

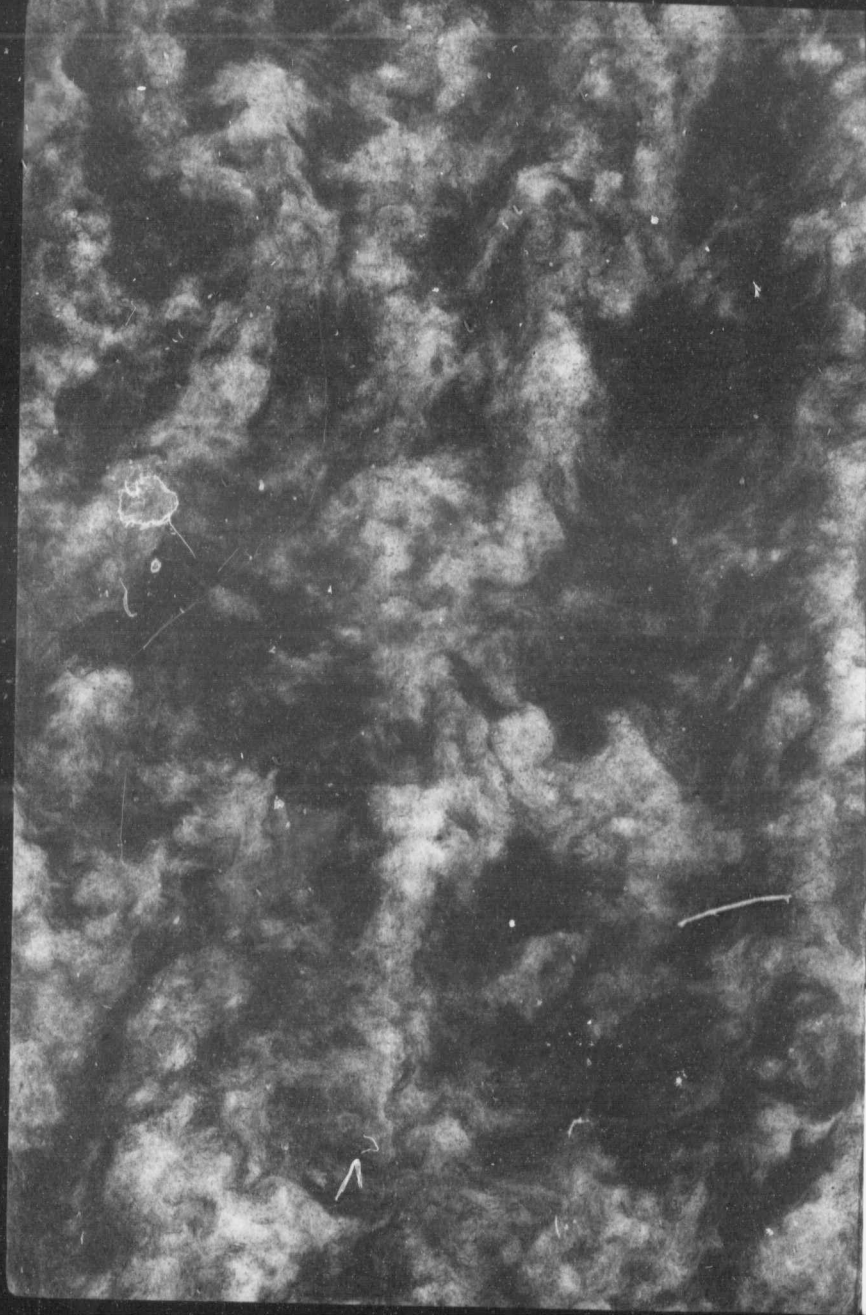
History
of the
Tabernacle Baptist
Church



1874-1914

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Rev E. M. Saunders S. J.

Compliments of

Wm David

**BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY OF
TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH.**

In the early Spring of 1873, a young man, a graduate of Spurgeon's College, was engaged in Evangelistic work in Devonshire, England. His heart was afire with love to God and he was filled with a burning desire to be useful in his Master's service. I refer to the late Rev. J. F. Avery. As he tells the story himself, he felt deeply impressed that there was a work for him to do in Nova Scotia and that there was a church there awaiting his services. He consulted his friends, among them the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, and much against their advice, decided to follow, what he believed to be the direct call of God, and took shipping for Nova Scotia. He arrived in Halifax in May, 1873, and at once received and accepted a call to the North Baptist Church.

From the very first he was greeted by large congregations, and during his pastorate, many souls were converted and added to the church. Some eighteen months after this time, in looking over conditions as they then existed in the north end of the City, it was deemed advisable to start a new interest and establish another Baptist Church, somewhere farther north than the North Church. With this end in view, Mr. Avery with eighty-six other members, of the North Baptist Church, asked for and received their letters of dismission to form the new church, above referred to. College Hall, on Gerrish Street, through the kindness of St.

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John's Presbyterian Church, was secured wherein to meet for public worship, and in that hall, on December 13th, 1874, the Tabernacle Baptist Church was organized, electing as its Pastor the Rev. J. F. Avery. David McPherson, Benjamin M. Hubley and Watson Eaton, Deacons; Treasurer, J. E. Irish; Clerk, T. A. Covey.

From its very inception the cause prospered and received manifest tokens of the Divine Approval. At the preaching services the hall was filled with earnest seekers after the truth, as it is in Christ Jesus. And during the first two weeks after the church was organized, ten adults, five men and five women, professed conversion and were added to the church. The cause continued to grow and develop and very soon it was apparent that the church, in order to carry on her work, required a larger and more up-to-date building. A Committee was appointed to take the matter in hand, and on their report, the church, on April the 11th, 1876, purchased the lot on which the house of worship, in which we now meet, was erected. The lot cost \$4,000.00, \$1,000.00 in cash with a mortgage of \$3,000.00 at 7% interest. The people now went to work with a will to raise money to build a house of worship and on June 21st, 1877, the corner stone was laid. On account of limited means, only the vestry was built at this time, and roofed over, at a cost of \$5,000.00, the inside being left unfinished. In May, 1883, the vestry inside was finished and completed, as we see it today, at a cost of about \$2,000.00. This amount was raised while the work was being done and the contractor paid when the job was complete.

Although the church had now been engaged for nearly ten years in a very strenuous effort to secure a house of worship, yet its spiritual needs had not been forgotten or neglected. During this time there had been very many conversions and great good had been accomplished. Not content to work along in the old rut, the Pastor marshalled his forces and led the way into new activities. Open air Services were conducted in different parts of the City, the corner of Gottingen St. and North St. being a favorite spot, where hundreds of people gathered on Sunday evenings and listened attentively to the Gospel Message.

The church also engaged a hall at Richmond, where for a long time, every Sunday afternoon, some of the Brethren conducted a Gospel meeting, which was well attended and much appreciated by the people in that neighborhood. In addition to this, our then lady Missionary, Sister Stephen, with two other Sisters of the Tabernacle Church, engaged in Sunday School work in a house on Kempt Road, which later developed into the Bloomfield St. Mission.

But, perhaps, no part of the outside work was more interesting and productive of good than the Flower Mission. All through the Summer, flowers were gathered from every available source, made up into small bouquets, to which was attached a card, on which was written a scripture text. These were carried to the City Home and Hospital and given to the inmates. After the season of flowers was over, an appeal was made for apples, which were given away at the City Home, and we may truthfully say, that in this way,

good cheer was carried to many hearts and eternity alone can reveal, how much good was accomplished.

Another interesting and important feature of Pastor Avery's work, was the publishing of "Buds and Blossoms and Friendly Greetings," a monthly magazine that obtained a large circulation. This magazine not only advertised the work of the Tabernacle Church, but because of its deep spirituality, brought a rich blessing to very many homes.

Thus the work in this part of God's vineyard was carried on until July, 1887, when, after a Pastorate of twelve and a half years, Mr. Avery felt called of God to resign his charge here, in order to accept a call to a larger and more important field in the City of New York, where he remained until God called him home, but to this day we are feeling the power and influence of his work here.

During his pastorate he baptized and received into the Church, two hundred and sixty-five members.

On August 4th, 1887, Rev. E. T. Miller accepted a call to the pastorate of this church. In entering upon his work he found that there was a mortgage of \$3,000 covering the church property. He determined that this debt, which was a great burden to the church, should be lifted. He gathered the people together and so enthused them, that all went to work with a will, and before the close of his pastorate, August 1st, 1890, Mr. Miller had the satisfaction of seeing the mortgage burned and the church free of debt. During this period, fifty-six members were added to the church through Baptism. We

may state that Mr. Miller received great help and assistance in his pastoral work through our then Lady Missionary, Sister Blakeney, now Mrs. Geo. W. Young.

In March, 1891, the Rev. W. E. Hall took up the work as pastor of this church. In a short time he discovered the fact that on account of not having an up-to-date House of Worship, with modern conveniences, he and his people were labouring at a great disadvantage, as compared with other churches throughout the City. After careful and prayerful consideration of the matter, he concluded that if there was to be growth and development, the existing conditions must be improved. It could not be expected that families coming to the City would care to make their Church home, where there was only a completed vestry, while all around there were other churches, with an up-to-date plant ready to give the ma hearty welcome.

Pastor Hall called his people together, and after the matter had been fully discussed, it was unanimously decided to arise and build, and so in humble dependence on God, that His blessing would crown this great undertaking with abundant success, in October, 1891, the contract was given for building and completing the superstructure, at a cost of about \$9,000.00.

Pastor Hall, who was noted as a church builder, proved to be an host in himself. Under his leadership the people were greatly encouraged and put forth a noble effort. Many kind friends also throughout the City, proved in a substantial way that they were in sympathy with the movement. The work was pushed forward to completion, and on October 9th, 1892, the

house was formally opened and solemnly dedicated to the service of God.

While building operations were going forward a most strenuous effort was made to raise funds and through much self-sacrifice the sum of \$6,200.00 was paid into the treasury of the Lord, leaving a mortgage of \$2,800.00. In other respects Pastor Hall proved himself a workman that need'th not to be ashamed. He Baptized and received into this church one hundred and sixty members.

On account of failing health, he had, on the advice of his physician, to give up active service, and resigned the pastorate of this church, Oct. 11, '97. He was a faithful pastor and a kind and sympathetic friend.

Rev. Welcome E. Bates, of Connecticut, U. S. A., accepted a call to this church in January, 1898, but after a brief pastorate of one year and eight months, resigned, September 30th, 1899. He was a very scholarly man and an eloquent preacher.

October 16th, 1899, Rev. G. W. Schurman was elected pastor of this church. He baptized and received into the church thirty-two members. He was a man who always had the courage of his conviction and was never afraid to declare what he believed to be the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. He resigned his pastorate May 15, 1902.

Rev. H. W. O. Millington accepted the pastorate of this church May 27th, 1902. Resigned October 16th, 1904. He baptized and received into the church thirteen members. During this period repairs costing

\$2,100.00 had to be put on the building. Of this amount \$900.00 was paid in cash and a second mortgage of \$1,200.00 placed on the church property.

October 19th, 1904, Rev. A. J. Vincent accepted the pastorate of this church, at a period which was perhaps the most critical in its history. Surrounded by many difficulties, the future did not look bright or promising, but under the leadership of the Divine Spirit, Mr. Vincent was enabled to bring the Church safely through all her difficulties, up out of the valley of shadows, into the mountain top experience of a happy united people, working together for the glory of God and the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

When Mr. Vincent resigned the pastorate, September 30, 1911, he left the church in many respects, perhaps, in a better condition than at any time in its history. He baptized and received into this church one hundred and seven members. During Mr. Vincent's pastorate, the lot south, adjoining the church, was secured at an outlay of \$400.00. The second mortgage of \$1,200.00 was burned and \$800.00 raised toward payment of the first mortgage.

Rev. E. E. Daly was called to the pastorate of this church, October 1st, 1911. And what shall we say of him? For he is here with us. Simply this. That we believe he is respected in the community, he is beloved by his people and God has blessed his work, and through his instrumentality twenty-six members have been added to the church, a total of 659 in the history of the church. In this period four young men have gone forth as preachers of the gospel.

During the past year the balance of \$1,800.00 has been raised to pay off the mortgage and we are tonight to burn it, and to declare that we owe no man anything but love.

In closing this paper, I may say, that out of the eighty-six charter members, fourteen are still connected with this church. In thirty-nine years there has been expended on church property \$22,500.00.

The Tabernacle Church, while in every sense a Mission Church, has never asked or received one dollar from denominational funds, but has contributed liberally to the work of our denomination, and for the last few years, at the rate of about \$1,000.00 per year.

During the whole history of the church, 39 years, it has had eight pastors, three of whom, the Rev. J. F. Avery, Rev. W. E. Hall, and the Rev. E. T. Miller, have passed over to the great majority.

January 11, 1914.

WM. DAVIES.

