Carolina project was a dentist who told Bro. Bryant, "If you will come to Gaffney, I can't guarantee you a certain salary, but I will give you 50 cents of every dollar I take in." It does my heart good to know that, in this age, there are brethren out there who love the Lord to such a degree. Dalraida has had, and still has, men who give much in a quiet way.

Bro. C. E. McCaughey conducted a gospel meeting at Dalraida in April. Bob Norris, who was assistant minister at Highland Avenue, directed the singing. Walt Spiro and Clyde Donegan were baptized. Oh, what great joy this event brought to our congregation! These men's wives had been faithful Christians for years and were members at Dalraida.

Both men would later serve as deacons.

1964 In May, we negotiated an option on the "Willis property" – the lot situated just east of the main building and occupied by a parking lot today. Bro. Paul Hunton held us a gospel meeting; and Dalraida contributed to travel funds for Gene Arnold, who was going to Germany, and Donald Earwood, who was bound for Haiti. Both were going as missionaries. All this was in May.

Billy Lambert, Tom and Doris Davis, and perhaps others, were doing clerical work part-time. Dick Garrett was custodian.

We closed the deal on the Willis property in November. The purchase price was \$65,000. Attorney John Kohn did the legal work "for free." At the time there was a pretty good house on the lot, which served us as a fellowship hall and classroom space for several years. That was a good buy... just think how "boxed in" we might have been with out it!

1965 Another busy year! The new mission work budget did not include the church at Kittery, Maine; but other projects remain unchanged. Floyd Merritt was employed as an assistant minister in February; in March, Bro. Nat Wiley was appointed to serve as an elder. The Bill Bird family returned to Montgomery and Bill was re-installed as a deacon. Nelson Daughtry, Walt Spiro and Sam Wingard were added to the roster of deacons.

In March, W.A. Bradfield held another gospel meeting... Bob McKee lead the singing. Dalraida also participated that Spring in a city-wide gospel meeting. We contributed \$50 to a special campaign held in Cairo, Georgia; paid \$320 for roof repairs to the church building at Montevallo; and, in May, began sending \$50 monthly to support a mission work in the southern part of Mexico... a project that would continue for several years.

In July, Dalraida began sending \$100 monthly to help support Ralph Wharton, who had moved from Grand Bay, Alabama to St. Vincent with an objective to establish the Lord's church in the Caribbean area. This marked the beginning of work in which the Dalraida congregation would continue to be involved for more than a decade; first, sup-

porting Bro. Wharton; then,, Bro. Bob Brown, who followed him; and later, several native preachers who have carried on the Lord's work since the Americans departed.

I have mentioned already that Bob McKee lead singing for our gospel meeting. Bob was "brought in" for that job, inasmuch as he did not attend Dalraida at that time. Song leaders were scarce! Dick Gamma lead our regular song services during the early part of the year; then, in October, Emmitt Goodwin moved to Dalraida and took charge of the singing. Bro. Emmitt was a dynamic leader!

Floyd Merritt and Wayne Harvell did some of the clerical work that year. In August, we sent Bro. Merritt over to Louisville, Georgia, to do a mission meeting. A goodly number of Dalraida members were participating in cottage meetings, using the Jule Miller film strips, at this time. We averaged a baptism per week for a long period. Bro. Estes was especially good at "closing the sale"- Some who were converted during this era are still with us.

I would like to inject here just a word about Bro. Estes: Dalraida prospered during his tenure. He was good at personal work; and I must rank him among the best when it comes to conducting weddings and funerals!

1966 Kind of a "catch-up" year: Bro. C. E. McGaughey held a meeting in April. Jean Spiro began working as the congregation's secretary that same month. In May, Dalraida began sending \$100 monthly to the Hartford, Massachusetts, Church; and, in June, Bro. Merritt resigned as our assistant minister to accept employment outside the Montgomery area. At this time William Dendy and Wayne Johnson shared the custodial chores.

Towards the end of that year, Dalraida began supporting Jimmy Brackin, a young native preacher to the Carib Indians on the Island of St. Vincent; support that would continue for almost eight years. Years later, I was told that Jimmy Brackin had baptized more people than all the other native preachers combined; and there had been ten or twelve who worked on the island over that time span. So Dalraida has played a key role in establishing our Lord's church in that region.

1967 Cottage meetings continued; members attended workshops; more deacons were appointed; additional land was purchased. It was another busy year!

On the first weekend in February, a number of Dalraida members traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, to attend a workshop held by the Madison Church. The experience caused some of us to "think big." I can still remember some of the ideas that came from that trip.

Early in the year we began sending \$75 monthly to support a Christian Student Center operated under the oversight of the Auburn Church. Dalraida had a number of boys and girls attending Auburn University at that time; some participated in the Center's program, and your elders felt that this congregation should help out with the costs.

In April, Bro. Buford Holt held a gospel meeting for us; and, on May 5th we closed the purchase of six acres from Shan Sellers. The plot is east of the Annex, includes the ball field and wooded area south of it. The purchase price was \$50,000. In July, we purchased an air-condition unit for Bro. Mitchell's room at Edgefield Gables Nursing Home.

Our Sunday morning service had become so crowded that, beginning in September, we began having two worship services. It didn't work! We lost ground instead of gaining. Members complained that they were losing touch. After about three months we went back to one service.

In October, Daryl Thompson, Leo Davis and Clyde Donegan were appointed deacons.

In November, most of the churches of Christ in the Montgomery area participated in a special televised program called "Journey to Eternity"; a series with Bro. Mid McKnight being the principal speaker. Plans were that the campaign would be climaxed with a special area-wide meeting at Garrett Coliseum, with a "big name" preacher who could "move 'em down the aisles." The project was given a lot of hype through advertising and from pulpits across central Alabama. When the "big day" for the Coliseum event arrived, it came in with a bang... literally. Bad weather throughout the South! Our "big name" speaker was unable to get a flight to Montgomery; and, here, it rained all day and all night. Attendance was very poor... and those who did show were mostly members of the church.

Bro. Van Ingram conducted a gospel meeting in December. (Perhaps our readers will have observed that Dalraida was holding two gospel meetings each year during this era. The times are changed!)

1968 A “slow year” But some significant changes were made. Bro. Emmitt Goodwin left Dalraida and went to the College Church... there went our songleader. Wayne Johnson took over the song leading and did a creditable job through November, then he moved with his family to Jackson, Tennessee... there went our songleader and our building custodian.

Our preacher, Tom Estes, resigned effective August 31st to devote full time to his Bible School and Supply operation. He had been at Dalraida seven years. Bro. Jack Black was employed to fill the pulpit and began on September 1st. Also, Bob McKee was employed as associate minister and song director. He began his part-time duties December 1st.

Bro. P.D. Wilmeth conducted a gospel meeting for us in March... the only one held in 1968.

1969 Evidently, an unexciting year. My notes reveal little activity. Paul Murphy, a close friend of Bro. Jack Black, held a gospel meeting in late March. Our mission work continued about as it was the year before.

1970 Bro. Troy Fakes resigned as an elder in March, having served for twelve years. Curtis Dowdy conducted a gospel meeting in April. Most of the churches located in the Montgomery area participated in a financial pool used to buy land situated in the vicinity of Auburn University at Montgomery; the purpose being, that the site should be used to build a center for Christian students at some future date. The plan was abandoned some years later. The land was sold and proceeds from the sale were prorated to those congregations that had put up the purchase money.

1971 St. Vincent occupied much of my personal interest this year. Bro. Bob Brown left Kingston, on the Isle of St. Vincent, and went to Trinidad; and Dalraida’s support to him was terminated when he made the move.

By November, we elders had decided that we had been “overing” this mission work long enough; it was time to do some “seeing.” So I was commissioned to travel to St. Vincent and check on the project. I went there and found the strongest church on the island to be at Sandy Bay, the home base of Bro. Jimmy Brackin, the native preacher whom we had sponsored since 1966. This seemed to me to be ironic inasmuch as Sandy Bay was located in the “boon docks” portion of the island. And there was bad news awaiting me. Jimmy had had a motorcycle accident a few months prior to my visit. His pelvis had been broken, so he was unable to walk to Owia and Fancy, which is the only way one gets there on Sundays. Jimmy had turned these two congregations over to a young man named Winston Sprot; but Mr. Sprot didn’t live up to his name, and the two groups dried up.

For some months Jimmy had had the desire to relocate to Georgetown, the second largest city on St. Vincent island. I held a couple of business meetings with the men at Sandy Bay; and they indicated to me that they could carry on without Jimmy, so plans were made to move him to Georgetown. I returned home with a burning desire to, somehow, restore the work at Owia and Fancy, and to establish a congregation at Georgetown; also, that all these churches should mature and become self-supporting. It would take about eleven years, but with help from my fellow elders and many of you brethren and sisters here at Dalraida, these goals were largely accomplished. I will have more to say about this later.

Speaking of our Lord’s work on St. Vincent, allow me to tell two stories; one quite personal, the other having to do with the acceptance of the Gospel by the islanders:

Near Sandy Bay there is a volcano called La Soufriere. It had been dormant since 1912; but about the time I arrived it started to build a cone of lava in the middle of its crater lake, which was about a mile in diameter. While I was there it boiled all the water out of the lake. On the day I was scheduled to meet with the brethren at Sandy Bay, the government ordered everybody north of the Rabica River to evacuate. I wrote my wife a “farewell” letter and mailed it. That evening we drove back to Sandy

Bay; held our meeting with those brethren and ate supper with Jimmy and his family while some of the young men loaded the Brackin's household goods onto a truck for the evacuation. Well, I beat the letter to Montgomery and tore it up when it arrived... I like to keep 'em guessing!

Now, the second story:

While the Bob Brown family lived in Kingston, they had a native maid whose name was Elsie Gelizeau. one morning when she arrived for work, she said: "Mr. Bob, today is my birthday and I want you to give me a birthday present." Bob turned to his wife, Wanda, and told her to give Elsie a chicken from the freezer; but Elsie said she didn't want a chicken... she wanted Bob to baptize her! This astonished Bob, because he had made no particular effort to convert her. She had picked up some tracts and compared their teaching with the Bible. Elsie, at that time, had five illegitimate children and had taken in two orphans to raise.

A few weeks after her baptism, Elsie asked Bob to go to Union Island, where she had been reared, to preach the Gospel. So, Bob took Albert, Elsie's brother, and traveled to the island. He spent two weeks on Union and, upon his return, told Elsie he had baptized "only two centipedes." Elsie then asked Bob to give her air fare to travel to the island, so she could try her own missionary zeal. Bob offered boat fare, but she wouldn't accept it. Boats, Elsie said, made her sick.

A short while later Elsie received a \$25 check from Becky, a friend who lived in the States. Elsie used the money to fly to Union Island. About three days later she called Bob, collect, and asked him to come to Union Island to baptize five people she had converted. After this happened for a third time, Bob asked Elsie to come home... telling her, "you've busted my travel budget!" But Elsie wasn't done! Before she returned to St. Vincent, twenty-one persons had been baptized. Some years later I received a report that eighteen from that group were still faithful to the Lord's church. In 1981, I tried to reach Elsie by telephone and was told by relatives that she had married and moved to New York. I would wager that Elsie figured she had "met her daddy drunk" when she tried to do battle with those tough New York yankees!

So much for my story telling! However, before

leaving my accounting for 1971, I need to point out that Bro. Frank Clayton resigned from the eldership in September. He had served well for ten years; beyond this, he was a personal friend... a kind and gentle man.

1972 Bus ministries were popular! We bought ours, a school-bus type, in July. The concept might have worked wonderfully for some congregations, but it didn't do well for Dalraida. We tried for more than a year to work out the kinks, but eventually wound up giving the bus to Alabama Christian.

Bro. Paul Murphy conducted another gospel meeting for Dalraida in April; and our mission work continued about as it had been established the previous year, except for some minor changes in St. Vincent.

The evacuation due to the La Soufriere threat had scattered Sandy Bay area Christians into five separate camps. Bro. Everold Baptiste, a very sincere man of middle age, had taken charge without pay and kept in touch with each camp, encouraging each to hold services each Sunday. Citizens were allowed to return to Sandy Bay in March. Bro. Baptiste re-organized the Sandy Bay Church on his own initiative, without pay.

In September, Dalraida elders began supporting him in the amount of \$100 monthly and commissioned him to restore the work at Owia and Fancy. His Sunday routine was established: Preach at Sandy Bay in the morning; walk four miles over the mountainous terrain, to preach at Owia in the afternoon; then walk another four miles, again over the mountains, to preach at Fancy that night. After that kind of day, all he had to do was to walk the eight miles back to Sandy Bay to reach his own bed! Beyond this, he did a lot of house-to-house work during the weekdays. I returned to St. Vincent in December and learned that Bro. Baptiste had converted a middle-aged white man of Portuguese decent, who lived at Owia. I will have more to say of him later.

1973 The mission work budget was expanded to include Philip Hardy, who was beginning a new work in England; and Don Starks, who was then teaching at Whites Ferry

and later went to Trinidad, the base from which he now oversees most of the mission work being done in the Caribbean area.

In January, Handley and Jo Cook moved to Carriage Hills. Mid McKnight held a gospel meeting at Dalraida in May... I still remember his theme, "Commitment,"... I guess we needed those lessons!

In June Dalraida began contributing \$250 monthly to support Richard McGough's work at Davenport, Iowa. Richard grew up at Dalraida, graduated at Harding College, and has preached full-time since finishing college. He is now located in the Leesburg, Florida area.

In October, Hubert Furlong and Ben Slauson were added to our eldership and Rufus Taylor was chosen to become a deacon.

1974 Sometime in February or March, Dalraida contributed \$500 to assist Claude Flynn in a mission work he purposed for South Africa. We continued to support this work on a monthly basis for some time. Bro. Paul Hunton held us another gospel meeting in April; and, in June, Dalraida covered expenses for Virgil Shelton so that he might conduct a gospel meeting over in Georgia. In July, Dalraida contributed \$500 to the Madison Park church to assist those brethren in an effort to modernize their building.

Bro. Paul Hunton held another gospel meeting at Dalraida in October. In November, I revisited St. Vincent. Jimmy Brackin had moved back to Sandy Bay, and his support was terminated. Bro. Baptiste was then transferred to Georgetown. Also, about this time, we sold the preacher's home on Rosedale Drive; Bro. Black having built for himself a home on Blackwood Drive.

1975 The work in St. Vincent progressed quite well and, in January, we began supporting Walter Hackshaw, the middle-aged white man whom Bro. Baptiste had converted at Owia in 1972. Inasmuch as Everold Baptiste had moved to Georgetown, we needed Bro. Hackshaw to direct work at Owia. and Fancy. Also, in January, Dalraida began contributing \$150 weekly to assist brethren at the Adamsville Church, near Birmingham, work their way through a financial difficulty. This support continued for about six months. In

February, we began supporting the church at Wewahitchka, Florida in the amount of \$100 monthly; and, in August, Dalraida contributed \$250 to the travel fund of Bro. Wayne Crocket, who was going on an overseas mission work.

Bro. Jack Black's employment was terminated in March. Leo Davis resigned as a deacon and moved to Landmark. Charles Tharp filled the Dalraida pulpit for about three months until Bro. Claude Flynn returned from his mission work in South Africa, to commence as Dalraida's minister on July 1st. He "ain't done yet!"

1976 Our Annex was built this year. Construction began in February and was completed in late August. Chester Williams was the contractor and Hubert Furlong supervised on behalf of the church. Total cost was about \$150,000; and of this sum, \$103,000 was in the form of a loan made to the church by Emma and Tom Staton. The interest rate was "not to exceed 7-1/2%" and the total sum was to be repaid in five years. (Actually, the loan was paid off earlier than five years.)

Charles Tharp moved to Wewahitchka, Florida in midsummer to direct the mission project there. Dalraida supported him in the amount of \$400 monthly. In May, we gave Bros. Ralph Wharton and Don Starks \$250 each to assist their mission projects in the Caribbean area; and, in June, Ed Holt received \$500, and Colin McKee was granted \$350, to assist their mission works. In July, Wayne Stubbs was employed as a part-time youth director; and, in August, Jimmy Edwards received a \$250 grant to assist his mission efforts.

1977 In April Dalraida began participating with other Montgomery-area congregations in sponsoring "Know Your Bible" television program. In June Bro. Nat Wiley resigned from the eldership because of health problems. He had served a little more than twelve years.

I revisited St. Vincent Island in July; this time as a guide for a group of fifteen campaign workers from Landmark Church and Alabama Christian School of Religion. Elsie Gellizeau was still on the island; and, guess what! Two days before we were scheduled to return to the States, Elsie said to one of our young preachers, "If you will come to my

house in the morning, I will have some prospects lined up.” He went, and the prospects were there. For the next two days the young preacher taught, one-on-one, in a back room at Elsie’s house while others waited their turn. Six were baptized! The young preacher... I wish I could recall his name... was on “cloud nine.” He had never experienced anything like it!

In November Ken Kilpatrick was employed as a part-time youth minister, replacing Bro. Wayne Stubbs who had gone on to other things.

1978 In January Derward Bird, Raymond Davis, Wayne Hatcher, Bob McKee, and Bill Moody were appointed to serve as deacons, bringing the deacon’s roster to fourteen. In May Bro. Virgil Shelton conducted another gospel meeting over in Georgia. Dalraida paid his expenses. Also, our participation in Charles Tharp’s work at Wewahitchka was increased to \$500 monthly.

I led a group of fifteen Dalraida members on a campaign to St. Vincent in July. We split into three parties and camped at Georgetown, Sandy Bay and Owia, working in five villages. Twenty- one natives were baptized and ten restored. Almost all of those who went praised the work being done there; and everybody counted it an experience not easily forgotten.

1979 In January Dalraida contributed \$500 to the Eufaula Church to be used towards their new building; and, in February, we began sending “AGAPE” \$100 each month.

Plans were made for another campaign on St. Vincent, with twenty-one Dalraida members signing to go. However, in April the volcano erupted again, and the trip had to be canceled. The eruption was much worse than in 1971. Huge boulders were hurled over all the northern half of the island; fire burned much of the vegetation, and ash covered the entire island. Our people were scattered into nine camps. Dalraida sent benevolent help to assist our brethren over a difficult time.

In May, Bill Bird resigned as deacon due to ill health; in July, Bro. J.W. Yeoman filled the pulpit on one occasion; and, in August, Dalraida loaned the Wewahitchka Church \$15,000 to expedite construction of a new building.

1980 A banner year! Members’ interest was sky high, and our auditorium was over-flowing! We set about to find a way to expand. The matter was discussed in a men’s meeting and ideas were developed for presentation at a second meeting of the men. The plan that was eventually adopted had its origin with Bro. Rufus Taylor and used the angular-wing concept you see in our present auditorium. At first, however, the plan was for the east side only; but the architect convinced us that the west side should be included. The plans were finished and construction began in August, with yours truly supervising the project.

During 1980 Dalraida also began partial support for Bro. Demar Elam, who was going to New Zealand on a mission; and partial support for Bro. David Binkley at Crookston, Minnesota. Bro. Jim Bill McInteer conducted a gospel meeting for us in April. He was very good at edification, so the elders asked for a return engagement. We had in mind, perhaps, the following year; but Jim Bill was booked for seven years, so we took him when we could get him... October, 1987.

Perhaps the best piece of work your elders did in 1980 was to hire Al Millergren as a full-time youth director. At first, there was some anxiety as to whether or not our young people would accept him. Our worries were a waste!

1981 The new wings on our auditorium were finished in the spring at a cost of about \$190,000. We didn’t have to make a mortgage – just a note here and there, and we had it paid off before the end of the year. Bro. Marvin Bryant held a gospel meeting in April. In June we made a one-time contribution to assist the Southside Church with its building; and we began subsidizing the salary of the Madison Park congregation’s preacher (\$50 a week). In the summer Charles Tharp left Wewahitchka and Dalraida’s contribution to that work was reduced to \$300 monthly. We participated with other area congregations to sponsor a booth at South Alabama State Fair. Bro. Curtis Cates, Sr., served as an associate minister for a few months; and, in December, Raymond Davis, Bill Jackson, and Bob McKee were appointed to the eldership. Also, late in December, Bob McKee, Pete

Fuller and myself traveled to St. Vincent to evaluate our mission program there.

1982 Demar Elam returned to the States in January, but we continued to support the mission program he had established in New Zealand. A building was being constructed in Georgetown, St. Vincent, under Everold Baptiste's supervision; and Dalraida contributed \$1,000 to be used to purchase materials. The St. Vincent brethren had paid for the lot and the members were doing the labor.

Dalraida subsidized Jimmy Sunday's Christian education during this period; contributed \$250 to purchase Bibles that were distributed in Poland; and made a one-time grant of \$270 to be used for youth work among Christian students attending Troy State University. Also, a \$350 grant was made to Jerry Sumney to assist in his education to become a gospel minister.

In June, Lewis Wimberly and Jerry Wynne were installed as deacons. Guest speakers were used on Wednesday evenings during the summer. Among those used were: S.D. Gray, John T. Smithson, Van Ingram, Colin McKee, Ed Rezach, Raymond Elliott, Byron Benson, Keith Ellis, Rex Dutton, Jimmy Edwards, and Kenneth Randolph. Dalraida's participation in the St. Vincent mission was terminated at the end of 1982.

I almost overlooked a significant accomplishment in 1982: We added classrooms at the south-end of the main building. Construction began in June and was finished in November at a cost of about \$95,000. No mortgage!

1983 With the beginning of the new year, a double-entry bookkeeping system was installed. Davenport, Iowa; Wewahitchka, Florida; the Madison Park church, here in Montgomery; and the New Zealand work remained in the mission work budget; so did AGAPE and Childhaven. John Tew was attending Alabama Christian School of Religion, subsidized by Dalraida.

Our members honored Bro. Flynn with an "Appreciation Dinner"... he had been with us seven and a half years, and our love continued to grow. Also, we purchased approximately four acres of land situated behind Lot C and the property now

occupied by Coastal Training. The purchase price was \$50,000.

1984 Early in the year we sold that portion of the newly purchased land lying behind Coastal Training Institute for \$34,000. Dalraida retained that portion adjoining its Lot C, a bit less than two acres, and squared up its property lines at a net cost of about \$16,000. As a matter of information, the church owns approximately ten and one-half acres.

Our present nurseries were added in 1984. The remodeling allowed us to gain about 75 seats in the auditorium. Total cost was about \$40,000. A loose-leaf pictorial directory was produced... it was nice, but proved to be expensive; and, it was difficult to keep up-to-date. During the summer season, Bro. Bert Thompson conducted a Wednesday night series on "Christian Evidences"; Alex Garrett resigned as deacon; William Norris resigned as custodian, and was replaced by J. T. DeFee and Derward Bird; and, we bought a "church bus"... the one that has been so useful in serving our young people and some of the older folks as well.

In November Dalraida sent \$1,000 to assist relief efforts directed to the starving peoples in Ethiopia. Also, in November, Bill Dodson filled our pulpit one Sunday. Since then, Bill has served as an elder at Rainbow congregation near Gadsden; and while I'm on that subject, Nelson Daughtry, who was once a deacon at Dalraida, has served as an elder at the Walnut Street Church in Greenville, Alabama for a number of years. These things reflect favorably on Dalraida!

1985 Finally, Dalraida has its own full-time "American" missionary! This has been a goal of the eldership for a long, long, time. We began about two years ago to drop partial support and one-time grants to some very worthwhile mission works. This allowed money to accumulate in Dalraida's mission works budget so as to create a reserve to assure longterm support for any missionary this congregation might put in the field. In February Dalraida began supporting not one, but two, missionaries on a full-time basis! Glenn Schliebner was sent to Roanoke, Virginia to work with the Vinton Church; and Miles Chapman, a

'hometown' who was leading things at the church in Crookston, Minnesota, went on our payroll in the amount of \$400 a month. Then, in the summer, Bro. Chapman and his family visited our congregation, impressing the members so favorably that, by private contributions, his support was doubled!

Dalraida's youth program, under the able direction of Al Millergren, continued to prosper. Yes, it was a good day's work when this church hired Bro. Al! We contributed \$10,000 to assist the Vinton Church in purchasing a lot in the Roanoke area to be the site of a new mission church.

In December, Bro. Ben Slauson resigned as an elder, having served since October, 1973. Ben continues to be an asset to the Dalraida congregation.

1986 Another full-time employee... this one, a custodian named Willie. He began working for us in February. In March we contributed \$500 to the church at Garrisonville, Virginia to assist its building program; and, in May, John Tew completed his studies at Alabama Christian School of Religion, and his support was terminated; Daryl Thompson resigned as a deacon.

On July 20th, Dalraida installed six new deacons. We held a little ceremony, presenting a total of sixteen deacons. Ten "old" ones: Derward Bird, Clyde Donegan, Wayne Hatcher, Bill Moody, William Norris, Walt Spiro, Rufus Taylor, Lewis Wimberly, Sam Wingard, and Jerry Wynne; and the six new ones: Chris Bylsma, J. T. DeFee, Bill Johnson, Bill Pemberton, Mike Taylor and Pat Watkins.

In point of service, the "old" deacons represented a total of 131 man-years as servants of our Lord at the Dalraida Church. Your elders wish to acknowledge that a large portion of this congregation's success has come as a result of work done by these good deacons.

The Miles Chapman family was with us over the summer as Miles attended Alabama Christian School of Religion. They lived in the Clines' home, taking good care of it while Beth and Charlie traveled to Alaska. Again, the Chapman's visit increased the congregation's love and friendship for them... so much so that our members sent them back to Minnesota in a new van for use in their mission work there.

Over the summer, Bro. Schliebner organized a new congregation at Rocky Mount, Virginia. It was the first in Franklin County, just south of the Roanoke area. Also, during this period Dalraida was supporting Bert Thompson's "Apologetics Press" in the amount of \$50 monthly; also, we were helping Bro. Norman Hurst, the black preacher of Madison Park Church. (We have helped Madison Park, off and on, for a good many years.)

It was about this time that "Starvin Marvin" first appeared in our corridor. He has devoured lots of canned goods since he showed up, but he's still hungry... in fact, he has changed his name to "Hungry Harry."

Beginning in the fall, Alabama Christian Academy opened a day care center utilizing Dalraida's facilities. The Academy pays a prorated share of utilities, etc.

One more item for 1986: The Wewahitchka Church got into a financial bind and had difficulty meeting its mortgage payments. To help them refinance, Dalraida gave the church a waiver on the \$15,000 note we held. Those brethren appear to have worked out the problem.

1987 Some physical changes were made during the year. First, additional parking spaces were added; second, a 30' x40' metal building was constructed to better serve the work of our benevolent program. Bro. Bill Pemberton handled the construction work and didn't charge us for his trouble, overhead expense, or profit. As a retired building contractor, I can assure you that we got that little building at a bargain! Bro. Pemberton is due an expression of our thanks; and we also appreciate the good work done by the deacons, and a lot of members, towards the congregation's benevolent program.

At the beginning of the new year, support for Bro. Chapman's work at Crookston was increased to \$1,500 monthly. Otherwise, Dalraida's mission work remained about the same. The Chapman family came back to Montgomery for a second summer, the arrangements being the same as 1986... except, he wasn't given another van!

Early in September I got word that Bro. Everold Baptiste had died at St. Vincent. As one of our native preachers, he was supported by Dalraida

from 1972 through 1982; and, after our St. Vincent mission was officially dropped, there was a group here at Dalraida who continued to support him privately. He was always grateful and wrote letters to each of those who contributed. Bro. Baptiste was simply one of the best men I have known. He was not especially good in the pulpit, but he was a real “work-horse” for house-to-house teaching. He could go into a village where there was a lame church and restore it in three weeks. Some of his last hours were spent at Sandy Bay, supervising construction of a new church building. It was mainly by his initiative, and his labor, that the church in Georgetown got its own building. Yes, Jimmy Brackin did the planting, but Everold Baptiste did the watering. Dalraida members should feel good that there are at least 200 native souls on the island of St. Vincent who now worship God as a result of our involvement in mission work there.

Bro. Glenn Schliebner’s work with the Rocky Mount, Virginia congregation was terminated at the end of November. On the second weekend in December, Bro. Paul Martin and his wife visited at Dalraida. Bro. Martin had worked as a part-time preacher while pursuing a business career; and, having entered retirement, wished to settle in Franklin County, Virginia. He and his wife were received favorably by Dalraida’s membership during their visit to Montgomery, and the elders finalized his employment as the mission preacher at Rocky Mount, effective January 1, 1988.

1988 With two full-time missionaries now in the field, Dalraida increased its mission works budget to include a \$100 increase in Bro. Chapman’s support; and to continue monthly contributions to the New Zealand work, and for the Madison Park Church here in Montgomery (\$200 each.). And we took on an additional \$200 monthly to Bro. Robert Andrews, whose mission is on the Island of Aruba, just off the coast of Venezuela. One-time grants were made to two black churches: Brookview, in the Boylston area of Montgomery; and the Haynesville Church in Lowndes County. We continued to support AGAPE and Childhaven.

The Miles Chapman family was with us for a third summer while Miles finished his work at Alabama Christian School of Religion. On the last Sunday in August Bro. Martin and his wife came down from Rocky Mount, Virginia, and Dalraida held “Missionaries Day.” Paul and Miles presented two sermons each on mission work. Both did a great job, impressing upon us the great outreach value of mission work. The occasion also provided opportunity for our two missionaries to become acquainted.

We can’t close this account of 1988 without paying some small tribute to Bro. Clyde Donegan who, for many years served as deacon in charge of Dalraida’s Sunday worship services. He died Sunday afternoon, July 24th, of a heart attack, having fulfilled his responsibilities just hours before. Many of our brethren at Dalraida have passed on in its 35-year history, but none have been missed so greatly as Bro. Donegan.

THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED...

ELDERS

Howard Foshee
 Charles Womack
 Lo Petree
 Jeff Powell
 Troy Fakes
 Frank Clayton
 Bob McKee
 Charles Cline
 Nat Wiley
 Hubert Furlong
 Ben Slauson
 Raymond Davis
 William Jackson

DEACONS

Derward Bird
 William Bird
 Chris Bylsma
 Frank Clayton
 Charles Cline
 Handley Cook
 Nelson Daughtry
 Leo Davis
 Raymond Davis
 J. T. DeFee
 Clyde Donegan
 Troy Fakes
 Hubert Furlong
 Alex Garrett
 Wayne Hatcher
 William Jackson
 William Johnson
 W. O. Jones
 Robert McKee
 William Moody
 William Norris
 William Pemberton
 Jeff Powell
 Virgil Shelton
 Walt Spiro
 Mike Taylor
 Rufus Taylor
 Daryl Thompson
 Pat Watkins
 Nat Wiley
 Lewis Wimberley
 Sam Wingard
 Jerry Wynne

FULL-TIME MINISTERS

Earl Hilbert (1 yr)
 Don Earwood (3 yrs)
 Anthony Emmons
 (2 yrs)
 Tom Estes (7 yrs)
 Jack Black (7 yrs)
 Claude Flynn
 (since 1975)

TRUSTEES

Sherman Bozeman
 Tom Butts
 Frank Clayton
 Hubert Furlong*
 Alex Garrett
 Howard Houston
 W. O. Jones
 George McGough
 David Norris
 G. Tom Owen
 Jeff Powell*
 J. H. Raley
 Pat Watkins*

*Currently Serving

PRIVILEGE AND COMMENT

When the Dalraida Church was formed in 1953, there wasn't a New Testament church in the Montgomery area that had more than 300 members. It seemed impossible to keep the bond of fellowship and peace among brethren where the numbers grew larger. Sad, but such was the history of our Lord's church in this city! Dalraida has grown to almost 500 members and the unity here is wonderful! Our success in this regard has been much greater than my expectations on that first Sunday in July, 1953. By the time this goes to press, I will have served this congregation as an elder for more than 33 years. I believe it should be my privilege to make some comments.

On Qualifications of Elders:

If you look for men who are perfect examples in all the qualifications laid down in the scriptures, you probably won't find any elders. Some years ago I attended a church in a distant city and heard the preacher say, from the pulpit, that there was not one man in that congregation who was qualified to be an elder. Now, that church was at least 40 years old and had a membership of just over 200. Some of its men had obeyed the gospel when they were young, raised their families there, and now were grandfathers. The preacher himself had been there for more than 15 years. Now, brethren, something was wrong in that church. Either the preacher's standards were too high, or he had done a poor job in his teaching.

On the other hand, our Lord has recorded every one of these qualifications in His Word for a purpose. Let us not compromise a single one. The candidate for an eldership should be a reasonable example of all these requirements; but, do not expect him to be fully mature in all of them.

The writer, in 1st Timothy 3:1, mentions desiring the office. Some teachers have included "desire" as one of the qualifications; and I have no quarrel with this, providing it is applied with some limitations. It should be unreasonable to have to beg a man to serve; but, on the other hand, it would be improper, in my mind, for a man to campaign for this office. Nor would it be proper to allow someone else to campaign for him. Such conduct should be taken as proof that he doesn't need the office, nor does the office need him. Politics have no place in the church.

When the congregation begins to talk about appointing elders, it seems that everyone begins looking for men who have been married only once and have believing children. If a man passes that test, it often appears that all the other requirements take second place. Even an unbeliever might be the husband of one wife and raise good children! There are at least a dozen other requirements to be considered when seeking out men of exceptional character. It takes a Christian man with a good degree of maturity to survive the rigors that come with serving as an elder.

Qualifications and Common Sense:

The scriptures require that an elder be "blameless," or of "good report without and within." How can a congregation expect to influence unbelievers if it selects as an elder a man who does not have the respect of its own members? How can a man lead a congregation that does not respect him? A man's behavior ought to be seriously considered before he is appointed and continuously scrutinized throughout his tenure.

NOT A NOVICE: The Bible gives good reason why a novice should not be considered... "lest he be

puffed up with pride.” Common sense gives us another... It takes a strong and mature Christian to fill his mind with the many problems that arise in the church, and remain able to sit down and worship God in spirit and truth.

NOT A STRIKER: I don't claim to know exactly what the Lord meant when he used this term. It seems unnecessary that it apply to a man who attacks his opponents by passing blows. The term “good behavior” should take care of that. It does, however, make good sense to assume that we need elders who will not be quitters when the going gets tough. This may seem like a small matter; but allow me to assure you that, in the 20th Century, more elderships have gone down the drain due to this weakness than perhaps any other.

LOVER OF GOOD MEN — STEWARD OF GOD: One can not be a steward of God's people without having an inward and motivating love for his brethren. Yes, I mean those brethren who are weak and sometimes rebellious. A good elder must respect ALL who wear the name Christian. A good elder must not be heard to say, “If they don't agree with what we're doing, let them go somewhere else.” A good shepherd goes after his lost sheep. Yes, the Lord expects elders to have respect, love, compassion, and to be long-suffering, after the pattern laid down by our Lord himself.

BE SWIFT TO HEAR, SLOW TO SPEAK: I realize that this admonition is given to all Christians, but it is especially important that elders carry it into practice. The elder must have patience to listen to any member about anything that is a burden to his, or her, heart. An elder should hold his speech until all the facts are on the table. The entire eldership, and sometimes the whole church, can suffer the consequences of a few loose words made by one of its members. Yet, there are many times when an elder is obligated to speak. Elders sometimes become deadlocked over some issue. It is proper to allow them time to think things through!

Individual elders are obligated to one another; and, insofar as it is possible, personal differences between individual elders should be settled between those involved; and if agreement cannot be achieved on this basis, then such differences must be resolved within the whole eldership. It is never proper to carry differences within an elder-

ship “campaign fashion” out among the membership. Good sense dictates that a church can not prosper when its eldership is split.

Members sometimes bring to elders problems they cannot handle themselves because they feel they have no where else to turn. Elders need to give careful consideration to such matters, and give those members an answer. Members expect it; indeed, deserve it! In some instances, elders receive information that must forever remain sealed. Elders must respect confidentiality in dealing with the congregation's members.

NOT SOON ANGRY: Anger can be a “sledge hammer” that can wreck a man's reputation in a hurry. The experiences that come with doing the work of an elder can “try men's souls.” It takes a strong man to control this fiery human impulse. Yet, control it he must, if his influence is to be used for the glory of God. Nobody has respect for a man who is noted for losing his cool.

PLURALITY OF ELDERS: Even though history clearly teaches that ignoring this principal caused Christians of the Fifth Century to digress into obscurity for a thousand years, several religious groups today are ruled by one bishop. If we are to merit the name Christian, we must respect God's pattern. We must take God's word to represent his will; but we should also appreciate this principal because it makes good sense.

Every eldership needs a good peacemaker. The power of persuasion can go a long way towards reconciling opposing ideas (or opinions), leading to a decision that all can live with. An eldership also needs somebody having secretarial ability. Notes need to be made on decisions, so that we can refer back to them when our memory fails. There are letters and documents to be written. All elders should be concerned with all lost sheep, but it is especially helpful to have at least one who is anxious and diligent regarding these matters.

Every eldership can use a creative thinker, someone to initiate new proposals; and every eldership needs men with good heads to keep the creative thinker on the proper course. An eldership should have the reputation of being stable. Decisions should be consistent; not “on today, off tomorrow.” Elderships need men who don't mind doing “legwork” and “burning the mid-night oil”

when diligent work is required.

Elders must have a vigilant eye for TRUTH; because false doctrines never cease to threaten our Lord's church. We have used as a slogan, "God's Word is the last Word." Let us abide by that slogan!

Last, but not least, every eldership must have a man who is willing to "go into the lion's den" when events demand it. Times will come when men must be told that they are wrong; when the service of a minister, an evangelist, a secretary, or a janitor, must be terminated. I know of no one who enjoys this sort of thing. I have known elders who could not bring themselves to speak to a brother about anything unpleasant. But every elder should be made aware that such tasks come with the territory. Confrontations of this kind should be well planned, and done with an abundant sprinkling of love, compassion, and due consideration for a brother in Christ Jesus. The brother should be left with a complete understanding of the problem. Anger has no place in such matters.

As I close, may I suggest to all elders these seven points, or admonitions, that should ever concern them: 1) Strive to keep yourselves qualified to serve in that important office; 2) consider the wishes of your brethren; 3) don't forget those who are destitute, especially our brethren; 4) remember, the church is the pillar and ground of truth; 5) encourage your brethren to be fruitful and multiply; 6) be consistent; 7) do all that is within your power to make your eldership a stable one, ever striving to pass on to the next generation a church having a solid foundation.

As I said at the beginning, it would be unreasonable to expect one man to be a perfect example of all those qualities needed to lead a church. But the blending of abilities and qualities of several godly men, using the strongest attributes of each with the endorsement of God, can "move mountains."

I offer these thoughts in hope that they may be found to be helpful when selecting elders in the future; and perhaps have a deeper appreciation of those already serving.

-Jeff Powell

WHY I LOVE THE DALRAIDA CHURCH

PEACE: I searched elsewhere, but I found it here. The days I have spent "sitting on a powder keg" have been few and far between for these 35 years. Many others have expressed to me their appreciation of Dalraida's peaceful climate. Our Christ is the Prince of Peace, and He said, "By this, the world will know you are my disciples, that you love one another." I like the policy of our elders: to handle our problems in the quietest possible way to resolve them. May God bless the common ground that binds us together, so that peace may abound more and more.

STABLE LEADERSHIP: In the 35 years that Dalraida has been an active church, thirteen good men have served as elders. Each has been different; each has had his strong and his weak points; but I have been able to work with them all. I have respected them because they -were selected by the congregation according to God's plan, as being good men. Without exception, almost, changes in leadership have been made in a dignified and orderly manner. Over those years, 33 deacons have served under the elders. Again, almost without exception, all have served well and demonstrated respect for the eldership. Both Claude Flynn and Al Millergren have now been with us longer than any of our previous preachers; and we are not about ready to give either of them up. Both are still giving this church superb service.

Just in case you might think these thoughts are my own personal opinion, Dalraida's elders have often been complimented, both by people outside and within our congregation, regarding these matters.

I love Dalraida because it is a wonderful family! When I was younger and not very smart, I did not value visitation very highly; but when my wife's mother died, Dalraida people came in such numbers that our neighbors pulled their cars to the rear so our friends could park in their driveways. Our neighbors were impressed, and being on the receiving end of such love and concern converted me in a hurry. My mother-in-law was a quiet woman who did not socialize much. The people who came at the time of her death came because

they loved Fannie and me! As the years have passed, I have come to appreciate more and more the demonstrations of compassion that are the rule, rather than the exception, at this church.

I am tempted to name some whom I consider the best people on earth, but I know it would be impossible to include all of them. I know that many good deeds have been done without having come to my attention, but some of my most blessed memories are among the many that I do know about. I know full well that I am not as good as I ought to be, but I also know that I am a lot better than I would have been without the association of so many good brethren at Dalraida.

ATMOSPHERE: Throughout much, indeed most, of these 35 years, the Dalraida church has enjoyed – well, for the want of a better word – good atmosphere. Here is a list of some reasons why I make such a claim:

1. Everybody seems to enjoy talking, and being with everybody.

2. Benevolence prevails! If I had the misfortune to lose every material thing I own, I would have no fear of going hungry, naked, or without shelter.

3. In general, Dalraida is, and always has been, a mission-minded church.

4. The congregation seems to appreciate its elders, deacons, ministers, and Bible class teachers.

5. Most of our members know how to handle gossip.

6. A spirit of friendship is shown those who visit our services.

7. Time and time again, the comment has come from members, “I think thus and so, but whatever the elders decide, I will back them 100%.”

Yes, I love Dalraida! And I appreciate all the good things that go on here. My constant prayer is that this church will have many more good years to give honor and glory to God the Father and to his Son, Jesus Christ.

—*Jeff Powell*

SOME THINGS I LEARNED AFTER FORTY YEARS

1. A good man causes himself to grow. A great man causes those around him to grow.
2. A righteous man can see “The Power of God” even in a mustard seed.
3. A shrimp of a man and God are a majority.
4. A man who uses moderation is expecting the coming of the Lord.
5. A patient man is a king without a crown.
6. We have too many offenders and not enough menders.
7. A peacemaker gets a better night’s sleep.
8. Love is a one-way ticket to carry us home.
9. Progress is born in pain. There is no such thing as a free lunch.
10. Angry words are already waiting to ambush you at the pass.
11. Little loose words can get you in big trouble.
12. A “sower of discord” calls himself a Christian crusader.
13. A “wolf in sheep’s clothing” is one that opposes your faction.
14. “Wild oats” just keep on sprouting.
15. We are saved to help in the process of saving others.

—*Jeff Powell*

GOSPEL PREACHERS WHO HAVE CONDUCTED MEETINGS AT DALRAIDA

E. C. McKenzie
Cecil Perryman
Maurice Howell (2)
V. P. Black (2)
Burton Coffman (2)
Marvin Bryant (2)
C. E. McGaughey (2)

Paul Hunton (2)
Henry McCaghren
Frank Chesser
Buford Holt
W. A. Bradfield (2)
P. D. Wilmeth
Paul Murphy (2)

Curtis Dowdy
Jim Bill McInteer (2)
Raymond Elliott
Jim Young
Wendell Winkler

*HISTORY
OF THE
Dalraida
CHURCH OF CHRIST
1989 - 2003*

By
BOB MCKEE

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INTRODUCTION

It had been my intention to follow up on Brother Jeff Powell's account of the Dalraida Church of Christ for many years, and with our fiftieth anniversary rapidly approaching, I decided it was a good time to begin. Jeff recounted the mission of the church from its beginning on the first Sunday in July, 1953 through the close of 1988, a span of thirty-five years. My task is not quite as formidable, because I have only 13 years for which to account. And besides, Jeff worked a great deal from memory, since written records were either non-existent or very sketchy for those early years. My own memory is not as exact as his, and I have relied mostly on bulletins to prompt me, filling in the blanks where I could. The additional advantage of a computer which he did not have is invaluable in taking on such a task as this.

However, as you will see, I have taken far more space than Jeff did to record my annals. Perhaps that is a mistake, but I particularly wanted to acknowledge as many people as I could by name. In such an effort there is always the distinct possibility that I will offend some by omission of names or events they feel are important. I simply plead guilty and ask pardon. My main goal is to add to the outline which Jeff began, and in the process to illustrate what a great church Dalraida has been for five decades. It's impossible to measure the good which has grown from such a humble beginning. If you check the record, Dalraida is directly responsible for the Lakewood Church, which later sowed seeds for both the Vaughn Park Church and also Landmark.

There is no way to track all the people who have attended Dalraida through the years. It is a vast army of saints. As I write this early in 2003, Sister Faye McKee has the distinction of being the only charter member of this church who is still around. The others have all either died or moved away.

— *Bob McKee*

1989 It had been evident to everyone for several years that Dalraida had outgrown its facilities, especially the auditorium. We had expanded it two or three times and had gotten about all the mileage we could from the existing location. Talk of a new building had been circulating for some time, and in fact, we had looked at a couple of preliminary drawings. There was always some reason to delay – high interest rates, differences of opinion on where and how to build, etc. But by the close of 1988 a consensus had developed among the elders and deacons that it was time to get serious. On the very first Sunday of the New Year – January 8th, 1989 – the elders called a general meeting of the men of the congregation to discuss plans for proceeding with a major building project.

There was an air of excitement pervading the meeting, as Brother Jeff Powell took the lead in laying out what the elders had in mind. Hardly a negative word was heard, and practical suggestions were made by many men with construction backgrounds. These included Rufus Taylor, Mike Taylor, Bill Pemberton, Carl Wiggs and others. Of course, Jeff had been a general contractor himself before retiring, and had actually built at least one of the additions to our existing facility. He had also acted as supervisor for a couple of others. This gave us a great deal of professional experience, and pretty much guaranteed that we would come up with a good proposal.

My own interest was to build an auditorium that had good acoustics. As the congregation's song leader since 1969, I was keenly aware of the drawbacks of a low ceiling with acoustical tile. The sound rose up a few feet and just died. And the audio system left much to be desired. Right away I began lobbying for an auditorium with state of the arts acoustics. As it turned out, I was successful, and we hired a specialist to design the acoustics and sound system. Check it out for yourself. I have

never been in an auditorium that was as good for singing as we have at Dalraida. On two or three occasions Ray Walker led the Capitol City Sing-Song here, and he said every time it was his favorite place to sing. From a professional singer who has been in hundreds of buildings, that's a high compliment.

But I'm ahead of myself. On January 22nd, 1989 the elders presented a "State of the Church" report which included plans to build. We had met with both the deacons and the men of the congregation, and were ready to embark. It had been our practice to set fifth Sunday contributions aside for a building fund, and I suggested that we all try to make a special effort to put in something extra on those Sundays.

Charlie Cline favored financing part of the cost by taking unsecured notes from among our members at an interest rate slightly above the current market. As it later turned out, a major portion of the cost was financed in that manner. It shows how many resources the Dalraida church has.

We were indeed bursting at the seams. On the first Sunday of 1989 we had 448 at the morning worship and our contribution was \$ 5,967. We set a goal of 400 for Bible study on the first Sunday in March, and easily surpassed that.

On the last Sunday of the month, Ray Walker conducted the Capitol City Sing-Song in the Tine Davis Gymnasium at Faulkner University from 2:00 to 3:30 PM, and many of us attended. That was the first time I had heard the song "I believe in the One They Call Jesus," and I have come to rate it as perhaps Alton Howard's best effort.

On the first Sunday in February we began a children's worship training led by Willette and Emile Vaughn and Sam and Regina Stringer. This was in response to several families who believed the young children could learn about worship activities by having a special class. We stressed that this was not a baby-sitting service, and of course,

we already had a nursery for toddlers and infants. We hoped that the children in lower grades could keep their attention focused on positive things and not be bored by being in the main auditorium. When a child reached the sixth grade they were no longer eligible for the children's worship training. This service has proven quite successful over the years.

Dalraida has always had strong children's programs, and the Huddle Groups did a lots of work behind the scenes to build the fellowship. An example of their influence is a tea which the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grade huddle groups hosted for our widows on Saturday, February 18th at the annex. It was a nice gesture, and the widows appreciated it.

A notable entry from a bulletin at this time records where teenager Top Shoemaker was baptized on Sunday evening, February 5th. Top was a friend of David Blevins, one of our fine young people who had been studying the Bible with him. The Blevins children were all very smart, and both David and his older brother were outstanding athletes.

Another occasion of significance was that Forrest Taylor was baptized on Sunday, February 12th. Forrest is the son of Mike and Pam Taylor, and he has gone on to graduate from Auburn and is now assisting Mike in the construction business. The Taylors – Rufus and Joyce, Mike and Pam – have been one of the most loyal and industrious families at Dalraida. They can always be counted on.

To illustrate how things were going, we had 514 at the morning worship service on the last Sunday in February, and the contribution was \$ 6,519. On March 5th we far exceeded our goal of 400 for Bible Study, with 560 for worship service. And on March 26th , we had 640! The men serving the congregation on that day were:

Sunday AM

Reading and prayer:.....Mike Taylor
 Song Leader:.....Bob McKee
 Presiding at communion:.....Bill Jackson
 Announcements:Charlie Cline
 Closing prayer:.....Jerry Wynne

Sunday PM

Reading and prayer:.....James Norris
 Song Leader:.....Bob McKee
 Presiding at communion:.....Bill Jackson
 Announcements:Bob McKee
 Closing prayer:Dan Manuel
 Foyer attendants: Terry Williams, Sam Stringer,
 Larry Eakin and Walt Spiro

We were all pleased to see Mike Moody and Karen Weed joined in marriage on Saturday, April 1st in the Dalraida building. Mike and Karen have been indefatigable workers for the church, and now they have two fine boys, one of which resembles his grandfather. (Sort of!)

On April 5th, the congregation organized a Christian Education Association among members who were interested in assisting students pursue degrees at Christian colleges. Brother Bill Moody was the brains behind this effort, and it assisted many worthy students.

On April 30th, which was a fifth Sunday, we had 443 at morning worship and our contribution was \$ 7,104. You can see that some were increasing their giving with the prospect of a new building.

Two significant events from this period were the 50th anniversary celebration of Tip and Olene Baker on May 30th – and Gail Flynn receiving her citizenship papers on May 1st. As you know, the Flynnns were natives of South Africa, and they had some interesting idioms in their speech.

Our graduates for the year of 1989 were:

Shelley Bailey, ACA
 Shaun Bice, Wetumpka High
 Tiffany Blevins, ACA
 Charlie Bundy, Lee High
 Michelle Mims, Jeff Davis
 Michelle Rhodes, Lee High
 Shannon Rhodes, Lee High
 Rhonda Raines, AUM School of Nursing

A personal note from June, 1989 is that we (Faye and I) joined Claude and Margaret Flynn for a three-week visit to South Africa. It was the first time Claude had been home in 14 years, and he was thrilled to see many of his brothers and sisters. For us it was a grand experience. We landed in

Johannesburg where we worshiped on Sunday and then caught the famous "Blue Train" for a 1,000 mile trip to Capetown. There we rented a BMW which had just enough room for us and luggage, and I drove that car over 3,000 miles across Africa. Faye and I were about \$ 6,000 poorer when we returned, but it was worth it. I have always wanted to return.

Jeffie Williams, who was a long time friend of Brother Jeff Powell was baptized sometime that spring. Jeffie had been in poor health for several years, but with Jeff's teaching and encouragement he had begun attending church. Jeff considered his conversion one of his best works of evangelism.

Continuing to stress our commitment to mission work, Paul Martin and Miles Chapman were back at Dalraida that summer. Paul preached on July 16th at both services and Miles followed on July 23rd, speaking at both services. In addition to these two full-time efforts, Dalraida was also contributing substantially to missionaries Richard Harp in New Zealand and Robert Andrews in Aruba.

The year of 1989 closed out on a sad note for Billy Chesser. He lost his wife, Mildred on November 19th and then his mother shortly afterward. Mildred had been one of the original members of Dalraida, and she had a great personality which made her a favorite of everybody. She had been fighting a battle with cancer for several months, and finally succumbed.

Another sad event was the death of Ashley McClain, infant daughter of Debra and Huey and granddaughter of Walt and Jean Spiro. Ashley had been born with a congenital heart problem, and despite an operation in Birmingham where the nation's finest doctors attended her, she just couldn't survive. There is something especially touching about the death of a new baby.

But the living carry on. A Christmas poem by Cliff Wingard won first place among all fifth-grade entries in Montgomery County. (It was obvious that he was much smarter than his grandfather!)

1990 As we entered the new year things were really cooking, and our numbers were growing. On January 7th we had 472 at the morning worship and the contribution was

\$6,384. February 4th and February 11th numbers were 525, \$7,160 and 522 and \$7,058.

On March 3rd, Gail Flynn and Doug Durden were married at Dalraida. It was a big event, because Gail was Claude and Margaret's only child, and we all felt we had a part in rearing her.

Another example of the service mentality of the Dalraida family is a reference that David Norris would come to the church building on Saturdays to assist senior citizens with income tax questions.

On April 15th the elders presented their final proposal including plans and an estimate of the cost for a new building. This was done on Sunday night after the worship service was concluded. In order to comply with state laws pertaining to churches, each congregation has to appoint trustees and have a general meeting of the church to legally conduct certain financial matters. Of course, we all know that the elders oversee all functions of the congregation, but we also know we should respect the laws of our land so long as they do not conflict with God's laws. Anyway, there was not a dissenting voice, and we were now ready to break ground. The general contract was awarded to Bill Pemberton's firm, Diversified Builders, and he agreed to fulfill it on a cost-plus basis, which saved us a great deal of money.

In response to this positive action, our contribution was \$ 7,494 on April 22nd and \$ 6,912 on the following Sunday.

Our graduates for 1990 were:

Eric Adams, Lee
David Blevins, ACA
Ashley Johnston, ACA
Top Shoemaker, ACA
Carol Manuel, Faulkner
Cindy Williams, AUM School of Nursing
Kim Fuller, Troy State

To illustrate how our membership was composed, these were the teachers for the summer quarter of June, July and August:

Sunday:

2-year olds:Teresa Norris
3-year olds:Angela Harris & Julie Hardin
4-year olds:Pam Helton & Gail Durden

5-years olds:Joe Ann Norris
 First grade:Margie Chancey &
 Betty Defee
 Second grade:Diane Mathis
 Third & Fourth grade:Donna Putnam &
 Patsy Killough
 Fifth & Sixth Grade:Joe Cowen
 Jr. & Sr. High:Al Millergren &
 Terry Williams
 Ages 25-34:Mike Taylor
 Ages 35-44:David Norris
 Ages 45 up:Bob McKee

Wednesday night:

2-year olds:Connie Hatcher
 3-year olds:Patsy Killough
 4-year olds:Dot Stubbs & Jewel Spivey
 5-years olds:Lynna Spivey &
 Allyson Andrews
 First grade:Teresa Ingram
 Second grade:Vicky Cowen & Susan Clark
 Third & Fourth grade:Roy & Janet Pogrzeba
 Fifth & Sixth Grade:Joe Cowen
 Jr. & Sr. High:Al Millergren &
 Terry Williams
 Ages 25-34:Mike Taylor
 Ages 35-44:David Norris
 Ages 45 up:Bob McKee

I don't know the time frame for sure, but our famous "Silver Threads" program was started sometime during this period. It was apparently the brainchild of Bill Moody, who has always been a very resourceful and active Christian. Through his efforts, we began a ministry which encouraged special care for our elderly members, especially widows. From this emerged the dynamic program that was later led for many years by Rufus Taylor and J. T. DeFee. The Silver Threads has been one of the most enduring and edifying efforts we have ever had at Dalraida.

On Saturday, June 9th, the congregation held a surprise dinner honoring Jeff and Fannie Powell for their many years of service to Dalraida. They were presented with a silver tray along with the appreciation of everyone for their labors. Jeff was one of the first members who helped charter the congregation in 1953, and he was always a stalwart in pro-

viding leadership. He was especially fond of mission work, and helped set the direction Dalraida has followed through the years. It was pretty difficult bringing this surprise off, but we managed it okay.

On the first Sunday in July, Miles and Betty Chapman with their son, M.C. moved to Montgomery to begin working with Dalraida. Miles was officially called the "Involvement Minister," and he was a grand addition to our staff. We first met him when Claude Flynn and I made a mission trip to Crookston, Minnesota, and we began furnishing support for his efforts there. He later came to Montgomery for classes at Alabama Christian School of Religion for two or three summers. Miles was a prince of a fellow, liked by everybody. He was a hard worker, especially good at visiting the older people.

We gained a minister but lost another. After fifteen years as our preacher, Claude Flynn resigned. It's difficult to describe how effective Claude was. But I will say that he is the only preacher I've ever seen who stayed at one place fifteen years without a significant number of people wishing he would leave. And for every phase of church work, I'd have to rate him as superb. It was a double shame to lose the Flynns just as we were under way with a new building. A major factor was that Margaret worked for a military warehouse provider which was closing its operation in Montgomery. She really wanted to keep working to earn her retirement, and that meant moving to Dallas, Texas.

In the meantime, Claude had said he was somewhat burned out from being at one place so long, even though he still loved the people and things were going well. They decided to go, and we wished them God speed, even though we hated to lose them. On Saturday, July 28th we gave them a farewell reception, and there were more than a few hugs and tears.

Claude was an excellent preacher, and it didn't hurt him that he spoke with a unique South African accent and had a repertoire of several dozen interesting stories which he would retell and add details for effect, so they almost seemed to be recounting different events. After several years in Texas – where Margaret asserted her independence by finally learning to drive – the Flynns moved back to Alaba-

ma where Claude began preaching for the Opelika church. It looks like he will retire there, and the brethren love him as much as we did.

A note in the bulletin from August shows those who had been baptized up to that time in 1990:

Helen Eiland, Leigh Strickland, Chris Maddox, Vicki Bundy, Josh Wingard, Adam Bylsma, Michelle Pruitt, Jennifer Williams, Dana Eakin, Jennifer Hester and Jud Cargile.

As you can see, if you remember the make up of the congregation, nearly all of these were from our youth group.

The September 13th issue of the bulletin has a welcome back message to Karl Olesen, who had completed six months in Turkey on a mission for the military.

On Saturday, September 14th we held an appreciation dinner for Al and Connie Millergren to celebrate their 10 years at Dalraida. Undoubtedly, hiring Al was a milestone in the progress of Dalraida. We gained many families to our fellowship because we had a strong, active youth program.

We welcomed our new Minister Charlie Boddy and his wife Mackie to our fellowship on September 16th. Charlie is a graduate of Alabama Christian and Freed-Hardeman, and was just the kind of man we needed: doctrinally sound and mature. I remembered him from my days in school, and our birth dates are just a few months apart. The congregation especially enjoyed his Sunday evening "Questions and Answers" presentations.

On September 17th Harold and Mable Myers celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, and it was a great occasion, but somewhat overshadowed by Harold's illness. He had known he was seriously sick for some time without mentioning it. When the diagnosis was finally made, he had advanced cancer and died after a stay in the Veteran's Hospital. His funeral was held on September 29th, and I wrote a poem titled "The Music Man" which I read as a eulogy.

Harold was always conspicuous by his booming bass voice, and he was a quiet, humble man who never had an ill word to say. He is the only man I've ever known who could play the fiddle and sing at the same time, and he was a world-class buck-dancer.

We set another Bible School goal Sunday for

October 28th, and the people responded in grand fashion. Our numbers were: Bible Study – 452, AM worship – 563.

An ugly situation had been developing in the Middle East where the armies of Iraq dictator Saddam Hussein had invaded Kuwait in August. The United States responded with the aid of the United Nations in an attempt to halt the aggression. As diplomatic efforts were underway, several of our members were called to service, some on active duty and some from activated units of the National Guard.

The names we singled out were Tech Sergeant Jack Daniels, Kenny Weil, Peter Vickers and Huey McClain. I'm not sure they all saw active duty, but they were ready for whatever their country needed. The Gulf Storm War began in January, and it didn't last very long. We all felt justifiably proud of the way our armed services performed.

By this time our new building was taking shape. It had a roof and was dried in. On November 4th, after Group One held its monthly luncheon in the annex, about twenty-five of us went down to take a look. There were no doors installed, so we could walk inside. It looked great! We even tried out the acoustics with a few songs – the first sung in the new auditorium. I don't remember any of them.

We closed out the year with an appreciation luncheon for our teachers. That's always a good idea, and we certainly had a great bunch of dedicated teachers at Dalraida. Our numbers for AM worship on December 2nd were 469 present and a contribution of \$ 7,722.

Bill Moody received the "Conservationist of the Year" award for his work in forestry and family farms in 1990. He had served as State Forester from about 1969 or 1970, and was an idea person who loved activity. Over the years the Moodys – both families – have been mainstays of the Dalraida church.

I spoke at the AM worship on the last Sunday in December (30th) and presented a proposal on behalf of the elders which included more support of mission work and a budget to help us meet our obligation on the new building. We set the budget at \$8,400, which was a considerable increase over the 1990 budget of \$6,500, and also quite above our average of about \$7,000 during the past four

months. This was an ambitious challenge, but there was no question that we were equal to it.

1991 Charlie Boddy presented a lesson on January 13th which encouraged everyone to increase his individual contribution by a small percentage and to write the amount of increase on a card. There was no signing and no pledging, but simply a good faith indication to give the elders solid ground for planning church finances.

The exercise was very successful. Even with many families out of town, we had 188 cards turned in, and the total commitment was to increase the budget by \$ 1,700 weekly. As a sign of what to expect, the contribution was \$ 12,501 on the 30th of December. On January 20th our contribution was \$ 9,169 and the next week on January 27th it was \$ 8,339. Truly, 1991 was off to a great start at Dalraida. We were hitting on all cylinders.

We had planned to move into the new building on March 3rd, but had a short delay and moved in on March 10th. It was a historic day for Dalraida! What a thrill it was to worship in such a brand new, spacious facility with exposed beams and padded pews. And the acoustics! Wow! I had the privilege of leading the first song in this auditorium, and I remember it well: "Soldiers of Christ, Arise." I'm sure beautiful singing may be no more acceptable to God than bad singing, but maybe He doesn't mind if we are encouraged and edified when the singing is great.

We had 564 at the morning worship – and 52 members of the youth group were gone!

We had our Open House on March 31st, and Charlie Boddy began a three-day meeting which was well attended. On Sunday AM we had 712, breaking our previous high of 625. Our contribution was also \$ 17, 579, which was a new record. All this went to the building fund.

On Friday, April 26th we hosted the city-wide Sing Song with Ray Walker. It was a tremendous event for us, and featured our new auditorium as a state of the art. We must have had between 750-800 people, but they were hard to count because they were not all in the room at the same time. Ray was much impressed with the acoustics and complimented us for planning such a fine facility.

Jim and Lorraine Russell placed membership with us during this time, and that was significant, because Jim would go on to become one of our elders in a few years.

Our graduates for 1991 were:

Charles Aldridge, Lee High
 Angie Bozeman, Lee High
 Scott Graham, Lee High
 Bradley Pemberton, ACA
 Leanne Putnam, ACA
 Lisa Wingard, ACA
 Michelle Flynn, AUM School of Nursing.

Miles Chapman graduated from Alabama Christian School of Religion in June.

A highlight of the summer was on June 19th, a Wednesday night. Captain Paul Johnson an A-10 pilot during the Gulf War was our speaker. He had been featured in a Readers Digest article for helping rescue another pilot downed behind enemy lines. In addition to being an outstanding pilot, Paul was a devout Christian, the son of a minister. He did a superb job. Pete McCoy, with whom I used to sponsor patriotic programs was responsible for arranging Paul's appearance. What an interesting development that Paul and Tricia and their children would come back to Montgomery and place membership with Dalraida in 2002 while Paul is here for assignment at Maxwell Air university.

About this time Brother Jeff Powell's health began to deteriorate. He had been contending with rheumatoid arthritis for many years, and had gotten to the point where he could hardly walk. Now he was diagnosed with lung difficulties, first a fungus which wouldn't go away, and then cancer. He battled gamely, but began steadily declining over the next year.

In July of this year Jim and Sue Crabtree went on a mission trip to Guyana for two weeks. They would return several times in the next few years and continued to keep in contact even after leaving Dalraida years later. They were faithful Christians and assisted us greatly in our teaching.

Those participating in leading the worship on August 4th, 1991 were;

Sunday AM

Reading and prayer:Mike Taylor
 Song Leader:Bob McKee
 Presiding at communion:Maurice Jackson
 Preaching:Ben Slauson
 Closing prayerJimmy Sheehan

Sunday PM

Reading and prayer:Roy Slauson
 Song Leader:Bob McKee
 Presiding at communion:Maurice Jackson
 Preaching:Miles Chapman
 (Charlie was out of town)
 Closing prayerTerry Williams
 Foyer attendants: Tip & Olene Baker, Ray & Kathleen Ellison, Shawn & Julie Hardin, Randy & Donna Stroup, and Charlie & Beth Cline.

On September 15th, five of our youth group were baptized: Alicia Bradley, Steven Clark, April Dorminey, Nicki Dorminey and David Smith. This was a day of rejoicing for us all.

In October the elders sent Charlie Boddy to preach in two mission meetings in Virginia, one at Wytheville and the other at Rocky Mount where we were supporting the local preacher Paul Martin full time.

We set October 27th as Bible School Day, and were successful in having 492 in class that morning. We also had 597 at the AM worship.

On November 17th, Bill Moody and Lewis Wimberley were installed as new elders, and David Norris, Jim Russell, Carl Wiggs, and Sammy Wingard were installed as new deacons. The church was really going forward.

Teachers for the winter quarter beginning in December were:

Sunday :

AuditoriumBob McKee
 Various Topics
 Room 163.....Jim Russell
 Bible Survey, Psalms
 Room 172James Norris
 Life of David

Room 170.....Pat Watkins
 II Thessalonians, Ten Commandments
 Room 173Various (College)
 Selected

Wednesday :

AuditoriumCharlie Boddy
 Holy Spirit
 Room 169Jimmy Crabtree
 Prayer
 Room 172Joe Ann Norris (ladies)
 Esther
 Room 173.....College & Career
 Room 163Singles

On December 22nd, Sister Lorene Turner died after a long illness. It was another great loss to Dalraida, because Jack and Lorene had been part of our church family for many years and were two of our loyal members of the church. We had helped support their son-in-law, Demar Elam in New Zealand for many years. Jack wasn't well himself, and would follow Lorene much too soon.

It is always sad to lose those we love, especially during what should be a festive time of the year such as Christmas when families enjoy gatherings. But despite the sad note, the church closed out 1991 with strong momentum. It was the most successful year in our history to that point. We had 24 baptisms and 67 to place membership. On the last Sunday of the year, Joe Steeves was baptized. It was at the evening service, and Joe wanted to be baptized at the beginning instead of waiting until the close. He had been studying for several weeks with Roy Pogrzeba and Mike Taylor, and we appreciate their commitment to teaching the gospel.

1992 The elders designated January 5th for minister Charlie Boddy to ask the congregation to assess its giving as we had done the prior year. 165 members turned in cards which suggested they would collectively increase their contribution by \$ 1,065 weekly. This seemed to be a good approach for us, and Dalraida has always responded positively, especially when we demonstrated a need such as missions — or in this case, the building note. Our contribution the next Sunday was \$ 10,325, and we had 580 at the AM wor-

ship services.

On Wednesday night, January 22nd, we were thrilled to have Tanya Belkina and Victor Muravev, two new Russian Christians attending our services. They were educators from Syktyvkar State University in the Komi Republic of northern Russia, and were in Montgomery as guests of Southern Christian University. I had attended a class at SCU where I met Tanya and Victor and invited them to come visit us. Victor is still the head of the philosophy department at the college, and he gave an excellent lecture on the history of the church in Russia. Tanya spoke to the ladies' class, and the women were really impressed with her. They should be, because she is the assistant professor of the English department at the college, and served as an interpreter for Demar Elam who had led the first group from our area on a campaign to the Komi region during the summer of 1991. Both Victor and Tanya had been baptized in America, but they had heard the gospel taught in Russia. This connection would grow in significance for Dalraida as later events would show.

We were all ecstatic that the Berlin Wall had come down and the former Soviet Union was now a thing of the past! Russia even had a real president, Boris Yeltsin, who would stand tall for the people against communism.

It was a matter of some interest to older Christians that Brother L.O. Sanderson died on January 17th at the age of 90. He wrote many songs published in Christian Hymns Number 1, 2, and 3. One favorite loved by everyone is "Be With Me, Lord" on which he teamed with T.O. Chisholm to write.

Maintaining our momentum, we had 576 present at AM worship on February 2nd, and our contribution was a whopping \$ 14,673! We were averaging over \$ 10,000 weekly during this time.

On February 14th, Michelle Flynn and Charles (Chip) Brown were married at Dalraida.

Our teaching set up for the quarter beginning March 1st was:

Sunday:

- Auditorium.....Doug Patterson
Ezra & Nehemiah
- Room 163David Norris
Survey of the Bible

- Room 170.....Buddy Renahan
Galatians, Ten Commandments
- Room 172.....Bill Moody
Husbands & Wives
- Room 173Various (College)
Selected

Wednesday:

- AuditoriumBen Slauson
Topical lessons on Christian issues
- Room 163.....Charlie Boddy & Roy Pogrzeba
Evangelism for 22-30 age group
- Room 170.....Jimmy Crabtree
Prayer
- Room 172.....Judy Graham
Ladies' subjects
- Room 173Clay Benson
College topics

In March, Jennifer O'Connor and Erin McLain won outstanding honors in the "Helen Boykin Music Competitions," and Meghan Stringer won 1st place in Flowers School First Grade Spelling Bee.

Our Graduates for this year were:

- Michael Johnston, ACA
- Chris Kimbro, Lee High
- Lisa Watkins, ACA.

Tiffany Blevins and Robert Maddox were married on June 19th at Dalraida.

On June 12th I joined a group traveling to Syktyvkar in the Komi republic of northern Russia for a three-week campaign. It was an unbelievable experience. We taught 10-12 hours a day, and still couldn't get to all the people who were interested. There were many baptisms, and we really learned to love the Russian people. The church paid \$1,000 of my costs and I paid the rest.

This trip was the realization of a lifetime dream, and I really never expected it to occur. As background, I already related that Victor and Tatyana had come to America a few months before when Southern Christian University had made a reciprocal agreement with Syktyvkar State University to engage in a joint educational outreach.

It turned out to be more of a mission outreach

than educational. A sizeable group led by Demar Elam visited Russia and hired interpreters to teach the gospel. They enjoyed outstanding success, and plans were immediately made to sponsor additional trips. As I earlier noted, I met Victor and Tatyana during the interim, and began making personal plans to be part of it all. I even began studying Russian Language seriously.

As part of a diverse group of missionaries from Alabama and Tennessee I embarked on an odyssey which space does not permit me to properly describe. As I noted, we were literally busy from morning to midnight, teaching as many as we could. And the people were hungry for the truth. We had few Bibles or literature printed in Russian, and those we had were soon gone.

The most unusual thing to me were the “belii nochi” – white nights – when the sun hardly disappears. About midnight, the sky just seems overcast for a few hours and then daylight returns. That’s how close we were to the arctic circle. Another feature of our work was that we walked just about everywhere we went. No wonder. The Russians have few personal automobiles, and the public buses are more trouble than they’re worth except for long distances.

Between a strange diet (I had no problem with Russian food as some others) and the walking, I slimmed down a bit myself, and I am not exactly a heavyweight. One evening a fellow missionary and I were scheduled to teach at the “Pedagoguery Institute,” where teacher students attended. It was amazing. The audience of about 200 people, mostly girls, listened attentively, and many came up after our lecture to ask questions.

I could write rudimentary Russian, so I presented them New Testaments with their names written in the front. They were quite fascinated to meet an American and learn about the Bible. The New Testaments we had were poor quality of paper and print, but they went fast. I actually felt like a rock star at a concert, especially when so many young women students expressed such interest in studying. These memories still bring tears of joy to my eyes.

Four of these students displayed a special interest, and I set up studies with them each night after their classes. As it turned out, all four were

from a small city far to the north and had known each other through their school years. They were all baptized, and I felt certain they understood enough to obey the truth. Unfortunately, about the time I got them taught, their academic year was over and they had to leave. They were all from Inta, about five hundred miles north of Syktyvkar – and that’s just at the tundra where trees stop growing.

Ironically, all the other cities up the railway – you went either by train or plane – had already been visited by Demar Elam and other missionaries. These included Ukhta, Pechora and Vorkuta. But somehow Inta had been bypassed, perhaps because it was just a few miles off the railway. Well, it just seemed right to plan a trip to Inta, and that’s what I did.

On June 15th, Jimmy and Sue Crabtree and Donna Putnam made a mission trip to Guyana where they also had great responses.

On June 27th Clyde and Evelyn Vickers celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary.

A big change occurred at Dalraida when Miles, Betty and M.C. Chapman decided to return to Minnesota in the summer of 1992. Their son, M.C. wanted to graduate from school with the friends he had known all during his school years. The Chapmans were hard workers and loved by everyone.

Sunday, September 13th was a grand day at Dalraida. It was Bible School Attendance Goal Day, and also the beginning of a gospel meeting with Claude Flynn preaching. We had 449 in Bible Class and 624 at AM worship. Our regular contribution was \$10,099 and we also raised an additional \$7,600 for the Russian mission work.

Our mission trip to Inta was scheduled for the first week in October, and the week prior to that, Demar Elam spoke at our evening worship. He humorously noted that it was already snowing in northern Russia! The cost of this trip was not in our budget, so we made an appeal to the congregation and, as usual, Dalraida came through. I strongly believed we should act quickly to teach as many as we could, because nobody could predict how long the door to Russia would remain open.

On October 7th, Charlie Boddy, Al Millergren, Clay Benson, Jimmy Crabtree and I left for Inta. We were joined in Atlanta by David Binkley, a former member at Dalraida. J.T. DeFee drove our group to

Atlanta and Wayne Hatcher picked us up on October 29th.

What a trip! Too many experiences to relate. But we had a wonderfully successful effort, baptizing 77 people and establishing a church which still meets in Inta. No one will ever forget the train ride. Demar Elam did not know that a plane flew from Syktyvkar to Inta, so we flew into Ukhta and stayed the night there. The next day we caught the train and headed for Inta, several hundred miles away. It was a very long trip because the train moved so slowly. And we had luggage on top of luggage. The Russians on the train had never seen anything like it. But the scenery was grand – the snow on the birch trees was like something out of a movie.

We arrived fairly late on Saturday night and stayed at the Inta Inn, a small hotel with about six rooms and ten beds. “Mama Alla,” our home keeper, would turn out to be a delightful person. Although she spoke no English, I managed to converse very well with her in my faltering Russian. The six of us had been joined in Ukhta by a young Russian Christian named Giorgi, and the next morning we all worshiped together. It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The first meeting of the church in Inta.

The Inta Inn had been converted from a good-sized dwelling house. In fact, it had been the home of the former prison boss of Inta, a man named Hileef. The street was named for him. All the cities up the railway from Syktyvkar had been founded as Gulags, or prison camps by Stalin during the 1930s. Not only did we baptize people in the former headquarters of a communist prison boss, we held our first lectures on Monday night at the civic center, former headquarters of the communist party!

The lady who had helped us with pre-arrival publicity had posted a large sign in the town square printed in Russian: “Coming to Inta: Famous American Missionary Bob McKee and Friends!” The place and dates of our meetings were posted, and when we went to the square I posed for a photo in front of the sign. I reminded the rest of the group that I was a “famous missionary” pretty often.

There’s no describing the first night. The meeting room was packed, overflowing into the corridors. A crowd of at least three hundred people were

present. After all, we were the first American missionaries to ever visit Inta. People came to the front holding out their hands for Bibles which most had never seen or owned. It was a tremendously emotional experience, and we passed out all the Bibles we had. In a few days we received some more from Syktyvkar.

You can see this is a special subject for me, but I will conclude by saying that we were all filled with awe. The next Sunday we met for worship with a large crowd, and after David Binkley taught a new Christian named Igor “How Great Thou Art,” Igor led us in singing. It was touching to hear them sing, and I noticed tears in several eyes. Igor was a former opera singer, and he was a fantastic leader. We had about 175 for this service, and the next Sunday we had 225. When we left, Bill Boutwell went to Inta and helped stabilize the work there. That winter we made an agreement to support him full time, and he stayed at Inta for over two years, marrying a Russian girl while he was there.

On Sunday, December 27th, I addressed the congregation and outlined our plans for the coming year, which included a strong emphasis on Russia. We closed the year out on a very high note.

1993 I had planned to go to Inta in January for a short visit with Bill Boutwell to purchase a flat which would serve as his office and residence and a place for the church to meet on Wednesday nights. But I had to postpone my trip because Jeff Powell was so gravely ill, obviously dying. He finally expired on Saturday night, January 16th. There is not much reason to write further about Jeff. His life said it all to everyone who knew him. Truly, he was a wise and unflappable man who provided strong leadership for Dalraida for almost forty years.

All who served with him respected him highly, and I think he used his talents in the most constructive way of anyone I knew. He had little formal education, but he was a shrewd man with an insight into matters which few people can match. Knowing him was a double blessing for me as his son-in-law and a fellow elder for over ten years.

In early February I traveled to Inta and we purchased the flat. Things were going well, but that is one of the coldest times of the year in northern

Russia. The morning I flew out it was forty below zero!

Teachers for the quarter beginning in March were:

Sunday:

Auditorium/Silver Threads.....Doug Patterson
Exodus
Room 163/Hill Toppers.....Bill Pemberton
I, II Peter
Room 170/Baby BoomersLewis Wimberley
Fruit of the Spirit
Room 173/Young adults.....K. Massengale
M. Moody
Bible fundamentals
Room172/SelectedBob McKee
Jerry Wynne
Personal evangelism

Wednesday:

Auditorium/Adults IJackie Bozeman
I Corinthians
Room 172\LadiesSue Crabtree
“Considering one another”
Fellowship room/Adults IIAl Millergren
“Help! I’m a parent!”
Room170/Adults IIIWayne Ellison
New Testament Survey

On the weekend of March 12th Al was scheduled to take about 40 young people to Camp Hargis for a retreat. This was consistent with the strong youth program we had at Dalraida during this time. Besides Al and Connie, chaperones and teachers for the group were Ronnie and Linda Pynes, Roy and Debbie Slauson and Terry and Cindy Williams.

But no one took the weather into account. A literal blizzard blew in on Friday morning with about 2-3 inches of snow which played havoc with the city and caused some churches to cancel their services. Dalraida met as it should have, but we had only 372 at AM worship. And of course, the trip to Camp Hargis was postponed.

Around this same time Terry Pitsinos was retained as a part time intern to assist Al in the youth ministry. This began our practice of using Bible-major students from Faulkner as our college liaison.

In a large congregation people are always coming and going, and you can't mention them all. But about the second week in March we were thrilled to welcome Tom and Emma Staton home after a 13-year stay in Nashville. The Statons are great people and a vital part of our fellowship.

On April 25th Brother Willard Collins spoke at our AM worship. It was grand to have this old soldier of the cross with us. He was a tower of strength for the Lord's church and Lipscomb College.

Adam Pemberton won the Class 2A High School pole vault championship this year, the result of much work and determination. Josh Helton, a 7th grade student at Baldwin, was honored by Duke University for outstanding scores on SAT and ACT tests. Not to be outdone by his older brother, Jason Helton received straight A's in the second grade at Forest Avenue Elementary School.

Our graduates for 1993 were:

Vicki Bundy, Lee High
Christi Bylsma, Lanier
Mark Graham, Lee High
Jennifer Hester, Jeff Davis
Shamim Johnson, Jeff Davis
Amanda Landers, Lee High
Jennifer Slauson, Lanier
Leigh Strickland, Jeff Davis
Sandy Raines, AUM (B.S.)

Seven of our members made a mission trip to Guyana from June 22nd through July 6th. The team included Donna Ross (Putnam), Jimmy Adams, Joe Ann Norris, Chris and Eric Williams, and was led by Jimmy and Sue Crabtree. 28 people were baptized and much medical treatment was administered by a team from Oklahoma who were there at the same time.

Sam and Mary Wingard observed their 50th wedding anniversary on June 19th at the Dalraida annex. And at Camp Wiregrass Sarah and Jimmy Mathis and Aaron and Beka Karns won Bible honors. Lee and Joy Millergren also received awards.

Bill and Esther Sims observed their 50th wedding anniversary on Saturday, September 25th.

On September 23rd Mike and Karen Moody, Donna Putnam, Al Millergren, Clay Benson, Charlie Boddy and I all made a three-week mission trip

to Inta to help encourage our Russian brethren. Some of us stayed in the flat which we had acquired on my visit that past February. On the way back through Moscow, we got to see the Russian White House where their Duma meets. It had several windows shattered and was blackened by tank shells, because during our stay in Inta, some members of the Russian Duma had staged an uprising and holed up in the White House. Tanks had arrived and shelled the building, forcing the protestors to surrender. Fortunately, a coup had been averted, but it was still quite a spectacle to witness first hand signs of that historical event.

On November 21st we held "Teacher Appreciation Day" for our many dedicated teachers.

We continued to lose several older Christians to death. Among the long-time faithful was Jack Turner who died December 31st. Jack was a great Christian with a tremendous sense of humor. His paintings hang in many living rooms around town.

1994 On the first Sunday in January, I presented a state of the church address and shared some of the elders' thoughts at the opening of a new year. Our budget was set at \$ 12,500, and our attendance was holding well. On the first Sunday we had 564 at AM worship and contribution was \$ 12,546. On the second Sunday our contribution was \$ 13,404.

Sister Ellie Owens died early in January, and Brother Woodrow moved to his granddaughter's home in Lawrenceville, GA. where he also died a few weeks later. Woodrow and Ellie were fine people and faithful Christians. They were among several members who made Dalraida their church home when the West End Congregation disbanded several years earlier.

On January 31st, Charlie Boddy made a two week trip to Russia to teach in the Syktyvkar Preacher Training School. By this time Charlie had developed a deep commitment to Russian mission work, something I could understand very well. We believed it was critical to help train native Russians to teach their own people, and are still involved in that effort as this is written (2003). It is not easy work. A teacher has to stand on his feet for about eight hours a day Monday-Friday and part of the

day Saturday. Fortunately, the curriculum is already outlined, so he just delivers prepared material. It's still grueling duty, and the interpreters work hard, too.

In February Sister Mozelle Smith died at age 100! Sister Smith had been confined to a nursing home.

In February the elders began helping support Miles Chapman in a new mission effort in Minnesota. You will recall that we met Miles in Crookston way back in 1985 when we visited the church there and began subsidizing the work. Of course, the Chapmans had left us the previous summer to return home. We reduced some of our aid to New Zealand and diverted it to Minnesota. Miles was a hard worker whom we trusted, and we were glad to be in partnership with him.

At about this time, both Jimmy Crabtree and Jimmy Adams made mission trips. Brother Crabtree went to the Caribbean and Brother Adams to Guyana. This is another indication of Dalraida's ongoing emphasis on mission work.

On April 11th, Paul Evans was hired as Dalraida's Youth Director. This signaled a sea change in our program, because Al Millergrén had been our first and only full-time youth minister since 1980. AL had been a great leader for our youth, but he desired to move into the position of "Family Minister," which we felt was a good idea. Paul Evans was one of our own products. He had been Cloverdale's youth leader when he graduated from college, and then took a job serving with our old favorite, Claude Flynn at Opelika. Claude recommended him highly, and Al was crazy about Paul – after all, he was Al's protege. Paul began his work with us and then married Marla Graves on May 21st.!

On April 22nd Dalraida hosted the "Sing Song" with Ray Walker again. He did his usual great job and still expressed his belief that our auditorium was probably the best in which he had led singing.

On May 1st Dalraida began helping sponsor "In Search of the Lord's Way," a 30-minute TV program hosted by Brother Mack Lyon of Edmond, OK which continues to run on Channel 4 WNCN on Sunday mornings at 8 AM.

Our graduates for 1994 were:

Jennifer Adams, ACA
 Heath Cowen, ACA
 Adam Pemberton, ACA
 John Dowell, Prattville High
 Greg Rhodes, Lee High
 Rebecca Wimberley, ACA
 Chris Williams, Prattville High
 Eric Williams, Prattville High

(Chris and Eric were identical twins, sons of Terry and Cindy. They were two of the finest young people we ever had to come through our youth group. Of course, they were very special to their grandparents, Carl and Connie Wiggs.)

Classes and teachers for our Summer Quarter beginning in June:

Sunday:

Auditorium/Silver Threads.....David Norris
 Proverbs
 Room 163/Hill ToppersJimmy Crabtree
 Romans
 Room 170/Baby Boomers.....Pat Watkins
 Galatians
 Room 173/Prime Timers.....Buddy Renahan
 Christian Virtues
 Annex /College/Young AdultsStan DeBary
 Christian Evidences
 Room 153/SinglesTony Smith
 Fruits of the Spirit
 Room 172/Elective.....Bob McKee/Jerry Wynne
 Evangelism

On June 5th five were baptized: Tommy Noble, Melanie Davis, from the youth group and Mark Smith and Lisa Biggs, young adults planning to get married. Bill Norris also had the pleasure of baptizing his granddaughter Jennifer Clark, daughter of Susan and David Clark.

Charlie and Beth Cline celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 10th and Nat and Melba Wiley celebrated their 50th on June 17th.

Clyde and Evelyn Vickers outdid them all by celebrating their 62nd on June 27th! Ruth and Barney Weeks followed with their 58th on July 5th.

Janet and Roy Pogrzeba moved to Florida about the first of August. They had been great

Christians and hard workers ever since their conversion, and it was a big loss to the congregation. Janet and Roy had been taught and baptized because of their friendship with Peggy Butler, the daughter of Hanley and Jo Cook.

A former elder of Dalraida, Frank Clayton died on July 25th.

We set a goal of 700 for Sunday AM worship on September 11th and everyone was amazed when we had a count of 786! It was the largest crowd we've ever had by far, and we were all excited at the possibility of setting up Bible studies with those who were interested. In fact, we had 580 at Bible Study that morning. We had a great deal of momentum during this period. On two consecutive Sundays in October we had 649 and 624 in attendance at the AM worship.

Sister Marian Boyd died on September 18th after an extended bout with cancer. Marian was the wife of Coleman Boyd and the mother of Ann Kimbro. The Boyds were well respected faithful Christians, and Coleman was the dorm supervisor away back when some of us first came to Montgomery to attend Alabama Christian High School and College at 225 Ann Street.

Brother Leonard Johnson died on October 5th. He was a long-time educator and preacher and co-founder of Montgomery Bible College which became Alabama Christian, then Faulkner.

Charlie Boddy made a three-week trip back to Syktyvkar to teach in the preacher training school as part of our continuing commitment to Russian mission work. I returned to Inta on November 3rd for over three weeks and taught a survey of the Old Testament. The weather got pretty cold while I was there, and I missed an opportunity to go see the reindeer herds one Saturday when the temperature was forty below! I didn't get back home until after Thanksgiving Day.

Brother Tom Estes died on November 8th while I was in Russia. Tom had preached at Dalraida for several years during the early and mid 1960s. He left the pulpit to start the Bible and Book Supply Store which he ran for many years. He had attended Vaughn Park where he served as an elder before his death. Tom was loved by all the church, and he was a tremendous personal worker during the time he was at Dalraida. He was also one of the best at

preaching a funeral I have ever seen.

Eugene and Barbara Neese celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 17th.

On December 18th we had 613 at the AM worship and the contribution was \$ 12,106. All in all, 1994 may have been our best year so far. We finished the year on a high note.

1995 The New Year began on Sunday, and it was a great start for Dalraida. Keeping with our practice, I gave the "State of the Church" address on behalf of the elders. It wasn't preaching so much as outlining our progress and plans, a practice we still observe.

Among the new members who came to us at the beginning of the year were Ralph and Janet Welch. It's worth mentioning, because Janet would become our church secretary in 2000. Of course, nobody could replace Jean Spiro, but we'll say more about that later.

For Sunday, January, 22, our order of worship and statistics were;

Sunday AM

- Announcements:.....Al Millergren
- Song Director:Bob McKee
- Presiding at Table:.....Charlie Cline
- AM Sermon:Charlie Boddy
"The Conquest of Fear"
- Closing Prayer:Harry Cagle

Sunday PM

- Announcements:.....Al Millergren
- Song Director:James Lamb & Bill Johnson
- Presiding at Table:.....Charlie Cline
- PM Sermon:Charlie Boddy
"A Happy Marriage"
- Closing Prayer:Ben Young
- Foyer Greeters: Jimmy Adams, LeAnne and Donna Putnam, Lynette Eakin, Mable Myers, Diane Mathis, Tony Smith, Jean Smith, Bobby Smith, J.C. Minter, Don Carter.
- Bible Study456
- AM Worship585
- Contribution\$15,430

Brother Leonard Lloyd died on February 12th. He and Odessa had been members at Dalraida for

many, many years.

On a happier note, Ken and Sara Hicks celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on February 16th.

Brother Hubert Furlong resigned from the eldership on February 19th after a lengthy recovery from heart problems. We were sorry to lose the leadership of Brother Hubert, but he was advised to resign by his physician. He had been appointed an elder in October, 1973, which means he had served almost twenty-two years. Brother Hubert always displayed the finest attitude, and he has been a strong supporter of the eldership after his resignation.

Sister Liz Chesser died on March 16th and Mildred McGough died on March 19th. Both were long time faithful members of the church, and we remember them even today.

On April 20th Brother Joe Greer was killed in an auto accident. He was a co-founder of Montgomery Bible School (Alabama Christian College/ Faulkner University), and was a sort of patriarch in the Montgomery area.

We set aside the month of April as "Mission Month." We had brother Earl Edwards from Freed-Hardeman to come and speak with us about this vital subject on April 30th, and set a goal of \$ 25,000 for missions on that day. We raised much more than that: about \$ 13,000 as regular offering and an additional \$ 17,000 for missions. It was a fantastic day!

Our graduates in 1995 were:

- Jodi Cowen, ACA
- Stephen Slauson, Jeff Davis
- Kelly Turner, Lee High
- Josh Wingard, Jeff Davis

At this time we entertained Brother Lar Doyle as a candidate to be our missionary in Inta, but after he had been at Dalraida several weeks we all decided it would not work out. We seemed to be unable to find the right man for this difficult but important work.

This summer we set up a Dalraida Scholarship Fund to assist worthy students who wished to attend ACA but could not pay the cost. The money for this effort came from individual contributions

over and above the donors' regular contribution. The Dalraida Church did not contribute.

Bill Boutwell returned from Russia and enrolled at Freed-Hardeman University to get a higher education. This left us totally without a preacher in Inta. The brethren there carried on very well, but we were deeply concerned about whether or not the church would hold together. As it turned out, they have done remarkably well.

On Wednesday evening, July 26th, we held a general business meeting of the entire congregation after services. This is a legal requirement under Alabama law when certain financial matters are discussed and decided. It in no way detracts from the authority of the elders, because when the elders propose and explain a course of action, the members fully support them. This is done on building decisions, etc. On this occasion we set up a separate fund designated for mission work.

Sister Gladys Conner, a faithful member of the Capitol Heights Church of Christ for many years had recently died. She was the mother of our own Lon Conner, a prominent local businessman, and also Tom Conner, an artist for the Montgomery Advertiser and song leader at Capitol Heights. Sister Conner had wanted to help support worthy causes after her death, so her estate provided a sizeable grant with which to set up the special trust we call "The Dalraida Family Mission Fund." Dalraida made a matching contribution to get the fund started. Of course, the elders oversee it, but it is a trust which earns interest. We have continued to add to the trust when we can, and are trying to build it so that the interest will support a full-time missionary.

This summer several of our members continued to make mission trips. Jimmy Crabtree went to Cuba and Jimmy Adams went to Guyana.

On November 7th, Sister Olene Baker died. She was another faithful, long-time member of Dalraida along with Brother Tip. Olene was a quiet and dignified lady that everyone loved.

Young members who moved up to the youth group this summer were: Brandon Bird, Jennifer Clark, Rachel DeBary, Jason Fifield, Lauryn Fortner, Joe Landers, Ashley Lynn, Lindsey Pynes, Katie Shifferd, Brandy Stroup, Kathryn Studinski and Ashley Williams. As you can see, we had a healthy

vigorous program under the leadership of Paul and Marla Evans with Al and Connie Millergen still assisting substantially.

The year was concluded on a very positive note, but we had several who were seriously ill. Of course, that's the story of life.

1996 Charlie Boddy returned to Russia on January 9th to teach at Syktyvkar and also to visit Inta. Robin Duke came to Montgomery in January with the intent of going to Inta and aiding the church there. We wanted him to stay several weeks so the congregation and he could establish a relationship. While Charlie was gone Paul Evans spoke at the AM worship for three Sundays and Robin Duke spoke at two PM services with Al Millergen speaking at the third.

On January 7th our AM worship attendance was 508 and our contribution was \$13,709.

Teachers for the December-February quarter of 1995-1996 were:

Sunday:

- Room 172/CollegeTrey Poole
I & II Timothy
- Room 170/Prime TimersDennis Turner
Revelation
- Room 118/Baby BoomersMike Taylor
II Corinthians
- Room 163/Hill Toppers.....Pat Watkins
Sermon on the Mount
- Auditorium/Silver Threads.....Bill Johnson
Luke
- Room 113/SinglesJimmy Adams
To be Announced
- Room 117/EvangelismBob McKee
Personal Evangelism
- Room 169/YouthKyle Massengale
Fundamentals of Faith

Wednesday:

- Room 118/Ladies' ClassWillette Vaughn
Ecclesiastes
- Room 163/Men's ClassClay Benson
Contagious Christianity
- Room 170/Open ClassDoug Patterson
Kingdoms of Judah & Israel

Room 113/Singles	Jimmy Adams To be Announced
Auditorium/Open	Rufus Taylor Are They Really Sins?
Fellowship/Youth.....	Paul Evans Teen Topics
Room 172/College	Al Millergren Christian Responsibilities

We dispatched Robin Duke to Inta for a few weeks to see if he and that church were compatible, and Charlie Boddy was on hand to introduce him to the congregation. Robin returned to Montgomery in February to make preparations to go back for the long haul. In the meantime, I called the home of a member, Alexander Savelev and confirmed that the church wanted Robin to come. After a trip home to Texas where he made arrangements, Robin went back to Russia on March 8th. However, events in Inta took an unexpected turn, and Charlie Boddy flew to Russia to assess the situation. Charlie was in a gospel meeting in Wildwood, Florida, and he left from there to fly to Russia. The result of Charlie's trip was that we brought Robin back home and dismissed him as our missionary.

From February 11th-13th we hosted Bill Watkins of the West Gate Church in Dothan for a series of lessons on the family. Bill did an outstanding job, and is one of the fastest talkers for a southern boy I've ever seen! He is the son of former Landmark preacher, James Watkins who now appears each Sunday on local TV with the program "Preaching the Gospel."

Our graduates for 1996 were:

Susan Baugh, Jeff Davis
 Adam Bylsma, ACA
 Brian Campbell, Jeff Davis
 David Campbell, ACA
 Daphne McCroskey, ACA
 Lee Millergren, ACA
 Jason Shaffer, Lee High
 David Smith, ACA
 Wendy Smith, Lee High
 Jennifer Stowe, ACA
 Rebecca Stowe, ACA
 Nancy Studinski, Lee High

Forrest Taylor, ACA
 Jennifer Williams, Prattville High
 Roger Wynne, Lee High
 Bradley Pemberton, B.S.,
 Auburn University
 Lisa Watkins, B.A., David Lipscomb

In May Simon Hui baptized two Chinese students who were enrolled at Faulkner University. This began a long profitable relationship between Simon and Shirley Hui and the Dalraida church. We began supporting Simon to do mission work among the Chinese population of Montreal, Canada. In June, 2000 we relocated him to Vancouver, B.C. where he is working on our behalf today.

Colin McKee spoke for us on June 2nd about his plans to return to Indonesia where he had done mission work for many years in the 1960s and 1970s. We agreed to supply a major portion of Colin's support, and have been supporting him ever since.

Speaking of mission work, a team composed of Jimmy and Sue Crabtree, Steven Clark and Michael Stroup went to Guyana from July 15th through July 30th. The Crabtrees had promised Steven and Michael that when they reached the age of sixteen they would take them on a mission trip!

On June 24th Jean Spiro's mother, Lena Dunn died after an extended illness. What a great lady! She had worshiped at the same congregation in Gadsden for seventy years before moving to Montgomery in 1985. At age 94 she was our oldest active member. And she was active. Only a year or so before her death she had been playing the piano with gusto at a Christmas party hosted by Don and Joanna Musgrave. She knew the Bible backward and forward and always had a big smile and a kind word.

Handley and Jo Cook celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on July 26th at the Dalraida annex.

A highlight of the summer for me was a visit to Montgomery by Elena Startseva, who had been my interpreter on each trip to Russia. Elena was – and is – a strong resourceful young lady, and I relied on her to keep everything in order. She stayed at my house and also at Charlie's for a day or two.

Dalraida was really stunned when both Paul

Evans and Al Millergrren resigned at the first of October to begin working with the Landmark congregation, effective November 1st.

Right away we got to work looking for a new youth minister, and since I was the elder in charge of youth, it fell my lot to head the search. I called Kenneth Randolph at Faulkner and inquired about a suitable man, and he directed me to Scotty Spake. I had breakfast with Scotty, and within five minutes I knew he was the man for the job. He had worked for several years after graduating from high school and had enrolled in college at the age of 29 or 30. He was mature, sound in doctrine, and was one of the most personable people you ever want to meet. He turned out to be a tremendous leader. Not long after he came to Dalraida he married Tammy.

Carl and Dorothy Haynes celebrated their 60th anniversary on November 22nd! Rufus and Joyce Taylor celebrated their 50th on November 29th, and Bill and Melba Jackson followed with their 50th on December 20th.

Christmas fell on Wednesday night and we had a short but very worshipful devotional service conducted by the young men of the congregation.

1997 I believe it was the first Sunday in 1997 that Clyde and Betty Hall placed membership at Dalraida. They had moved away for several years, and we were delighted to have them back!

As I remember, it was about February 16th that the elders announced Charlie Boddy would be repositioned from pulpit minister to oversee mission work and the Bible School program and also assist in family ministries. At the time we were heavily involved in Russia, and Charlie had become totally committed to that effort. We thought it would be a positive move for Dalraida, and in the long run it was. However, there is no question that many older members were puzzled by this action, and there was some dissatisfaction for a time. Charlie was a great scholar and very able preacher, and he was and still is respected by all who know him.

Tiffany Welch was baptized on Wednesday night, March 5th.

Teachers and classes for the Sunday AM spring quarter on the subject "Harmony of the Gospels":

Room 170/Prime TimersRoy Slauson
Room 118/Baby Boomers.....Travis Davis
Room 163/Hill Toppers.....Bill Moody
Auditorium/Silver Threads.....Bob McKee

Teachers and classes for Wednesday night on the subject "The Pentateuch":

Room 118/Ladies' ClassWillette Vaughn
Room 170/Mixed ClassCharlie Boddy
Auditorium/Mixed class.....Doug Patterson

At this time Dalarida had actively begun a search for a pulpit minister, but of course, Charlie Boddy was preaching in the meantime. On Sunday, March 16th, he came down with some sort of allergy and lost his voice. Coincidentally, Floyd Bailey had come to town to attend the Faulkner lectures and decided to attend Dalraida that Sunday. Almost at the last minute, Charlie asked him to preach, and Floyd did an outstanding job. We were all quite impressed with him, and I recall that Mackie Boddy suggested we seriously consider him. Ironically, Floyd had sent us a resume with a tape of one of his lessons, but we had sort of passed over him because we felt he might be too young for Dalraida. He was only thirty-one, I believe. As it would turn out, he did become our pulpit minister..

Charlie Boddy continued his work in Russia, Teaching in the Preachers' School at Syktyvkar and visiting Inta for encouragement. He was gone from April 24th through June 2nd, perhaps the longest time Charlie had been able to devote to this important effort.

Scotty took the young folks to a rally at Bremen, Georgia on April 10th – a terrific outing, and he was planning marriage at the same time! The youth group also enjoyed a trip to Six Flags on the weekend of April 26th.

One rather interesting sidelight is that Agnes Ferrell, Ruth Eager and George McGough all had knee replacement surgery at about the same time at the Hughston Clinic in Columbus, GA.

This year we began holding our Vacation Bible

School at night, conducting classes for all ages. This was a great success, and since then we have continued to build our VBS into a top event. I guess it was because we had a different approach, but we delayed VBS until the week of July 20th-25th. The theme was "Our God, He is Alive," and it was a really fine program. Dozens of people participated under the leadership of Mike and Karen Moody who went "all out" to make it a smashing success.

About the first of April the elders completed their agreement with Floyd Bailey to become Dalraida's pulpit minister. He had been preaching at Salem, Virginia and had a fine education and background as a Bible student. The Baileys officially started their work on the first Sunday of June. Floyd and his wife, Elizabeth have four children, Trae, Spencer, Jessie and Logan. Floyd fit the conservative Bible-based mold that we expected from preachers.

One highlight of the year – in fact, two – were Scotty Spake's graduation from Faulkner (Magna Cum Laude), and his marriage to Tammy Brown. They were married on June 14th. Showers are fairly common for those about to marry, but the height was a "Tool and Gadget Shower" hosted for Scotty by the Flint Church in Decatur, GA.! That summer he also took forty-four of our young people to a Braves ball game in Atlanta. Even though the thermometer was through the roof, they had a swell time. Scotty and Tammy also took the teens on a very successful mission trip to Michigan that summer, accompanied by Charlie Boddy who did the preaching for the small church we were assisting in Bay City.

We contracted with Ryan Frederick that summer to be our college intern for the year, and Ryan did an outstanding job. In fact, he was so good he was chosen Homecoming King at Faulkner that year.

One of the many social events that summer was a dandy trip by the Silver Threaders to the Back Forty Restaurant near Auburn. The driver had some difficulty locating the restaurant, but the fellowship on the road and the food were great! Ben Slauson hardly talked at all. (Just kidding).

We had two fine high school graduates that year:

Joel Jackson, South Montgomery Academy
Philip Turner, Robert E. Lee.

In July, Colin and Ellen McKee returned to Indonesia as missionaries where Colin had spent many years in the 1970s. He had actually served two "tours of duty" in that country, and after preaching for the Lincoln Church in Huntsville for several years during the interim, he and Ellen decided to return. Dalraida agreed to provide the major portion of his support. Colin was uniquely qualified for the work because he was one of very few Americans who was fluent in the language and did a great deal of translating work.

The highlight of the fall, maybe the entire year was the "Mortgage Burning" we held in the auditorium on September 7th. Claude Flynn was asked to come speak to us for a ceremony at 3PM, and we had a fellowship meal afterwards. We had built a new auditorium and added a major classroom wing and paid for it all in seven years!

We also made a major change in our Bible School curriculum that fall. Under the tutelage of Elizabeth Bailey, we installed an intensive hands-on program for pre-school and elementary classes which had been developed by a lady in Jacksonville, FL. It took quite a bit of work on everyone's part, but we have continued the curriculum and it has been very successful.

Long-time member at Dalraida, Bill Pitts died in late August. Many of the younger folks did not know Bill well, because he had not been able to attend worship for quite a while.

One notable event of the year was that Steve and Pat Phillips and their three children placed membership at Dalraida. They are both from outstanding Christian families, and were a great addition to the Dalraida family. As you will learn, Steve later became an elder.

Charlie Boddy made his usual trip to Russia in October. We were apprehensive because the Duma had recently passed a law severely curtailing the work of American missionaries in that country. As it turned out, we were able to fairly well continue our efforts, but in later years we would see the restrictions become heavier and more political.

Many of our long time missionaries would be turned down for renewal of their visas.

All things considered, 1997 was a good year, even though it presented some special challenges. Of course, we lost some fine members who died that year. In addition to those already mentioned, there were Elaine Marsico's husband, Jim, Jack Sykes, Herb Dendy, Luther Bozeman and Fannie Powell. Sister Powell was a charter member of Dalraida along with her husband, Jeff who had served as an elder for thirty-seven years before his death. Former member Betty Slack also died that year.

1998 We started this year on a high note, with a radical change in our bulletin format. It is now computer generated to keep abreast of modern technology, and we owed the positive changes to Mike Moody and Floyd Bailey. Another positive note to begin the year was that Brother Mac Lyon of the TV program "In Search of God's Way" was in town to speak at the Faulkner University lectures, and we were able to book him for our morning worship. Brother Lyon is a dignified and conservative minister, and we especially enjoyed having him.

We also began an emphasis on the Lads to Leaders and Leaderettes in March and saw positive results among our young people as a result. This program was begun by Brother Jack Zorn in 1969, and it grew into a brotherhood event. Jack displayed a remarkable ability to involve and motivate people.

I believe it was also about this time that we began a TV program called "The Tree of Life" on Sunday night featuring Floyd Bailey which was aired on the local cable channel. We installed some lights and equipment in one of our classroom to produce the films. It was an excellent program except for the cable production, and we were never totally pleased with their capabilities.

It was this spring that we began allowing the Alabama Council on Aging to use our annex for their morning meetings. We felt it was an important outreach and perhaps an opportunity to also teach the Bible. Scotty began teaching classes to these older folks, and our Youth Ministers continue that.

In March we expanded our ministries and

appointed several new deacons to help reinvigorate our work. The new deacons installed on March 22nd were Larry Stowe, Travis Davis, Curley Turner, Buddy Renahan, Kent Olesen, Stan DeBary, Dean Sanders, Steve Phillips, Roy Slauson, Denny Bramlett, Mike Moody, Steve Hatcher, and Kyle Massengale.

At this same time Ben Slauson was appointed as our Minister of Care and compassion. Just about everybody in Montgomery County – and many others as well – knows Brother Ben and respects him for his many years of service in the church.

Charlie Boddy continued his trips to Russia and also made a ten-day trip to Montreal to encourage our Chinese missionary, Simon Hui and his wife Shirley. Montreal was always a difficult field, and we encountered problems with the French language – and the strange welfare system which attracted people for short periods of time until they could find work and move elsewhere.

Scotty kept the young people busy with volunteer work for those on the "Meals on Wheels" program, pulling weeds, doing yard work, etc., and a mission trip to Antigua in May.

We were very sorry that Lewis Wimberley resigned as elder this summer. His father, who lived in Texas, had been seriously ill for a long time, and Lewis had taken more time away from the eldership than he thought he should. He felt it was best to resign, because he didn't think he could give the church sufficient attention. We really hated to lose him.

Our graduates for 1998 were:

Kenneth Bedgood, Robert E. Lee
Alicia Bradley, Jeff Davis
Josh Helton, Sidney Lanier,
Scott Slauson, Jeff Davis,
Shawn Slauson, Jeff Davis,
Taylor Wheeler, St. James Academy
Matt Brewster, Faulkner University,
Christi Bylsma, Auburn University,
Ryan Frederick, Faulkner University,
Suzy Stowe, Auburn University
at Montgomery.

To show what an outstanding group of youngsters we had – always have – the following students

received numerous awards and promotions:

Trae Bailey, Reading Program Award
 Timothy Hatcher, Fifth Grade Diploma
 Jeremiah McGough, Citizenship Award
 Drew Phillips, President's Award for Educational Excellence
 Michael Portera, President's Award for Educational Excellence
 Jon Reynolds, Citizenship Award
 Lindsay Welch, Principal's Award
 Rachel DeBary, Honor Roll, English Merit Award and President's Award
 Laura Phillips, Top 6th Grade Average, 1st in Bible, Math, Social Studies, Science, Language !!
 Meghan Stringer, Awards in Science, Language, Duke University Talent Recognition
 Hunter Johnson, Principal's Award
 Tiffany Welch, Principal's Award
 Jessica Gowan, Principal's Award
 Mackenzie Moore, Awards in Pre-Algebra and Language
 Amy Shropshire, 1st Place in Art and Art Show

Mike and Karen Moody led the Vacation Bible School production again – and “production” is the right word. It was a tremendous success, with about 175 kids in attendance, plus our evening lecture series was top notch once more.

David and Carol Baker placed membership with Dalraida during the summer. David is a graduate of the Auburn School of Architectural Engineering, and it was a big day for us when he and Carol became part of our fellowship. The Bakers are two of the hardest working Christians in the world.

In September, Charlie and Mackie Boddy moved to Highland Home to preach for that small church. We looked at it as a mission field because of the small membership, and believed it was important to provide substantial support from Dalraida, since the congregation there could not support a full-time man. Charlie continued his other mission efforts on our behalf, taking some much needed funds to Inta for the relief of our brethren who were really suffering from the abysmal economic conditions in Russia. He found the church there doing surprisingly well, but the small city was in decline from falling production of the coal mines and just

general slumping economy.

We arranged with Faulkner student Taylor Hammett to be our college intern for the year, and Taylor turned out to be another outstanding young man who did us a good job.

On the weekend of September 18th - 20th, we hosted the edification series of “Building on the Rock,” an effort to bring strong Bible based men with sterling reputations to Dalraida. This was partly to counter the liberal trends we had witnessed in the brotherhood during recent years. Floyd Bailey did a great job contacting and confirming the speakers, and we created much interest outside our own fellowship. It was an outstanding event. How could it not be with such a cast of speakers as James Watkins, Tom Holland, Harde-man Nichols, and William Woodson. All these men are widely known and respected, and our congregation was really strengthened by that weekend.

On October 25th we had a Homecoming Day with an old-fashioned dinner on the grounds – not “ground” – with an afternoon singing at 1:00 PM and a 2:15 worship service featuring our old friend Claude Flynn as speaker. That was an alternative to our regular evening worship service. Travis Davis and Sammy Wingard coordinated the program, and it was a grand event.

Baptisms are always a reason to rejoice, and one of those which helped build up our fellowship was Tim Hatch, Kristi's husband, who was baptized by Kyle Massengale. Tim is a fine Christian and a hard worker, and he has shown tremendous growth.

As always, 1998 saw the passing of many members and friends and relatives of members. Among our long-time brethren to die were Troy Fakes, who had served as an elder at Dalraida for several years. Billy Duncan, a relatively young man died, leaving teen-age daughters and a good wife, Becky. Billy's death was a great loss. Vivian Brock and Louise Park also died, leaving spouses to grieve. Betty Connor's mother, Clara Kelly of Troy died, as well as Emily Hatchett's mother, Karon Bennett, and Willette Vaughan's father, Willie Welch. Agnes Ferrell, Brenda Wright and Janice Hartley also lost brothers in 1998.

All in all, it was a good year for Dalraida, and we were regaining some lost momentum.

1999 This year opened on a positive note, with several new members becoming part of our fellowship. When you look back at any given year, you have to be impressed with the number of people who move in and out of a community the size of Montgomery. It seems that literally hundreds of members have passed through our doors in the past decade.

Serving at communion for Sunday, February 28th were: Dean Sanders, Tony Jackson, Mike Moody, David Baker, Mark Davidson, Denny Bramlett, David Schofield, Charlie Bundy, Tim Hatch and Carmel Weed.

A large number from Dalraida attended the Lads to Leaders Convention in Atlanta. The adults who attended and helped are too numerous to list, but it was a major effort, and our kids did really well.

On April 24th we participated in Christmas in April, an opportunity for our members to be involved in a specific community benevolence effort. Those who participated gained a great sense of personal satisfaction by helping those less fortunate than themselves.

And would you believe a baby shower for Tammy Spake on April 25th ! Yes, she and Scotty were soon to be proud parents!

Taylor Hammett finished his tenure at Dalraida, and we retained Gabe Gillespie as our new college intern. Taylor had done a fine job and we hated to see him go. But Gabe was a great successor, a rather “laid-back” relaxed young man who made friends easily and set a fine example.

Our 1999 high school graduates were:

- Jessica Gowan, ACA
- Daniel Ingram, ACA
- Clint Lindsey, ACA
- Steven Wingard, ACA

What do you know – all graduated from Alabama Christian Academy, and three of the four planned to attend Faulkner university.

Our Vacation Bible School was again held at night, and dozens of people – upwards of a hundred – helped make it another outstanding success. We also hosted different speakers for a summer Wednesday night series which proved quite

popular.

Speakers for the summer were: Gabe Gillespie, Roy Slauson, Steve Housley, Donnie Hilliard, Billy Hilyer, Doug Patterson, Donnie Davis, Kenneth Randolph, Mike Taylor, Cecil May, Jim Henry, Hal Wynn and Travis Davis. As it turned out, Travis Davis was too ill to take his allotted night and I filled in for him.

Jim and Sarah Hagan were honored by their children on July 24th in celebration of their 40th wedding anniversary.

Dalraida young people who received Bible Award honors at Camp Wiregrass that summer were Jacqui Wynn, James Wynn, Skye Jordan and Daniel Haiden.

Bert Thompson gave a very interesting and challenging sermon on scientific evidences for God on Sunday, September 5th at the morning worship, and Brother Charles Brittnell preached that evening on the problems of gambling. This was especially important to us, because a vote on the lottery was coming up in a special election in October. Charlie did yeoman work in traveling and speaking at his own expense to oppose the lottery – which thanks to God, was defeated by a strong vote!

For the September Quarter classes the lineup looked like this:

Sunday Morning – Philemon & Hebrews

- AuditoriumKyle Massengale
- Hill ToppersJim Russell
- Baby Boomers.....Mike Taylor
- Prime TimersMike Moody

Wednesday Evening – Isaiah

- AuditoriumFloyd Bailey
- Men’s ClassRoy Slauson
- Ladies’ Class.....Willette Vaughan

“Say it ain’t so, Joe!” Those were our sentiments when we learned that Scotty and Tammy Spake were accepting a new position in Nacogdoches, Texas. And taking little Hazel as well. It’s difficult to express how special Scotty and Tammy were to Dalraida. Scotty came as a seasoned and mature Christian who had worked hard for several years in the business arena before returning to college.

He had experience as a coach, too, and really knew how to connect with young people. And he did a great job in helping hold our young folks together after Paul Evans' departure. But he also was tremendously loved and respected by the older people. He was just a genuine good-old red-headed country boy with a ton of common sense and a great love for the church. In retrospect, there is no doubt that Scotty was the answer to prayers. He and Tammy are still remembered and loved by the Dalraida congregation.

We got busy right away to locate a new Youth Minister, realizing we had big shoes to fill. After interviewing several good prospects, we hired Trae Durden from Atlanta. There's no question that Dalraida has had providential assistance in finding the best Youth Ministers in the world. Trae came in December, and didn't miss a beat. Scotty had stolen our hearts, but so did Trae – and he and Leann have been a strong force for good among us.

I took Floyd Bailey with me to Russia from October 15th - 30th. It was a very profitable trip, and I especially enjoying renewing relations with my long time Christian brothers and sisters. The people of Inta are great folks, humble and sincere. The church was continuing quite well, but more were leaving Inta as time went on. We had been aware for some time that it was a dying city. By comparison, Syktyvkar was thriving and growing, even under the awful economic conditions in the country as a whole.

Often overlooked in the church's activities are people who do grunt work. We owe a real debt to Clyde Hall and Johnny Jordan who spent countless hours each Wednesday morning preparing and giving out canned and packaged food to those who come by – an average of 12 families a week.

Misti Edmondson left our employment as auxiliary church secretary at the end of October, and we were in the market for a replacement. Misti had done a good job, and she was sorely missed. She moved to North Alabama with her husband Rodney, who had accepted employment there. We interviewed several applicants and hired Paris Faulkner. She and her husband Jim had placed membership at Dalraida a few months earlier.

Once again the year brought the deaths of many members and their relatives. One of the most significant was Brother Rufus Taylor who died suddenly on May 2nd of a heart attack. Rufus had been a deacon for 26 years and co-director of the Silver Threads Group for 17 years. He made so many contributions to the Dalraida church it's hard to remember them all. I recall it was his idea to put the "wings" on the old building when we were growing and looking for an economical way to expand our seating capacity. Rufus was a great person, and we missed him sorely.

Another of our deacons, Travis Davis died in August. Travis had been diagnosed with cancer over a year earlier, and he fought a valiant fight before succumbing. He was a hard worker, and even while he was still very ill, he helped coordinate our Family and Fun Day in May of that year. Like Billy Duncan's, his death was especially tragic because he left a young widow and two teen-aged children.

Connie Wiggs died in the fall after a long and debilitating illness which was an ordeal for the family. Connie and Carl had been members at Dalraida for more years than I can remember, and they were just loveable people. Carl was devastated but he continued to assist Charlie Cline with oversight of the physical building as he always had.

Eleanor Slauson also died in March after a lengthy bout with cancer. Ironically, Ben had a heart attack at almost the same time and had surgery for blockage in four arteries. He recovered from the heart attack, but it took much longer to overcome the loss of Eleanor.

Also passing from us that year were Mary Cross, Clyde Vickers and Mertice Adams, Edna Ruth Gardner, James Reeves, Eva Campbell, Comer Sessions, Ken Toler, Betty Crosby and Eugene Neese.

During the year we made considerable progress. The congregation was getting more comfortable with Floyd, and his relative youth seemed to be no barrier. Our attendance and overall spirit was good, and we had 40 baptisms and 42 people to place membership.

There were some reasons to rejoice besides the stability we were enjoying at the time. The Pemberton boys, Bradley and Adam got married

within about a month of each other, and David Wingard married Dana Hudson. Mark Davidson soon followed by marrying Stacey Baker in April.

2000 The Y2K scare came and went like a mouse which tried to roar but couldn't. For months that's all we heard about, and I for one was convinced that the millennium wouldn't end until December 31st, 2000 – not 1999. I was glad I was half right, at least. The main concern everyone had was computer problems, but if you had a fairly recent model it was already properly programmed. Some thought government agencies might be vulnerable, but overall, I never saw such hype over nothing.

In recapping the chronology of our congregation, I have relied on my memory to a limited degree, but generally have scoured old bulletins. During that process, I have been amazed at how many people of our number have died or been sick with all sorts of problems. Every bulletin contains name after name of those who were either at home suffering with some malady or in the hospital for a wide range of treatments and surgeries. If you want to be reminded of your mortality, take a look back through our collection of bulletins some time.

As a novelty, I thought I would include a list of the people who had birthdays during the weeks of February 20th-26th and February 27th-March 3rd: Regina Stringer, Beverly Pace, Janet Smith, David Schofield, Jewel Spivey, Barbara Crippen, Joe McClendon, Tony Jackson, Todd Wheeler, Stacey Davidson, Roy Blackwell, Mike Taylor, Daniel Henry, Toby Helms, Haley Sanders and Gerald Duncan.

If you're impressed with that list, take a look at all those who celebrated birthdays in July:

Thomas Taunton, Jimmy Sheehan, Kaydn Pace, Virginia Barker, Beryl Bird, Roy Everage, Dorine Hatrzog, Scott Slauson, Jim Faulkner, Wilmer Hammond, Thomas Olesen, Joshua Helton, Terri Connor, Darlene Gregory, Matthew Renahan, Alicia Goggans, James Killough, Becky Rhodes, Joe Blazer and Skye Jordan.

Sister Josie Hall died in January, and Earline Baker, Tip's wife, died soon afterward.

My own brother, Kenneth also died in January

after a long siege of lung cancer, and the loss still hurts.

Brother Bill Jackson died on February 21st, having fought his own courageous battle with cancer. Bill was one of a kind – a fisherman, a football coach par excellence, a rabid Auburn fan and a strong church leader. He had served Dalraida as a deacon for 20 years and then been appointed elder in 1981, serving in that role until his death. After his retirement from a sales career, Bill made a second career out of visiting sick and distraught members and those in need. Every Monday was set aside, and he made the rounds, week after week. And when he got down himself he never complained but had a great attitude right to the very end.

Our VBS was outstanding again, with Kristi and Tim Hatch taking over the reins from Mike and Karen Moody. They did a superb job, and much good seed was sown in open hearts.

It would also be in order to acknowledge the men who took care of our bus ministry – those who pick up our elderly on Sunday night and other times. J.T. DeFee was coordinator for many years. If you ever take a trip and need someone who can tell what is wrong with a vehicle and fix it – call J.T. He put in many, many hours looking after our fleet of vehicles. Some of our committed drivers were Bill Sanders, Don Musgrave, Wayne Hatcher, Steve Hatcher, Bill Johnson and Duane Ingram.

We had a special day to honor our teachers on May 7th, and just look at the long list of people who were involved:

Floyd and Elizabeth Bailey, David and Carol Baker, Mike and Chris Bennett, Joe and Laurie Blazer, Michelle Brown, Amy Bundy, Margie Chancey, Lula Chapman, Debbie Curtis, Mark and Stacey Davidson, Vicki Davis, Trae and Leann Durdan, Misti Edmondson, Wayne Ellison, Paris Faulkner, Darlene Gregory, Judy Garham, Shane and Shannon Hammett, Tim and Kristy Hatch, Toby and Sherry Helms, Jim and Martha Ann Henry, Teresa Ingram, Donna Jackson, Bill and Jill Johnson, Bryan Jurkofsky, Sandy Liepins, Kyle and Jamie Massengale, Bob McKee, Bill Moody, Mike and Karen Moody, Mallisa and Mackenzie Moore, Bill and Joe Ann Norris, Sarah Olesen, Mark Pace, Doug Patterson, Bill and Janice Pemberton, Pat Phillips, Karen Portera, Barbara Raines, Buddy

Renahan, Cindy Reynolds, Jim and Lorraine Russell, Dean and Stephanie Sanders, David and Missy Schofield, Roy Slauson, Janet Smith, Nancy Stowe, Regina and Meghan Stringer, Mike and Pam Taylor, Willette Vaughan, Carmel and Suzy Weed, Jenny Webb, Kim Wheeler, Sammy and Bobbi Wingard and Rhea Wynn. This sort of participation is what makes a great church.

Bill Moody resigned as one of our elders on the first Sunday in June to pursue some publishing interests which he felt might present a possible conflict of interest. With the help of Floyd Bailey, he would be developing material for commercial purposes he hoped might be used by the church in its curriculum. Bill is the former Alabama State Forester, and he brought a lots of motivation and energy to the eldership. He is a man in whom there is no guile, and he did an excellent job as elder. He was greatly missed.

The Alabama Christian Academy baseball team won the state championship in their division, and several of our young men played on the team. Scotty Hatcher wielded a strong bat and Hunter Johnson pitched a four-hitter to seal the championship!

Our graduates for 2000 were:

Lesa Milstead
Emily Pugh
Micah Gregory

In keeping with our established custom, we brought Rick Williams aboard as our college intern for the year, and really appreciated his work. Rick is a rather quiet and unassuming young man who was very popular with old and young alike.

Our “veteran” church secretary, Jean Spiro announced that she was retiring – after 34 years on the job! With the exception of the few most recent years, Jean had been our only full-time secretary since Dalraida was organized! There is no use in trying to relate what a great job she did and how much she meant to the church. Fortunately, she agreed to come in a couple of days a week and help orient our new secretary.

A sea change occurred at Dalraida at the end of July. Floyd Bailey left the pulpit and once again we found ourselves seeking the services of a pulpit

minister.

Floyd and Elizabeth are dedicated and talented Christians, and it was a real blow to lose them to our work. In many ways Floyd was wise beyond his years, and he was a good scholar and a fine preacher. He accompanied me on one of my trips to Russia, and I developed a great deal of respect for his abilities and his understanding of the scriptures.

The elders asked Brother Martel Pace to come and preach for us for about three months to help get us through a difficult period, and Martel did a splendid job. He is a terrific scholar and preacher, sound in doctrine, and fit well with Dalraida.

After our temporary agreement with Martel Pace ended, we used several of our own men during the interim, as well as preachers from the area. But the task of filling the pulpit fell mainly on Trae Durden. We all loved and respected him already, but he stepped in like a real trooper and showed what an outstanding young man he is. Trae and Leann are truly great blessings from God.

We also found ourselves needing a new secretary – Paris Faulkner left in August and of course, Jean Spiro was only coming in occasionally. We didn’t look long until we hired Jan Welch. She stepped in like a real pro and learned the job right away. Jan is superlative!

Another long time member, Travis Brock, died in August. Travis had not been quite the same since his wife had died some years earlier.

We received word that Brother Earl Hilbert had died on September 8th in Colorado City, Texas. Not many of our number were left who remembered that Earl was Dalraida’s first full-time preacher, hired in September, 1956. It reminds us again of how brief are our years on this earth.

The year closed somewhat uneventful – if you can say that about a year filled with many significant changes. We had more than a few who continued to have illness and surgeries, and we lost relatives and friends in numbers commensurate to other years. The core membership at Dalraida was, and always has been, loyal to the Word of God and loyal to the elders. We all felt if we could “make it through December,” as the song by Merle Haggard puts it, we would come out on the other side stronger and humbler.

2001 On January 6, 2001, the Dalraida elders received word from Doug Smith that he would accept the position as pulpit minister. The announcement was made the next day, which was Sunday, and everyone seemed quite pleased that our search was over. Because of his contract and commitment to Black Water Macedonia (in Walker County), Doug told us he might not be able to relocate any earlier than April 8th.

The congregation went right on with Trae Durden taking the lead in filling the pulpit. Trae is a talented young man with great depth of character, and he always makes you feel good about being a Christian. Other brethren who filled in during this interim included Art Baker, Tommy Thompson, Doug Patterson, Mike Moody, Jason Owens and myself. College Minister Rick Williams also preached during this period, and Brother Colin McKee, who was home from his mission work in Indonesia spoke several times. Brother Kyle Butt of Apologetics Press brought several outstanding lessons that edified the church. Kyle manifested tremendous knowledge and ability for a young man 24 years old.

Doug Smith began his full-time work at Dalraida on April 8th, 2001 as scheduled, and his lesson that morning was appropriately titled "Unity." A luncheon was held in the annex to honor Doug, Jodie and the children. The attendance was 477. The following Sunday we had 520. Two couples – Mark and Vicki Lockett and Kenny and Grace Pugh – placed membership with us that week.

The "Fishers of Men" class continued meeting under direction of Louis Hartzog and Mark Davidson. Our college intern, Rick Williams finished his work at Dalraida and went on to pursue higher learning. Many of our members participated in Christmas in April again, and it was another significant and successful effort, under the leadership of Tim Blazer.

Mentors and Mentees organized the first "Dalraida Hot Rod Races" on April 22nd. It was like a Soap Box Derby with thirty cars entered in competition. One hundred spectators watched Scotty Hatcher win the men's event and the Grand Prix event, while Shannon Hammett won the Powder Puff event. Of course, David Baker was the main force behind this outing.

With the close of the college year, several members received academic honors from Faulkner University: Leann Durden, Secondary Education Award, Rick Williams, Science Award and Neely Campbell, Social Science Award.

Alan Compton became our college intern beginning in the summer. Alan did an excellent job, following in the footsteps of those who had preceded him.

Our graduates for the year were:

Rachel DeBary, Lee High School. Rachel graduated 8th in her class of 416 with a GPA of 3.89

Emily Jean Faulk, Dalraida Family Christian School.

James Henry, Dalraida Family Christian School, GPA of 3.56

Doug Killough, Hooper Academy

Mary Kathleen Reynolds, Alabama Christian Academy, Band and honors.

Katie Shifferd, Alabama Christian Academy

Neely Campbell, Faulkner University, Cum Laude

Jason Shaffer, Jacksonville State University, BA in Drama

Heather Couch, Faulkner University – (Heather went to China for mission work)

Leann Durden, Faulkner University, President's List, All-American Scholar

Rick Williams, Faulkner University, Science Award, George S. Benson Citizenship Award.

Other young people receiving recognition for the school year included Whitney Baker, Mackenzie Moore, Tiffany Welch, Hunter Johnson, Meghan Stringer, Laura Phillips, Drew Phillips, Whitney Anderson, Morgan Moore, Jon Reynolds, Lindsay Welch and Danielle Hayden.

With Leann and Trae Durden leading and several couples assisting, we sent twenty-two young people to FOCUS that summer. In addition, David Baker helped guide the Lads to Leaders Retreat at Children's Harbor from July 13th-14th.

On August 19th, Doug Smith began his "Kid Sing," a ten-minute exercise before the evening worship where he drills the youngsters in Bible memorization and children's songs. This has become a permanent feature at Dalraida, and the

children enjoy it. It's surprising how much they can learn.

Many of our youth received honors from Camp Wiregrass during the summer, including Kelsey Blazer, Jacqui Wynn, Brett Pace, Daniel Blazer, Jason Killough and James Wynn.

Several members participated in a mission trip to the Dominican Republic in August under the oversight of Brother James Andrews of the East Tallassee Church. Making the trip were David Baker, Mark Baker, Shannon Hammett, Matthew Vaughn and Jack Zorn.

The Inner City ministry kicked off again in September with David Baker leading the way. Do you notice how often his and Carol's names appear in relation to good works?

Doug Smith's father, Kelby Smith spoke at the morning worship on the first Sunday in September. He did an outstanding job, and it's easy to see that the Smith family has a great tradition of preaching.

On September 12th, David and Dana Wingard were baptized into Christ, becoming part of the Dalraida family. They are outstanding young Christians. About this same time Carli Rock and Ed and Elizabeth Kinsinger placed membership as well.

Brother Charles Cline announced his resignation as elder effective October 1st. Brother Cline served FORTY YEARS as an elder and did a tremendous job. It's difficult to find words to describe the positive influence he has had on the church. A luncheon to honor him and his fine wife, Beth was held in the annex on October 28th following the morning worship.

Long-time faithful Dalraida member Bill Sims died early in October. Bill was a real character, an "Okie" with a grand sense of humor. Sister Lucy Bozeman also died in October. She was the mother of former member Paul Bozeman, and had suffered ill health for several months before her death.

On October 21st we were thrilled to have Greg and Tina Thompson and their sons Kyle and Kent to place membership with us. George and Kay Pudzis placed membership the next Sunday.

Red Fowler, long-time friend of Ben Slauson and many other Dalraida folks, was baptized by Brother Ben in October, and on October 31st, Jack Lee was baptized into Christ.

On November 18th we hosted Friend and Fam-

ily Day with Brother Kelby Smith speaking at the Bible study hour and Sam Durden speaking at the morning and evening worship. Of course, these two men are the fathers of Doug Smith and Trae Durden, and it is great to see what influence they have passed on to their sons.

Several people placed membership with us on November 11th, including Handley and Jo Cook, Brian Nichols, Jamie Glass, Donnita Harrah, Kim Hall, Doug and Doris Hughes, and David and Carol Brewer. The following Sunday Wathan and Lisa Bryant placed membership. They have four children, Robert, Andrew, Brandon and Chris. On December 2nd, Glenn and Karon Bailey also placed membership. Karon is the daughter of Robert and Jamie Sharpe.

Several of our young people received awards at Exposure, the year end retreat they have begun attending for the past several years. Hunter Johnson, Joey Hunt, Meghan Stringer and Jason Helton were singled out for special recognition. To close out a great year, the Hill-toppers and Silver Threads enjoyed a Christmas Party at the Embassy Suites on December 13th.

Tiffani Freeman was baptized on a Wednesday evening December 26th, and it was a special occasion of rejoicing for my family, because she is my youngest grandchild. A fine Christmas present.

2002 In Keeping with our long standing custom of addressing the congregation, all the elders participated in a presentation on the first Sunday of the year. And in contemplation of the new fellowship building which was now to be bid in February, we asked for a weekly budget of \$ 14,000. On average, we met our budget very well.

On January 20th we hosted Windell Winkler for "Stewardship Sunday." Former head of the Bible Department at Faulkner, Wendell is an outstanding speaker, and he did a great job in reminding us of our responsibilities as members of the church. After lunch in the annex we had a worship service at 1:30 PM in lieu of our regular Sunday evening meeting.

Of significance to their parents and the congregation as well, Both Hunter Johnson and Amber Gregory signed athletic scholarships, Hunter with

Shoals Junior College in Tuscumbia, and Amber with Wallace State in Hanceville.

On February 1st and 2nd the ladies of the congregation attended a special retreat at Children's Harbor on Lake Martin put together by Regina Stringer, Jill Jackson and Lorraine Russell. The speaker for this event was Sheila Butt from Columbia, TN, sister of Kyle Butt of Apologetics Press.

Our youth group continued to be involved in a great number of activities, one of which was somewhat unusual. It was the Girls' Hunting Day on February 16th. I'm sure they had fun with one of the world's most enthusiastic hunters (Trae), but I don't remember any report on the number of trophy-sized game they brought back.

Trae also took the young people to the YES weekend in Valdosta, GA February 22nd -24th, and then to Pensacola, FL from March 8th-9th for the Conquerors Youth Rally. As a service project, 15 youngsters went door knocking in Atlanta from March 27th-30th.

Good food and fellowship have always been a vital part of Dalraida's program, and the Silver Threads Bar-B-Q supper on March 15th was an outstanding success. On May 3rd the Prime timers hosted the Hill Toppers and silver Threads groups to a "syrup sopping" meal in the annex. It was another delightful fellowship occasion, and Mike and Karen Moody had a strong hand in the event.

Long time member Verdie Johnson died on March 22nd. He was the father of Annette Huett. Jimmy Adams, another former member of Dalraida, also died suddenly on March 24th. Jimmy was in his mid-fifties and left a widow and a young child.

It was a splendid day for Dalraida when Brother Steve Phillips became part of the eldership on April 7th. Steve and his family are dedicated Christians and great assets to the church.

On Sunday, May 5th Jason Owen began his work with us as our new college intern. He was a part of Dalraida's youth group in times past, and was well familiar with our program. We were very glad to have this fine young man on our staff to take up the tasks of outgoing intern Alan Compton.

Brother Handley Cook, another of our early Dalraida members, died on April 29th. Only a few months earlier, Hank and Jo had moved back to

Dalraida from Carriage Hills where they had attended many years. I remember Hank as one of my first Bible teachers way back in 1957-1958.

Our annual Senior Banquet was held on Saturday, May 4th. What a great group of young people we had this year! So many of them won academic and athletic awards that it's difficult to name them all. Amber Gregory and Hunter Johnson have already been mentioned, and added to their number are Tiffany Welch, who is attending Faulkner on a Presidential Scholarship and Mackenzie Moore, who is attending Freed-Hardeman on scholarship.

Our full list of seniors for 2002:

Ragan Layne Anderson, Jeff Davis
Whitney Baker, ACA
Alfred Capitell, II, ACA
Lysley Collier, Lee High
Amber Gregory, Wetumpka High
Scottie Hatcher, ACA
Steven (Joey) Hunt, Marbury High
Hunter Johnson, ACA
Mackenzie Moore, ACA
Jordan Moorer, Lee High
Braden Pace, ACA
Joey Parten, ACA
Matthew Vaughan, ACA
Tiffany Welch, ACA
Kathy Reynolds, Lee High
Emily Faulk, Dalraida Home School

Dana Wingard also graduated from the AUM School of nursing. Dana is a very talented and pleasant young lady. She and David are a vital part of our young married group.

Other college students in various classes from Dalraida include:

Micah Gregory, attending Shelton State in Tuscaloosa.

Chris Johnson, attending Freed-Hardeman.

Kyle Thompson, attending Auburn University.

Taylor Pugh, daughter of Doyal and Sheby, graduated from the University of Alabama.

Effective August 1st, Brother J.T. DeFee resigned as a Dalraida deacon. It would be impossible to list all J.T.'s works during his thirty-year career at Dalraida. From taking care of buses to the church grounds and dozens of tasks in between,

J.T. is a stalwart man whose shoes will be hard to fill.

From July 6th -August 13th, Bill Johnson and Steve Phillips led a group of about 16 parents and teenagers on a mission trip to Mexico. They actually helped build a meeting house for a small church, and every one reported it was really hard work. From the photos they brought back it's obvious that they learned a great deal about pouring concrete.

Trae continued his vigorous pace with the youth, leading them on a mission trip to Kingstree, SC from July 21st – 25th, and to Camp Maywood from July 28th-August 3rd. And as a testimony to the talent of our youth, Drew Phillips and Eric Johnson were featured speakers as the young men conducted the evening services on September 29th. All who participated did a fine job.

Bids were received for construction of our fellowship and youth building on June 18th, and it was amazing how close the bids were. After consultation with all elders and our architect, we awarded the contract to the low bidder, Mike Taylor and MTS Construction. And as before, we are doing much of the financing by members investing in notes.

David and Carol Baker became proud parents when Isabella Riley was born to them on August 25th. This is especially worth mentioning, because we all wanted to see if the Bakers would slow down on their involvement. Perhaps they had to change just a little, but we hoped they would continue their leadership and commitment, and of course, they did.

We were sorry that Stan DeBary resigned as deacon effective the first Sunday in September. Stan was a hard worker, and he and Sandra will be sorely missed at Dalraida.

The Prime Timers enjoyed the Fall Family Retreat at Guntersville State Park on the weekend of November 15th-17th. Kyle Butt was the guest speaker, and you know who coordinated the event. That's right – David Baker.

On October 27th we hosted David Miller for a Sunday series of lessons entitled "Must Churches of Christ Change?" It was an uplifting and informative day, and we had great attendance – 629 at the AM worship and 521 at the PM hour. Brother Miller did a great job in pointing out the many winds of

change blowing through the brotherhood today. His book, "Piloting the Strait" is an outstanding reference source for those concerned with the liberal slide which the church seems to be taking.

On November 17th Clyde and Betty Hall observed their 50th wedding anniversary.

On November 27th we had a special devotional service to remind us how thankful we are to be living in our great land, and to acknowledge all God's blessings.

We also closed out the year with an abbreviated Christmas evening meeting in which Doug Smith rendered a very inspiring lesson. The fact that we met even on Christmas evening illustrates the desire of the elders to demonstrate proper priorities.

Trae and Leann Durden marked their fourth year (!) with us in December, and we got the great news that they would soon be parents!

Deaths this year: Ruth Rucker, June 19th; Dixie Dozier, Aug 6th; Bill Bird, Aug 16th; Ruby Lewis, Oct 13th; Webster Lewis, Oct 26th; Raymond Davis, Oct 18th; Louise Garner, Nov 12th; Wahneta McCollough, Nov 14th; Roy Blackwell, Nov 29th; Ray Ellison, Dec 6th.

All deaths have a particular impact on the church family, but Brother Raymond Davis' departure really left a big hole in the eldership. Raymond was a peace maker and a Bible loving man. I don't think I've ever known a more conscientious man. He was a pillar of strength, and he is sorely missed.

2003 On the first Sunday in January, the elders all again participated in a report of our progress to the congregation. In many respects we felt better about our future than we had in several years. We set the budget for \$ 15,000 weekly, with a strong view to occupying our new fellowship and youth facility on schedule.

On January 12th, we hosted V. P. Black for "Stewardship Sunday." Of course, this great soldier of the cross has become one of the most loved and widely known preachers of our day in the southern part of the nation. His specialty is teaching on giving, and his lessons were outstanding. The logic with which he presents Bible subjects causes us all to think more seriously about our treasures and lives. Although he is over eighty, he still possesses

that fire for the gospel that makes him special.

Sister Mable Myers died just after the turn of the year, and her funeral was held fittingly enough at the Dalraida building. Kristi Hunt, Regina Stringer, Steve Phillips and I sang at her service. We honored her with old gospel songs that she and Harold had loved for so many years – “I was dreaming of a Little Cabin” and “Life is like a Mountain Railroad.”

On Wednesday night, March 5th we hosted Brother Winfred Claiborne, a long time professor at Freed-Hardeman College and a gospel preacher for over fifty years. He is best known for many years as the speaker on the program “International Gospel Hour.”

Madelyn Claire Nummy was born to Michael and Missy on Sunday, March 2nd. Dalraida’s family keeps growing!

Also in March, we welcomed several families to our membership. Among these were Lonnie and Pam Keeton, and older Dalraida folks will remember Pam from her growing-up days as the daughter of Rufus and Joyce Taylor. Joyce agreed that it was wonderful to have Pam and Lonnie back in Montgomery!

Placing membership about the same time were John and Mary Pope, Charles and Gaylena Bryant, Scott Franklin, Ricky and Carol Baldwin and children Ricarno, Crystal and Candace. Many of these fine brethren had formerly attended the Narrow Lane Road Congregation.

The long expected war to dislodge dictator and tyrant Saddam Hussein was finally launched on March 19th, and several of our members had friends or family that were deployed. In an awesome display of military might, the United States led Coalition Forces in what turned out to be another spectacular and rapid victory for the free world. Within six weeks, the real struggle was over, and many of those sent to the Middle East were able to return home. Among those either from our congregation or associated with members were: Mitch Spillers, Todd Wheeler, Bo Collier, Katie Shif-ferd, Michael Malone, Ronald Davis, Amanda Wall, Richard Redmon, Michael Johnston, Robert Bedgood, Chester Morgan, Joseph Fountain, Darrin Sanders and William (Matt) Russell.

We thank God for their safe deliverance.

The latter part of March saw two fine young ladies, Devon Griffith and Kathy Daniel, become part of Dalraida, along with Matt and Heidi Steen and their daughter, Maggie. College student Jennifer Clifford also placed membership with us at this time.

The long awaited arrival of Trae and Leann’s baby girl was finally marked on April 1st, as 9-pound Darcy Grace entered their world and ours. She definitely is a keeper!

Among other things we have to thank God for, Brother Sid Sanders, son of Bill and Jackie made a decision to be restored to his first love for the Lord on Tuesday, March 25th.

On May 4th we held “Friends and Family Day,” and our great friend and former preacher, Claude Flynn spoke for us at Bible Study and both worship services. Claude is a tremendous person and a superlative evangelist, and we were really edified by his being with us. We had over 600 present and our contribution was over \$17,000.

After the morning worship we retired for what was undoubtedly our last fellowship and meal in the old annex. The next time we have such an event we will have plenty of room!

Our graduates from high school this year were:

Jason Helton, Lee
Meghan Stringer, ACA.

A matter of rejoicing is that Joe Blazer, Mark Pace, Jim Henry and Freddie Johnston were presented to the congregation as men to serve as deacons. They will begin their duties on May 25th . As this is written, we are continuing to grow, and our new fellowship building is making good progress. We look forward to our FIFTIETH YEAR ANNIVERSARY in just two months with great anticipation! But this chronicle must stop in order to be printed by then.

Epilogue

Jeff did such a good job writing about Dalraida and the work of elders that I really shouldn't try to add any commentary. Truth is, I'm not as smart as he was anyway.

But I'm a senior citizen now, and those of us in that category may consider ourselves wise enough to give our opinion. If the reader will indulge me, there are just a few observations I want to make.

First, I think one of the most difficult things for us as humans to remember is that the Dalraida congregation – or any scriptural church – is the body of Christ, despite the flaws and weaknesses of its members. We are apt to meet with our brethren from time to time and see in them the faults and limitations we know exist in our own lives, and if we're not real thoughtful, we can begin viewing the church as just a collection of people who are not very wise, not very righteous and not very noble. Sort of like a civic club or college fraternity.

It's a sobering realization that this church is the bride of Christ, that He died for it, and that when we harm the church, we are hurting Christ. And when we hurt our brother, we are hurting Christ. This profound truth should keep us from ever participating in any activity which would create strife and division. It should motivate us to see Christ in every brother, in every congregation and in the worldwide church as the eternal kingdom God planned before the dawn of time.

Second, in the matter of trusting God, I have observed that it is a rare individual who can endure much hardship and not begin to have doubts that God is really concerned. I'm not suggesting that he will necessarily lose his faith, although some will. But when troubles come and seem to pile up, many Christians wonder why God is sending – or at least, allowing – such obstacles in their lives. Obviously, He could alter events if He wanted to. And we pray

for Him to be mindful of us. Sometimes we can't tell by our circumstances that He is. That's where faith comes in.

Since I'm just as weak as anybody, I don't claim not to be affected in this area just like many other people. But we all need to reflect constantly on the fact that when we overcome this world and reign with our Lord, the downside of life here is a small thing. It almost seems we Christians in America imagine that we are entitled to the best this world has to offer today, and also the best in the world to come. That may not always be the case, and we ought to tremble at the thought that in our lifetime or that of our children, unprecedented adversity could be visited on our land.

It takes years of growth and study to even approximate the attitude of Paul, who stated, "I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

Or the attitude of Job who said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

And on and on. The prophets, apostles and martyrs of old who were spectacles to men and angels by what they endured. And if we had been in charge, we would have spared them.

But the world hated them because it hated our Lord. And we had better beware if we rise too high in this world's esteem and have too much of this world's goods. Jesus was not speaking lightly when He said it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven. And if the average one among us isn't rich, he's not far from it.

Finally, as much as I think about it and have

read about it, I can never quite comprehend the truth that God lives, and that He created boundless worlds stretching out through infinite space. The distances we can see with modern telescopes are staggering. But as far as we can see, space goes on, stars and galaxies without number inhabit the heavens God has made. That's overwhelming.

We open our eyes and there is wonder in every flower and every bird, every new born baby and in the amazing machine called man. Not a hank of hair and a piece of bone, but a masterpiece of creation. Made in God's image. Truly, in the words of David, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it."

By nature and teaching, we want to know God, to be closer to Him. We can do that only by studying His word, by praying and meditating. By obeying His commandments. John wrote, "And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

May the peace of God attend the Dalraida Church of Christ. That depends on us. In Exodus 45:24, the Bible relates how that after Joseph revealed himself to his sinful brethren and was reconciled to them, he sent them back to Canaan for his father and the entire clan. As he helped prepare them for their departure, he had a parting word of advice: "Do not quarrel on the journey."

In addition to the wonderful scriptures above, my benediction is to direct the reader to Psalm 122:

I was glad when they said unto me,
 "Let us go to the house of the Lord."
 Our feet are standing
 Within your gates, O Jerusalem,
 Jerusalem, that is built
 As a city that is compact together;
 To which the tribes go up,
 Even the tribes of the Lord –
 An ordinance for Israel –
 To give thanks to the name of the lord;
 For there thrones were set for judgment,
 The thrones of the house of David.
 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
 "May they prosper who love you.
 May peace be within your walls,
 And prosperity within your palaces."
 For the sake of my brothers and my friends,
 I will now say, " May peace be within you."
 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God
 I will seek your good.

— *Bob McKee, Montgomery, AL, May 2003*

Dalraida Church of Christ

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