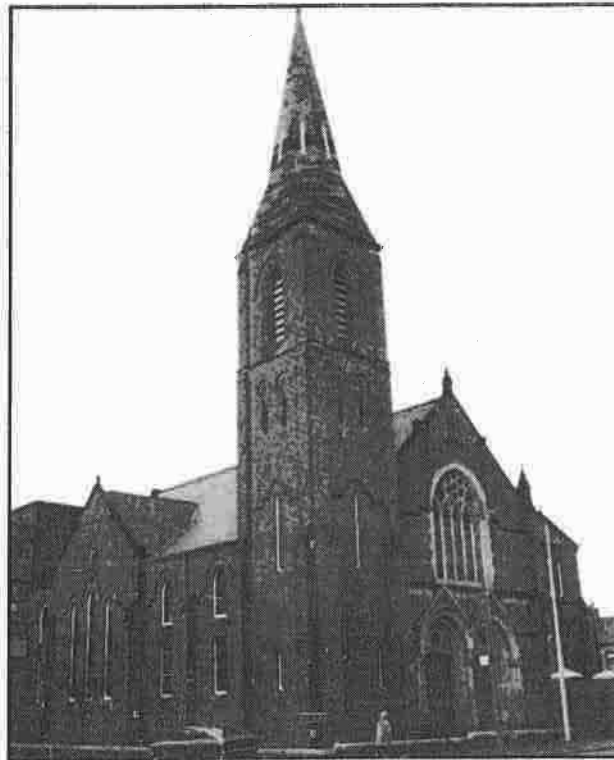


McQUISTON MEMORIAL
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



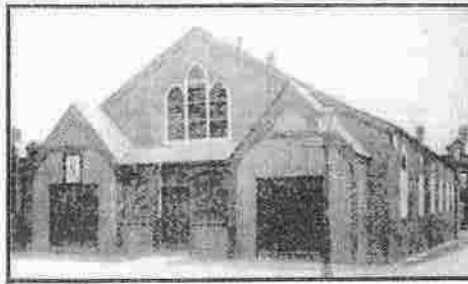
1892 — 1982

CHAPTER I

The story of McQuiston Memorial congregation begins away back in the year 1892. At that time the district of Willowfield was growing rapidly. Green fields were being converted into streets and houses, for many people had started migrating from the quiet hamlets of the surrounding counties into the city hoping to improve the prospects and future hopes of their respective families.

A duty, therefore, devolved upon the Church Extension Committee of the Belfast Presbytery to make provision for the growing spiritual needs of the district. These new hopeful home-makers needed to be catered for, welcomed and kept in touch with the Church of their fathers. Hence the founding of Willowfield Presbyterian Church, later to be known as the W. J. McQuiston Memorial.

The building in which McQuiston Memorial started was known as the Iron Church. The opening services were held on Sunday, 24th April, 1892, and were conducted by the Rev. H. M. Williamson, D.D., in the morning and the Rev. William Park, M.A., in the evening.



The Old Iron Church

At these opening services, the Rev. T R Ballantine, B.A., then a licentiate of the Belfast Presbytery, was introduced and entrusted with the task of gathering and forming a congregation. Mr. Ballantine commenced his ministry the following Sunday. He soon gathered around him a band of dedicated workers who supported him in every venture of faith and a beginning of great promise was initiated. Mr. Ballantine was a Co. Down man, born in 1864 at Ballynahinch. Later he came to live with his family in Belfast. He graduated in the old University of Ireland and his theological training was at Assembly's College.

McQuiston's first Sunday School was started by Mr. Ballantine on Sunday, 31st July, 1892. It began with 104 pupils and twelve teachers offered their very acceptable services. Mr. Ballantine acted as Superintendent for the first three months and then handed over this important office to Mr. Samuel Nicholl. Other organisations also came into being such as the Women's Working Association, A Young People's Bible Class and a Singing Class. In the short time of eight months 108 families had joined, and thus was considered sufficient to form a congregation. Accordingly, a petition was presented to the Belfast Presbytery asking that the congregation be taken under its care. With this step



Rev. T. R. Ballantine. B.A.

accomplished a unanimous call was made out to Mr. Ballantine asking him to become McQuiston's first minister and promising a stipend of £150. Having accepted the call Mr. Ballantine was ordained and appointed to the oversight of the congregation by the Presbytery of Belfast on the 7th March, 1893.

Under Mr. Ballantine's gifted and enthusiastic leadership the work prospered and the congregation grew. To organise the outreach of the congregation in those days it is interesting to notice that, in addition to the usual business committee, two other committees came into being—one a visiting committee to look after the new and unconnected families coming into the

district — the second was the reception committee whose special task was to look for and welcome new members and strangers to the services. In those days they believed that a welcoming handshake was just as important as a good sermon — and it still is in the work and witness of every congregation.

As the congregation grew the Iron Church gradually became congested and the difficulty of providing seating accommodation was increasing every Sunday, especially at the evening service. It, therefore, became apparent that if the Church was to meet the spiritual needs of the Willowfield district a more commodious and permanent building would have to be erected.

By this time 265 families had become connected with the church. The average Sunday collection amounted to £3 - 10 - 0. The total income from all sources for the year ending 31st March, 1894 amounted to £440 - 10 - 8. Salaries were small in those days and, consequently, the building of a new church was an almost terrifying undertaking. However, there was sufficient faith and courage to decide that a start should be made, and so a Building Fund was started to which everyone was invited to subscribe according to their means.

The estimated cost of a new church building, adequate to meet the growing demands of the area, was between five and six thousand pounds, a really vast sum in those days. But the young congregation faced the challenge with faith, vigour and enthusiasm. Just at the point when they needed encouragement most, a kindly Providence intervened. On Sunday, 4th March, 1894, after preaching on "Jehovah — Jireh", Mr. Ballantine concluded his sermon with the intimation that on the previous night he had received a communication from

Messrs Alexander Crawford, J.P. and Joseph Blair (executors of the W. J. McQuiston bequest) to the effect that they had considered the undertaking of the Willowfield congregation, and had decided to assist the congregation in the building of their new edifice to the extent of £2,938 - 4 - 6. After hearing this intimation the congregation, many with tears of joy in their eyes, rose spontaneously and sang the Doxology. So before building operations began the congregation was a little more than half-way to its target.

The building of the present church was started in January, 1896, Messrs Young & MacKenzie were the architects, and Mr. Robert Corry, the builder. The memorial stones (four in number) were laid on 28th March by the Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor of Belfast, W. J. Perrie, J.P.; Sir William McCammond, J.P., ex-Lord Mayor; Mr. Alex. Crawford, J.P. and Mrs. Wilson, Maryville. The church was opened for public worship on Sunday, 27th February, 1897, by the Rev. W. J. McCaughan. Crowded congregations attended both morning and evening services, many being unable to gain admission. The church is situated in a commanding position (known at one time as Windmill Hill) on the Castlereagh Road, and its lofty spire is now an ecclesiastical landmark of our city. It is capable of providing seating accommodation for over eleven hundred people. The total cost of erection was £5,500. Some months after the new church's opening for public worship the old Iron Church, which had housed the beginnings of McQuiston Memorial, was removed to the vicinity of the Ravenhill Road by the Church Extension Committee. In its new location it again housed the beginnings of another congregation known today as Ravenhill Presbyterian Church. Because of its removal, suitable accommodation was now needed for the various meetings and mid-week activities which go to make up the life and witness of a growing church.

After prayerful consideration, the congregation decided to embark upon the erecting of the first storey of a lecture hall on the site of the old Iron Church. The plans of Mr. W. J. Roome, M.S.A. were accepted. These provided for a large hall for public meetings (known today as the Minor Hall), a minister's room, kitchen and office on one side — and a ladies' room and a committee room (later known as the Boys' Room and Choir Room) on the other side. The building contract was given to Mr. William Dowling at a cost of £2,200. The foundation stone was laid by the Rt. Hon. Thomas Sinclair, D.L., on the 14th January, 1899, and the first stage of the structure was completed and opened on the 1st May by the then Moderator of the General Assembly, the Very Rev. W. Beatty, D.D.

With feelings of gratitude to God, those responsible for the erection of the new hall had the joy of seeing their cherished dreams realised. Their great desire was to possess a building where the lambs of the flock might be properly shepherded, and to which young men and women, stepping out on the

highway of life, with all its vicissitudes, temptations and trials, might resort to in the evenings. Every week night young people could be seen flocking to the hall — it was the place of rendezvous for the Boys' Brigade, a singing class, a sewing class, the Band of Hope, the Gymnasium and the Guild.

It is worthy of note that the 19th Belfast Company of the Boys' Brigade was formally enrolled on the 13th December, 1899, the first captain being J. A. Kirkpatrick, with lieutenants John Bradford and W. P. Hall (later to become the Rev. Dr. W. P. Hall). In an incredibly short time the 19th attained to a prominent position in the Belfast Battalion.

The first Presbytery visitation of the congregation was on 7th November, 1899. After enquiring into all departments of the church's life and work the Presbytery drew up its findings. It expressed its immense pleasure at the progress the young congregation had made since its inception, and the many signs of health and vigour it displayed. One critical observation of the Presbytery which they felt it their duty to point out, was the comparatively small number of communicants on the Roll in proportion to the number of families. In spite of many ensuing efforts to counteract this trend, this characteristic has been more or less true down through the years of McQuiston history. The Presbytery also recommended that immediate steps be taken to appoint the congregation's first Kirk Session, which took place on 24th February, 1905, when the following were solemnly ordained by the Presbytery — Messrs W. H. Byers, Thomas Cumming, J. W. A. Hamilton, James Morrison, M.D., Samuel Nicholl, Andrew M. Porter, Robert Robinson and James Wilson, previously ordained, were installed.

Owing to a depression in the industrial world, the year 1904 recorded a low-water mark in the history of the Church's finances with a debit balance of £8. However, in the year 1905, an era of greater prosperity opened for the congregation, and from this time forward its history is a record of progress and success, each year outdoing the previous one. Jumping to the year 1910 one notices a vast increase in the statistics of the congregation — Net income during the year ending 31st March, 1910 was £1,200; membership 600 families; Sunday School children over 800, and stipend £357 - 10 - 6. Such was the condition of the congregation when the news broke that Mr. Ballantine had received a call to Boksburg Presbyterian Church, South Africa. In the midst of a happy and successful ministry this call was a great disappointment to the McQuiston people. They specially asked him to consider well his decision, feeling that the home Church, and McQuiston in particular, could ill afford to lose a man with Mr. Ballantine's gifts of leadership and success. However, the call to South Africa prevailed and Mr. Ballantine announced this to the congregation on Sunday, 29th May, 1910. This led to McQuiston's first vacancy and steps had now to be taken to find a successor to their first minister.

This opening chapter in McQuiston's history would be somewhat incomplete without a brief mention of Canton Street Mission. Towards the end of 1898 a number of young men in the congregation were led to a Christian decision. Afterwards they formed themselves into an evangelistic band. Frequently, they held open-air meetings on Sunday evenings. On the 20th February, 1899, they took a step which was to have far-reaching and fruitful results — they rented a house for the purpose of holding Gospel meetings. Later a Sunday School was started, and later still another adjoining house was taken over. These efforts were the beginnings of what is now known as the Canton Street Mission Hall; and it is a joy to report that between the Church and the Hall there has always existed a wonderful spirit of co-operation and united witness. This was, in no small measure, due to the loyalty of missionaries like Mr. J. C. Cunningham, who served in the Belfast City Mission for 60 years, 55 of those years in Canton Street.

CHAPTER II

After the resignation of Mr. Ballantine, the Rev. Dr. William McKean was appointed convener of the vacancy. The congregation appointed a Selection Committee to search for a suitable pastor. After a lapse of two months the Committee reported back to the congregation and recommended that the



Rev. & Mrs. Boyle

Rev. D. D. Boyle of Newry be offered the call to McQuiston. This was unanimously adopted and the call was signed by over 400 members of the congregation. The call was presented to Mr. Boyle at a special meeting of the Newry Presbytery on the 18th October, 1910. With a few choice words, and not without some emotion, he signified his acceptance of it and was duly installed in McQuiston Church on the 1st

November, 1910. Four days later a reception to Mr. and Mrs. Boyle took place at which Mr. Boyle was presented with pulpit robes and Mrs Boyle was made the recipient of a diamond ring.

Mr. Boyle was a Limavady man with a farming background. He was educated at Magee College, Londonderry, where he studied Arts and Theology. In 1890 he was ordained in his first charge, Third Ballymoney, now known as St. James', Ballymoney. Twelve years later he received and accepted a call to be assistant and successor to the Rev. William Wylie in Downshire Road Presbyterian Church, Newry. His ministry in Newry had lasted only three years when he answered the McQuiston call and came to the city where he had a ministry of outstanding success. Mr. Boyle was a big man both physically and intellectually. He could be very dramatic in the pulpit, even in his reading of the Scriptures. In his preaching he made skilful use of a wide vocabulary as he preached the gospel of Christ and Him crucified. The ready acceptance of his pulpit ministrations was evidenced by the large congregations who flocked to hear him on Sunday after Sunday, and especially in the evenings.

Shortly after coming to McQuiston Mr. Boyle, on one occasion, made the remark — "Mr. Ballantine's ministry was a ministry of exhortation, mine will be a ministry of instruction". This was duly demonstrated during his ministry by the keen and practical interest he took in education. Night or evening classes were held for many years in the Institute, and it could said that Mr. Boyle was the means of opening the door to education for many who otherwise would have been unable to avail themselves of this benefit and privilege.

The *British Weekly* in an article of 30th November, 1905, made the following interesting and descriptive comments — “Mr. Boyle is a genuine orator . . . his style suggests much reading among the Puritan Divines . . . He is one of the men who cannot help influencing those with whom they are brought into contact. Nor can he help being loyal with a very enthusiastic loyalty to his own convictions”.

During Mr. Boyle's ministry a number of progressive innovations are on record. In April, 1914 electric lighting was installed. In January, 1922 the Free Will Offering system was inaugurated, and in 1932 the outstanding event of the year was the installation of the organ. This occasion was marked by opening services on the 9th October, conducted by the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt. Rev. J. J. Macauley, D.D.

That the congregation at this time was a centre of life and activity is evidenced by the number of organisations being catered for in the Church's weekly programme. Sunday's programme, as well as morning and evening services, included a Girls' Bible Class; the Young Ladies' Bible Class; the Young Mens' Bible Class; the B.B. Bible Class; the Junior Sunday School and the Senior Sunday School, plus the Mission Sunday School in Canton Street. During the week there was the Junior and Senior Christian Endeavour; the Life Boys; the Boys' Brigade; the Brownies; the Girl Guides; the Girls' Auxiliary; the Women's Missionary Association; the Mid-week Meeting for Prayer and Study; the Church Choir. the Badminton Club; the Gymnasium and the League of Nations Union. What a hive of activity, and all centred in contributing something to the promotion and progress of the Kingdom of God. In many of these Mrs. Boyle took a deep and practical interest, and was a tower of strength to her husband.

In 1937 the Faculty of the Presbyterian College honoured Mr. Boyle by conferring on him the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity. It was an honour well deserved and suitable both to the character and ability of the man. It was with sadness and suddenness that Mr. Boyle's ministry came to an end on the 29th April, 1938. After a very brief illness, and having completed 40 years in the ministry (27½ in McQuiston) his busy and fruitful life of service to the church and community came unexpectedly to its close, and so ended the second chapter in McQuiston's history.

CHAPTER III

With the death of Dr. Boyle, McQuiston experienced its second vacancy. The appointed convener was the Rev, C. M. Young of Bloomfield. After the customary procedures giving the congregation the necessary permission to call, the congregation appointed a committee to hear and consider a number of possible candidates and then bring in a recommendation. This policy was followed and, late in the summer of 1938, the Hearing Committee recommended that a call be made out in favour of the Rev. J. B. McIlroy, M.A., D.D. This was unanimously accepted and his installation took place on the 3rd November, 1938. His ministry in McQuiston lasted almost 20 years.



Dr. and Mrs. McIlroy

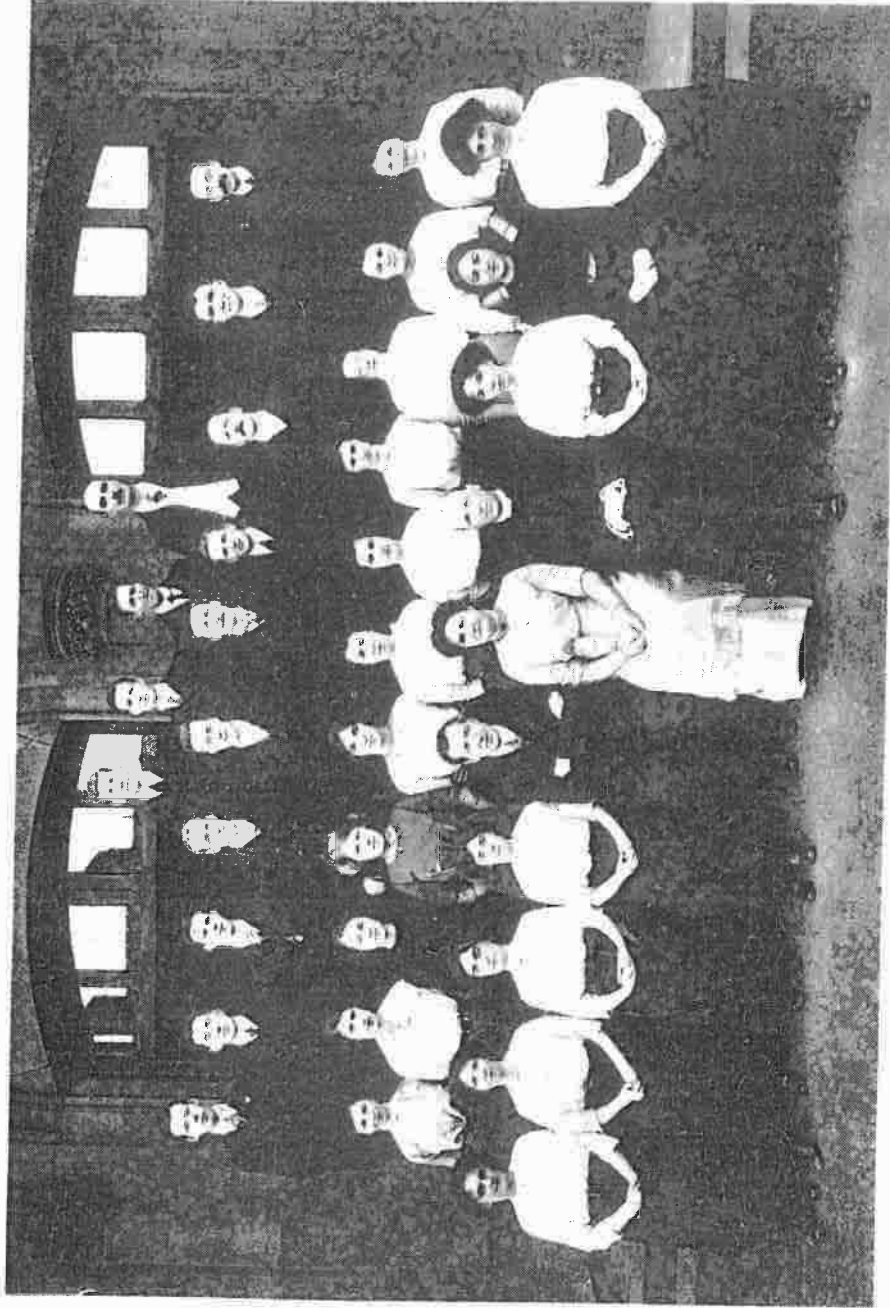
Dr. McIlroy was no stranger to Belfast. He was native of the upper Shankill Road, and attended Albert Street Presbyterian Church. He graduated at Trinity College, Dublin, and later attended Assembly's College, Belfast. He served as assistant in Ballysillan Presbyterian Church and the Shankill Road Mission. On leaving Ireland, he attended Princeton University in the U.S.A., where he obtained his B.D. degree. In September, 1918 he was ordained in Cowan Avenue Presbyterian Church, Toronto, where he ministered for 6 years. In 1924, he was called to the congregation of North Church, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, and in May, 1935, he relinquished his charge there and returned to Ireland.

For a few years he engaged in temporary service in various congregations where there were vacancies, and in 1938 he answered the call of McQuiston, where he exercised an evangelical ministry and served the congregation with great fidelity until his retirement on 31st July, 1958.

Dr. McIlroy ministered in McQuiston during the 1939 - 1945 war. During this period many young men and women answered the call to national service. In 1947 a memorial tablet was placed in the vestibule recording the names of 238 who served in H.M. Forces, and 20 of whom made the supreme sacrifice.

During his entire ministry, Dr. McIlroy lived with his brother in Bangor. Although the congregation offered to purchase him a manse in the city, he declined the offer.

Dr. McIlroy was deeply interested in evangelistic work, and one of the memorable campaigns in McQuiston was held in the autumn of 1949. It was



Members of Choir - McQuiston Memorial Presbyterian Church, 1913
Prize Winners — Derry Feis, 1908, 1911, 1913

conducted by an American friend, Dr. Oswald J. Smith. The Session minutes record the challenging impact it made upon the entire congregation. For some it was a time of Christian decision, while for some communicant members it was an occasion for re-dedication. Dr. McIlroy also took a deep interest in the Worldwide Missionary Convention, and for many years presided at its annual meetings in Bangor.

Another event which took place in 1949, and which captivated the interest of the congregation, was the marriage of Dr. McIlroy. It took place in America, and on the return of the Doctor and his bride, a happy reception was held at which tangible tokens of the congregation's good wishes were presented.

In 1958 Dr. McIlroy sought permission to retire, and his active ministry in McQuiston ended on 31st July of that year. A few years after retirement he and Mrs. McIlroy returned to America, where they spent their last years. On the 22nd January, 1976 the Doctor passed away in New Jersey at the age of 92, and on 28th September, 1979, Mrs. McIlroy passed away also.

During Dr. McIlroy's ministry a Church Sister was added to the full-time staff — Miss Elsie Morrow. At this time McQuiston was a truly large congregation. The year book of 1953 - 54 contains the following extract — "Our congregation is by far the largest in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Our number of families is greater than the total number in any of fifteen of the Presbyteries of our Church. It is equal in number to one Presbytery which has 14 ministers looking after its 16 congregations. Our Sunday Schools too can claim to be the largest in our Irish Presbyterian Church". A situation such as this made the



Elsie Morrow - Church Sister
Sept., 1954 - Aug., 1956

services of, a Church Sister both urgent and expedient. At the request of the congregation the Women's Home Mission allocated Miss Morrow to McQuiston. She was introduced at a service of recognition on Sunday evening, 12th September, 1954. At the end of July, 1956, Miss Morrow's resignation was submitted and accepted, pending her marriage with the Rev. James A. McFarland, M.A., then minister of Sinclair's Seamen's Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

Just over a year later, the Women's Home Mission was able to allocate another Church Sister to McQuiston — Miss Jane Orr, a native of Co. Down, and a member of Mourne Presbyterian Church. Her service of recognition took place on Sunday evening, the 15th September, 1957. One of Miss Orr's first undertakings was the formation of a children's church at the request of the Kirk Session, and ever since, it has played a vital part in the

Church's programme for children. Another organisation introduced by Miss Orr was the Friendship Circle. It celebrated its 21st Anniversary in 1980. It provides a meeting point for young wives and has contributed much to the life and witness of the congregation. At the time of going to Press, Miss Orr is in her 25th year in McQuiston. She has served the congregation most faithfully in all kinds of ways among the young, the sick in hospital, the old, and the "shut-ins" at home. She deserves the gratitude and good wishes of us all.



Miss Orr

CHAPTER IV

by W. O. Bell

Mc Quiston's 4th chapter begins with the ministry of the Rev. Samuel Eaton, M.A., H.C.F. Mr. Eaton, a member of Raphoe congregation in County Donegal, was educated at Raphoe Royal school (one of the five Royal schools in Ulster), Magee College, Londonderry, Trinity College, Dublin, and Assembly's College, Belfast. He spent a short assistantship in Ulsterville congregation before being called to his first charge in First Killyleagh. He was ordained and installed there on 27th July, 1939. During World War II he was released by his congregation and served as a chaplain with the R.A.F. in North Africa, Italy and the Far East. In 1950 he received a call to Bushmills and ministered there for the next nine years. The call to McQuiston brought him to the city in 1959 and he was installed on 10th March.

The year after Mr. Eaton's arrival the congregation embarked on a series of new and helpful ventures, the first being Christian Stewardship and Lay Evangelism. Prior to this the General Assembly had given its approval and blessing to this new approach in the Church's ministry and had appointed the Rev. T. A. Patterson, minister of First Donaghadee, as full time director. How such a scheme would succeed in a congregation the size of McQuiston was an undertaking which fired the hopes and anticipation of both Mr. Patterson and the Session and Committee. It involved the training of a considerable number of members as well as Session and Committee. Volunteers were asked for and altogether some 180 trainees were prepared for the new venture. Right from the start it caught the imagination and approval of the people much to the delight of the visitors, and became an outstanding and rewarding success.

At the end of the first year the treasurer reported to the Annual General Meeting an increase of 96% in the Freewill Offering. But other even more desirable fruits began to show in the spiritual realm. These were evidenced in



Mr. and Mrs. Eaton

increased attendances at both morning and evening services; many new members and, frequently, new families joined the congregation. But what gave greatest satisfaction was the unprecedented number of new communicants of all age groups who became full members of the Church on a personal profession of faith. It was always Mr. Eaton's policy to make his communicants preparation meetings a time of special evangelistic

outreach when he became, in a very deliberate and prayerful way his own evangelist. It is worthy of note that the first communicants preparation class, on the completion of the stewardship campaign, numbered 47 people, and this encouraging trend continued at many communion seasons afterwards. It is also an interesting statistic that during the ministry of Mr. Eaton over 400 communicants were received on profession of faith and 943 children were baptised.

As a follow up to Stewardship and Lay Evangelism, a shepherding scheme was introduced some time later. This provided each elder with a number of workers in his district. It also provided for the minister and elder to visit together in the elder's district. Having two assistant ministers at this time, it meant that three pairs of visitors were active in the vineyard on at least one evening each week.

In such a large congregation it became clear that communication was very important and, consequently, the Church Magazine came into being on a monthly basis in 1961.

It often carried a personal message from the minister, communiques from the Session and Committee, reports and requests from organisations, or an article presenting the Christian view point on contemporary events.

A scheme of renovation and alteration to the choir area was proposed in 1960. This resulted in the presentation of a new Communion Table by the members of Canton Street Mission Hall. Other gifts were also donated by members and organisations of the congregation and, on the 24th September, these gifts were dedicated by the Rev. Dr. T. A. B. Smyth of Rathgar Church, Dublin. The alteration to the choir area provided room for the new Communion Table with the choir members sitting in two sections, one on each side of the pulpit facing each other.

McQuiston has always had a fine musical tradition, and the choir was widely known for its high standard of church music under conductors like Mr. James Woods. Later this was ably maintained under the leadership of Ronald McCully as organist and choirmaster. Mr. McCully had also a young people's choir which made a name for itself inside and outside the congregation. The Christmas and Spring shows, which they presented, were always highlights of the year.

In 1961 a public address system was installed in the church. In December, 1963 new ground was broken with the introduction of a Christmas entertainment for the senior members of the congregation. The motivation behind it was to give the younger age groups in the congregation an opportunity to acknowledge the past services of their elders who had handed down to them the

heritage and blessings of a grand congregation. This event is now a happy yearly landmark in the McQuiston calendar — and long may it continue.

On two occasions our minister had holiday exchanges with ministers from America. In July and August, 1969, Mr. and Mrs. Eaton took over the manse in Warrensburg, New York, and the Rev. and Mrs. Richard Paddon took up residence in 32 Hampton Park. In 1972 a similar exchange was arranged with Rev. Wallace Drotts, minister of First Presbyterian Church, Visalia, California. It was a stimulating and happy experience for the congregation on both occasions and on their return, both Mr. and Mrs. Eaton gave fascinating insights into church life in America.

In 1974 two memorial windows were donated to the congregation and now beautify the Sanctuary — one in memory of Percy and Reta Firth, was the gift of Mrs. J. Stevenson. It depicts two Old Testament characters, Ruth and Boaz. It was dedicated by Mr. Eaton at the morning service on Sunday, 29th September. The second window was the gift of Mrs. E. Wilson and her family in memory of her husband, David Henry Wilson, J.P., who for many years was financial secretary in Church House and affectionately known to everyone as D.H. This window depicts Jesus washing the disciples feet. It was dedicated by the Very Rev. Dr. Austin Fulton at the morning service on Sunday, 1st December, 1974.

A new lighting system was installed in the church in 1974 at a cost of £2,000. The previous system had lasted 60 years, being installed in 1914. The organ was also modernised and a new console provided at a cost of £4,300. These alterations necessitated an interior decoration of the church. The total cost was £10,000 and, in a matter of 6 months, the congregation had more than met the expense. The re-opening and dedication service was on Sunday, 8th September, and was conducted by the Moderator of the General Assembly, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Temple Lundie.

In 1976/77 a census of the congregation showed that there were 1,614 families who had at least a recorded connection with McQuiston. From 1969, due to “the troubles” and the beginnings of city redevelopment, many young people after marriage made their homes in suburbia or even further afield. There was also a move of population generally, with the result that a decline in numerical strength began to show.

But, in spite of these adverse factors, McQuiston continued to be, and still is, a big congregation, and capable of maintaining an effective Christian witness in East Belfast. After 16 ½ years, Mr. Eaton conducted the closing service of his ministry on Sunday morning, 14th September, 1975. A fortnight later, at a largely attended function in the church, the congregation honoured both Mr. and Mrs. Eaton with parting gifts.

CHAPTER V

This chapter opens with the congregation in charge of the Rev. A. W. E. Forbes as convener of the vacancy. Before calling a new minister the church committee recommended to the congregation that the manse at 32 Hampton Park be sold and that a manse with less grounds be acquired. The Hampton Park manse had been purchased in 1959 at a cost of £5,500, and was McQuiston's first manse. It was sold in 1975 for £32,000. The present manse at 52 King's Road, costing £29,000 was purchased in 1976 after a unanimous call had been offered to the Rev. Robers Derek Drysdale. B.A., B.D., of Dundrod.

Mr. Drysdale was brought up in Westbourne Congregation. He was educated at Mountpottinger P.E. School and Belfast Technical High School. His university education took him to Magee College, Londonderry and Trinity College, Dublin. He continued his studies at New College, Edinburgh, where he gained his B.D. degree.



Rev. & Mrs. R. D. Drysdale

Mr. Drysdale's assistantships were in Hamilton Road, Bangor, and First Lisburn. His first call was to Dundrod Presbyterian Church in 1968, where he ministered with great acceptance until 1976. After hearing a list of four candidates, the Hearing Committee of McQuiston Memorial recommended to the congregation that the Rev. R. D. Drysdale of Dundrod, be asked to become McQuiston's next minister. Having accepted the call, his installation took place on 7th April, 1976.

From the beginning of his ministry in McQuiston, he displayed a masterly use of the English language and it was not long before the B.B.C. commissioned him to report on the proceedings of the General Assembly. He also, on a number of occasions, was the speaker on "Thought for the Day" programme.

Mr. Drysdale's ministry was short. His abilities were recognised and very much appreciated not only by McQuiston congregation, but also by another congregation in the East Belfast Presbytery, the congregation of Belmont. When it became vacant, its Hearing Committee, after very serious consideration, decided to present Mr. Drysdale with a call to succeed the Rev. R. J. Young. It was anything but an easy decision to make. Short ministries, of course, are not new in the Presbyterian Church, and Mr. Drysdale felt it was his duty to accept the call. His decision was made accordingly, and he was installed in Belmont in January, 1980.

CHAPTER VI

The Rev. Herbert Courtney, Clerk of Presbytery, and recently retired from St. Andrew's congregation, was appointed convener of the vacancy. As in previous vacancies, a Hearing Committee of twelve people was given the assignment of finding, hearing and recommending a successor to Mr. Drysdale..

Owing to the escalating troubles it must be put on record that many ministers are now very reluctant to be considered for vacancies in the city. Another factor is the tendency of ministers not to make applications for vacancies, but wait for the congregations to invite them to have their names considered. On



Rev. and Mrs. H. Gray

hearing that an Irishman might be interested in returning from Canada to the land of his birth, approaches were made, on behalf of the congregation, to the Rev. Henry Gray, M.A., minister of St. Andrew's, Hagersville, Ontario. Mr. Gray answered the approach favourably, came to preach in Joymount, Carrickfergus, and afterwards was interviewed by the Hearing Committee. Later the congregation heard the unanimous recommendation of

the Hearing Committee and, eventually, the Gray family (all nine of them) arrived in Belfast on 16th September, 1980, and two days later, Mr. Gray was installed as McQuiston's sixth minister.

City life was not new for Mr. Gray as he was born in Belfast. His first experience of education was at Ballydrain P.E. School; then Campbell College; Belfast College of Technology; Magee College, Londonderry; Trinity College, Dublin and, finally, Assembly's College, Belfast. In 1965 he was ordained assistant minister in Ulsterville Presbyterian Church. In 1968 he was called to Clogherney in County Tyrone; later to St. Enoch's in Belfast in 1973. Some four years later he accepted the call to St Andrew's, Hagersville, Ontario, Canada, and it was there that McQuiston found him and called him to be installed on 18th September, 1980.

Needless to say, this chapter must remain incomplete. In fact it has only really begun, and our prayer is that, under Mr. Gray's ministry, the work of the Kingdom of God in McQuiston may go forward from strength to strength, and may its greatest chapters remain to be written.

This booklet is not intended to be a comprehensive history of McQuiston Memorial. It is rather a brief summary recording some facts and figures which should interest past, present and future members of the congregation. In publishing it the Fund Raising Committee would express its indebtedness to the Rev. S. Eaton and Mr. W. O. Bell for their invaluable help.