



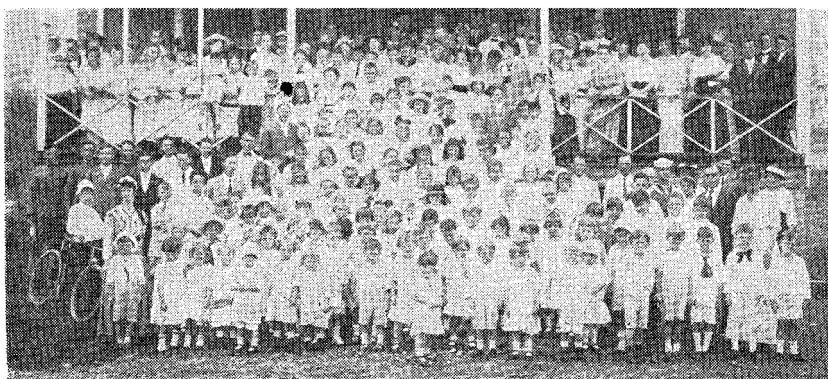
El Halcon, Panama

### The Woman's Auxiliary, 1948

Bottom Row: Mrs. Ira Wright, Mrs. Carl Schjeveland, Mrs. Harvey McConaughey, Mrs. R. T. Toone, Mrs. Frank Yarborough, Mrs. Sheppard Clarke.  
 Top Row: Mrs. H. Reikman, Mrs. George Thibodeau, Mrs. E. D. Stillman, Mrs. Harold Sosted, Mrs. Wm. Hearon, Mrs. Guy Feagans, Mrs. B. L. Thomas, Mrs. R. L. Klotz.

\$50 toward cost of illuminated cross in the church." In 1933, "the Auxiliary's donation to church treasury to be raised from \$400 to \$500."

Thus, ran the excellent record. With the complete retirement of the building debt in 1938, the emphasis on fund raising abated. It must not be presumed, however, that even at the height of the church's financial need the raising of funds excluded other normal emphases. There was an increasing interest in the extension of the Gospel. In its gifts of money and boxed materials, the Auxiliary follows the lead of the



### Balboa Union Church School

Date uncertain, place the old Chapel-Lodge Hall.

church itself, in majoring on the local Methodist Missions and the work among the San Blas. Meanwhile, studies were made in accord with the emphases annually selected by Protestantism's Missionary Educational leaders. As a further background, informed speakers have been heard month after month both in worship services and concerning missionary effort in other lands. A sampling of the records reveals addresses on the following topics: Argentine, Brazil, Chile, Churches Around the World, China, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Hawaii, London during the war, Mexico, North American Migrants and National Missions projects, Palestine, Passion Plays Across the World, Panama, The Philippines, Puerto Rico, The San Blas Islanders, Russia and Turkey. The presentation of the San Blas work and the Methodist Mission in Panama is a hardy perennial.

Just as the biography of a mother is inseparable from the life of her family, so the Woman's Auxiliary story runs like a silken thread through the life of the Balboa church.

### **The Parsonage Problem**

Being a problem for a third of a century is the unenviable distinction earned by the Balboa parsonage. The reason is clear—it was a bargain! Bargains are usually worth something less than their cost. Imagine purchasing a six room



**The Old Parsonage, Balboa**

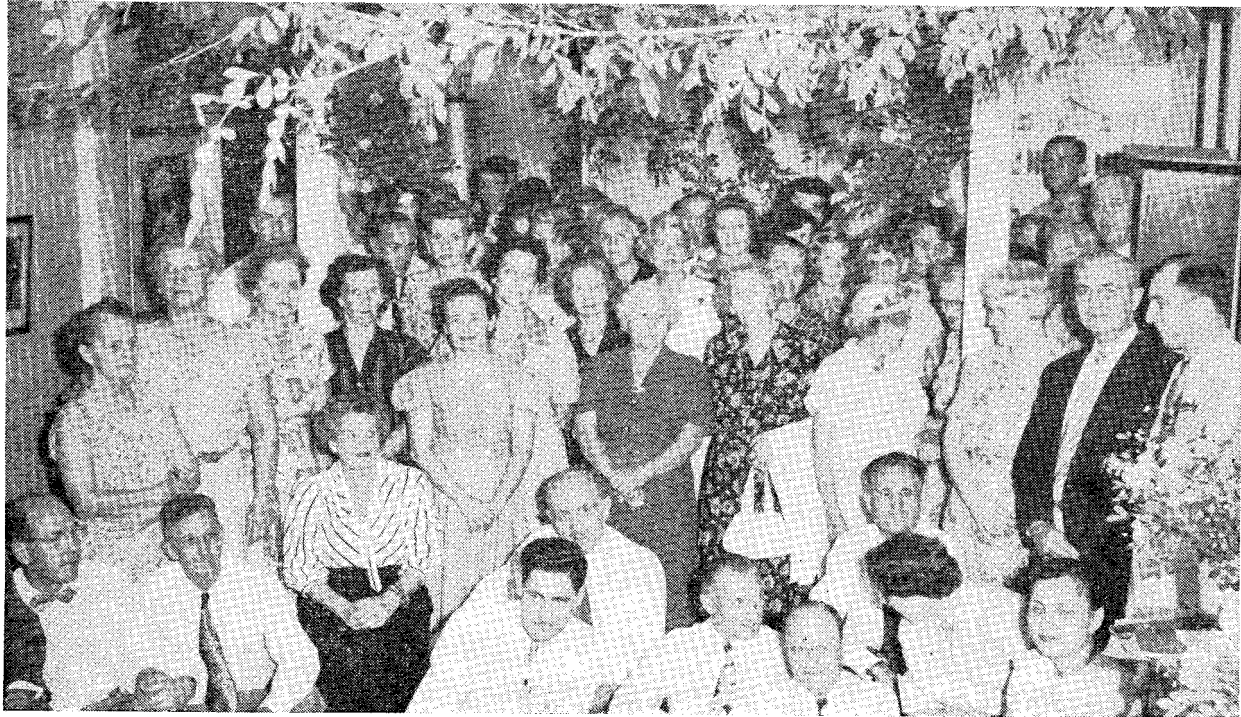


Photo by Sykes

The old parsonage was given an appropriate farewell before being demolished to make room for its successor.

El Malcon, Panama

house—with three bed rooms, two baths and a complete installation of tropical termites for a paltry \$2,000—only one-fourth of which was for the house itself! Following is a verbatim copy of one of the documents involved in this transaction:

Culebra, July 28, 1914

“Mr. H. A. A. Smith,  
Auditor,  
Empire, C. Z.

“Sir:

Type 17 House for Union Church

“Your letter of July 18, addressed to the Governor has been forwarded to me.

“I have had Mr. Holmes make an estimate of the cost of demolishing and reerection of this building, also the cost of the addition. The estimate is given below:

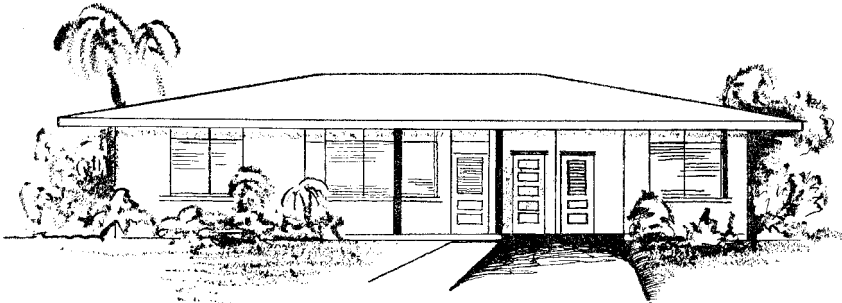
|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| Sale value of present house .....   | \$500.00  |
| Cost of demolishing and reerecting including<br>the changes indicated in sketch which accompanied<br>letter of Mr. H. A. A. Smith 7/18/14 ..... | 1100.00   |
| Cost of addition shown, 14'x17' .....   | 400.00    |
| <hr/>   |           |
| Total .....   | \$2000.00 |

“If the house were put up exactly as it stands now, the estimate of \$1100.00 could be reduced to \$700.00.

“We will be ready to start work on this house within a week or ten days. I would like to know as soon as possible whether you desire the changes and the addition made.

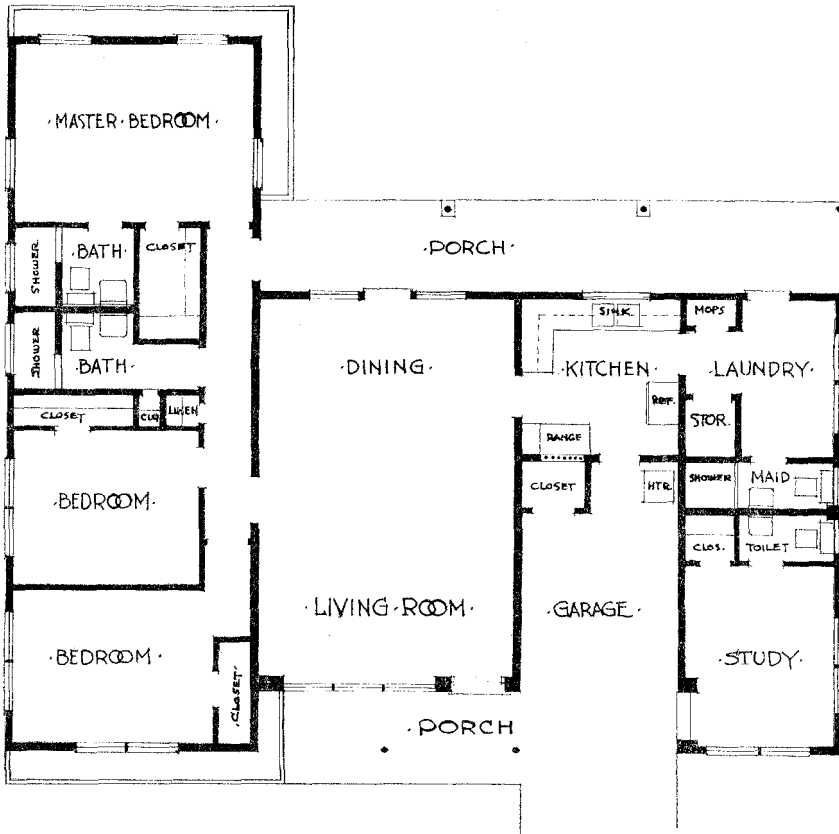
R. E. Wood  
Chief Quartermaster”

No ordinary termites, these! Indeed not! Their lineage probably rooted in the equivalent of a *Mayflower* of sorts.



Drawn by Bert Page

The new parsonage as seen from San Pablo Street



Drawn by Bert Page

Floor plan of the new parsonage

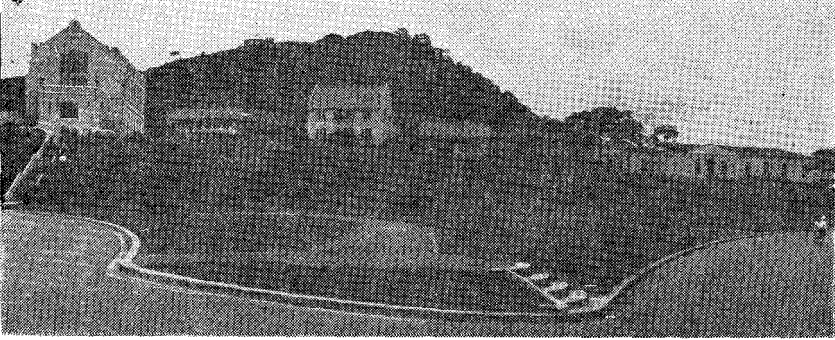
Perhaps, even, Columbus' *Santa Maria* who complained of termite trouble while on Panamanian shores. Anyhow the breed was of a virile variety. Its prodigious modern progeny may boast of its Royal forebears' life in Culebra, the Canal Zone's gay Capitol during construction days, and of their great, great, great ancestors' adventurous voyage atop flat cars to Balboa, the new Capitol. Always Royalty is an expense, difficult to justify, and these insects are no exception. From the outset the Trustees' records reveal repairs on the parsonage as a steady diet, with the following, reported by Mr. W. H. Kromer in 1929, as typical:

"The wood ants are going up the uprights by the millions leaving enormous trails. Undoubtedly they are chewing up the joists



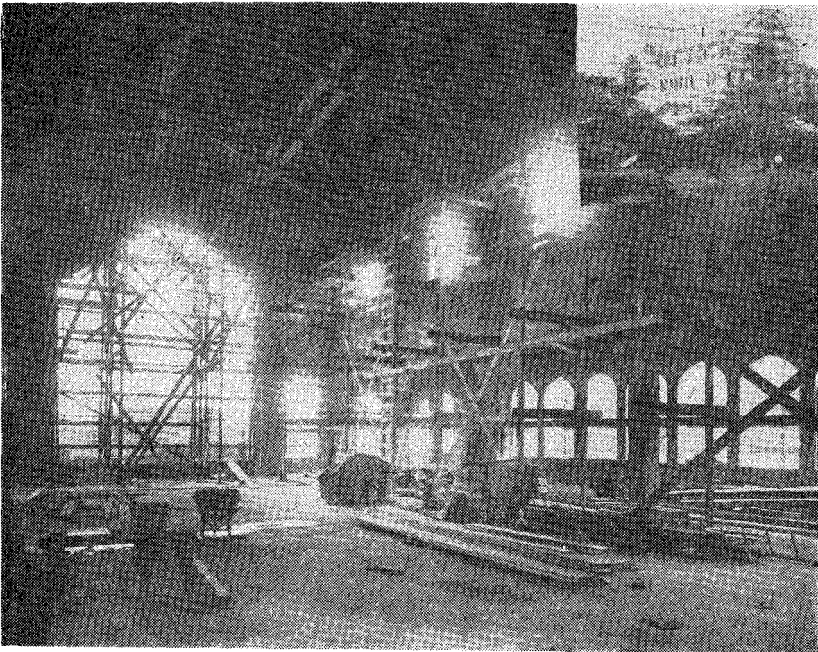


cost of interim repairs on the old building. The new parsonage project has reached the status of approximately \$18,500 on



### Balboa Union Church

At Right, first story Balboa Union Church, parsonage adjacent on left. St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church on extreme left. On either side of the priests' home (center) are apartment buildings on San Pablo (St. Paul) street. Sosa Hill in the background.



### Building Progress

"—the house of the great God which is builded with great sienes . . . and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands."—Ezra 5:8.



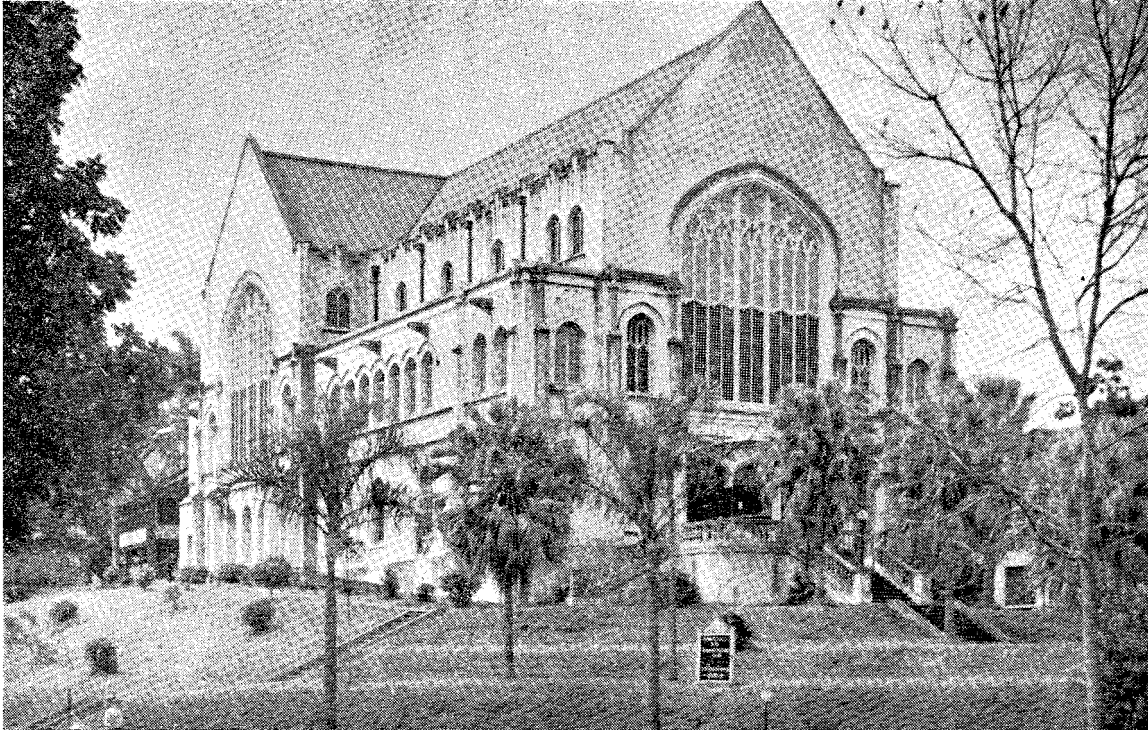
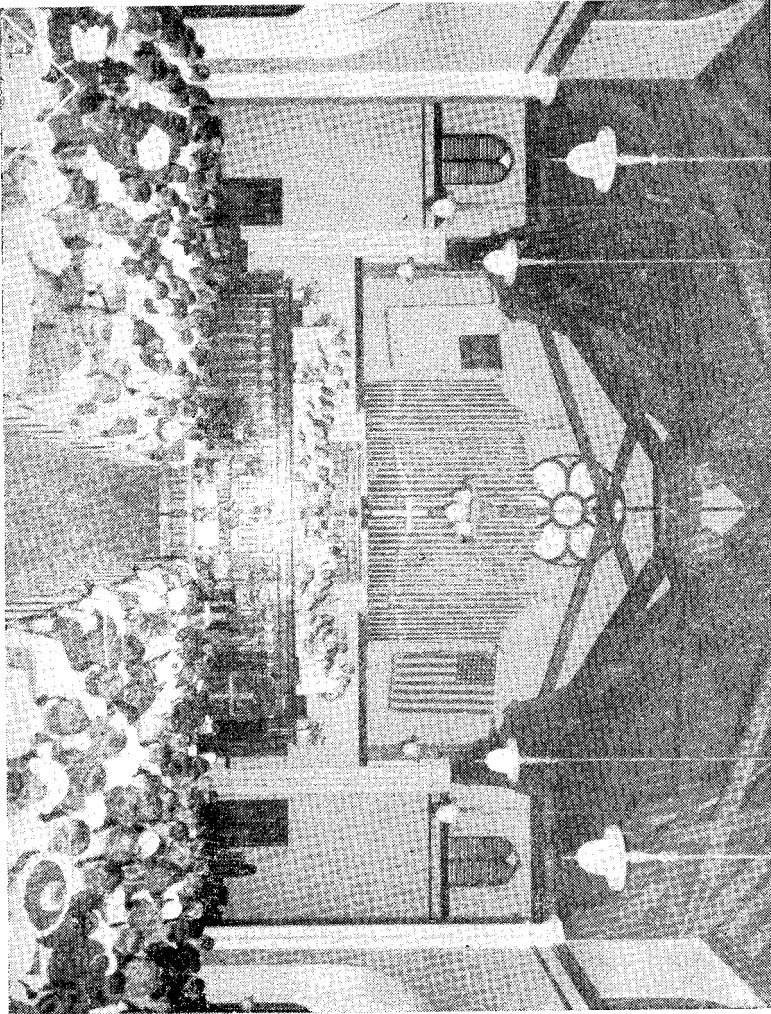


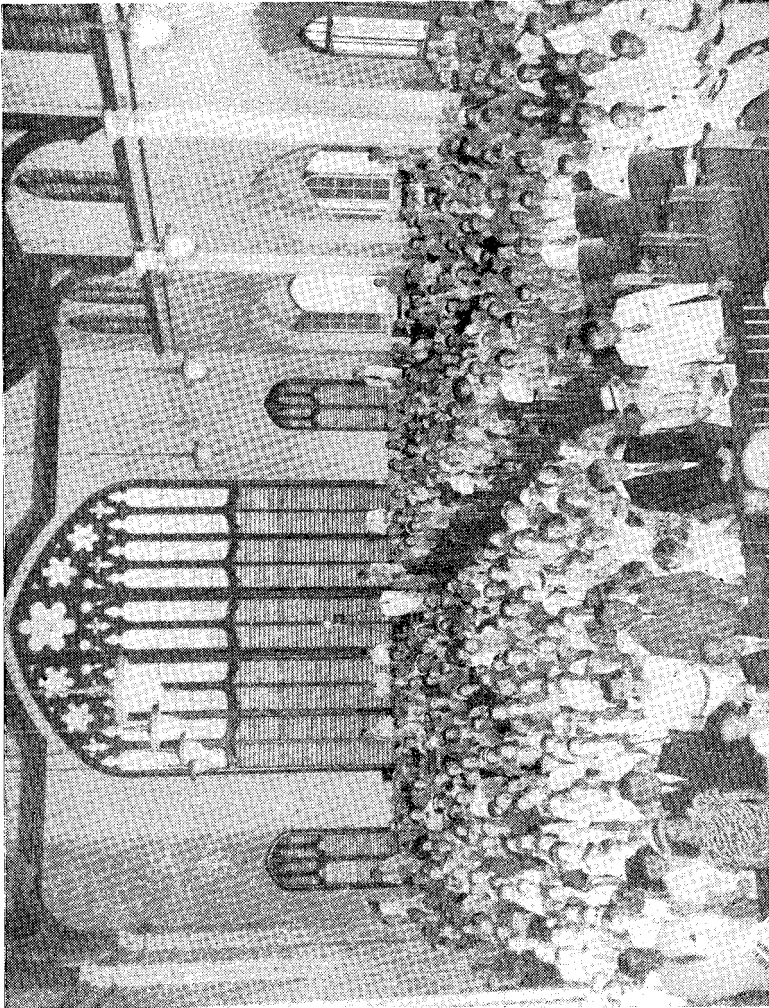
Photo. El Halcon, Panama

**How lovely is Thy Dwelling place!**  
On January 24, 1926 the completed structure was dedicated



Photo, El Halcon, Panama

**The sanctuary, as seen by the audience**

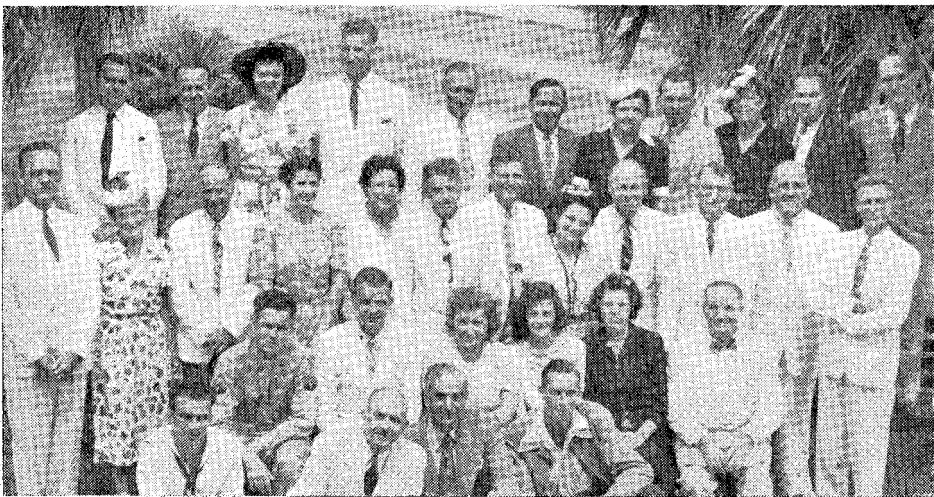


Photo, El Halcon, Panama

The sanctuary, as seen by the choir and preacher

hand. During the summer of 1946 the plans were presented to local contractors for bidding. That was a period of radical transition from a war regime, when predicting cost trends was hazardous—even if materials were available. In consequence, one lone bid in the enormous amount of \$73,000 was ventured! Of course it was refused. Of more consequence than plans or funds was a congregation determined to stop subsidizing wood ants with money that should go into a beautiful and permanent building. In writing the following, printed in *The Bulletin* in June, 1945, Mr. Harvey McConaughey phrased the congregation's sentiment:

“Our parsonage is not like an old manse which, while still sound but weathered with the years, has grown old gracefully. It is just old. It has no flavor of romance about it. It is just weatherbeaten, termite eaten, unsound and unsightly. It is not in harmony with the architecture of the church building. It was



Photo, El Halcon, Panama

### The Local Council, 1947, Balboa

Bottom Row: Mr. Andrew, Dr. R. H. Rolofson, Mr. C. M. Lessenden, Wilson Purvis.  
 Second Row: Mr. Walker, Lee Adkins, Miss Hazel Matthews, Miss Priscilla Hanners, Miss Dorothy Knowles, Mr. F. W. Hohmann.  
 Third Row: Mr. E. M. McGinnis, Mrs. Ann De La Mater, Mr. R. T. Toone, Mrs. G. A. Thibodeau, Mrs. George Lee, Mr. L. R. Evans, Mr. Harold Sosted, Mrs. R. T. Toone, Mr. Harvey McConaughey, Mr. George Chevallier, Mr. R. W. Clarke, Mr. Russell Klotz.  
 Fourth Row: Mr. F. S. Baumbach, Mr. W. A. Webb, Miss Dorothy Erickson, Mr. Ira Wright, Mr. George Lee, Mr. John Matthews, Mrs. H. A. McConaughey, Mr. W. H. Townsend, Mr. Bill Allen, Mrs. Bill Allen, Mr. J. W. Kromer.

originally a cottage in Culebra. It was an old building when the Union Church purchased it from the Canal in 1914. It was dismantled, transported to Balboa and reerected in the area on the far side of the railroad tracks, not far from the Balboa Fire Station. It was occupied while on that site by our first pastor, Rev. William Flammer. In 1916 it was moved to the present site. It has now reached a state of obsolescence which results in our annual repair bills being much too great in comparison with the value of the building. If it belonged to the Panama Canal, that organization would probably refuse to spend any more money to keep it habitable. Spending money on it for repairs is really a bad investment. For years we have been thinking of a new parsonage, one which would be adequate, permanent and in architectural harmony with the Church building."

Shown in these pages is the floor plan and the San Pablo street elevation drawing of the new parsonage currently under construction. It is of concrete, with tile roof and floors. The pastor's study is isolated from the family quarters by means of the car port. The new parsonage occupies the site of the old one. The plan is to include new furnishings also.

### **Pet Projects Postponed**

Every institution has its necessities, which lacking the elements of critical immediacy, are postponed. Another, far remote of realization, is an elevator. From the level of Balboa Road to the sanctuary floor, 64 steps must be ascended. Those steps constitute a problem for the aged or physically handicapped. Moreover, the carrying of a casket up the winding front steps is an ordeal. The long back stairway is almost equally prohibitive. On many occasions the installation of an elevator has been discussed as a solution to those problems. Always the expense, in the light of other needs, has brought postponement.

The widening of San Pablo Street, to east traffic, has been repeatedly considered. Action favoring this improvement was taken in April 1933, and again in November, 1941. The records do not state the reasons for failure of accomplishment.

A must, in the mind of most teachers, who have tried holding the attention of pupils in the wide open areas on the ground floor, is that by some effective means these spaces should be converted into usable class rooms, thus making effective instruction possible.



### Woman's Bible Class, early twenties

Front Row: Mrs. Frank (Mary Brown), Mrs. Larrimore, Mother of Mrs. W. E. Johnson and Mr. Haw, etc., Mrs. Lerea Walling, Mrs. Johnson, Mrs. W. B. Helte, Mrs. Charles Cameron, Mrs. Parsons, —, Mrs. G. Edgar Murphy, Mrs. A. L. Fessler, Mrs. B. B. Knapp (Teacher).  
 Middle Row: —, Mrs. Murwin, Mrs. Harry Smith, Mrs. John Cokeet —, —.  
 Back Row: Mrs. Anna Messer, Mrs. Archibald Scott, Mrs. Marie Van Clief, Mrs. Anna Worsley, Mrs. Annie Fraser, Mrs. Luther (mother of Mary Driscoll in Gamboa), Mrs. Marstrand, Daughter of Mrs. Powell (Scott).

Long, long ago, good pedagogy relieved public school teachers of the futile assignment of attempting to teach anybody anything in the equivalent of a gold fish bowl. Indeed it would be exceedingly difficult to find, even in the most remote backwoods of North America, a Public School in which a half dozen earnest teachers were forced to conduct their classes under the competitive conditions prevailing in much of the Balboa Church school. By a unanimous vote, however, the congregation has recently sanctioned the correction of this condition. A campaign to procure up to \$10,000 for the proper partitioning of this space was authorized and the responsibility for perfecting plans is in the hands of a committee.

During recent years several of the worship centers in the Church School have been improved by the addition of altars. A circle of the Woman's Auxiliary deserves credit for some of this improvement.

### Pet Projects Perfected

Taken for granted is the porte cochere extending from the rear door to San Pablo Street, yet, this welcome protection from sun and rain was not constructed until 1945. Long had it been the object of pros and cons in official board meetings.

At a cost to the church treasury of only \$125, four rooms were constructed beneath the parsonage in unused space! One of these became an office for the Minister of Education. Another enabled the pastor to bring his study down from the



**The Rev. Albert R. Brown**



**The Rev. Raymond E. Marshall**

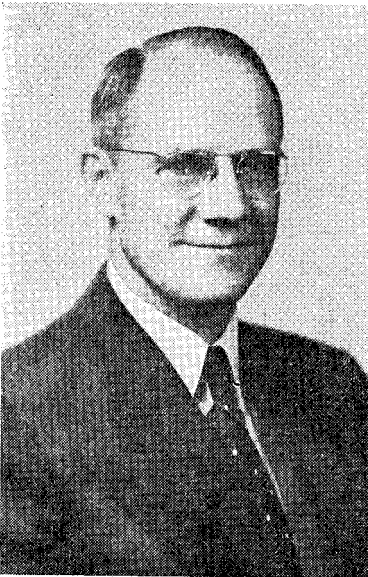


**The Rev Ray Willing Smith**



**The Rev. Leon Loofbourow, Ph.D.**

back porch of the parsonage, where, amid the competition of the countless interruptions in a minister's home he had found effective concentration impossible. Between these rooms are two others for church school classes. Thus the "pushing-out-of-the-walls" process that has characterized the Church School for some years was partially eased. The amazing economy to the church budget was due to contributions of labor from several faithful men; a gift of \$50 from the Woman's Auxiliary;



**The Rev. Cranston E. Goddard,  
Ph.D.**

a contribution of \$100 from the pastor and two small gifts from anonymous sources. This project, completed early in 1948, had been discussed eighteen years before. In December, 1929, Mr. W. H. Kromer advised the Board of Trustees of his having measured the area of this "Valuable usable space . . . that would be over 1,500 square feet." He added, in closing his report, "I would be willing to be one of a dozen to go there after four o'clock or even take time off . . . I believe we can lay such a floor for \$150, if we can stop the termites by doing it, it would pay for itself in a short time."

From the beginning the sanctuary has presented an acoustical problem. Words uttered in orthodox volume and with proper enunciation bounced from one eighteen-inch concrete wall to another. Other words were choked into meaningless sounds by traffic noises pouring in through open windows, and likewise bouncing hither and yon. Through the years many cures have been proposed, including the double glazing of windows, with air conditioning. Once the theory was advanced that the speaker's words were being lost in the rafters and beams of the transept, some sixty feet above. Hence about \$2,000



was spent in "sound proofing" that entire area, with a marring of architectural beauty and no benefits. Meanwhile, two experiments had been made with public address systems, and one with a \$300 sounding board. None of these were adequate. During 1942, came the construction of the present beautifully designed pulpit. Mounted on rubber wheels, it is movable. Soon it became orthodox routine during the singing of the second hymn for a quartet of strong-armed ushers, with set determined faces, to push the pulpit from its normally unobtrusive location to the head of the center aisle. With due decorum, and synthetic dignity, the minister gravely followed, awaiting final adjustments of position before again ascending to his place. Perhaps he may have been tempted to ride, at least once, to catch something of the old Roman Chariot atmosphere. With pews formerly in the transept removed, the speaker actually stood at the entrance of the nave, high above the unfortunates occupying front sittings. That condition was relieved in the summer of 1945 with the installation of an adequate Public Address system at a total cost of \$700.00.

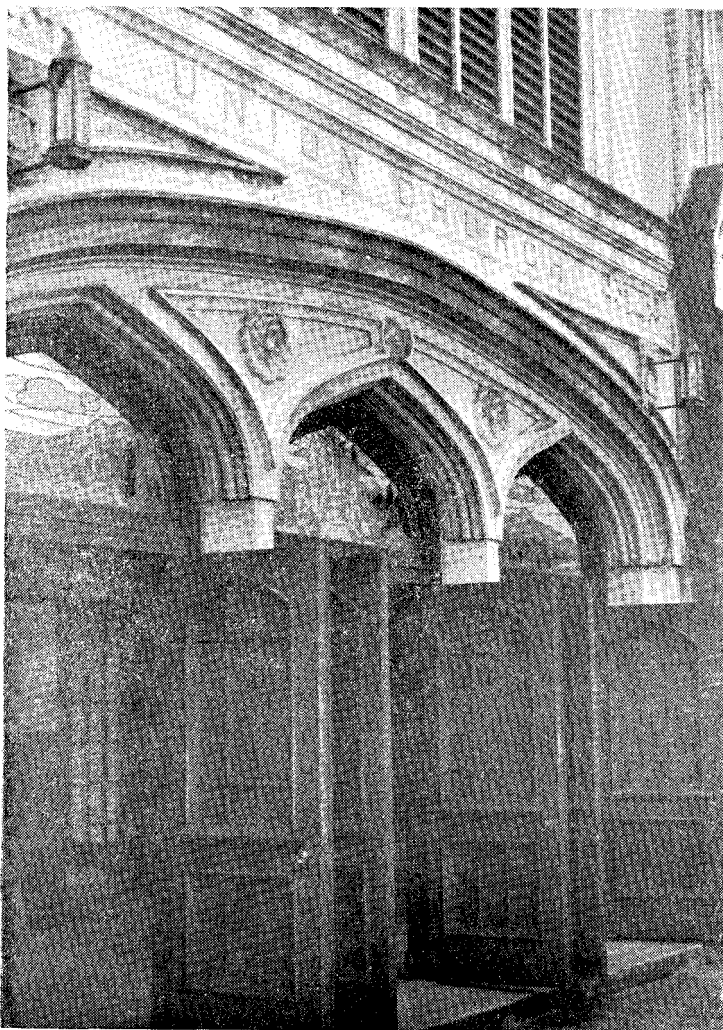
An achievement of far-reaching spiritual consequences was the creation of the John McGinnis Memorial Chapel, just off the lower foyer. It is approximately reserved for prayer and meditation and is open at all times for such purposes. Following is a quotation from the formal Litany of Dedication:

"We of the Senior High Fellowship of the Balboa Union Church do, on this thirtieth day of May, 1940, dedicate, in the name of our friend, John McGinnis, this John McGinnis Memorial Chapel."

John had recently lost his promising young life in a plane crash at Taboga Island, while returning from his first year at West Point. In the preparation and furnishing of this little room the young people were but reflecting the united testimony of all ages in the church and community! A testimony to the effect that Balboa had never had a more universally loved and admired son, or one with larger endowments in intellect and in versatility of talents, or one with a more accurate sense of spiritual values, or a deeper loyalty to the highest.

### **Hospitality**

Whether wise or otherwise, strangers initially measure



El Halcon, Panama

### Welcoming Doors

churches by the degree and apparent sincerity of the hospitality expressed. In that important matter the Balboa Union Church has earned a top rating. Beneath its inherent cosmopolitan

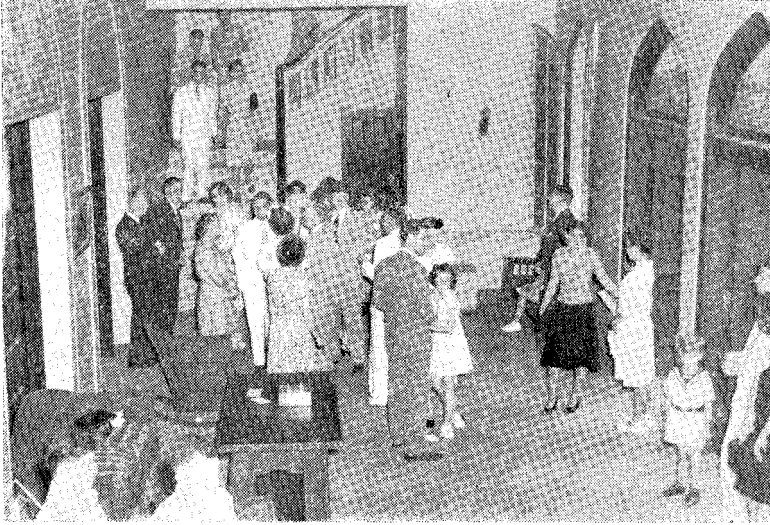
aspects there is much of the "Howdy neighbor" spirit that so delightfully characterized the old West. No superficial flutter this, rather an exudation of friendliness, helping to make real the adopted adage "You are never a stranger in your Father's house." Moreover there are planned implementations of the church's welcome.

One of these centers is the spacious lower foyer where worshippers are welcomed. In 1937, Dr. Loofbourow initiated a hospitality program that included, and went beyond foyer greetings, to the assignment of both a Deaconess and a Deacon to certain areas in the sanctuary, that every stranger might be greeted. These officers were also assigned certain portions of the parish, with similar objectives. The excellent custom of meeting folk in the foyer continues with unabated value. A number of persons adept in such a role welcome all who come, giving special attention to first-timers whom they greet and introduce to the two registrars at the information table. When sufficient information for further contacts has been recorded, the visitor is given a 32-page booklet describing and picturing what the church has to offer individuals and families. These booklets are dispensed at the rate of approximately 1,000 annually.

Also rooting back in the past to an unrecorded date are the "Welcome Home" parties staged with more or less regularity each Autumn. Included among the welcomed are the horde of church folk returning from Stateside vacations, the public school teachers and all the church members received during the previous year. During the Autumn of 1945, a war year, with many strangers in the community, 1,500 invitations to this affair were mailed, with 300 acceptances.

In consequence of the General Council's Visitation Evangelism Campaign during 1948, Balboa's Board of Elders, through its Parish Activities Committee, is making splendid use of this technique. Some twenty, or more, callers devote eight evenings each year to inviting non-members to share the benefits of the church. The dividends of this investment of time are amazingly large. This is attested by the fact that 124 new members were received in 1948 and 110 in 1949—years of drastic declines in

population—whereas 72 had been the average number of new members for the previous 34 years.



El Halcon, Panama

**An hospitable foyer where visitors register and friends chat and families meet**

The Church's most intensive extension of hospitality came appropriately during World War II. In those days, approximately ten percent of the entire Protestant membership was in uniform. It is of incomprehensible consequence, that this minor percentage included almost one hundred percent of tomorrow's potential church men. Hence, for any church to fail the service men, whom circumstance had stationed at its door, was a major tragedy. Approximately 100,000 soldiers, sailors and airmen were within, or near, the Canal Zone. A majority of those were housed in seven huge permanent military posts all within a half hour of the Balboa Union Church! Few churches of its size anywhere had a greater opportunity—and obligation. Its excellent building—the most imposing of any English-speaking Protestant Congregation south of the Rio Grande, standing on a knoll midway between the Balboa Clubhouse and the Balboa-Amador U. S. O., simply could not be missed by the passing thousands. Moreover it was a *Union*