AN ANNIVERSARY

BY THE REV. FRANK FITT

Rapid Growth of Presbyterian Church During Past Ten Years; Many Attend the Service

"Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"-Psalm 90:12.

In the sight of Almighty God ten years is but a moment. For this church, now drawing towards it fifty-eighth year of unbroken service in this community, the last decade has been significant. For the one who has been pastor of the church the ten years, coming during the earlier and more formative phase of his professional experience, have meant more than can easily be expressed.

The Factor of Change

The most measurable factor bearing directly upon the Highland Park Presbyterian church during the last ten years has been the factor of change. A little less than one-third of the present active membership tripled its giving since 1918, from in 1918. Slightly more than twothirds have entered this fellowship curing the intervening years. Some tivities has increased. The Young of that group have been taken by taken on a deeper meaning for our before us at this hour. Gladly they gram. Among the entirely new their example, and we acknowledge religious education, a young people's our debt to them.

cal readjustment to the individual China. and society. Our dress, our very speech, our ways of thought and action, what we eat and what we drink, our work and play and love and worship, have been altered in this period of adaptation to the new. And the life of corporate spiritual strength, shared in such fashion that no one one group or nation, can remain uninfluenced by the passing of a decade, but it is very doubtful if within our entire history as a nation so many profound and far-reaching changes have come to our American life as in the last ten years, changes which uproot worthy traditions and challenge the wisdom of the ages and disturb our most settled conventions.

This fact of change, not only in the personnel of our membership, but in the forces and movements which vitally matter in the development of all that makes up human personality, is at once a stimulus and a very baffling problem to one responsible for proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. To be sure, the more fundamental, un derlying part of life has not changed. We have the same God the same revelation in Jesus Christ. We read the same Bible, sing the same hymns and worship in the same church. Sin persists, and also Calvary. The Angel of Death still beckons, and Easter reminds us of our great conviction. Childhood retains its charm and age its wisdom and respect. We insist that character shall occupy its primary place. First things remain first in all that really matters: but there is need for re-interpretation. The formative spiritual experience came for most of us in those distant days when the telephone was a curiosity and no one had seen an automobile. It was a quieter and less disturbing world that we knew then. How different for the more recent generation! Life in its jectives suggest themselves. The first glaring realities comes upon them with a quick rush. They face new issues, new hopes, new fears. Can they find the secret of Christ's redemptive message? We help them ately south of our present building. towards their discovery as we our- Three years ago we reached the limit selves express the abundant life of of our physical equipment for our

The Factor of Growth tionship to the church. It is very store-room which has been parti- pastorate it meant a rather sudder easy to allow the official roll to in- tioned with screens. Further growth and heavy responsibility. Inevitably

ceptive than truthful. Under this tain the numbers we have been able faulty motive so much as inexperstringent regulation our church now to gather. With the very large num- icnce. There have been many things for the first time since it was founded bers of families almost certain to for which to thank God. There also in 1871 will report this year a mem- come to Highland Park within the have been occasions demanding inhundred. This includes, of course, a of whom we may reasonably expect cost in the stuff of one's roul. That

In some respects this growth of numbers should be cause for rejoicing. From the point of view of the pastor it involves certain handicaps. Ten years ago it was possible to visit all the homes of the parish regularly each year and know the members of each family intimately. That is no longer possible to the same degree It means the working out of new methods of approach between pastor and people during the coming year.

The financial budgets of the church have shown the same proportionate increase. The local treasurer will report at the annual meeting in few weeks about double the sum reported ten years ago. There has been an advance also in our benevolence giving, but not to the same degree. In this connection special mention should be made of our Woman's Missionary Union which has almost were connected with this fellowship eleven hundred dollars to nearly three thousand.

The number of our organized acof the group who welcomed the pas- People's Society was re-created after tor ten years ago have moved away several years of complete inactivity. to other communities. Forty-seven The mid-week prayer meeting has death. Their names and faces come fellowship as the church night progave themselves to the cause of developments have been the addition Christ in this place. We remember of a director of religious education their devotion, their sacrifice and as a fulltime worker, a committee on council, a thriving adult Bible class, The factor of change has also been a young people's choir, a Camp Fire noticeable in the social currents af- group, and a Young Woman's Club. fecting the national and local at- Allied to these, although not directly mosphere in which the membership under the control of our church, are of this church have carried on their two troops of Boy Rangers and one work and thought. There is only troop of Boy Scouts. The other subtime to summarize in a few phrases sidiary organizations, the Dorcas Sothe immense panorama of the years ciety, the Presbyterian Guild and the in which the World War has be- Woman's Missionary Union, have inqueathed its heritage and from the creased their membership and carry immediate shadow of which we are an enlarged program. On several only now beginning to emerge. Con- occasions during the last ten years sider the significance for all of us the Dorcas Society has raised conof such words as these: the League siderable sums of money for the of Nations, the Ku Klux Klan, Day- physical improvement of parish ton, Tenn., radio, jazz, prohibition, house and manse. Within recent bootlegger, the Mississippi flood, years our church has taken over a Lindbergh, flapper, crime wave, mass | large responsibility in the work of production, the Washington Disarm- Laird House on the north-west side ament Conference, behaviourism. of Chicago. This work balances our These are just a few words chosen at responsibility in the foreign mission random which suggest some of the field, the work of the Rev. and Mrs. many facts and forces bringing radi- Kepler Van Evera at Hangchow.

It is difficult to say anything defin-

ite regarding the growth of our church in what is far more impor- | time and energy. In any properly tant than mere numbers or finances or organization, namely, its inner its daily expression through its membership of the mystery and power of the Grace of God. Perhaps the pastor is the last one to utter any judgment on that phase of the work of our church. Moreover, it is doubtful if there is any certain method of measurement. But we can ask ourselves some searching questions. Does our vision of God in Christ grow larger from year to year? Do we give to the point of sacrifice in time and thought and money? Do we provide leadership and support for all that is good in our community? Do we offer a glad welcome to the stranger within our gates? Are we loyal to the implications of the Gospel of Christ? We live in a wellto-do town, a very prosperous place, in which riches and culture and the opportunities of travel and leisure exist in far larger proportion than the average community. We possess street after street lined with expensive homes. There are five golf clubs inside our city limits. Does this have a deadening effect upon our souls, bringing some of us perilously close to a forgetful attitude towards God? Or does it confront us as a challenge, a chance to interpret the power of Christ amid plenty rather than poverty, amid strength rather than weakness? We must face those questions sincerely as Christians who dwell in Highland Park.

Our Present and Future Needs

When we make an analysis of our present and future needs certain obof these is a substantial addition to our parish house, costing at least one hundred and fifty thousand dollars and occupying our property immedifaith and discipleship in this new day. | church school and since that time it has been impossible to increase our Another important factor which attendance despite the fact that the seems quite definite in the retrop- membership and attendance at the spect of ten years is that of growth. | regular Sunday morning service have The population of the community has increased. Every department of the sonal note that needs to be said on increased steadily during that period church school is cramped and for such an occasion as this. Some of and the membership and attendance some years the Junior Department the happiest years of boyhood were of our church reflect the increase. has had to carry on under physical spent in this church and community. In general our numbers are just limitations extremely disconcerting In this place marriage has come and about double in 1928 what they were to an effective morale. The manse is parenthood and some deep and abidin 1918. In some instances the in- occupied on Sunday mornings by a ing friendships, all infinitely precicrease is more than that; in other class of boys. Another class meets ous. In this place, too, was found instances less. During the present in the pastor's study and another in the chief task less than three years pastorate there has been a very reso- the director's office. There are classes after leaving the theological seminlute attempt year by year to cut meeting in the parish house kitchen thy. For the church it was a somedown the membership roll to include and serving room. There are three what daring and generous experonly those who have an active rela- classes meeting in an underground iment. For the one who assumed the

dicate a number which is more de- is impossible and it is difficult to re- | there were blunders, not blu ple away at school and college and tion to our problem, namely, an addi- can be no easy or altogether happy some others who can seldom or never tion to the present parish house. The parish in the Kingdom of God. W appear at our gatherings. Actually pastor cannot make this decision. The Christians advance in growth only four hundred members in Highland official channels. If such an enterprise is undertaken it will mean a very large and significant responsibility, but one which our church needs and which will undoubtedly bear a blessing.

> Another need confronting us is the rapid development of our community. Within the last ten years Highland Park has enlarged its geographical limits until it covers a wider area than any other city along the North Shore. Evanston, with a lesser area. has more than sixty thousand people. With our new sub-divisions, our new streets and our new plans for city improvement it seems clear that we shall have a steady and rapid growth for some time to come. How shall we meet this? There are always a few who lose heart as they face the changing conditions in the constituency of a church. It is no longer the church of their parents or their own childhood and they feel that the old values have departed with the passing of a former day. This is a natural protest, excusable in people of a certain type of temperament, but it is a most useless attitude as changing conditions confront us. So far we have not developed any sure method of adopting into our fellowship the new arrivals. In former years, partly through our own lack of approach, we created among certain groups in this community a there is late frosts. tradition of exclusiveness which was extremely damaging. That tradiour community grows and as we culti- be large. vate the genuine enthusiasm of the friendly spirit it will disappear. But this is not a need which the pastor can meet alone. It is a special charge upon every member to help in the creation of the irresistible atmosphere of goodwill.

Allied to this is another need not altogether easy to describe. Perhaps it could be put in briefest terms by saying that we require a larger degree of initiative among the members in working out expressions of discipleship which build the spirit of the church. The tendency of our time among the Protestant churches is to centralize altogether too much responsibility in the pastor until he loses his primary function in the multiplicity of his tasks as a jack-ofall-trades to his parish. The consequence is that in his efforts to make his contribution at too many points he fails to make any vital contribution at all. The longer a pastor remains in a parish the more these unnecessary extras come to consume his organized religious group the power person, and certainly not the pastor, is esential to the working of the whole. Our church has the organization. What it lacks in too many instances is the initiative to proceed. A very welcome example of the more constructive vision is provided by one of our women's organizations which, for a term of several years, has been steadily working out with increasing usefulness a dramatic presentation annually. This is a form of creative expression full of promise. There is no reason why this should not continue as a permanent activity in our

church program. Perhaps our chief weakness as a church lies in our failure thus far to create a distinctive men's work. In the strict sense of the term we have no such organization. Twenty-one, men serve on the official boards and about twenty-five render praise worthy service in our church school. About half a dozen act as ushers. The only other work performed by our men is at the time of our annual financial canvass and occupies a very limited number for about a couple of hours. More than twothirds of our male membership have no direct channel of activity related to the church. This seems to be one of the peculiar difficulties of a suburban church which recruits its male constituency mainly among those who find their means of livelihood and most absorbing pursuits in a metropolis miles away from the locality in which their wives and children live. At any rate it is one of our problems. Is there any relation between our need for more adequate educational facilities in our parish house and our need for organized men's work? Could the men of our church gather in a responsible fashion behind the project which added physical equipment would offer? Perhaps we can solve a twofold problem by a single method of attack.

The Purely Personal Note

There is little of the purely per-

THE PERSON NAMED IN TAXABLE

bership somewhat in excess of five next ten years, a certain proportion ward struggle and exacting high considerable number of young peo- for our parish, there is only one solu- perhaps, is as it should be, for there it is doubtful if on any Sunday dur- membership must work out the solu- in the test and trial of our faith and ing the year there are as many as tion through the regularly appointed we always find that the way of adventure is marked by a blood-stained trail. For pastor and people the process is the same. But there is thankfulness and no regret, a resolute joy and no complaint, that these last ten years have been passed in the service of this church and commun-They have been given in honesty of spirit and purpose. They have been marked by earnest activity of mind and heart. The pastor is very conscious and appreciative of his unpayable obligation to the people this parish. His chief hope is that the years have added something to the sum total of that Divine Kingdom which is without boundaries and which no man can measure.

Sermon preached by the Reverend Frank Fitt at the Highland Park Fresbyterian church, Highland Park, Illinois, on Sunday morning, March 18, 1928, on the tenth anniversary of his assuming the pastorate.

BEGIN ALREADY ON PEACH BUD PROPHEC

Reports received from fruit experts indicate peach buds in the Centralia district and other sections of southern Illinois suffered but little injury from the recent severe weather. Indications are the crop of 1928 will be a bumper one, unless

Apple and pear buds are said not to have suffered any damage whattion has by no means disappeared. As ever, with indications both crops will

STYLE NOTES FROM HUP EVANSTON SHOP

Although there are an endless variety of smart ensembles for Spring wear, these two set forth here will

give the general style trend: With a suit of gray as the basis wear a shirt either of solid green or green stripings and figures on a white ground, cravat of the same color, hose to match with contrasting clocking or jaquard figures, black shoes, small shaped curl brim green hat and tweed topcoat. The entire brings out the vogue for green to good advantage.

For a combination with a tan suit, a tan shirt with closely set stripes is good, cravat of figured orange, hose in a heather mixture, tan shoes, tan snap brim felt, and tan topcoat.

The most pronounced change this Spring in Hats is for the higher tapered crown and narrow curl brim. with green the outstanding shade. In shirts, blue and green will be strong favorites. The collars smaller with shorter points. In hose for the more subdued colorings with novel elocking.

The conservative man will favor the two button suit with notched lapels—and trousers slightly narrower at the bottom.

The man who blew hot to warm his hands and cold to cool his soup had nothing on the candidate who is personally dry and politically wet .-Boston Herald.

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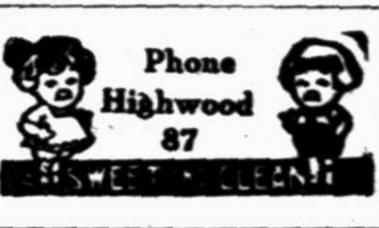
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