

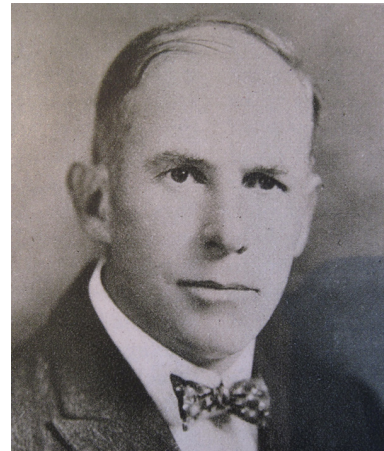
# Noble Elderkin Comes to Pilgrim Church



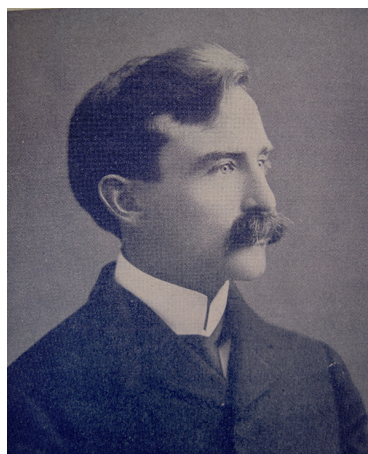
Noble Strong Elderkin



Emily Susan Hartwell



Ray Edward Phillips



Herbert M. Irwin

## Noble Elderkin Comes to Pilgrim Church<sup>1</sup>

*Dedicated to the memory of Robert Eaton (1929-2009) who asked  
me to remember the name "Noble Elderkin"*

Everyone knew Pilgrim Congregational Church had a bright future when Rev. Charles Nicholas Thorp unexpectedly submitted his letter of resignation on September 14, 1919. Two years earlier he had conducted the first Sunday service in Pilgrim's new building.<sup>2</sup> Thorp was popular. Pilgrim was growing. Fifty-five new members had joined in 1918 and sixty-nine joined in 1919, bringing Pilgrim's official membership to 556.<sup>3</sup> In addition to a building as fine as one could imagine, free of all debt, Pilgrim had an involved congregation and an effective Board of Trustees. A positive sense of anticipation prevailed at Pilgrim. At the same time, this was a period of change and uncertainty. Pilgrim's congregation had lived through anxiety and tragedy associated with the 1918 influenza epidemic and great fires in Northern Minnesota.<sup>4</sup> World War I

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<sup>1</sup> This paper provides information about Noble Elderkin's background and activities prior to his arrival at Pilgrim, with notes about organizations he supported and individuals associated with those organizations. It also supplies additional context for his selection, including brief biographies of some of Pilgrim's previous ministers and other individuals the search committee consulted. More importantly, this paper attempts to provide information about interests and attitudes of Pilgrim members in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in an attempt to understand why Pilgrim was so welcoming to Noble Elderkin. A sense of these interests and attitudes can be derived from the minutes of women's organizations at Pilgrim (for the most part there were no corresponding men's organizations) and the activities of missionaries Pilgrim chose to support. In all of this are clues to understanding Pilgrim's unique heritage among Duluth churches today.

<sup>2</sup> September 30, 1917

<sup>3</sup> The difficulty of sustaining membership is apparent from the fact that Pilgrim's membership in 1919 (556) was only 126 greater than it had been in 1912 (430) when Charles Thorp came to Pilgrim, despite the fact that an average of 48 new members joined Pilgrim every year during the seven years Thorp served as Pilgrim's minister. It should be noted that for two years during Thorp's tenure (September 1915 to September 1917) Pilgrim did not have a church building.

<sup>4</sup> Neither event appeared to have resulted in the death of members of Pilgrim Church. Four Church members died in 1918; three had died in 1917 and five would die in 1919. However, the life of the Church was significantly impacted by both events. At the time of the epidemic, Health Department officials and the city government banned all sizable gatherings and Pilgrim Church did not hold services for six Sundays. Pilgrim Church used its facilities to shelter some of those injured or displaced by the fires. William McGonagle, a member of Pilgrim Church and President of the Duluth, Missabe and Northern Railroad, was in charge of all fire relief efforts in Northern Minnesota. Some members of Pilgrim spent Sundays helping to rebuild homes destroyed by the fire. The Pilgrim Ladies Union undertook a series of projects for the American Red Cross and the

had just ended, leaving a host of troubling moral and social issues. On June 15, 1920, three African-American circus workers<sup>5</sup> were lynched at the corner of Second Avenue East and First Street in downtown Duluth. Although this event was erased from public memory for decades, it caused distress and controversy at the time.<sup>6</sup> Great social and

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Fire Relief Commission, efforts which continued until March 1919 when they delivered 48 layettes (sets of clothing, linens and toiletries for a newborn child) to Cloquet fire sufferers.

<sup>5</sup> Elias Clayton, Elmer Jackson and Isaac McGhie.

<sup>6</sup> A man long associated with Pilgrim Church, Judge William A. Cant was at the center of the legal response to the lynchings. Judge Cant, joined by Judge Bert Fessler, confronted the mob early in the evening of June 15 in an attempt to stop the lynchings. William Cant, described (by Michael Fedo, *The Lynchings in Duluth* (St. Paul: The Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1970)) as "...a forceful, if not self-righteous man, used to being paid homage from his long years on the bench..." was able to get the attention of the mob. Leaving the scene after the mob seemed to become disorganized and quiet, Cant and Fessler attempted to contact Duluth Police Chief John Murphy who was thought to be in Virginia, Minnesota. Two days later, Judge Cant, a district court judge whose tenure on the bench had begun in 1896, convened a special grand jury investigation into events related to the lynchings. The grand jury was "...comprised of men with substantial influence within the community – businessmen, bankers, men of financial status, religious laymen, members of country clubs...Most of all, they were friends of Judge Cant...". In his statement to the grand jury, William Cant said "...The most atrocious crime in all our history has been committed in the open defiance of authority, in disregard of law and attended by horrors such as will ineffaceably scar the minds and consciences of us all...The great wrong to the victims wholly beyond our power of estimation can never be undone. The laws of God and man have been defiled, set at naught. In our midst from this time forth, the laws of God will be held less sacred, life will be less safe, property less secure, and humanity itself of every character will be held more cheap...". William Cant also presided at the trials of two of those accused of committing the lynchings. William Alexander Cant (1863-1933) was born in Westfield, Wisconsin and graduated from the University of Michigan Law School in 1885. He began a law practice in Duluth in 1886. He served as a state district court judge (1896-1923) and as a United States federal judge (1924-1933). As Duluth grew, William and Carrie Cant moved east with their children (Helen, Howard, Kenneth and Margaret), living at 219 East Fifth Street, 326 North Tenth Avenue East, 1231 East Third Street, eventually settling at 2015 Lakeview Drive. Carrie Cant joined Pilgrim Church in 1887. The Cant children went through confirmation and joined the church. William served as a Pilgrim trustee (1898-1904) and was an usher in the 1920's. J. P. Johnson (see footnote 86), long-time St. Louis County Clerk of Court and a charter member of Pilgrim Church, signed many of the documents related to legal proceedings surrounding the lynchings. On the night of the lynching, John P. Nelson (1899-1989), an ambitious young man who would be for many years a member of Pilgrim Church, was attending a regular 8:30 p.m. Tuesday night drill of M Company of the Minnesota National Guard at the Armory (12<sup>th</sup> Avenue East and London Road). Nelson later recalled that when guardsmen came to the drill, they heard a rumor that a big crowd had gathered downtown around City Hall (Second Avenue East and Superior Street) which contained the city jail. The commanding officer of Company M, Captain L. J. Moerke, sent a messenger by

political movements were occurring. Labor was trying to organize politically.<sup>7</sup> In the year following Thorp's resignation (1920) women would finally be enfranchised in the United States, and a half-century long effort to improve social well-being would come to fruition when the National Prohibition Act went into effect. Charles Thorp had come to Pilgrim in 1912, promoted the planning and construction of a new church building and successfully worked to keep Pilgrim functioning well during the two years Pilgrim was without a building. "...But these are restless days and seven years constitutes a long pastorate..." , Thorp wrote in his resignation letter, saying it was time for "...a new leader with different gifts and fresh enthusiasm...". Pilgrim would turn to a leader very much preoccupied with the great issues of the age.

### *The Search Process, 1919-1920*

The Trustees met with the Board of Deacons on October 7, 1919 and nominated a seven person committee to find a new minister. All of the nominees were men. Nearly all were late middle-aged to elderly and affluent. Two days later (October 9) the names of the seven nominees (Oscar Mitchell, Sr., William Hegardt, William McGonagle, Charles Duncan, Albert Baldwin, Samuel Matter and Brewer Mattocks, Jr.) were presented at a congregational meeting.<sup>8</sup> Approval was not immediately given. Brewer Mattocks

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motorcycle to City Hall with an offer to help control the crowd. Although Captain Moerke was told at the time that the police apparently did not need help, he kept his men on alert at the Armory after the drill was completed. When mobilization orders came at 12:30 a.m., Moerke was able to immediately sent guardsman downtown, but, by that time, three men had already been lynched. John Nelson and his colleagues spent the next few days guarding the county jail (located east of Sixth Avenue East between Second and Third Streets) where prisoners were eventually transferred. John Nelson was born in Oslo, Norway to parents of Swedish ancestry. He came to Duluth as a young child and graduated from Central High School. His father was a carpenter. Working with his father, John helped build the three houses enclosed by Fifth Street, 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue East and Woodland Avenue. John's father died from complications of tuberculosis shortly after these houses were built. Without money for further education, John started working in the heating and plumbing division of Kelley-How-Thomson (which was, like Marshall-Wells, a large wholesale hardware distributor based in Duluth), eventually becoming head of the division. In the 1920's, working evenings and weekends, he built a home for his wife (Vianna) and himself at 2119 East Eighth Street. After World War II, as the national wholesale hardware business changed, John started his own plumbing wholesale company, North States Supply Corporation (not to be confused with Northern States Supply), which he operated successfully until his death at age 90. In the 1960's he succeeded his neighbor Robert Eaton on the Duluth City Council. The Nelson's activities at Pilgrim were limited because Vianna suffered for many decades from multiple sclerosis.

<sup>7</sup> The first national convention of the Farmer-Labor Party would be held in Chicago in 1920.

<sup>8</sup> Brief biographies of all of the nominees, except Brewer Mattocks, can be found in the footnotes of "Building in the Promised Land" (footnotes: 24; 25; 31; 23; 29; and 27). Brewer Mattocks, Jr. (1867-1952) was Pilgrim's Clerk from 1910 to 1936 (with the

reported that "...after quite a bit of discussion relative to representation of the younger element in the church on this committee and whether or not other names might be added to the committee, the report as presented, was by vote adopted...".

The search committee went about its business as one might expect a group composed of successful men, each at the top of his respective organization, to approach their task. "...One of the first things settled upon by the Committee was that this Church was worthy to have, and it ought to secure, as its pastor, the best available man in the country. With that conviction established, the Committee has sought the advice of some of the most prominent and influential leaders of our denomination, including preachers, college and seminary presidents and professors, as well as laymen...".<sup>9</sup> The committee met weekly from October 1919 to July 1920. We do not have search committee minutes, but one can reasonably speculate on the identity of those who advised the committee. Foremost among this group must have been Ozora Stearns Davis, president of the Chicago Theological Seminary (1909-1929).<sup>10</sup> The man who would eventually be the successful candidate at Pilgrim had recently worked (1918-1919) for Davis on the field staff of the Chicago Theological Seminary (and was looking for a permanent position). Ozara Davis visited Duluth at a crucial time in the search committee's deliberations and delivered the sermon at Pilgrim on April 18, 1920. Another member of the faculty of the Chicago Theological Seminary, Arie Binkhorst, supplied the pulpit at Pilgrim twice (March 21 and May 9) during the interregnum between Charles Thorp and his successor. Cornelius Howard Patton, Pilgrim's minister from 1895 to 1898, had become a national figure in the

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exception of one year). Mattocks worked for 56 years as a price clerk, starting in 1887 (on a temporary job which was scheduled to last two weeks) with G. C. Greenwood & Co., which became A. B. Chapin & Co., and which was renamed Chapin-Wells in 1893 when Albert Morley Marshall purchased it. Subsequently the name was changed to Marshall-Wells. On his retirement in 1943, Brewer Mattocks stated that his hobby was stamp collecting. Like other Pilgrim members, Brewer and Delia Mattocks (with their children Brewer III and Brenner) moved east as the city grew, eventually settling into a new home at 911 Woodland Avenue. These facts about his personal history falsely suggest that Brewer Mattocks, Jr. may have been an uninteresting person. However, twenty-six years of flamboyant, colorful and lengthy annual Clerk's reports belie this image of mundane conventionality. He must have been quite a character. Upon retiring (from what he said were "...the longest two weeks in my life..."), Brewer moved to Denver to live with Brewer III and his daughter-in-law.

<sup>9</sup> Report of the committee to recommend a pastor, presented by Oscar Mitchell to a special meeting of the congregation on July 25, 1920.

<sup>10</sup> Ozora Stearns Davis (1866-1931) grew up in White River Junction, Vermont, graduated from Dartmouth College in 1889, attended Hartford Theological Seminary and (with the help of a fellowship from Hartford) earned a Ph.D. from the University of Leipzig. His career has been described as one of "...power, literary and administrative achievement...". During his long presidency of Chicago Theological Seminary, its campus was moved (1914) to Hyde Park adjacent to the University of Chicago and the seminary's architecturally significant main building (Davis Hall) was built (Davis Hall and other CTS property was purchased by the University of Chicago in 2008). Ozora Stearns Davis served (1927) as moderator of the National Council of Congregational Churches.

Congregational Church and was undoubtedly one of the denominational leaders consulted.<sup>11</sup> Since 1904, Patton had held one of the most important positions in the

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<sup>11</sup> Cornelius Howard Patton (1860-1939) was born on Christmas Day in Chicago where his father (William Weston Patton) was minister of the First Congregational Church. Cornelius' great grandfather, Robert Patton, had been postmaster of Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War. His grandfather, William Patton, was the long-time minister of Central Presbyterian Church ("the old Broome Street Church") in New York City. In 1867, Cornelius' father, William Weston Patton, left the First Congregational Church of Chicago and founded the weekly Congregational magazine *Advance*, which soon became the most influential Congregational periodical outside New England and New York. William Weston Patton left the editorship of *Advance* to become president of Howard University in 1874. Howard University had been founded seven years earlier by an act of Congress which came about largely through the efforts of members of the First Congregational Society of Washington to found an institution for the education of African Americans in the liberal arts and sciences (Howard University did not have a black president until Dr. Moredcai Wyatt Johnson assumed the presidency in 1926). Young Cornelius received his preparatory training for college at the Howard University Preparatory Department and the Emerson Institute (now Emerson Preparatory School) in Washington, D.C.. He received a B.A. from Amherst College in 1883 and a B.D. from Yale in 1886. Cornelius married (June 5, 1889) Pauline Whittlesey, whose father, General Eliphalet Whittlesey (Yale: B.A., 1842; M.A., 1847) had been a Congregational minister (Central Congregational Church, Bath, Maine), Civil War officer (Colonel, U.S. Colored Infantry), a founder and faculty member of Howard University, adjutant general of the Freedman's Bureau (1868-1872), and Secretary of the Board of Indian Commissioners (1874-1900). Cornelius Patton was ordained February 16, 1887 at the First Congregational Church, Westfield, New Jersey, where he would serve as minister (1887-1895). In February 1895, Cornelius and Pauline came to Duluth's Pilgrim Congregational Church. Cornelius' lengthy annual reports to the congregation suggest that he was earnest and hard working. He was consistently disappointed by poor attendance at the Sunday evening service. Patton promoted and seemed to take pleasure in an expanded music program under Pilgrim's new "musical" director Arthur Drake. Pauline served as president of the Ladies Union and the Women's Missionary Society. After leaving Pilgrim, Patton was minister of the First Congregational Church St. Louis, Missouri (1898-1904). In 1904, Patton was appointed Home Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Boston, Massachusetts. Patton donated a major collection of books by and about William Wordsworth to Amherst College. These books constitute most of the Wordsworth Collection in the Amherst College Archives and Special Collections. Patton wrote many journal and magazine articles in addition to a number of books. His books include: *The Lure of Africa* (Methodist Book Concern, 1917), 208 pages; *World Facts and America's Responsibility* (New York: Associated Press, 1919), 236 pages; *The Business of Missions* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), 290 pages; *Eight O'clock Chapel: A Study of New England College Life in the Eighties* (New York & Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1927), 345 pages (written with his Amherst classmate Walter Taylor Field); *Foreign Missions Under Fire: Straight Talk with the Critics of Missions* (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1928), 180 pages; and *The Amherst Wordsworth Collection: A Descriptive Bibliography* (Amherst: Trustees

Congregational Church (Secretary, Home Department, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions). Affable and respected, Patton successfully cultivated an extensive network of relationships within the Congregational Church. Like Charles Thorp and the man Pilgrim's search committee would eventually nominate, Cornelius Patton was a graduate of Amherst College, and, like the search committee's nominee (and all of Pilgrim's settled ministers up to that time) Patton was also a graduate of Yale University.<sup>12</sup> Cornelius Patton visited Pilgrim in the Spring of 1920 (during the search for a new minister), giving the sermon on May 23. A third resource for the search committee was Donald Cowling, who, during his long tenure as president of Carleton College (1909-1945), gave the sermon at Pilgrim many times. Alexander Milne, Pilgrim's minister from 1899 to 1911, had been a Carleton College trustee during the early years of Donald Cowling's tenure.<sup>13</sup> Oscar Mitchell, head of Pilgrim's search

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of Amherst College, 1936) 304 pages. Cornelius Patton served as a member of the Amherst College Board of Trustees from 1905 to 1939.

<sup>12</sup> All of Pilgrim's settled ministers had been graduates of Yale College or Yale Divinity School (or both): Charles Cotton Salter, B.A. (Yale, 1852), M.A. (Andover Theological Seminary (1854-1855)), Yale Tutor (1856-1857), Yale Divinity School (1858); Edward McArthur Noyes, B.A. (Yale, 1879 (Phi Beta Kappa)), M.A. (Yale, 1882); Cornelius Howard Patton, B.A. (Amherst, 1883), B.D. (Yale, 1886), D.D. (Amherst, 1899), D.D. (Williams, 1921); Alexander Milne, B.D. (Yale, 1888), Yale Graduate School (1888-1889), M.A. (Ohio State University, 1898); Charles Nicholas Thorp, B.A. (Amherst, 1891), B.D. (Yale, 1896).

<sup>13</sup> Alexander Milne (1862-1912) was born in Aberdeen, Scotland. At age 11 he came to the United States, living initially in Rockland, Maine and then in Westerly, Rhode Island. "...He became an expert granite worker, but having strong ideas of independence, he refused to join the stonecutters' union and he was in consequence forced out of work. His attitude toward the labor union attracted the interest of Hon. Nathan F. Dixon (B.A., Brown, 1833), who desired him to enter his law office, and at the same time directed his studies in the common branches. Although his previous opportunities for education had been extremely limited and he was then 18 years of age, he quickly mastered his textbooks. The pastor of the Congregational Church in Westerly, with which he had united, Rev. George L. Clark (B.A., Amherst, 1872), after a time suggested that he should go into the ministry and aided him in Latin, Greek, and mathematics and other preparatory studies, so that he entered the Yale Divinity School in the Middle class. After graduation he was a member of the Graduate class for a time, but in May 1889 was ordained pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church in Columbus, Ohio, which he served ten years, leaving it with new life and a new edifice...Mr. Milne married at Columbus, Ohio, February 4, 1895, Florence Josephine, daughter of Rev. Samuel Teppett, a Methodist minister, and Jane Ropp Teppett...[Marjorie, their only child, was born June 1896] ...In 1898 Mr. Milne received the degree of Master of Arts from Ohio State University...Accepting the call of the Pilgrim Congregational Church of Duluth, Minnesota, in February, 1899, he became a leader there in all good works. He was at the same time a scholarly and convincing preacher. He was very helpful to the other churches in the Duluth Conference. In January 1912 he resigned on account of ill health, went first to Florida and then [Tryon,] North Carolina. Finding recovery hopeless, he returned to Columbus and died in the Grant Hospital there four days later, September 22, 1912, at the age of 50 years. He was buried at Columbus, Ohio..." He was survived by his wife and 16 year

committee, was a long-time Carleton trustee (although his sons went to Yale). During the search committee's deliberations, members of the Carleton College community conducted services at Pilgrim three times.<sup>14</sup> The man whom the search committee would recommend had been a student in the Yale Divinity School the same time as Donald Cowling.<sup>15</sup> Other possible advisors to the search committee include D. H. Walker<sup>16</sup> (President of Fargo College), Charles F. Taylor<sup>17</sup> (Congregational World Movement) and Edward McArthur Noyes<sup>18</sup> (minister of Pilgrim Church, 1883-1894).

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old daughter. (*Obituary Records of Graduates of Yale University* (New Haven: Yale University, 1915), pages 517-518).

<sup>14</sup> Rev. Mr. Hoban of Carleton College gave the sermon on December 21, 1919. Prof. Ambrose W. Vernon gave the sermon on May 2, 1920. Vernon (Princeton, 1891) held positions at Yale Divinity School, Dartmouth College and Carleton College over his long career. Edwin Blanchard Dean (1866-1948) gave the sermon at Pilgrim on July 25, 1920 (the day the search committee announced their selection to the congregation). Dean was born in Bombay (India), the son of Congregational missionaries Samuel Chase Dean (Amherst, 1853; Andover Theological Seminary, 1856) and Augusta Elizabeth (Abbott) Dean (Mount Holyoke, 1855). His mother, also the child of missionaries, had been born in India in 1835. Dean served as minister of the First Congregational Church in Northfield (Minnesota) from 1905 to 1920. During his tenure, membership in the small town church soared to 710 (making it second only in size to Plymouth Congregational Church in Minnesota). Around the time of his visit to Pilgrim, Dean left the active ministry and became assistant to President Cowling and Chairman of the Board of Deans of Carleton College. He subsequently served (1925-1936) as President of Doane College, a liberal arts college with Congregational roots in Crete, Nebraska.

<sup>15</sup> Donald John Cowling received four degrees from Yale (B.A., 1903; M.A., 1904; B.D. 1906; and Ph.D., 1909).

<sup>16</sup> D. H. Walker gave the sermon at Pilgrim on December 14, 1919. Fargo College was a liberal arts college in Fargo, North Dakota, which was founded by the General Congregational Association in 1887. It ceased operation in 1922. A new library building was dedicated at Fargo College on September 5, 1910. Theodore Roosevelt gave the dedicatory address for the library and attracted a crowd of over 10,000.

<sup>17</sup> Charles F. Taylor of the World Congregational Movement gave the sermon at Pilgrim on April 25, 1920. The World Congregational Movement, other denomination world movements and the Interchurch World Movement were responses to the failure of protestant churches to cooperate effectively to deal with the many social problems resulting from World War I. It hoped to unite all benevolent and missionary activities of the protestant church. The religious world movements were short-lived as organizational entities.

<sup>18</sup> Edward McArthur Noyes (born, New Haven, Connecticut, October 12, 1858) was the minister of Pilgrim Church from July 1883 to September 1894. He was ordained in Duluth at Pilgrim Church on September 27, 1883. Noyes married Mary Caroline Simpson (sister of a Yale classmate) on July 3, 1884. The Noyes' had three children while in Duluth: Margaret Elizabeth (6/15/1885); Alice Louise (2/26/1887); and Edward Simpson (5/1/1892). Typhoid fever caused the death of Alice (5/19/1891) and Mary (7/30/1892). After leaving Pilgrim he spent the rest of his active career (1894-1922) as minister of the First Congregational Church in Newton Centre, Massachusetts. By all accounts, Noyes was well liked at both churches he served. He successfully led efforts



The candidate who would eventually be recommended by the search committee, Noble Elderkin, gave the sermon (*He Made as Though He Would Go Further*) at Pilgrim on June 20, 1920. At the Sunday service on July 25, Oscar Mitchell, speaking for the search committee, made a formal recommendation (signed by all members of the search committee) that the congregation hire "...Rev. Noble S. Elderkin, of Chicago, now pastor

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to build new stone church buildings in Duluth and Newton Centre. On July 6, 1904 Noyes married Grace Brewster Alvord (17 years his junior). Grace was the daughter of Rev. Frederick Alvord (Yale, 1855) and a direct descendent (through her mother) of Elder Brewster of Plymouth. Grace and Edward had three children: McArthur ("Mac"; born 5/5/1905); Elizabeth Brewster (born 1908); and Catherine Alvord (born 1909). Noyes was descended from Rev. James Noyes, D.D. who emigrated from England in 1634. Edward's ancestor Rev. James Noyes of Stonington was chairman of the company which founded Yale College in 1701. Rev. James Noyes of New Haven (son of James of Stonington) was one of the trustees named in the Yale charter of 1745. Edward's father, Rev. Gurdon Wheeler Noyes (Amherst, 1848), was minister of the Howard Avenue Church in New Haven at the time of his birth. In 1905 Edward Noyes wrote the following autobiographical summary: "...Trained in a parsonage, surrounded with books, with seven brothers and sisters, my memories of childhood are singularly happy. Entering the church fellowship at 11 years of age, by hereditary instinct and the bent of my natural endowment drawn toward the ministry, I have had an uneventful but very happy ministry. I went West in '83 and took a small church [Pilgrim Congregational Church] in a rapidly growing city [Duluth]. It increased ten-fold in the eleven years of my pastorate, and we built a new stone church, lost it by fire, and rebuilt it. I lost my little daughter, and my wife a year later by typhoid fever, and my health gave way under the strain of anxiety, grief and overwork. Against my own wish and the unanimous vote of the church I had to seek another climate and learn to sleep again. In Newton Centre my pastorate has been very happy. My church has grown steadily, and we have just built and paid for a handsome stone edifice. In a charming suburb, only eight miles from the State House, with a pleasant home and a united and cordial church, with constantly widening opportunities for service, why should not a man be happy in his work? After living twelve years a widower, I did a rash and proverbially dangerous thing, - married a young lady who is a member of this church, daughter of a Yale man. The parish, instead of being disturbed, were so much pleased that they sent us to Europe on a wedding trip...If I had to choose my profession again, I should certainly choose the ministry. I hope I should make a better record in it, if I had another chance. I hope to make the remaining years of my service count for more - *far more* - in my upholding of the divine kingdom and of doing good to my fellow-men. It's a good world. I am glad to have lived so long in it, and hope to have many more years. Its friendships are precious and the service of God in it rewarding. And when I get through, I hope my boy will pick up the torch and carry on the long succession of ministers of our name in this land..." (Edward McArthur Noyes, Frederick Wells, ed., *A History of the Class of '79: Yale College, during the thirty years from its admission into the academic department, 1875-1905* (New Haven: The University Press, 1906), pp. 331-334). A portrait of Edward McArthur Noyes hangs in the Pilgrim Church Library.

of Park Ridge Congregational Church<sup>19</sup> ...at a salary of \$6,000.00 per annum<sup>20</sup>, with rent of parsonage free, and that the moving expenses of himself, his family and household goods from Chicago to Duluth be paid by this Church...”. The search committee apparently felt it necessary to obscure Noble Elderkin’s background in its recommendation to the congregation and press releases to Duluth newspapers. Elderkin’s most recent church had been the Second Congregational Church of Oak Park (Illinois) from which he had been forced to resign in 1918 (after only fourteen months at the church) because of his pacifist views.<sup>21</sup> Although Elderkin’s difficulties at his Oak Park church do not seem to have been a secret to Pilgrim’s congregation in the 1920’s, there is no mention of these difficulties in the records of Pilgrim Church.

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<sup>19</sup> This statement is misleading. Park Ridge Congregational Church (Park Ridge, Illinois) was a small, unstable congregation during the first two decades of the last century. Between 1891 and 1911 the Church was served by eleven different ministers. In 1917 the Church abandoned efforts to merge with a neighboring Methodist church. I could find no evidence that Noble Elderkin was a settled minister at Park Ridge Congregational Church. He may have filled the pulpit at Park Ridge on a temporary basis (it was near Oak Park where his home and previous church (Second Congregational) were located). Elderkin stated in biographical information supplied to Yale in 1922 that his occupation during 1919-1920 was as a staff person for the Western Section of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (*Eighth General Catalog of the Yale Divinity School: Centennial Issue, 1822-1922* (New Haven: Yale University, 1922), page 408). In the 1920’s, Park Ridge Congregational Church became Park Ridge Community Church. The last regular position Elderkin held at a church before coming to Pilgrim was as minister of the Second Congregational Church of Oak Park (Illinois), where he served for fourteen months in 1917-1918. Subsequently, he worked (1918-1919) on the field staff of the Chicago Theological Seminary, and, the following year (1919-1920), for the Fellowship of Reconciliation..

<sup>20</sup> This was twice the \$3,000.00 per year salary of Elderkin’s immediate predecessor, Charles Thorp.

<sup>21</sup> On June 13, 1918, the *Emporia Gazette* (published in Emporia, Kansas (near Lawrence where Noble Elderkin had been minister of Plymouth Congregational Church) by the famous newspaperman, essayist (*What’s the Matter With Kansas*; August 15, 1896), progressive and spokesman for middle America, William Allen White (1868-1944)) carried the following news story: *The Pastor Resigned* – Chicago, June 13, 1918 – “Accused of being a pacifist by his parishioners, Rev. Noble Strong Elderkin of the Second Congregational Church of Oak Park, a suburb, yielded to demands of a majority last night and resigned. Dr. Elderkin was pastor of a church at Lawrence, Kansas for six years before going to Oak Park fourteen months ago. One month after his arrival he preached a sermon on ‘pacifism’ and since that time the congregation has been divided in its attitude toward the minister.”

### *Noble Strong Elderkin, Reformer and Pacifist*

Rev. Noble Strong Elderkin, 42 years of age in 1920<sup>22</sup> when he came to Pilgrim, was a man of unusually strong sensitivity and commitment to the well-being of others, having had great difficulty in at least two of his previous three pulpits because of advocacy for issues related to social reform, civil rights and peace. Committed to pacifism, Elderkin was working for the Fellowship of Reconciliation when he was offered a position at Pilgrim Church. A seminal<sup>23</sup> but recently formed organization, the Fellowship of Reconciliation came into existence during World War I to promote peace and social justice.<sup>24</sup> Although Elderkin's work<sup>25</sup> with the Fellowship may have been personally satisfying, it is unlikely to have provided much support for his wife and four children.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Noble Strong Elderkin, Jr. was born January 1, 1878 in Indianapolis, Indiana. His family moved shortly after Noble's birth to Chicago.

<sup>23</sup> After its founding in 1915, initial activities of the American division of the Fellowship of Reconciliation consisted largely of opposition to American involvement in the War and work with conscientious objectors. The Fellowship of Reconciliation established the National Civil Liberties Bureau in 1916 to formalize its programs for conscientious objectors. The National Civil Liberties Bureau was reorganized in 1920 as the American Civil Liberties Union. The head of the Boston branch of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Abraham J. Muste (1885-1967), was founding chairman and head of the faculty of Brookwood Labor College (Katonah, New York), the first residential labor college in the United States. Between 1921 and 1937, Brookwood played an important role in the development of the American labor movement, training many of the individuals who founded the Congress of Industrial Organizations (C.I.O.) in 1935. Members of a Fellowship of Reconciliation cell on race relations at the University of Chicago (James Farmer, Jr. (1920-1999), George Houser (b. 1916), Bernice Fisher (1916-1966), et al.) formed the Committee on Racial Equality (later, Congress of Racial Equality (CORE)) in 1942. CORE would become an influential civil rights organizations in the United States. Six members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, including Jane Addams (1860-1935) and Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

<sup>24</sup> The Fellowship of Reconciliation evolved from conversations between Henry Theodore Hodgkin (1877-1933; English physician, Quaker minister, one time missionary to China, secretary of the Friends Foreign Mission Association and author) and Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze (1885-1969; German professor of theology and ethics, chaplain to Kaiser Wilhelm II) during and after a conference on Christian pacifism held (August 1-3, 1914) at Konstanz, on the border of Germany and Switzerland, just before the outbreak of World War I. The United States Fellowship for Reconciliation was founded November 11, 1915 at Garden City, New York with Henry Hodgkin in attendance. Sixty-eight charter members were present, including: Abraham J. Muste (footnote 23); Norman Thomas (1884-1868; Princeton, 1905, Union Theological Seminary, 1911; Presbyterian minister (assistant to Henry van Dyke at the Brick Presbyterian Church on Fifth Avenue; subsequently minister of the East Harlem Presbyterian Church, resigning when funding for the Church's social programs were cut (possibly because of Thomas' unpopular opposition to American entry into World War I)); U.S. presidential candidate of the Socialist Party in six consecutive national elections (beginning in 1928)); Jane Addams (founder of the American settlement house movement (Hull House in Chicago) and later

Noble Elderkin had grown up in Lake View (now Lakeview) which was, at the time, a new and prosperous neighborhood on Chicago's near north side.<sup>27</sup> His father was a store manager who worked in the Loop. Noble had one sibling, George, who was two years

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winner of the Nobel Peace Prize (1931)); Grace Hutchins (1885-1969; Bryn Mawr 1907; missionary to China (1912-1916); pacifist; labor economist (women's labor issues); during her life, Hutchins philosophically moved from Christian socialist to Communist); and Paul Jones (1880-1941; Yale 1902, Episcopal Divinity School (Cambridge, Massachusetts); Episcopal Bishop of Utah (1916-1918, losing his position after a commission of the House of Bishops found him guilty of "promulgating unpatriotic doctrines" because of his opposition to World War I (particularly his well-publicized 1917 comment "war is un-Christian")); socialist; advocate for economic justice; civil rights activist; and (at the end of his career) chaplain of Antioch College).

<sup>25</sup> Noble Elderkin apparently traveled around the north central United States for the Fellowship of Reconciliation, primarily making presentations at churches. *The Evening Courier and Reporter*, Waterloo, Iowa announced (February 1, 1919) that Noble Elderkin would be speaking at the First Congregational Church on "The Moral and Social Failure of Bolshevism". *The Capital Times*, Madison, Wisconsin gave a detailed account of Noble Elderkin's visit to that city in its edition of April 7, 1920 (page 4). This occurred as the search committee in Duluth was in the middle of its deliberations. "Noble Elderkin of the Fellowship of Reconciliation spoke Tuesday night [April 6] at the University Methodist Church...He pointed out how since the War freedom of speech, freedom of lawful assembly and freedom of the press have been destroyed with only a slight show of concern by the people who are to be robbed of constitutional rights and liberties...The deadening effect of the War to the spiritual life of the people, making them indifferent to social, industrial and political evil and [to] injustice, was discussed...As to conscientious objectors, Dr. Elderkin said, our whole history is a history of conscientious objecting. William Lloyd Garrison, the most influential of all abolition leaders, was a conscientious objector and absolutely opposed to the war. And yet we are still holding 90 men whose only crime is belief that Jesus was right when he said 'Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you...'...As none of the churches spoke out against the War, when it was declared, and when it was on, the Fellowship of Reconciliation seeks to get the church to take a stand against the next war now...Dr. Elderkin said he has unbounded admiration for Scott Nearing, who adheres to his pacifist views, although these views are making him unpopular with many socialists, who are about his only friends and supporters...Dr. Elderkin has just returned from Europe, where with Oliver Dryer, Secretary of the English Fellowship, he made a 16 day trip through Germany. The Germans were surprised to know that there were no churches in America that opposed the War to the end...Dr. Elderkin said that the only industrial organization that did not break down during with War was the financial organization. English manufacturers of war munitions are paying dividends now to German shareholders...Dr. Elderkin was entertained by Chi Psi fraternity on Langdon Street...He is national chaplain of the organization..."

<sup>26</sup> In 1920, Noble Elderkin's wife, Eline, was 41 years old. They had four children: Noble (14 years); Judith (12 years); Sage (9 years); and Martha (2 years).

<sup>27</sup> The Elderkin family lived (ca. 1900) at 1604 Wellington Avenue.

younger.<sup>28</sup> His Father's family (originally from the border country between Scotland and England) could trace its presence in North America to the earliest days of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.<sup>29</sup> His Mother was born in Illinois, the daughter of Swedish immigrants. Noble Elderkin's family attended nearby Evanston Avenue Congregational Church<sup>30</sup>. Noble received his B.A. from Amherst College in 1901 and his B.D. from Yale Divinity School in 1905. He was ordained at Evanston Avenue Congregational Church on June 15, 1905.

Less than three months later (September 3, 1905) Noble Elderkin became minister of the First Congregational Church, Ogden, Utah.<sup>31</sup> Mormon settlers had come to the area in 1847 and incorporated the town of Ogden<sup>32</sup> in 1851. The community changed significantly in 1869 when the Union Pacific Railroad was extended to the town which soon became a railroad hub as local railroad lines were built to the north and south. Non-Mormon workers and businessmen moved to Ogden, which grew to about 6,000 by 1880. There was ongoing conflict between Mormons and non-Mormons over many issues

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<sup>28</sup> George Wicker Elderkin (1879-1965; A.B., Dartmouth, 1902; Ph.D., Johns Hopkins, 1906) was an archeologist, distinguished authority on classical Greek art, author of numerous scholarly journal articles and books, and director of archeological field work at the ancient and medieval site of Antioch. He spent his entire academic career after 1911 as Professor of Art and Archeology at Princeton University.

<sup>29</sup> The Elderkin family immigrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 1630's. Noble's ancestor, John Elderkin (1616-1687), was a carpenter who is said to have built the first church building and first mill in both New London and Norwich, Connecticut. Referencing men in the Elderkin family is difficult because the father, grandfather and son Pilgrim's minister were all named Noble Strong Elderkin. The family did not use unique identifiers to distinguish the generations, only Sr. or Jr. intermittently if two members of the family were mentioned in the same context. Rev. Elderkin's grandfather (the first Noble Elderkin, 1810-1875) was born in Potsdam in upstate New York near the St. Lawrence River four years after the town was established. The first Noble Elderkin was county Sheriff, village President, state Assemblyman, and, for a short time, Speaker of the New York State Assembly. The second Noble Elderkin grew up in Potsdam and moved to the Middle West. He married (ca. 1877) a woman, Lena, who was born in Illinois, the child of Swedish immigrants. Rev. Elderkin was born (1878) in Indianapolis, Indiana. The family soon moved, and by 1880 they were living in Chicago where the second Noble worked as a bookkeeper and later as a store manager.

<sup>30</sup> The Evanston Avenue Congregational Church merged with the Lincoln Park Congregational Church on May 20, 1909, forming the newly named Wellington Avenue Congregational Church (now the Wellington Avenue U.C.C.).

<sup>31</sup> Nearly all the information related to Noble Elderkin's time in Utah (including the quotations in the following two paragraphs) closely follows the text of historical essays (*History of the Ogden Congregational Church*) written by Gordon K. Harrington and posted on the web site of the Ogden United Church of Christ, Congregational (<[www.ogdenucc.org](http://www.ogdenucc.org)>). Harrington is an historian, now retired from Weber State University, Ogden, Utah.

<sup>32</sup> Ogden was the name of a Hudson Bay Company trapper who had lived in the area in 1825.

related to lifestyle, politics and education<sup>33</sup>. The First Congregational Church, which had been founded in 1883, had a membership of 174 at the beginning of 1905, and had been without a full-time minister since October 1903.

Noble Elderkin threw himself into diverse activities when he arrived in Ogden. He rejuvenated programs for the youth group, men's club and choir. His sermons, perceived as interesting and noteworthy, were reprinted from time to time in the Ogden *Standard*. Elderkin invited speakers advocating controversial positions such as socialism and the concept that it was not necessary to be a church member to be a follower of Jesus; topics which drew large audiences. Elderkin also worked diligently for local reform.

With over sixty passenger trains arriving and departing each day, large numbers of transient passengers needed to be fed and entertained in the area around the train station. In addition to legitimate services, prostitution, illegal saloons, gambling and narcotics were available to the traveler. Elderkin and other reformers wanted to end these illegal activities and eliminate what they considered to be a root cause of many social problems, excessive use of alcohol<sup>34</sup>. Noble Elderkin supported the work of the national Anti-

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<sup>33</sup> Territorial schools were under funded and controlled by Mormon school boards. Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational denominations started separate school systems in Utah Territory. In 1879, the Congregational Minister's Union founded the New West Education Commission which developed during the next decade into the largest non-Mormon school system in Utah. The Ogden Academy, which opened in 1883, was among the schools founded by the New West Education Commission. Private protestant schools declined rapidly after Utah achieved statehood in 1896 and public schools were upgraded. The Ogden Academy (which had been renamed Gordon Academy following a \$10,000 gift from Nathaniel Gordon of Exeter, New Hampshire) ceased operation in 1896 and the building was leased to the Ogden city school district.

<sup>34</sup> Gordon Harrington in his previously cited history of the Ogden United Church of Christ quotes extensively from a Sermon Noble Elderkin gave December 9, 1907 discussing the historically heavy use of alcohol at Congregational Church functions. Among the examples given by Elderkin: consumption of one barrel of West India rum and five barrels of New England rum by congregational volunteers while building a New England meeting house in 1773; record of the brethren partaking liberally of the whiskey jug on September 5, 1810 in Farmington, Connecticut during a meeting to set up a missionary society; heavy consumption of alcohol at the installation of Dr. Leonard Bacon as minister over Central Congregational Church, New Haven Green in 1825; admonition by the Congregational Associations of Rhode Island and Connecticut in 1826 that the church which entertained the brethren should provide a liberal sideboard; statement to Elderkin by Artemus Haynes, minister of the United Church on the Green in New Haven, "...that his church still has the toddy stick which was used to mix the one thing then necessary at all ecclesiastical functions..."; statement by Lyman Beecher in 1817 that "...rum consecrates our baptisms, and our weddings, and our funerals...". Noble Elderkin, in his December 9, 1907 sermon, said that the attitude toward alcohol by the Congregational Church had changed, because "...the saloon costs too much. It gives us most of our criminals, paupers, insane. It brings poverty and pain, want and misery...".

Saloon League and the Women's Christian Temperance Union. In January 1908, Elderkin began a series of sermons which described illegal activities in Ogden and the corruption of police who were bribed to allow these activities to continue. His sermons were surprisingly detailed and, many felt, indiscreet. In October 1908, Elderkin was quick to praise the Mormon Church when it pledged to support prohibition legislation; praise which was unpopular given deep anti-Mormon feelings among Ogden's non-Mormon citizens. Elderkin conducted an ineffective "raid" of several gambling houses in Ogden which made him appear naïve. He helped organize a reform slate of candidates for the 1909 municipal election which did not attract many votes. An editorial in the *Ogden Standard* criticized Elderkin, asking "...Is not the Reverend Elderkin a good deal of a busy-body, with a greater love for mixing in politics than preaching the gospel and spreading the spirit of charity; and is he not a most inconsistent dabbler in things worldly?". By January 1910 there was open discontent in the First Congregational Church and some threatened to leave the Church "...unless the pastor abandon his pulpit talks on the social evils of the city...". Elderkin responded by saying that the "...courage of the average Christian here in Ogden ought to delight the men who love slime and adore scum...The gospel that hurts business, the gospel that assails political jobbery, the gospel that disturbs one's pleasure in indolent ease is not wanted in Ogden...". He went on to criticize ministers who "...maintained a dignified silence in the presence of monstrous injustice...giving the pews what the pews want. The pews demand silence...". On June 14, 1910, Noble Elderkin resigned from the First Congregational Church and announced that he had accepted a position as minister of Plymouth Congregational Church in Lawrence, Kansas. The *Standard* gave its impression of Noble Strong Elderkin on leaving Ogden as "...fighting real and imaginary foes. His crusades have been the promptings of a radical mind, of an uncompromising theorist, and over eager soul...sincere, but a zealot...who...believed that evil could be banished from the world by a sweep of the hand, and that goodness could be legislated...Ten years from now, Rev. Elderkin...may have developed that fine balance which will make him a leader of thought, a philosopher, a sage adviser – a really great man...".

Noble Elderkin's reform efforts, although not welcomed by many of his parishioners and other prominent citizens in Ogden, were very much in the spirit of other reform activities occurring at the time. In 1907, Walter Rauschenbusch published his remarkably influential book *Christianity and the Social Crisis* which outsold every other religious book for three years and helped define the theology of the Social Gospel movement. Rauschenbusch argued "...that it was society, rather than individual souls, that stood in need of redemption—that they should not think of Jesus as their *personal* savior. Jesus did not come to save you, but to teach that you and your neighbor, working together, can create a just society...He asked Christians to 'have faith enough to believe that...God saves not only the soul, but the whole of human life; that anything which serves to make men healthy, intelligent, happy and good is a service to the Father of men'...Rauschenbusch urged Christians to set aside hopes for eternal life (hopes that he himself does not seem to have shared) and to focus instead on the suffering being

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He went on to report that closing the saloons in Kansas City, Kansas decreased criminal prosecutions and saved the local government \$50,000 per year.

inflicted daily by the strong upon the weak...”.<sup>35</sup> The Social Gospel movement was most vital during the first four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (roughly the period of Noble Elderkin’s active ministry). Applying Christian ethics to society, followers of the Social Gospel movement championed causes such as social justice, pacifism, equal rights, temperance, labor unions, child labor reform, better schools, better housing and public health.

We know less about Noble Elderkin’s activities at Plymouth Congregational Church in Lawrence, Kansas than we do about his time in Ogden, Utah. During Elderkin’s ministry in Lawrence, a large brick parish house (attached to the existing 1870 Plymouth Church building) was planned, financed and constructed. The parish house was completed in 1916 (while Pilgrim’s building in Duluth was under construction) in the sixth year of Elderkin’s tenure at Plymouth.<sup>36</sup> He is also remembered for saving the stained glass windows in the 1870 Plymouth Church building. The windows, which had been made in England, were felt by many to make the interior of the solid walnut sanctuary with its red pew cushions too dark. Elderkin learned that Tiffany wanted to purchase the stained glass windows which were to be removed from Plymouth and told the congregation “...that if Tiffany wanted the windows at any price, the church had something that was priceless...”<sup>37</sup> Noble Elderkin took a public stand in Lawrence against American entry into the World War. His sermon of September 26, 1915, *Jesus was in Berlin, August 1, 1914*, must have generated quite a bit of discussion because it was published the following year.<sup>38</sup> In the sermon, Elderkin creates a parable which contrasts the moral qualities at the core of Jesus’ teachings with the unchristian actions required of those who participate in war and makes reference to theological support some find for war in the Bible (“I came not to send peace but a sword.”, Matthew 10:34). We do not know the response of the congregation to Elderkin’s pacifist views as patriotic fervor swept the nation, or whether controversy shortened his stay in Lawrence. He apparently had some involvement with students at the University of Kansas. It was reported that “...as an evidence of the esteem in which he was held in Lawrence, over one hundred students of the University of Kansas signed a petition of protest against his resignation”.<sup>39</sup>

In 1917, when Noble assumed the pulpit of the Second Congregational Church of Oak Park (Illinois) the Elderkin family moved into a comfortable single family home<sup>40</sup> in this idyllic Chicago suburb. The Elderkin’s new home was nine miles from Noble’s boyhood home in Chicago’s Lake View neighborhood and little more than a block from the

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<sup>35</sup> Richard Rorty [philosopher, distinguished professor (Princeton, Stanford, U. of Virginia), humanist and grandson of Walter Rauschenbusch], “Buds that never opened”, in Paul Raushenbush, ed, Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 2007), pp. 347-348.

<sup>36</sup> <[www.plymouthlawrence.com](http://www.plymouthlawrence.com)>

<sup>37</sup> Elfriede Fischer Rowe, *Wonderful Old Lawrence* (Lawrence, Kansas: The World Company, 1971), 130 pages.

<sup>38</sup> Noble Strong Elderkin, *Jesus was in Berlin, August 1, 1914* (Lawrence, Kansas: Bullock Printing Company, June 1916), 11 pages.

<sup>39</sup> Note in *Amherst Graduates Quarterly*, Volume VI, November 1916 – August 1917.

<sup>40</sup> 129 South Scoville Avenue, Oak Park, Illinois



handsome Second Congregational Church<sup>41</sup>. The year the Elderkins arrived (1917), Ernest Hemingway graduated from Oak Park and River Forest High School (which was across the street from the Second Congregational Church). Hemingway's seven bedroom family home<sup>42</sup>, as well as twenty-five homes and buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, were within walking distance of the Elderkin residence. Fourteen months after his arrival in Oak Park, Noble Elderkin was forced to resign as minister of the Second Congregational Church because of controversy surrounding his pacifist views and his opposition to American participation in World War I.<sup>43</sup> After his resignation, Noble Elderkin and his family continued to live in Oak Park. During the next two years, he held temporary positions with the Chicago Theological Seminary (field representative), Fellowship of Reconciliation (regional staff)<sup>44</sup> and Park Ridge Congregational Church<sup>45</sup>.

In addition to his work promoting pacifism, civil liberties and social reform, Elderkin maintained links with reforming political parties. Two weeks before Pilgrim's search committee formally announced his nomination to the congregation, Noble Strong Elderkin gave the invocation opening the national convention of what would become (later in the convention) the Farmer-Labor Party.<sup>46</sup> In July 1920, labor representatives, progressive republicans and socialists, originally meeting in Chicago as the Labor Party and the Committee of 48, agreed to unite as a new national party, the Farmer-Labor Party. The party's platform advocated: public ownership (nationalization) of natural resources, railroads and utilities; disarmament; full and equal civil and political rights for all regardless of sex or color; an end to private banking; an eight hour work-day and forty hour work-week; and guarantees of civil liberties.<sup>47</sup> Two additional goals of most of those present had been achieved, i.e., prohibition (18th Amendment, ratified January 16, 1919) and women's suffrage (19th Amendment, ratified August 18, 1920).

### *Noble Strong Elderkin Arrives at Pilgrim Church*

What does Noble Elderkin's selection say about about Pilgrim Church in 1920? The seven members of Pilgrim's search committee appear to have been conservative in the conduct of their personal lives, but we know little about their views on politics and social justice issues. We know more about the interests and attitudes of their wives from minutes of various women's organizations discussed below. Like members of the search

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<sup>41</sup> Second Congregational Church, subsequently renamed Pilgrim Congregational Church (U.C.C.), is located at 460 Lake Street, Oak Park, Illinois. The beautiful 1888 building is still in use.

<sup>42</sup> The house at 339 North Oak Park Avenue was owned by Ernest Hemingway's grandfather (and namesake), Ernest Hall.

<sup>43</sup> See footnote 21.

<sup>44</sup> See footnote 25.

<sup>45</sup> See footnote 19.

<sup>46</sup> "New political party came into existence today", *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, July 10, 1920, pages 1&5.

<sup>47</sup> There was strong sentiment at the convention to nominate Senator Robert M. LaFollette, Sr. of Wisconsin as their candidate for President, but LaFollette was not entirely comfortable with the radical reform advocated by the new party.

committee, Noble Elderkin tended to be formal and reserved in social situations. Reports from contemporaries suggest that he had some fine qualities. He was modest, genuinely nice and considerate. Educated at Amherst and Yale, he struck those who met him as thoughtful with serious ideas. Elderkin appears to have been popular with many leaders of the denomination. The search committee was aware (to some degree at least) of his history of activism, yet felt comfortable recommending Noble Elderkin to the congregation. All of which suggest that in 1920 Pilgrim was sympathetic to a reform minded and socially conscious minister.

The Elderkin family<sup>48</sup> arrived in Duluth September 15, 1920<sup>49</sup>, moving into the parsonage at 1131 East First Street.<sup>50</sup> Four days later, Noble Elderkin preached the Sunday sermon, *Give It Flesh – The Word Became Flesh*. By October 17, the Elderkins were settled enough to allow the following announcement to begin to be regularly printed in the bulletin:

Mr. and Mrs. Elderkin are at home Monday evenings.

Somewhat eccentric short announcements began appearing in the bulletin which suggest that Noble Elderkin had church growth on his mind from the time of his arrival.

Strangers are asked to come six times before arriving at final conclusions regarding Pilgrim Church. Certain estimates may be formed today. But those estimates can be corrected by longer contact.

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<sup>48</sup> See footnote 26.

<sup>49</sup> Less than two months after the congregation voted to ask him to come to Pilgrim.

<sup>50</sup> The parsonage (which was torn down the week of March 7, 2011) had been the home of William and Emile Cole before they built a more substantial brick house on the corner of 22<sup>nd</sup> Avenue East and First Street (2204 East First Street). When Pilgrim acquired the parsonage in 1909, it was located in one of Duluth's most fashionable neighborhoods (although families had started leaving the area to build new homes farther to the east). The Coles, who were members of Pilgrim Church, sold the house with terms favorable to Pilgrim. The Coles contributed \$1,000 of the purchase price (\$9,000.00). Ward Ames, Sr. negotiated the purchase and personally paid \$2,500 of the cost. Emile Cole held a note for the remaining \$5,500 (at 6% interest), which Pilgrim paid off at the rate of \$1,000 per year. In June 1926, the congregation sold the parsonage at 1131 East First Street for \$12,000.00 and purchased a new parsonage near the Church at 2426 East Fourth Street. The cost of the new parsonage was \$18,000.00 (of which \$5,000.00 was financed by five \$1,000.00 promissory notes at 6% interest). Prior to 1909 (during the ministry of Alexander Milne), Pilgrim's parsonage (now demolished) was located near the First Presbyterian Church at 312 East Third Street. Several other buildings served as the parsonage in the 1800's. Edward Noyes (Pilgrim's minister 1883-1894) lived at 214 First Avenue East and later at 116 East Third Street.

Pilgrim Church is not perfect. Some things about it you will not like. Those may be things in evidence today. There ought to be a little good about this kind of an institution. The better side may emerge next Sunday.

The low-key, somewhat quirky style of these announcements is typical of Noble Elderkin. The number of announcements in the Sunday bulletin noticeably increased after Elderkin's arrival.

### *Pilgrim Women's Activities and Missions*

In 1920, almost all organized activity at Pilgrim Church was supported in some way by the Ladies Union. Organized in the 1870's, the Ladies Union had, in many ways, been the essence of Pilgrim Church for decades. In the 1895 Annual Report, Pauline Patton, wife of Pilgrim's minister and president of the Ladies Union, indicated that "...The object of the Ladies Union is to promote the spiritual and social interests of the church, and to raise money for church and benevolent purposes...". In addition to hosting all social events, performing most of the charitable work undertaken by the Church, engaging in numerous fundraising activities throughout the year, maintaining the Church grounds and gardens, and decorating the sanctuary, the Ladies Union took responsibility for furnishing the new church building. At a special luncheon meeting on February 23, 1921, the Ladies Union changed its name to the Women's Assembly and adopted a new organizational plan. The Annual Report for 1921 (submitted by its President, Edith Cook Collins (2501 East Fifth Street)) summarizes the accomplishments of the Women's Assembly for that year (the list of their activities is so long it is somewhat tedious to read). Nine Assembly meetings and thirty additional formal meetings were held. Volunteer work was undertaken for the following organizations: Children's Home<sup>51</sup>; Poor Farm<sup>52</sup>; Bethel Home<sup>53</sup>; Nopeming Sanatorium; Industrial Home for Girls<sup>54</sup>; garments

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<sup>51</sup> Work for the Children's Home included darning stockings, sewing, preparing 38 work bags for Christmas (all fitted out with thread, needles, scissors, thimbles, etc.). The Duluth Home Society was founded in 1887. Sarah Roger Stearns was the leader of the movement to found the society which had broad support in the community. Judge Ozara Pierson Stearns and Judge Josiah Davis Ensign donated land to the Society for a Women and Children's Home at 1722 East Superior Street. Sarah and Ozara Stearns were active members of the Duluth Unitarian Society. Rose and Josiah Ensign were members of Pilgrim Church at the time the Home Society was founded (Josiah Ensign had been a member of Pilgrim's first Board of Trustees in 1871; the Ensigs later transfer their membership to the First Presbyterian Church). In 1904, the Society built a large Children's Home at 1515 East Fifth Street (the building still stands, although the Society moved to a new facility at 714 West College Street in 1956).

<sup>52</sup> The Women's Assembly provided books, magazines and a "jelly shower" for Poor Farm residents. The Poor Farm (owned by St. Louis County) was located on 260 acres adjacent to the present intersection of Rice Lake Road and Arrowhead Road (in an area now in part occupied by McCarthy Manor and the Chris Jensen Nursing Home). Arrowhead Road (originally platted as St. Marie Street) had not been built in 1920.

<sup>53</sup> The Bethel Rescue Home for Women and Children was established in 1902 by the Duluth Bethel Association, an organization whose development had been greatly

were made out of new materials were given to The Associated Charities; a complete layette was made for a needling Mother; clothes were sewn for Near East Relief Work (Red Cross); financial drives were undertaken for China Famine Relief, Near East Fund and St. Luke's Hospital<sup>55</sup>. The Women's Assembly conducted a Tea and May basket sale at the Light House for the Blind. The Assembly conducted four additional sales in 1921: food sale at Kelly-Duluth (May); flower sale at George A. Gray Department Store<sup>56</sup> (August); harvest sale of vegetables and flowers (September); and Christmas sale of fancy articles and food (December). The Women's Assembly hosted many social events and meetings in 1921: social hour following the annual Church meeting; Normal Glee Club; lecture by Dr. Homan; Carleton College Glee Club; Silver Tea in May; Parcel Post Party; picnic at Lester Park for women of the Finnish Congregational Church<sup>57</sup>; Sunday School and Church picnic at Lester Park; organ concert; Rally Day reception in September; Brotherhood Dinner for the Pilgrim's Boy Scout Troop 8; Christian Endeavor Society banquet; Girl Scout dinner for Pilgrim's Girl Scout Troop 1; Pilgrim's Fiftieth

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influenced by Charles Cotton Salter (Pilgrim's first minister; see *Pilgrim Congregational Church (U.C.C.): an annotated plan of the first floor with additional notes*). In 1916, the Bethel Rescue Home for Women and Children (later the Bethel Home for Girls) moved into a new building on the southeast corner of Ninth Street and 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue East. This is still standing but no longer owned by the Bethel. Jessie Hegardt, wife of Pilgrim's long-time treasurer (William Hegardt), was for many years Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Bethel Home.

<sup>54</sup> The Women's Assembly gave twelve Bibles and songbooks to the Industrial Home for Girls.

<sup>55</sup> The financial drive by the Women's Assembly supported St. Luke's campaign to finance a major new building. St. Luke's Hospital was founded by St. Paul's Episcopal Church in 1881. Edward Chester Congdon joined the Board of Directors of St. Luke's Hospital in 1919 and transformed the institution. He chaired a committee which proposed breaking the ties between St. Luke's Hospital and St. Paul's Episcopal Church. Following his committee's recommendation, St. Luke's Directors voted to end the association with St. Paul's in 1920, making the Hospital non-sectarian. St. Luke's physical plant at the time consisted of a small building on the northeast corner of Ninth Avenue East and First Street (now replaced by a much larger building). Edward Congdon proposed a major building which would fill much of the block between Ninth and Tenth Avenue East along First Street (this building was build and is still the main component of the St. Luke's campus, housing radiology, the laboratory, surgery and intensive care units). Congdon tirelessly led a financial campaign to successfully raise \$1,000,000.00 for the new building. Although Edward Congdon's background was in the First Methodist Church and his wife Dorothy House's was in the First Presbyterian Church, they both became active members of Pilgrim Church.

<sup>56</sup> George A. Gray (2122 Woodland Avenue) and his family were long-time members of the Pilgrim Church community. The George A. Gray Department Store was a upscale store in downtown Duluth which would become (after George Gray's death) Wahl's Department Store.

<sup>57</sup> Pilgrim's work among the Finnish people in Northeastern Minnesota is discussed below in the main text.

Anniversary Dinner; banquet in honor of the cast of the Pilgrim Masque<sup>58</sup>; C. E. banquet for Christian Endeavor convention; Harvest Day Dinner; Brotherhood Dinner in honor of Oscar Mitchell; Luncheon for Kindergarten and Primary Teacher's Association; Inter-Church Council Dinner for all churches; and a formal Christmas luncheon for Ladies of the Church and their friends. In addition to all of these activities, the Women's Assembly: guaranteed the salary and overhead expenses of the Director of Religious Education for 1921; equipped dining room and kitchen so as to serve 300 people; cleaned up vacant lot east of the Church; sent Christmas gifts to Pilgrim's missionaries (Herbert Irwin<sup>59</sup> and Ray Phillips<sup>60</sup>); voted to finish chancel woodwork; and voted to finish the janitor's quarters in 1922 (providing, of course, that the Trustees of this church desire the quarters finished<sup>61</sup>).

The efficiency of the Women's Assembly was in part due to a high level of organization. The women of the Church were divided into twelve units, each of which was responsible for events occurring during one month of the year. The units comprising each quarter of the year were organized into four groups. Each group had at least one regularly scheduled meeting every month of the year. Each unit had a Director and each group had a Supervisor. There were twenty-five women in each unit and seventy-five women in each group. Thus, three hundred women had a specific period of responsibility for support of Church activities during the year. Giving direction to all this activity was a nine member Advisory Committee composed of four Supervisors and five executive officers. In addition to regular monthly meetings of each of its subdivisions, the Women's Assembly held a formal meeting of the entire organization most months of the year.

A great deal of communication was required to support this activity. Communication occurred in formal meetings, direct personal conversations and letters sent through the U.S. Mail. Communication via mail was fast, efficient, private and inexpensive. Mail boxes were abundant and usually was picked up several times during the day. Mail was delivered twice daily to personal residences.<sup>62</sup> A letter mailed in the morning might be delivered within the city the afternoon of the same day. It was unusual for mail to be delivered to an incorrect address. This was accomplished without computers, automated processing centers, zip codes, or personal vehicles for mail carriers. Postal carriers rode the streetcar (buses, after streetcars were discontinued in Duluth in the late 1930's) and

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<sup>58</sup> On December 16 & 17, 1920, Pilgrim produced a masque commemorating the tercentenary (1620-1920) of the arrival of the Pilgrims in North America (which is ironic because the masque was considered by some to be "...the highest art-form in England..." until theaters were closed by the Puritans). A large number of Pilgrim adults (and some younger members) participated in this elaborate event. Costumed and masked actors told the story of the Pilgrims in dialogue and pantomime.

<sup>59</sup> See discussion of Rev. Herbert M. Irwin below in the main text of this paper.

<sup>60</sup> See discussion of Rev. Ray E. Phillips below in the main text of this paper.

<sup>61</sup> Even though the Ladies Union and Women's Assembly assumed major responsibility for planning, executing and funding nearly all church activities (excepting religious services and religious education), they operated under the direction of the Board of Trustees.

<sup>62</sup> Twice daily mail delivery ended in most areas in the 1950's.

picked up mail at drop boxes throughout the city. On Thursday afternoon, February 17, 1921, Edith Collins mailed letters to 300 women of Pilgrim Church announcing an organizational meeting for the Women's Assembly. She asked her correspondents to R.S.V.P. by "...Saturday's afternoon mail—the 19th...". Custom and practical matters tended to discourage the use of the telephone for conversation. Not every home had a telephone. Those which did usually had only one device located in a public area of the house. Most telephones were on party lines, not private lines. Telephone calls were not dialed but had to be verbally placed through operators. Before the 1950's, Pilgrim Church directories included mailing addresses but not telephone numbers.

Pilgrim women also supported two other smaller organizations concerned with missionary activities, the Women's Missionary Society<sup>63</sup> and the Friends in Council. Minutes of missionary organizations at Pilgrim suggest that the members of these organizations were more concerned with the welfare and education of disadvantaged populations in the United States and abroad than they were with proselytizing. Membership in the Women's Missionary Society overlapped with that of the Women's Assembly. The Women's Missionary Society had monthly meetings where various topics related to local and world conditions were studied. The following topics were among those studied during the 1919 to 1921 period: social, religious and economic condition of women of the Orient; the Negro problem of the South; women and children in local industry; the Americanization of foreign born women; home missionary problems in Northern Minnesota; medical missions in foreign lands; and charitable and philanthropic institutions of Duluth. The Women's Missionary Society collected several offerings, most of the proceeds of which were sent to the Home and Foreign Mission Board. In addition, the Society sent clothing to a Negro school in Moorhead, Mississippi, bandages to Congregational hospitals in Puerto Rico, clothes to outfit a needy family in Northern Minnesota, and contributions to a scholarship fund at Fisk University.

The Friends in Council met monthly in the evening. Their mission was to aid in the missionary work of Pilgrim Church and to promote a social spirit among its members. The Friends in Council, with a membership primarily consisting of younger business and professional women, met once a month in the evening (unlike the Women's Assembly and Women's Missionary Society which met during the day). A meal was a part of each meeting. They were famous for their 35 cent suppers. Many members of the Friends in Council were teachers and librarians. A topic was studied at each meeting. The following were among those discussed during the 1919 to 1921 period: women in China; women in Japan; Serbian relief work; missionary conditions in Turkey; Americanization work in Duluth; child welfare in St. Louis County; unemployment in Duluth and the work of Goodwill Industries; state factory inspection, labor laws and child welfare in Minnesota; International Institute in Duluth and its work among foreigners; educational work among employees of the Glass Block and other large stores; and the work of the YWCA in Duluth<sup>64</sup>. The Friends in Council also regularly gave small amounts of money

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<sup>63</sup> Organized in early 1872, the Women's Missionary Society was Pilgrim's oldest internal organization.

<sup>64</sup> Pilgrim Church has many links to the YWCA and its predecessor organization, the Women's Auxiliary to the YMCA. Many Pilgrim women have been leaders of these

to a variety of charities. One of their favorite charities was the Schauffler Missionary Training School in Cleveland, Ohio which trained "...young women of American and foreign origin for religious, educational and social leadership...". This Congregational School eventually became part of the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology (which moved to Vanderbilt University in 1966).

From time to time there was well-modulated friction between these women's organizations and the all male Board of Trustees. Actions of the women's groups had to be consistent with overall direction given by the Board of Trustees. Occasionally the Trustees asserted their authority.<sup>65</sup> Underlying discontent is occasionally noted in

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organizations, including Alice Howe who was the first President of the Woman's Auxiliary to the YMCA. Leadership has been provided over the years by other Pilgrim women, including Ella Roe, Jennie Moody, Dr. Mary McCoy, Grace Tenant Adams, Ina Duncan, Sarah Sergeant McGonagle and her daughter Mary McGonagle Tibbets Roberts. Pilgrim women were especially active in formation of the YWCA's International Institute and the Raleigh Street Neighborhood House (which was facilitated by Mary Baldwin Bertram Richmond who grew up in Pilgrim Church and was one-time head of the Social Services Department at New York's Postgraduate Hospital (now incorporated into New York University School of Medicine). The YWCA Friendly Club for employed girls was started by Bessie McRae Phillips, Mother of Pilgrim's missionary Ray Phillips. Another important figure in the early development of the YWCA was Frances A. Woodbridge (1841-1915), who like her husband William Starkweather Woodbridge (1844-1911) was one of the sixteen charter members of Pilgrim Church (Frances Woodbridge was also a mainstay of the Ladies Library Association, located in the Grand Opera House which stood across Superior Street from the present site of the Medical Arts Building. This subscription library served the community between 1880 and 1889. On January 28, 1889, the Grand Opera House burned to the ground (a fire which occurred nine days before the opening celebration in Pilgrim's second building on Lake Avenue and Second Street, and which also destroyed the first home of the Kitchi Gammi Club). Following the fire, leaders of the Ladies Library Association approached Duluth Mayor John Sutphin with insurance money from the destroyed library and asked him to open a public library in Duluth. A Public Library Board, consisting entirely of men, was appointed and the first Duluth Public Library reading room opened in the old Masonic Temple Building on August 1, 1890.).

<sup>65</sup> For example, at their regular monthly meeting on March 26, 1919, the Ladies Union voted to give the proceeds from the Easter offering (which they traditionally distributed) to Rev. Ray Phillips in Johannesburg, South Africa. Five days later Oscar Mitchell, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, wrote a letter to Niva Piper Carlson (829 Woodland Avenue), President of the Ladies Union, which said in part "...the Church Trustees met yesterday afternoon, and...unanimously agreed that the offering not be used...for Mr. Phillips...and the whole amount sent to Rev. Mr. Irwin, our missionary representative in Turkey...If for any reason the ladies prefer not to use the collection for this purpose, it will be entirely agreeable to the Trustees for the ladies to...use all or part of it for the piano fund, or...for a furnishing fund...the Trustees have consulted a number of the men who assume large responsibility in connection with the financial affairs of the Church, and they are all unanimous in approval of this action...". Mr. Mitchell explained that the Trustees felt that Mr. Irwin's needs were substantial and that

annual reports. For example, in her report for 1920, Sarah McGonagle, President of the Women's Missionary Society, wrote "...The officers of this society feel strongly that the cause of missions is not advanced by the budget system as used in our church this year...". Eva Kimball had discussed this issue in her 1919 Missionary Committee report.<sup>66</sup> "...During the past few years, this church has had to raise large sums of money in order to build the new church home and in order to meet the increased expenditures occasioned thereby...Our benevolent contributions have not been increased in proportion [to our overall increasing budget]...". However, everyone recognized the effectiveness of the Trustees at managing church finances. Annual reports by the Trustees were generally brief and positive. Typical is the 1920 report: "Your Trustees beg leave to submit the following report: The Church owns, free of all encumbrances, its Church property and Parsonage and comes to the annual meeting will all bills paid...The condition of the Church property is first class and the business affairs of the Church are in excellent condition..."

### *Sustained Early 20th Century Mission Projects*

For a number years in the late 19th and early 20th century, the Women's Missionary Society paid the salary of Emily Susan Hartwell (1859-1951) who was a Congregational Missionary (1884-1937) in Fuzhou (Foochow), Fujian (Fukien), China. Emily Hartwell was the daughter of Charles<sup>67</sup> and Lucy Stearns Hartwell who arrived in Fuzhou in 1853 and remained there the rest of their lives. Charles Hartwell became expert in the Fuzhou dialect, writing a number of books in Chinese as well as *[A] Dictionary of the Foochow Dialect*. Charles Hartwell, who was involved in many activities, was also President of Foochow College. Emily Hartwell graduated (1883) from Wheaton College (Norton, Massachusetts) and returned to Fuzhou. During her long tenure in China, Emily Hartwell is credited with establishing a number of institutions, including a girl's school, an orphanage (Christian Fukien Industrial Homes), Union Kindergarten Training School, and the Christian Women's Industrial Institute. When the Manchu Dynasty fell in 1912, Emily Hartwell successfully raised funds to establish goat farms in the hills around Fuzhou for starving Manchu soldiers who had lost all other means of support. Over the

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the Church had a primary obligation to him. The Ladies Union held a special meeting on April 6 at which they voted to rescind their original motion and to give the Easter offering proceeds to Rev. Irwin.

<sup>66</sup> She noted that Church benevolent expenditures in 1919 were \$2,220.00 (including \$2,000.00 for Rev. Irwin). This does not include contributions by the Women's Missionary Society, Women's Assembly and other organizations. Total Church expenditures (excluding expenditures from the benevolent fund) were \$11,714.41 in 1919. Thus, benevolent expenditures were about 16% of total church expenditures. Eva Kimball noted that in 1918, average Congregational benevolent expenditures nationally were 23.4% of total church expenditures. Some churches gave dramatically more. In 1918 Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis "...gave nearly four times as much for benevolence as for home expenses..."

<sup>67</sup> Charles Hartwell was born in Lincoln, Massachusetts in 1825 and died in Fuzhou in 1905. He received undergraduate and graduate training at Amherst College (M.A., 1852).



years, the Fuzhou Congregational mission grew to include many buildings including schools, church, hospital, missionary housing and other structures. Hartwell House in Fuzhou was said to contain the Woodridge Memorial Staircase and Duluth Reception Room with photographs of Frances Woodbridge, William Starkweather Woodbridge, Sarah Stewart and Ward Ames, Sr. hanging on its walls. Emily Hartwell was forced to leave Fuzhou in 1937 at the start of the Sino-Japanese War. She died in Oberlin, Ohio in 1951 at the age of 92.

In January 1907, Pilgrim Church began supporting<sup>68</sup> Herbert M. Irwin, his wife Genevieve and their two children. The Irwins were a missionary family who had been in Talas, Turkey since 1903. Talas, where the main missionary compound was located, was about five miles from the much larger town of Ceasarea. The association between the Irwins and Pilgrim was nurtured by Pilgrim's former minister, Cornelius Patton, who had become Secretary of the American board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1904. The Irwins were Canadians. Herbert received his post-secondary education at Manitoba University, Winnipeg and Knox College, Toronto. Genevieve was born in Delaware but educated at Manitoba College and the Manitoba Provincial Normal School. Herbert Irwin was minister of a church at Sapperton, British Columbia before he was appointed to the position in Ceasarea by the American Board. In 1903, the Ceasarea mission station (which had been established in 1854) was staffed by four male and six female missionaries. The mission station supported a large hospital, a kindergarten, two boarding schools, thirty village schools with 1,701 pupils, and thirty-five churches with a total membership of 5,439. The Ceasarea mission served an area of forty thousand square miles. Although much of the mission work was with Greek and Armenian students, some activities included large numbers of Moslems. Herbert Irwin started and sustained for many years a Boy's Club in Talas. At Sunday evening meetings of the Boy's Club, he projected lantern slides (many of which depicted Biblical stories) onto a vellum screen. This was very popular, particularly with Moslem boys. Irwin reported in 1914 that audiences (averaging 250) for these shows were almost wholly Moslem. The same year, local authorities told Irwin that showing these pictures was contrary to the "Sheriat" (sacred law of the Ottoman Empire). Irwin had been showing lantern slides for years without government objections. Eventually, Irwin was allowed to continue his Boy's Club meetings with lantern slide presentations. After the start of World War I in the Summer of 1914, the Turkish government appropriated some of the mission buildings and drafted a Turkish physician working with the mission into the army. The mission hospital was forced to close. Word of the Armenian genocide first appeared in the Pilgrim Sunday bulletin on November 7, 1915:

...Armenians from all of the stations in the Eastern Turkey Mission and from Trebizond, Marsovan, Sivas and Bardizag in the Western Mission have been in large part removed. Many of the men have been killed and the women and children deported towards Arabia. Talas and Ceasarea were spared longer than some of the places further east. Word comes under date of September 5, that deportations from

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<sup>68</sup> In 1907, Pilgrim agreed to pay \$440.00/year to support of Mr. Irwin and \$88.00/year to support the Irwin's two children. This amount increased over the years.

there were beginning. Dr. Hoover had been to Talas from Constantinople to perform an operation on Mrs. Irwin which was wholly successful. He has returned to Constantinople.

The operation performed on Genevieve Irwin was an appendectomy. When she developed symptoms of appendicitis, there was said to be no doctor within hundreds of miles of Ceasarea. Travel required a special permit which was almost impossible to obtain. Ailing Genevieve Irwin was kept in an ice pack for ten days until the Dr. Hoover (a physician who had previously staffed the mission hospital in Talas) was able to travel to Talas from Constantinople (where he was working for the Red Cross). In 1916, all of the remaining mission buildings (except the building housing the Irwins and other missionaries) were seized by the Caucasus army. Most of the missionaries and their families were able to leave Turkey early in the War. The Irwins were forced to stay in Turkey, because, as Canadians, they were considered British subjects and citizens of an enemy combatant. Communication with the outside world was difficult. All letters passed through the hands of several censors, and many letters were lost. The letters which were delivered were delayed from 2 1/2 to 7 months. In 1917, the Irwins left the interior and settled "...in Bebek [a prosperous Constantinople neighborhood] on the Bosphorus, just under the shadow of Robert College..."<sup>69</sup> While in Constantinople, Herbert Irwin taught at Robert College. After the War, the Irwins were able to leave Constantinople on furlough, July 11, 1919. They had a prolonged stay in Canada and the United States which included several visits to Pilgrim Church. Back in North America, Irwin was bitterly critical of the Turkish government and its treatment of the Armenian and Greek populations with which he worked.<sup>70</sup> Following the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922), there was a massive forced population exchange of ethnic Greeks and Turks in 1923. The Irwins returned to Talas in early 1922, but moved to Athens (Old Phaleron) in late 1923 to work among Armenian refugees in Greece. Herbert Irwin died in Athens on November 18, 1927. Pilgrim Church supported the Irwin family without interruption from 1907 to 1927.

Pilgrim Church began outreach work among Finnish people in Northern Minnesota on April 1, 1916 when it assumed part of the support of Katri Toivonen. Miss Katri Toivonen was sent to Duluth from New York by the Congregational Home Missionary Society to do Christian work among Finnish people. The work begun by Katri Toivonen was continued by others. In 1926, Pilgrim loaned money to a Finnish congregation in Eveleth. Pilgrim's active support of the Finnish ministry extended over decades, most noticeably through support of the ordained couple, Rev. James E. and Rev. Lillian Tuomisto. The Tuomistos came to the already established Cloquet Finnish Congregational Church in June 1927. They accomplished many things over the next 17 years. Between 1930 and 1932, the men of the Cloquet Finnish Congregational Church

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<sup>69</sup> Robert College was founded in 1863 by Christopher Robert and Cyrus Hamlin, a Congregational missionary. Robert College continues today as a co-educational, independent and highly selective boarding school for high school students.

<sup>70</sup> Herbert Irwin was quoted in the *Duluth News-Tribune* (January 21, 1921) as saying: "Wherever the Turk rules, desolation, intolerance, oppression and ignorance are sure to be found - but ignorance is the cause of it all".

(many of whom were unemployed) build a new brick church building on Carlton Avenue at 12 Street South. Church services and Sunday school classes were well attended. James Tuomisto also conducted regularly scheduled Congregational services in chapels around the region (Stoney Brook, Sawyer and Arthyde). The importance of Pilgrim to the Finnish congregation is evident in Rev. Tuomisto's account (written late in his life) of problems at the Cloquet church caused by people who wanted to replace him with an unemployed Finnish minister from Hibbing. "...wild stories [were] told by these unscrupulous people, especially the stories brought to the Pilgrim Congregational Church...Undoubtedly some of the lady members of that great church have believed these stories but the men and especially the ministers have been able to see the gold through the dusty surface. With all fairness we must say that it has been the Pilgrim Congregational Church of Duluth, through its financial help and moral support, which has made it possible for this pioneer mission work to make definite progress and go forward these last thirty years...". Rev. Victor Holopainen replaced James Tuomisto as the active minister in Cloquet and was supported by Pilgrim between 1944 and the beginning of 1951. Rev. James Tuovisto returned to this position from 1951 to 1955. For a period of time in the 1940's, Pilgrim Church also supported the work of Rev. Johannes Vaananen in Virginia, Minnesota.

Ray Edward Phillips (1889-1967) was a Congregational missionary in Johannesburg, South Africa for forty years (1918-1958). He was born in Hawthorne, Wisconsin<sup>71</sup>, but grew up in Duluth<sup>72</sup>. Ray Phillips regularly attended Pilgrim Church with his parents from the time he was a toddler. He was active in Pilgrim's Sunday School and youth programs. He studied at Carleton College and the Yale School of Religion. While at Yale (August 4, 1915), Ray Phillips married Carleton alumna Dora Larson (1892-1967) of Clarksfield, Minnesota. Ray Phillips was ordained in Pilgrim Church on Monday evening, September 24, 1917. This was the first service of any kind held in the new Fourth Street building. The service was held in the Sunday School Room (known now as Salter Hall), because the auditorium was not finished. Pilgrim's former minister, Cornelius Patton, had known Phillips as a youth at Pilgrim. As Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Patton was instrumental in arranging for Ray Phillips to be commissioned as a missionary to Johannesburg. At the time Phillips was commissioned, Pilgrim Church did not feel that it could take responsibility for his support, because of the commitment it already had to Herbert Irwin in Turkey.<sup>73</sup> Ray and Dora Phillips visited Johannesburg for the first time September 1918. Riding an Indian motorcycle with a side car, they went to the top of a hill. "...From these high points could be seen...the mountains of tailings...which mark the location of the mines. Looking wither east or west, as far as we could see, there were smoke stacks belching smoke. We had already become...accustomed to the roar like the

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<sup>71</sup> September 3, 1889.

<sup>72</sup> The 1892 Pilgrim Directory lists his address as 819 Fourth Avenue East. The 1905 Pilgrim Directory gives his address as 801 Fourth Avenue East. In 1914, the Pilgrim Directory indicates that his mailing address was 524 Fourth Avenue East.

<sup>73</sup> A happy solution was eventually found in 1920 when the First Congregational Church of Holyoke, Massachusetts, whose minister (Charles Thorp) had recently left Pilgrim, assumed responsibility for Ray Phillips' support.

sound of distant thunder which is heard everywhere and never stops: the sound of the stamp mills crushing the rock at the mines...We have been sent here...to start social work among these thousands...".<sup>74</sup> Ray Phillips reported in a letter to Pilgrim dated February 17, 1919, that he, Dora and their son John had settled in their new home in Johannesburg.<sup>75</sup> Ray and Dora Phillips both soon became fluent speakers of the Zulu language. Ray Phillips was responsible for directing Christian social service work for the American (Congregational) Zulu Mission. Over the next four decades, Phillips undertook a remarkable number of projects.

In 1924, Ray Phillips started the Bantu Men's Social Centre in Johannesburg. The meeting rooms, library, theater, boxing club, social and cultural programs of the Social Centre became a focal point in the lives of many young South Africans who would later have great influence in the country. Walter Sisulu (1912-2003), a leader of the anti-apartheid movement and the African National Congress, attended night school at the Social Centre. The wedding reception for Walter Sisulu and Albertina Metetiwe was held at the Social Centre. Oliver Tambo (1917-1993), another member of the Bantu Men's Social Centre, succeeded Walter Sisulu as Secretary General of the African National Congress in 1955 after Sisulu was forced to resign by the South African government. Nelson Mandela, iconic leader of Umkhomto we Sizwe ("Spear of the Nation"; armed wing of the African National Congress) and later the first democratically elected President of South Africa, was a member of the Bantu Men's Social Centre. In 1944, Mandela, Sisulu and Tambo founded the Youth League of the African National Congress at the Bantu Men's Social Centre.

The Bantu Men's Social Centre was typical of Ray Phillips' work in Johannesburg. Dr. C. T. Loram, a member of the Native Affairs Commission, Union of South Africa, gave the following impression of Ray Phillips and his work in the Foreword to Ray Phillips book *The Bantu are Coming: Phases of South Africa's Race Problem* (New York: Richard R. Smith, Inc., 1930, 238 pages). "...Young, virile, athletic, of magnetic personality and tireless energy, endowed with a keen sense of humour he is a fine example of the new Christian missionary who is spreading the social gospel...Mr Phillips sensed at once the need for social work, particularly among the young native "intellectuals",...the group of well-educated, discontented, striving black men who, whether they deserve it or not, are bound to become leaders of their people. These young men, ready tools for the scheming agitator, Mr. Phillips has bound to him with ties of personal friendship, and in so doing has saved them from foolish and hasty action, and South Africa so far from any serious outbreak of racial trouble. With his rare gift of persuasiveness and his obvious sincerity, Mr. Phillips has secured the support of the business men of Johannesburg as well as of his fellow-missionaries and others interested in the welfare of the natives...". Ray Phillips seems to have urged reform with a modulated voice tolerated by the South African government. Yet Phillips was critical of the country's government and white institutions. "...The answer of South Africa to the

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<sup>74</sup> Excerpts from a letter by Ray Phillips to Pilgrim Church printed in the Church bulletin, October 6, 1918. At the time 300,000 men worked in the Witwaterstrand gold-fields around Johannesburg.

<sup>75</sup> Phillips' address was 45 Crown Street, Jeppes, Johannesburg, South Africa.

natural rise of the native in industry is the Colour Bar – repression. The answer to low wages and bad conditions is not more wages, better conditions, but a Bill aimed to stifle agitators who are voicing the resulting discontent...The answer to the inevitable desire on the part of natives for representation as citizens in their own land is met, not by a gradual extension of the franchise from the Cape to the other provinces by means of an educational and property test, but by the framing of Bills looking to the elimination of the Cape native vote and the provision, in its stead, of a Council system for natives which will satisfy nobody but the politician who cannot imagine himself ever sitting in Parliament with a black man...”.<sup>76</sup> Dr. Loram closed his comments in the Foreword to *The Bantu are Coming* with the following telling comment, “While dissociating myself entirely from the political opinions expressed herein, I, as a South African, commend to my fellow-countrymen this burning appeal for a change of heart in the consideration of our grave and difficult problem”.

Ray Phillips engaged in a spectrum of additional activities. In 1929, he helped found the South African Institute for Race Relations which continues today as one of the oldest liberal institutions in South Africa. He also helped found the Johannesburg Coordinating Council for Non-European Welfare Organization. In 1929 and 1931, Phillips gave a course of lectures on sexual hygiene to school teachers and principals which were well received. He published material from these lectures in a pamphlet, *African Youth and Sexual Hygiene* (Durban: The American Board Mission, 1935), 45 pages. Ray Phillips conducted sociology research during his first two decades in Johannesburg for which he was awarded (1937) a Ph.D. in sociology by Yale University. The following year Phillips published a scholarly book based on his thesis, *The Bantu in the City: a study of cultural adjustment in the Witwaterstrand* (Lovedale, South Africa: The Lovedale Press, 1938), 452 pages. This book, filled with statistics and detailed analysis of the changing social situation of the Bantu in urban areas, is still referenced. In 1941, Ray Phillips became the founding Director of the Jan H. Hofmeyr School of Social Work, which was the first institution to train black social workers in South Africa.<sup>77</sup> In 1947, Phillips wrote a 71 page monograph, *The Crux of the Race Problem – Are Black People Human Beings?* (Students’ Christian Association of South Africa). Following retirement from the mission field in 1958, Ray and Dora Phillips traveled extensively in the United States, speaking on conditions in South Africa and against apartheid. He was moderator of the general council of Congregational Christian Churches (1958-1961). In 1964, the Phillipses settled at Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California where they both died in 1967.

Ray Phillips maintained a close relationship with Pilgrim Church throughout his life. From the time of his ordination at Pilgrim in 1917, reports of Phillips’ activities were routinely printed in the Church bulletin and he visited Pilgrim on his trips to the United States. In September 1929 (after the death of Herbert Irwin), Ray Phillips officially became Pilgrim’s missionary representative abroad. Regular support for Ray and Dora

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<sup>76</sup> Phillips, *Bantu are Coming*, 211-212.

<sup>77</sup> Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, controversial but influential South African politician, social worker and former president of the African National Congress Women’s League, was a graduate of the Jan H. Hofmeyr School of Social Work.

Phillips continued without interruption until their retirement in 1958.<sup>78</sup> On the occasion of Pilgrim's 75th anniversary (January 18, 1946), Phillips wrote, "Pilgrim Church has been 'home' to me. Ever since the old days, in the former building on Second Street, when I used to sit more or less properly between my father and mother in a forward pew a little to one side, Pilgrim friends and Pilgrim pastors have figured prominently in my life and thinking. And, since marriage, this has been true of my wife as well...It is still a deep joy to meet many of those who were contemporaries of my parents...The presence of these, together with a number of their children, and groups of college classmates who are making Duluth their home, makes each visit to Pilgrim Church a memorable occasion for us..."

### *Pilgrim's 50th Anniversary and Noble Elderkin's Recognition Ceremony*

Pilgrim's 50th anniversary (January 18, 1921) was long anticipated, and a series of formal celebrations were held between January 16 and January 25. The celebration was inaugurated with the January 16 Sunday morning service.<sup>79</sup> During this service the Abbie

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<sup>78</sup> The value of what seems like rather modest levels of support in today's dollars is illustrated by comparison with the advertised cost of attending a meeting of the International Council of Congregational Churches in Bournemouth, England, July 1-8, 1930. The September 29, 1929 Pilgrim Bulletin urged people to attend ("Any flickering desire to go should be fanned in flame." - N.S.E.). The cost of round trip passage on the White Star Line "Adriatic", sailing from New York City on June 14, was \$175 tourist class and \$279 cabin class. American Congregationalists had arranged an optional nine day tour of England and Scotland for an all-inclusive price of \$100.

<sup>79</sup> Services at Pilgrim in the 1920's would seem familiar to church members today. Services generally had the following format: organ prelude; call to worship; hymn sung by the congregation; invocation; the Lord's Prayer with choral response; responsive reading from the hymnal; anthem sung by the choir; scripture reading; prayer and choir response; hymn sung by the congregation; announcements; offering with offertory music; anthem sung by the choir; sermon; hymn sung by the congregation; benediction with choir response; and organ postlude. However, there were some differences. The program for the service generally filled less than one page of the church bulletin (space was not taken up by responsive readings which were limited to one per service taken from the hymnal). The bulletin, which was professionally printed in crisp, sharply defined type, contained more news and announcements than our present bulletin, serving much of the function that *Pilgrim News* does today. The bulletins did not have preprinted covers. The covers were attractive and unique to our church. Although the service was in some ways more formal than our service today, it was associated with less ritual and symbolism. The service was not interrupted to provide a time for members of the congregation to greet each other. There was no children's moment in the service (a separate children's service was conducted in the Sunday School Room at the same time as the main service in the sanctuary). Pilgrim members valued a religious tradition which they knew was different from Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Episcopal and other traditions. Pilgrim, in the reformed Protestant tradition, avoided the use of religious symbols and many of the liturgical customs of other Christian churches. Pilgrim's minister did not wear vestments or a clerical robe. Noble Elderkin and his predecessors wore a business

Goodale Hoopes<sup>80</sup> Tiffany window was unveiled, and seventy-nine individuals became new members of Pilgrim Church.<sup>81</sup> Communion was celebrated using Pilgrim's present communion set for the first time. On Monday, January 17, the Pilgrim Brotherhood<sup>82</sup> hosted a dinner<sup>83</sup> for Pilgrim's Boy Scout Troop 8<sup>84</sup>.

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suit in the pulpit. There was no cross in the sanctuary (until a cross was placed on the communion table by Royal Shepard in the early 1970's). Communion was celebrated four times a year (always in the pew; Pilgrim did not begin monthly communion until the 1990's). Pilgrim did not hold a Christmas Eve service (although it did have an annual Christmas pageant). Celebratory Christmas and Easter Services were held on Sunday. Advent was not mentioned in the Sunday bulletin and Lent did not receive the attention it does at Pilgrim today.

<sup>80</sup> Abbie Goodale Hoopes (1861-1920), "for many years a beloved and active member of Pilgrim Church", died of pneumonia at the Hotel Barstow, San Diego, California on February 12, 1920. She was, for a number of years, a teacher in the public schools of Duluth. She and her husband Townsend W. Hoopes, a prosperous real estate developer, lived in Hunter's Park at 2206 Woodland Avenue. The Hoopes window was given by Townsend Hoopes in Abbie's memory.

<sup>81</sup> A special effort was made to enroll an unusually large number of new members during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. It was initially hoped that fifty new members would join the Church on January 16, but recruitment efforts exceeded everyone's expectation. Between 1921 and 1928, 597 individuals joined Pilgrim, an average of about 75 new members each year. During the decade of the 1920's, church membership grew 63%, increasing from 556 (1920) to 906 (1930).

<sup>82</sup> The Pilgrim Brotherhood, or Men's Club, met infrequently. Many years it did not meet at all. Some years it met only once. Its meetings almost always included a dinner which was prepared and served by the Women's Assembly (Ladies' Union). This was the case for the two Brotherhood meetings in 1921 (Boy Scout dinner in January and dinner honoring Oscar Mitchell in September).

<sup>83</sup> Speakers at the Brotherhood Boy Scout dinner included: C. W. Haddon ("Boy Scouts of America"), Director of Scout work in Duluth; R. A. Kent ("The Conservation of Boyhood"), Superintendent of Duluth Public Schools; and O. J. Larson ("Welcome to Our Boys"), United States Congressman elect. Oscar John Larson (1871-1957) and his wife Dorothy Roberts Larson were long-time members of Pilgrim Church. Dorothy Larson frequently sang at services. Oscar Larson was born to a Swedish speaking family in Oulu, Finland which immigrated to North America in 1876. Oscar Larson grew up in Northern Michigan and graduated (1891) from the Northern Indiana Normal School and Business Institute (since 1900 Valparaiso College). In 1894, Oscar Larson graduated from the University of Michigan Law School (Ann Arbor) and began practicing Law in Calumet, Michigan. He was Prosecuting Attorney for Houghton County (1899-1904). The Larsons moved to Duluth in 1907 where Oscar practiced Law. He was elected (as a Republican) to Minnesota's Eighth Congressional Seat in 1920 and re-elected in 1922. He chose not to run for Congress in 1924 and returned to practice law full-time in Duluth. The Larson's daughter (Ruth) was the mother of Robert Eaton (1929-2009).

<sup>84</sup> Pilgrim's Boy Scout Troop 8, was officially registered with the Boy Scouts of America on August 13, 1917. The first Scout Master of the troop was W. C. Allen. William Clinton and Marguerite Allen (1830 Jefferson Street) joined Pilgrim Church in 1913. By

Pilgrim's Fiftieth Annual Meeting was held Tuesday, January 18.<sup>85</sup> At the meeting, those present elected church officers and committee members by indicating their choices on a printed ballot. For several positions (Trustee, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer and Clerk), the number of nominees exactly equaled the number of open positions. However, the number of nominees exceeded the number of openings for Deacons (8 nominees for 4 positions), Standing Committee (4 nominees for 2 positions), Bulletin Editors (4 nominees for 2 positions), Music Committee (6 nominees for 3 positions), Missionary Committee (6 nominees for 3 positions), Lookout Committee (6 nominees for 3 positions), Inter-church Council Representatives (14 nominees for 8 positions), and Ushers (35 nominees for 16 positions). J. P. Johnson<sup>86</sup>, who was for many years Chairman of the Board of Ushers, presented the following report at the meeting, which is reproduced in toto here because of its charm and insight.

To the Noble Chief and Friends of Pilgrim Congregational Church.

I have been asked as Chairman of the Board of Ushers to make a report for the past church year which I am very glad to do, although there is little to say along these lines.

I, however, wish to say that this part of the church work I have always enjoyed and have had the hearty support of those assigned to do this work with me. It has been most satisfactory and pleasant to me and hope so to those of the Pilgrim Church whom we have served.

This part of the church work may not seem very important to its members but I believe, and have tried to have those with me feel, that the courteous welcome and attendance of the usher to those they serve, especially the timid stranger who comes to our door, goes far to making the atmosphere of the church that of cordial welcome to everyone. I believe it rests with the usher to make the first impression of the real welcome our pastor ever is giving out from the pulpit and wherever he is found and it is our privilege to fill our place in the program to make Pilgrim Church a place where every one feels a warm welcome.

Sixteen ushers have been elected by the church each year since I have been in charge and have been truly loyal and always on hand for duty. These sixteen have been divided into squads of four for each quarter and it has worked out so far as I

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1922 the Allens had moved to Ardmore, Pennsylvania, a "Main Line" suburb of Philadelphia. Troop 8 had 17 members in 1920 and 40 in 1923.

<sup>85</sup> Prior to 1981, when it was moved to May, the Annual Meeting was held on the anniversary of Pilgrim's formal organization (January 18, 1871).

<sup>86</sup> John Perkins Johnson and his wife Catherine (Kate) Johnson were born in New England in the early 1850's. They came to Duluth when it was a small settlement and were among the original sixteen charter members of Pilgrim Church on January 18, 1871. John worked in real estate and eventually became the long-standing St. Louis County Clerk of Court. They lived for many years at 1113 East Superior Street.



know very satisfactorily. Any of us not assigned to certain time have always been willing to help when requested and to accept suggestions for the betterment of the service.

In these progressive days, perhaps it would not be out of place to suggest the trying out of the required number of women for this work.

Trusting the newly elected list of ushers will do their very best in this branch of God's service.

Submitted,

J. P. Johnson

The Ladies' Union hosted a dinner for Pilgrim's Girl Scouts and their mothers on Wednesday, January 19.<sup>87</sup> The following day, the Women's Missionary Society and the Friends in Council assisted with the Thursday evening service<sup>88</sup> at which Herbert Irwin spoke on "The Missionary Enterprise and Problems of the Near East". On Friday evening, the Christian Endeavor Society of Pilgrim Church held an anniversary rally,

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<sup>87</sup> Pilgrim's Girl Scout Troop 1 was organized on October 16, 1917 with Florence Wade as Captain. This was the first Girl Scout troop in Duluth. Miss Florence Wade, who joined Pilgrim in 1912, was the daughter of Bert (Executive Director of the Duluth YMCA) and Ella Wade. Pilgrim's Girl Scout troop had 26 members in 1922.

<sup>88</sup> Dorothy (Mrs. Oscar) Larson sang a solo and Grace Tennant Adams read the scripture lesson. Charles Edward (1867-1936) and Grace Tennant Adams joined Pilgrim in 1901 and 1903 respectively. Charles was born in Boston, but moved with his family as a child to western New York State and then to the Dakota Territory. He attended Fargo College (Congregational), Princeton University and the University of Minnesota. He graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1900, after which he moved to Duluth and began a general law practice. He married Grace Mabel Tennant (daughter of George H. Tennant, Minneapolis) in 1902. From 1915 until the time of his death in 1936, Charles Adams was a member of the Minnesota Senate. As President pro tem of the Senate, Adams served as acting Lieutenant Governor between 1929 and 1931 (after Lieutenant Governor William Nolan was elected to the U. S. House of Representatives in a special election). Charles and Grace lived at 2833 North Hawthorne Road (2833 East Eighth Street after Eighth Street was extended to meet Hawthorne Road) with their three children (John, Elizabeth (Elizabeth Hale after her marriage to Lloyd (Joseph Lloyd) Hale, 8/4/1928), and Mary). John (Amherst, '29; University of Minnesota (Electrical Engineering), '32) remained in Duluth and was active in Pilgrim Church until his death in 1991. Elizabeth and Lloyd settled in the Twin Cities where Lloyd eventually became president of the G. H. Tennant Company (their son Roger would serve as Tennant president (1976-1998) and as a major fundraiser for Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis); another son, Charles Adams Hale, became a distinguished Latin American historian).

and on Saturday each of the Church School Departments<sup>89</sup> held a rally at different times during the day.

A number of visiting clergymen participated in services on Sunday, January 23, and the service Monday evening recognizing Noble Strong Elderkin as minister of Pilgrim Church. Pilgrim's former (1883-1894) minister Edward MacArthur Noyes<sup>90</sup> delivered the sermon ("Perfecting the Past") at the January 23 Sunday morning service. Cornelius Patton<sup>91</sup>, Pilgrim's minister 1895-1898, delivered the sermon ("The Spirit of the Apostles in the Modern Church") at the 8:00 p.m. Sunday evening service. Noyes, Patton and Herbert Irwin all participated in each of the Sunday services. In addition, Rev. Jeremiah Kimball<sup>92</sup>, who was a charter member of Pilgrim Church, gave the benediction at the morning service. Noble Elderkin did not participate in the January 23 services. All visiting clergy took part in the service recognizing Noble Elderkin as Pilgrim's minister. Ozora Stearns Davis<sup>93</sup>, president of the Chicago Theological Seminary, gave the sermon ("The Changeless Message in Changing Accent") at the installation service. Well-spoken Albert Baldwin<sup>94</sup> gave the formal greeting of Pilgrim Church at the service.

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<sup>89</sup> The Church School had four departments for young people: Beginners (ages 5 and 6); Primary (ages 7 and 8); Junior (ages 9,10 and 11); and Intermediate (ages 12, 13 and 14). We do not have detailed enrollment figures for 1921, but in 1923 enrollment was as follows: 42 Beginners; 78 Primary; 77 Junior; and 107 Intermediate (Senior). The students were taught by 30 Church School teachers. In addition, 80 children were on the Cradle Roll (children younger than 5 years) which was separate from the Church School.

<sup>90</sup> See footnote 18.

<sup>91</sup> See footnote 11.

<sup>92</sup> Jeremiah Kimball (1841-1926) was born in Kittery, Maine. He was the son of a Congregational minister. He attended academies at Franklin, New Hampshire and Fryeburg, Maine. He served (1864-1865) in Company E First Volunteer regiment of New Hampshire during the Civil War. Jeremiah Kimball and his wife, Nancy Hazen Kimball, arrived in Duluth in 1869. The Kimballs were two of sixteen original charter members of Pilgrim Church in 1871. In 1880, Jeremiah Kimball moved to Huron, Dakota Territory as a missionary of the American Sunday School Union where he organized Sunday Schools for ten years. He was ordained a Congregational minister in 1891 and began working in South Dakota under the Congregational Home Missionary Society. In 1894, Kimball became minister of Hope Congregational Church in Superior, Wisconsin. Subsequently, he served churches in Tamarack, Aitkin and West Duluth. In the latter part of his life, Jeremiah Kimball, with his beard and distinguished bearing, was a familiar and well-liked personality at Pilgrim. He served as a deacon several times (1871-1874, 1875-1882 and 1922-1925). In January 1925, Kimball was given the honor of being elected deacon for life.

<sup>93</sup> See footnote 10.

<sup>94</sup> See footnote 29 of *Building in the Promised Land*.

Celebrations ended with a Fiftieth Anniversary Dinner Tuesday evening, January 25. This was hosted, after considerable preparation<sup>95</sup>, by the Ladies' Union which had hosted a formal dinner for different church organizations six of the previous eight days. The Ladies' Union was able to create seating for 404 using the main basement social room, scout room and adjacent classroom<sup>96</sup>. Seating was not available for everyone who wanted to attend.<sup>97</sup> The evening began with a reception at 6:00 p.m. followed by dinner<sup>98</sup>. Speakers for the after-dinner program and living charter members<sup>99</sup> sat at a round table on the stage. The program for the evening consisted of a series of talks ("toasts").<sup>100</sup> Oscar Mitchell was the "Toastmaster". The *Duluth Herald* (January 23, 1921) reported that "...One of the most entertaining speeches of the evening was given by Mrs. E. J. Collins who paid tribute to Mrs. Elderkin. 'There has been too much praise of our pastor altogether. The credit belongs entirely to Mrs. Elderkin for bringing him up properly. She also accused the men of the congregation of assuming too much credit for the success of the anniversary celebration...the women carried it all out...'"<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Planning included detailed drawings of table placement with specified seating. The planning committee created multiple typewritten pages covering every aspect of the evening, including detailed discussions of the route which would be taken by those carrying food and dirty dishes. Everyone working was assigned a very specific task. Twenty-eight women worked on decorations for the evening. Thirty-two hostesses served the food. Twenty couples served as official hosts of the reception preceding dinner.

<sup>96</sup> The scout room and adjacent classroom, which have been altered by remodeling, were located in the northeast corner of the basement in an area now occupied by the east basement entrance hall (there was no east basement door (handicapped entrance) before 1996) and cloakroom. Six long tables were placed in the basement social (fellowship) hall perpendicular to the stage (providing seating for 356). A large round table was placed the scout room and additional tables were placed in the adjacent classroom (providing seating for 48).

<sup>97</sup> Tickets (\$.50) could not be purchased directly. Those wanting tickets had to submit an application for tickets. In general, tickets were not distributed to those who were not church members or who were under 18 years of age.

<sup>98</sup> The dinner menu: grapefruit with cherry; chicken pie with gravy and mashed potatoes, celery and jelly; vanilla ice cream ("50" in orange cream in center of each serving); birthday cakes with yellow candles, yellow candies and coffee.

<sup>99</sup> Surviving charter members on January 25, 1921: Jeremiah Kimball (see footnote 92); Nancy Kimball; J. Perkins Johnson (see footnote 86); Catherine Cochrane Johnson; and Maria V. Salter (widow of Pilgrim's first minister, Charles Cotton Salter).

<sup>100</sup> Speakers included: Jeremiah Kimball and J. P. Johnson ("Our Remote Past"); Eleanor Pinneo Dunning and Russell Duncan ("Our Immediate Past"); Herbert M. Irwin and Everett Leshner (Superintendent, Congregational Conference of Minnesota; "Our Neighbors"); Ella Roe ("Our Heritage"); Edward M. Noyes ("Our Church"); and Noble Elderkin ("Our Future").

<sup>101</sup> Edith Cook Collins must have been a very organized and focused woman. She was the last President of the Ladies Union and the first President of the Women's Assembly. As President of the Ladies Union she oversaw elaborate 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations at Pilgrim (although she noted that most of the planning for this event had been done by

## *Farewell*

Noble Elderkin would spend a decade as Pilgrim's minister. The record available to us suggests that he had the affection and respect of the congregation throughout his tenure. Accounts of several of Noble Elderkin's early (somewhat political) sermons at Pilgrim were carried in Duluth newspapers.<sup>102</sup> However, the record of Noble Elderkin for most

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others before her election). In addition, Edith appears to have been the driving force behind reorganization of the Ladies Union as the Woman's Assembly; a complex process affecting every woman in the church. Born in New York, she married Edwin James Collins in 1906. Edwin Collins (1875-1956) was born in Greenland, Michigan (at the base of the Keweenaw Peninsula) into a mining family. As a young man, he served in the Spanish-American War. He graduated in 1903 from the Michigan College of Mines (now Michigan Technological University) and went to work for the for the Calumet and Arizona Copper Company which had been founded by his uncles (James and Thomas H. Hoatson). Edwin eventually became superintendent of Hoatson mining operations in Brisbee, Arizona and Tonopah, Nevada. Edwin and Edith built a house in Tonopah. After their first child (Emmons) was born (1907), Edith insisted that they move from the isolated mining town to Duluth where she had grown up (born in New York, Edith's adolescent years were spent in Duluth with her mother Sarah, stepfather Fred Hargreaves (a lawyer, LL.B (Cornell, '89)) and brother Joseph on Astabula Heights at 513 East Third Street). After leaving his uncles' employ, Edwin Collins opened an office in Duluth as an independent mining engineer. This required him to travel to evaluate mining properties around North America. Edith and Edwin Collins lived at 2501 East Fifth Street with their three sons (Emmons left for Cornell in 1923) and Edwin's mother. In 1926, the Collins family moved to Calumet, Michigan where Edwin worked as a Director of the Calumet and Arizona Copper Company, eventually helping negotiate sale of the company to Phelps Dodge in 1931. Edith and Edwin moved to Berkeley, California after World War II (much biographical information on Edwin J. Collins was found in an article by Eric Nordberg in *Michigan Tech Magazine* (Fall 2007)).

<sup>102</sup> One of these related to a sermon Noble Elderkin delivered at Pilgrim February 13, 1921. Samuel Sidney McClure, influential muckraking journalist and magazine publisher, had spoken in Duluth the week before on "World Problems". Elderkin called McClure's doctrine at direct variance with Christian principles ("Un-Christian is comment given McClure sermon: Dr. Elderkin scores creed advanced by noted magazine publisher", *Duluth News-Tribune*, February 14, 1921). The *News-Tribune* quotes Noble Elderkin as saying "...Our distinguished lecturer, S. S. McClure, preached with rare effectiveness the gospel of belonging to the number one class...I would like to plead for a world organized around other principles than those of dog eat dog. A world in which we should seek to discover ways of getting on together during the few years we are here...". Elderkin's sermon the following week (February, 28, 1921) was also covered in the *News-Tribune* ("Dr. Elderkin pleads for tolerance in passing judgment on others"). Speaking on divisions in Christianity, Elderkin said "...We have divided ourselves into camps almost endlessly...one's difficulties could be lessened if those who differed would be patient and generous in their judgments. Instead, the world has had to hear many harsh things said by one group against another...we seem to think that the only way to show that we really believe what we say we believe is to hate the person who holds a different

of his time at Pilgrim suggests that he focussed his attention on activities related to his church and denomination. There is no evidence of controversy similar to that associated with his ministry in the past. There is evidence that he continued to hold liberal and tolerant views.<sup>103</sup> In February 1929, Noble Elderkin was given the opportunity to succeed Cornelius Patton as Home Secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Patton had been Home Secretary, one of the most important positions in the Congregational Church, for twenty-five years. Elderkin declined the position, but the next year he accepted an offer to become minister of the First Congregational Church of Akron, Ohio.

The Board of Trustees called a special meeting of the congregation for Sunday, July 20, 1930 to receive the resignation of Noble Elderkin.<sup>104</sup> Elderkin began his resignation letter with the following words.

For almost ten years I have served as your minister.

I need not say that for me these have been exceedingly happy years.

And because they have been so happy, it is not easy to take the step which will bring them to a close.

In accepting Noble Elderkin's resignation, the congregation passed a resolution which said in part.<sup>105</sup>

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notion...Take, if you will, the matter of Christianity and war...Christianity...professes to love the methods of peace, but Christians have most bitterly hated and persecuted those sects which have clung to their philosophy of peace in time of war..."

<sup>103</sup> Based on scattered positions and comments throughout his years at Pilgrim. It is also noted that he is named (p. 138) as a member of the "communist organized and controlled" Committee on Militarism in Education in the 1934 book by Elizabeth Kirkpatrick Dilling, *The Red Network: A Who's Who of Radicalism for Patriots* (Noble Elderkin is in good company; among others listed in the book as communist sympathizers are Eleanor Roosevelt, Mahatma Gandhi and Sigmund Freud).

<sup>104</sup> In response to Elderkin's resignation, the trustees would propose a different process for selection of pulpit (search) committee members than was used in 1920 when the trustees and deacons selected all seven members of the search committee. Their 1930 proposal was presented and adopted at a special meeting of the congregation on August 24. Under this proposal, one member of the pulpit committee was appointed by each of the following: Board of Deacons; Board of Trustees; Women's Assembly; Women's Missionary Society; and Committee on Religious Education. Five additional members of the pulpit committee were chosen by a committee of five individuals selected at the special church meeting of August 24.

<sup>105</sup> The resolution was written by Oscar Larson (see footnote 83), Grace Adams (see footnote 88) and Henry William Nichols (1870-1937). Henry Nichols lived with his wife (Gertrude), daughter (Charlotte) and 92 year old mother (Annette) at 2141 Woodland Avenue. Henry and Gertrude had joined Pilgrim Church in 1906, the year of their marriage. Henry owned the North Land Coal Company.

That while this is perhaps not the proper occasion for the enumeration and appraisal of the many achievements of Dr. Elderkin's ministry..., we cannot refrain from saying briefly that it is the sense of the congregation that we contemplate with deep and genuine sorrow the ending of a ministry which had been so fruitful in every activity of the Church.

Through his exceptional executive ability and his unfailing tact, he has organized our congregation into an harmonious and effective working body.

...

To Dr. Elderkin we say in sincerity and in truth that wherever his ministry may take him, he will be followed by our esteem and love.

Noble Elderkin conducted his last Sunday service at Pilgrim on September 28, 1930. The following telegram was sent by the Deacons of Pilgrim Church on September 27.

Edmund Burroughs, Church Clerk  
1206 Sunset Drive  
Akron, Ohio

Will you please have the following read in your church tomorrow morning:

To the members of the First Congregational Church, Akron, Ohio: As this reaches you Dr. Elderkin will be preaching his last sermon as our pastor. As he goes to you we commend him and his family to your fellowship and loving care. With confidence we assure you that you will find in him more than you expect. You cannot begin to realize as yet the great good fortune that awaits you in his ministry. For ten years he has grown larger each year in the admiration and love of his people. His leadership has never failed. We are sure that we voice the sentiment of Pilgrim Congregational Church in saying that he leaves here a united and loyal membership, greatly grieved at his going, and wishing for him and for you the choicest blessings in years to come.

W. W. McMillan  
A. P. Barnes  
H. W. Nichols  
C. D. Stillman  
A. J. Zoerb

Albert Baldwin  
J. P. Johnson  
D. F. Pennie  
G. H. Winchester

Constituting all the Members of the Board of Deacons.