

## XI. The Gospel to the City

By Kit Watts

The sixties were years of confrontation and activism in the nation—and a college church reflected much of the questioning and searching of the age.

In the early sixties, paralleling the civil rights bills being enacted downtown in Congress, the Sligo Church board voted to accept American blacks into the church's already international fellowship.

Loveless and Winton Beaven, college president, teamed up in 1965 to produce a local TV program, "Concept", on channel 7. More than seven thousand Bibles were given away during the first year.

In 1966 for the first time membership passed the three-thousand mark.<sup>76</sup>

That same year a church paper, the Sligo Scene, was published by the church public relations committee and edited by Carol Hetzell. It ran for about two years. Associate minister Walton W. Smith was to revive the paper under the name Sligoscope in 1971.

In 1969 Sligo ventured into a street ministry for hippies and flower children whose culture centered in Georgetown. The coffee house idea spawned by Verlin Chalmers and a handful of MV leaders from CUC, resulted in establishing The Gate in a rented storefront just up the bank from the C & O Canal at 3338 M Street.<sup>77</sup>

Three years later when Columbia Union MV leader Ed Peterson casually asked his pastor for a suggestion to energize the fall MV program at the college, Christian Urban Service Corps was born. Fifteen students teamed up with fifteen ghetto children on Sabbath afternoons and together began to learn and to love.<sup>78</sup>

Riots in the nation's capital following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968 put tanks on New Hampshire Avenue and guardsmen around the college and throughout the city.

Seventh-day Adventists in Takoma Park contributed food and clothing, which was later distributed to those in need, by members of the First Church.

The events seemed to impact on student consciousness. In 1968-1969 more than 159 college and academy students operated five tutoring programs in the inner city—at Logan School, 3<sup>rd</sup> and G Street, N.E.; the Anacostia Community Building, Mountain View Place, S.E.; at the Anacostia Our Lady of Perpetual Help School; at the Hillcrest Children's Center on W Street, N.W.; and in Mount Pleasant, a program for Spanish-speaking children.<sup>79</sup>

Foremost among the capital improvements realized under Loveless' administration was constructing the new elementary school for which Bunch and Osborn had helped lay the groundwork. It opened at 8300 Carroll Avenue in 1964-1965 with facilities for 320 students. The first year 360 students enrolled.<sup>80</sup>

Sligo's basement was remodeled in 1967 and dedicated on January 13, 1968 as the Memorial Chapel. Ground-breaking for Takoma Academy's new addition began the same year.

In 1969, for the first time, Sligo members broke over the one million dollar mark with their tithe receipts.

Loveless emphasized systematic benevolence, preached without notes, directed the TA band, and would be remembered for playing the saxophone, and wearing a chef's hat in his several "Fun with Food" cooking classes. In 1970 he accepted a call to the University Church in Loma Linda, California.

M. Dale Hannah, former pastor of college churches in Keene, Texas, and Lincoln, Nebraska, became the new head pastor.

### Footnotes:

76 The Sligo Scene, Vol. 1, No. 1, March 1966, p. 3.

77 The Gate History, compiled by Monte Sahlin.

78 Columbia Union College Chapel program, March 2, 1970. Notes from tape of program. Participants included William Loveless, Ed Peterson, and Ernest Plata.

79 Interview with Joan Angelo and Karen Lumb.

80 The Sligo Scene, May, 1966.