

Advances in Troubled Times

By William Johnsson

Despite the turbulence and pain, with some long-time stalwarts of the congregation eventually severing their ties with Sligo, the period 1996-2000 saw several significant advances:

1. Sligo youth came to the fore in a marked manner. Under the leadership of Pastor Terry Johnsson, who joined the pastoral staff in 1996, the youth became a large, dedicated segment of the congregation. Their numbers grew from 35 to 280, and most of the increase occurred during the troubled period. The youth won several awards for leadership in these years. They became involved in meetings for prayer and Bible study, community projects, and an annual mission trip. Although some of their parents were caught up in dissension, the youth stayed united and sought to bring healing and unity to their elders through earnest prayer.
2. Sligo became a praying church as never before. The Lord allowed us to be humbled, and out of the turmoil and pain we came to realize our need of Him and the value of gathering together to pray. At the same time there was a new awareness of the need to step up and serve Sligo in various capacities.
3. After many years of talk, a plan for restoration of the organ was launched on Pastor Scragg's watch. Members turned their energies toward a positive, much-needed endeavor. They gladly wore badges proclaiming "I'm an organ donor" Under Pastor Bath's leadership, the plan expanded to embrace renovation of the church sanctuary.

All congregations go through seasons of change. During 1996-2000, change blew into Sligo like a gale. But the Lord who has watched over Sligo these many years was there to bring us through it and, albeit through a chastening experience, to refine us and lead us closer to His plan for Sligo.