

NEW BEGINNINGS AT McCUTCHEVILLE, O.

By Rev. J. B. Rust, PH. D.

Quite a number of friends have expressed a desire for more explicit information concerning the reawakening of the interests of the Reformed Church in *McCutchenville*, Ohio. Perhaps it is best to make answer to these requests through the columns of THE CHRISTIAN WORLD.

Some local church history lies back of the organization of the present Trinity Reformed congregation of *McCutchenville*. Many who do not know anything about the facts in the case and some who have forgotten them, have an idea that the formation of the Trinity Reformed congregation was sporadic, and appeared in one night, like Jonah's--gourd. This impression is far from being true. In the month of August, 1846, at the meeting of the Ohio Synod in Columbus, the Rev. Daniel Kroh reported four congregations as constituting his charge, Tiffin, *McCutchenville*, and two others, with a membership of three hundred and twenty-four persons. He resided in Tiffin. In September, 1847, at the meeting of the Ohio Synod in Carrollton, Rev. W. H. Brinkerhoff, as the record shows, was pastor of the *McCutchenville* and Sycamore churches. He failed to send in parochial and statistical reports. At the meeting of the Ohio Synod in Cincinnati in August, 1848, Rev. W. H. Brinkerhoff, pastor of the *McCutchenville* and Sycamore churches, reported forty-four members, and named *McCutchenville* as his place of residence. At the meeting of the Ohio Synod in Tiffin, in the month of October, 1859, Rev. W. H. Brinkerhoff, who in the mean time had accepted a call to Lancaster charge, reported five churches as the recipients of his pastoral care, among them the congregation at *McCutchenville*. His address at that time was Lancaster, Ohio. In September, 1850, at the Synod of Ohio, which met in Navarre, the Rev. H. K. Baines appeared as pastor of the *McCutchenville* charge, consisting of the Mt. Pisgah and *McCutchenville* congregations, and possessing a membership of one hundred and twenty persons. At that time Rev. Baines lived in Tiffin. At the Synod of Ohio in Miamisburg, in the month of September, 1851, Rev. H. K. Baines is reported as having received \$25.00 for missionary services rendered the cause of the Church in Republic, Seneca county, Ohio. It was also announced that within the eighteen months preceeding, a congregation, called Mt. Pisgah, had been organized twelve miles Southeast of Tiffin, for which a church had been built, paid for, and dedicated. Rev. Baines also preached at Swander's school-house, and at *McCutchenville*. This last congregation, the minutes of Synod state, had been organized for a number of years, and at that time had a membership of about thirty persons. In August 1852, at the meeting of the Ohio Synod, in Wooster, the Rev. H. K. Baines appeared as pastor of the *McCutchenville* charge, and reported a membership of fifty-eight persons. He resided in *McCutchenville*. At the meeting of the Ohio Synod in Neria, Monroe county, Michigan, in September, 1853, the *McCutchenville* charge was

reported vacant. The *McCutchenville* parish continued to be reported vacant until the year 1858, when it no longer appears in the statistical table. The house of worship was built of logs, and contained on its interior a large gallery, surrounding three sides of the building, a common plan in those times. It stood in the center of the old burying ground southeast of the village, and was finally sold and taken down. It was owned and used conjointly by the Lutheran and Reformed people in the community. The Lutheran and Reformed congregations worshipping there, ceased to exist almost simultaneously. Many of the members were called away by death, and many others sought homes elsewhere, so that the interests could no longer be maintained. At this time there were five different churches in the village of *McCutchenville*. The Albrights had a church, which was also sold when the congregation ceased to exist. The Roman Catholics had a church there, and still maintain their burying ground. The Methodist Episcopal Church had a flourishing congregation, which still lives, and has a neat house of worship in the village. In 1854, at about the time the Reformed and Lutheran interests ceased, and the field had to be abandoned by Tiffin Classis, the Presbyterian Church appeared upon the scene and organized a congregation, which has never been self-supporting, but constantly received aid from Huron Presbytery, at least in recent years, because it could not, on account of distance, be conveniently united with any neighboring Presbyterian congregations. Beginning some time after 1870, Rev. Dr. Moore, at the close of his pastoral relations with the Presbyterian congregation in Tiffin, served the *McCutchenville* and Melmore Presbyterian congregations together. Finally, largely because of its sequestration, the congregation, some twelve or thirteen years ago, secured the services of Rev. A. C. Shuman, then pastor of the Bascom charge, who labored there very acceptably for about four years. He was followed for a short time by the Rev. Theodore J. Bacher, also an alumnus of Heidelberg Theological Seminary. Rev. William G. Gerlach, another alumnus of our Seminary, who had left the Reformed Church and entered the Presbyterian communion, succeeded Rev. Mr. Bacher, and served the congregation for a number of years, with great blessing. He enlarged the field of operation by establishing a preaching point at Tymochtee, in Wyandot county, three and one half miles south of *McCutchenville*, on the Upper Sandusky pike.

Soon after Rev. Gerlach withdrew from the field, nearly one hundred members of the Presbyterian congregation severed their connection with the church, and, in union with a number of other Christian friends, overtured Tiffin Classis to grant them the privilege to organize a Reformed congregation and build a Reformed Church in *McCutchenville*. At two special meetings of the Classis, in the presence of a large delegation of petitioners on each occasion, the situation and the appeal were carefully canvassed. On invitation from the clerk of Classis, at the first meeting the Rev. Dr. Martin, pastor of the Presbyterian church of Fostoria, and moderator of the vacant church in *McCutchenville*, was

present as the representative of Huron Presbytery. On inquiry it was discovered that a great many of the persons whose names appeared upon the petition, are of Reformed ancestry, and that some of them, a few of the older persons in the movement, originally belonged to the Reformed Church at Berwick, and to the Salem congregation in Seneca township, now a part of the Bascom charge, and at one time in its history, a flourishing church in this county. Thus it soon became apparent, that in obedience to the logic of past events, and by reason of the close relationship which exists between the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, the people who undertook the weighty and important task of organizing a new congregation in the village of *McCutchenville*, appealed to the Tiffin Classis. On closer scrutiny it became evident, also, that by befriending those people in their trying situation, after Huron Presbytery had exhausted all means to reestablish unanimity of sentiment, the Reformed Church simply reappeared again, under the strange leading of Providence, in old home territory. They have changed their fellowship ecclesiastically, but they have not abandoned their faith. It is still the Calvinistic faith, thank God! Had the Tiffin Classis failed to act helpfully in behalf of those people, they would have organized under another denominational banner, or bound themselves together as an independent church, or drifted away, many of them, from all church connection.

Finally on Wednesday, March 28th, 1906, in Salem Church, Seneca township, by a committee of Tiffin Classis, having plenary power, Trinity Reformed congregation, of *McCutchenville*, was organized. The committee consisted of Revs. D. Van Horne, J. B. Rust, and Elder N. L. Brewer. About one hundred persons entered into the new organization. It was a solemn moment when the right hand of fellowship was extended by the representatives of the Tiffin Classis to so large a number of earnest and devoted people. Immediate steps were taken to erect a suitable house of worship. The cornerstone of the new church was laid on August 26, 1906, Dr. Van Horne and Rev. Shuman preaching the sermons. During the time the church was being built, services were held at intervals of four weeks in the Tymochtee school-house, the Sunday School meeting every Sunday. This meant much for the churchless hamlet of Tymochtee, and its immediate neighborhood. The congregation was attached to the Bascom charge, and hence the acting pastor conducted most of the services throughout the year. As has been already made known, the new church was dedicated with impressive ceremonies on Pentecost. It is a beautiful edifice, the most prominent object in that region, especially when seen from the roadway to the north, as one approaches the village in coming from Salem Reformed church. The red tile roof and the tower, and the symmetrical outlines of the main part of the building loom up picturesquely against the background of the skyline, the village homes on either side, the upland or ridge on which the church stands, and the groves of forest trees in the distance.

Some are still saying that the new church is too fine for the village. Nevertheless, its erection seems to have given fresh impetus to house building and church repairing in the place. And besides, Dr. Van Horne in the dedicatory sermon fully answered such objections by telling the people how ennobling is the influence of a beautiful church, as a memorial, educationally, socially, and as a place of worship. Some said it could never be paid for. Dr. Miller proved that gloomy foreboding to be unfounded by raising \$2800 and nearly liquidating the remaining indebtedness. The feature of the afternoon was the children's service in connection with Dr. Miller's address on the place of the child and of young people in the Christian Church. Dr. Christman's able and inspiring sermon on The Witnessing Church, closed the services of a memorable day in the history of Trinity Reformed congregation. Many of the members have said to the acting pastor since then: "You brought the right men, -- just the men we needed."

With a few exceptions, all the members of the congregation are less than fifty years old. They possess a progressive spirit, have the courage of their convictions, are loyal to the cause of Christ, and with the bounding hope of youth, assumed their task with the determination to succeed, God helping them. Since the day of consecration, a feeling of great thankfulness and joy, pervades the congregation.

Thus we have told, as far as we were able to glean the facts, the story of the reawakening of the interests of the Reformed Church in the village of *McCutchenville, Ohio*.

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Italicized = corrections made to original document.