

The Winds of Change 1906 - 1917

As New Year's Eve, 1905, drew to a close, Theodore Roosevelt occupied the White House, a peaceful settlement had recently been reached in the Russo-Japanese War, and in Central America, work was progressing on what would soon come to be known as the Panama Canal. Back in New Tripoli, the next day (New Year's, 1906) would arrive no differently than every other New Year's Day had. However, the winds of change were blowing on that day.

The year 1906 was a turning point in the history of our congregations. No one could have imagined then the amount of change that would take place that year, and in the coming years. By the time the year would be out, little would remain of the old church, and many of the old ways—ways that had prevailed since the church's beginnings. In its place would be the foundations of the modern church we know today.

The first hint, of what was to come, would arrive by way of an absence. On Tuesday, January 30, 1906, The Morning Call was reporting that Allentown Attorney Lawrence G. Rupp had been admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and that Farr Shoes was holding a rebuilding sale with women's Sorosis shoes for \$1.65 a pair. Most people probably didn't even take notice to a small item tucked away on the same page and headed "Rev. Fegley Very Ill—Was unconscious all day yesterday and not expected to survive the night." The short article went on to say that after officiating at a funeral on Saturday, Rev. Fegley had taken to his bed and was not able to leave Sunday morning to preach a service.

To some, this item may not have signified anything; however, to Rev. Fegley's loyal followers, we can be certain the worst was feared. Rev. Fegley had been preaching to this congregation for thirty-three years, and never once missed a Sunday service, not even a few years earlier when his wife had passed away. By this time most of his congregation had heard the news that he had been slipping in and out of consciousness all day.

On Tuesday afternoon, the residents of New Tripoli had their worst fears confirmed as the church bell was tolled sixty-two times, once for each year of his life, as was the custom. Rev. Fegley had passed away at 12:30 that day, of what the doctors felt to be cancer of the stomach. Although he had been sick for some time, as reported by The Morning Call, he continued to carry on his duties as always. On Monday afternoon he had passed into a coma from which he never awakened.

Funeral services were to be held on Saturday, February 3, 1906, at 9:30 a.m. at his residence, with services following at the church. Rev. W. D. C. Keiter of West Bethlehem, president of the Allentown Conference of the Lutheran Ministerium, and Rev. J. H. Waidelich of Sellersville, were to conduct the services.

When the day of the funeral arrived, a crowd, the size of which the village had never seen, descended upon it. Over fifteen hundred people attended the services, causing the church leaders to conduct simultaneous services in both the church's main auditorium and in the church basement. Revs. Keiter and Waidelich conducted the services upstairs, while Rev. Dr. C. J.

Cooper of Muhlenberg College and Rev. J. S. Erb of Slatington conducted the services in the basement. The text used for the services was Hebrews 3:7—"Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith today, if ye will hear His voice.

A large gathering of ministers attended the services, some serving as honorary pallbearers. The other pallbearers consisted of two members of each of Rev. Fegley's congregations, with Henry D. Kistler and Edwin Clause so honored for Ebenezer. The Morning Call reported that Prof. T. S. Smith's choir sang a German hymn, and a quartet under his leadership performed the song, "Rest Thee In Peace." They also reported that there were more than four hundred vehicles in the village and vicinity that day.

The Morning Call, in reporting the death of a man it referred to as "one of Lehigh County's most popular Lutheran clergymen," had the following to say about Rev. Fegley:

"He was greatly esteemed by his congregation and his sudden demise is a severe shock to his many friends. He was an able pulpit orator, and during these long years of his pastorate he studied continually and thus kept abreast with the times. He was a very pleasant man to meet socially and he was ever ready to guide the young man who needed his help. He was exceptionally successful in his long pastorate in the one charge. When one met his people in the various congregations he served, there was always the highest respect shown and the kindest words spoken for him. He lived the life of a good pastor and friend."

For many years Rev. Fegley had served as a director of Muhlenberg College in Allentown and took a great interest in the welfare of the college. His death was keenly felt by the college.

The Ladies Aid Society draped the church in black, paying half the cost as a token of its respect for Rev. Fegley. It also purchased black altar covers to be used at other church funerals.

Just as the Lutheran congregation was beginning to adjust to its tremendous loss, the Reformed congregation was dealt a blow of the same proportions. On the morning of April 20, 1906, as most people were scanning the pages of The Morning Call to read the on-going story of the destruction of San Francisco by earthquake only days earlier, Reformed congregation members were most surely shocked by the headline, "Rev. Helffrich Passed Away."

Sometime after midnight, on the 20th, Rev. Nevin W. Helffrich suddenly passed away at his home, 123 North Eleventh Street in Allentown. For several days prior to his death, he had been complaining of not feeling well, and on the evening of his death, not being able to sleep, he had remained seated in a favorite chair. At a quarter past twelve he was stricken, with what the doctors then referred to as a stroke of paralysis of the heart, and died. From the few remaining pictures we have of him, it appears that he was not slight of build, and given his somewhat young age at the time of his death, a mere fifty years old, we can most likely assume that he was a victim of what is commonly referred to today as heart disease.

The family had requested that only a small private service be held at the house; however, given the large number of friends of the deceased who gathered at his late residence, a public service was held. These services were officiated by Dr. H. P. Spengler of Philadelphia.

Immediately following this service, his body was taken to Ziegels Church, another of Rev. Helffrich's congregations, where a large group was gathered, made up of representatives from all of his charges, and many fellow ministers. Services were again held, this time conducted by Dr. Philip Vollmer of Philadelphia, who preached a service in the German language. Prof. W. J. Hinke of Ursinus College, Rev. Helffrich's alma mater, gave an address in the English language.

After the services, the congregations were allowed to bid their farewells, and his body was laid to rest in the Ziegels Church cemetery.

Obviously, Rev. Helffrich was not only highly thought of by his congregations, but by all who knew him, as can be attested to by the following editorial that appeared in The Morning Call the day after his death. No words written today could sum up the character and personality of a man like Rev. Helffrich better than these:

"REV. NEVIN W. HELFFRICH

"The sudden and unexpected death of Rev. Nevin W. Helffrich, which occurred shortly after midnight Friday morning, came as a shock to the community. It will be especially keenly felt and lamented in the rural districts, where he was very popular as a preacher and beloved as a man.

"The fact, perhaps, that his manner and his methods would have been no more acceptable to a fashionable city congregation than those of their 'eminent divine' would be suited to the people to whom he ministered, is no reflection upon either his ability or his character. On the contrary, it shows his exceptional natural adaptability for the work of his chosen field of endeavor, and is a tribute to his keen insight into human nature. Without these qualities he or any other man would have been a failure under similar circumstances; possessing them to an eminent degree, he was the most popular country preacher Lehigh County has had in recent years. After all, in the ministry as in other things, nothing succeeds like success, and it is by the degree of success they attain that men and their works are ordinarily measured.

"Rev. Helffrich had his faults-and who has not?-but hypocrisy, sanctimonious cant and mock-modesty were not among them. Indeed, he was unconventional to a fault, and was, therefore, not always understood. But the people whom he served so long accepted him at his real worth, and that was sufficient for him. They loved him for his generous heart, his frank, outspoken, democratic manner and inimitable social qualities. He made them feel as if he was one of them and no more, and taught them by word and example that a happy heart, a bright face and kind, encouraging, even merry, word are more pleasing in the sight of God than comfortless sighs, groans and fears. There was homely wisdom and sound common sense in his sermons, and when wrought up with feeling, there was thunder in his rude eloquence. But when his softer nature was touched, few could speak in tenderer or more consoling tones than he. A strong character of magnetic personality, and withal a good mind and of scholarly attainments greater than he was usually credited with, he thus endeared himself to his people and became a distinct personal force for good in the community.

"Such a man, despite any shortcomings, has not lived in vain. And now that Rev. Nevin W. Helffrich is no longer serving his Master on earth according to his lights, let us give him in death at least that justice which he did not always receive in life."

When a respectable period of mourning for both pastors was completed, it became necessary to get back to business. Life goes on, and the spiritual needs of both congregations still had to be taken care of. In the interim, between pastors, others had filled their pulpits. The Morning Call of Tuesday, April 24, 1906, comments under its "New Tripoli Notes" column that on the previous Sunday forenoon, a Mr. Yaxtheimer, a student in the Mt. Airy Seminary, had occupied the pulpit of the late Rev. Fegley, and that in the afternoon the late Rev. Helffrich's pulpit was occupied by Allentown pastor, Rev. Ruloff.

There is very little written or verbal information available as to how these congregations dealt with their similar situations. Obviously, choosing successors to both of these men would be a difficult task. Both congregations at that point were probably still attempting to deal with the sudden loss of their much-loved pastors. How do you replace men like Rev. Fegley and Rev. Helffrich? Both of these men had been immensely popular, and were held in high esteem by their congregations. Both men had held their positions for lengthy periods of time. So you can see why this was such a difficult task. The choices that would be made by these congregations would be very different.

The Lutherans would be the first to come to a decision on a successor. In July of 1906, five months after the death of Rev. Fegley, a call would go out to a young man by the name of Rev. Alfred O. Ebert. Rev. Ebert was well-known in these parts. He was born at New Tripoli on February 19, 1870, a son of Amandus and Sarah A. (Mosser) Ebert. He received his early education in the public schools of Lynn Township and attended church at Ebenezer as a member of the Lutheran congregation.

He completed his preliminary training in special schools that were conducted in Lynn Township at that time. In the fall of 1889, he entered Muhlenberg College, graduating with the class of 1893. He then entered the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Mt. Airy, and graduated in 1896. On June 1, 1896, he was ordained into the ministry at St. John's Lutheran Church, Allentown.

From the years 1896 to 1904, Rev. Ebert served his first charge at the Audenreid-Beaver Meadows Parish, near Hazleton. In 1904, a call went out to Rev. Ebert from the Schoenersville-Rittersville Charge, in the area now known as East Allentown.

He continued to serve this charge until the call to Ebenezer came, in July of 1906. While serving his parish in Audenreid, Rev. Ebert was married. On September 2, 1897, he became the husband of Annie Minerva Fegley, daughter of Rev. & Mrs. Henry Fegley. The wedding service was conducted by his soon-to-be father-in-law. They would eventually become the parents of three daughters and four sons.

We can be fairly certain that the fact that Rev. Ebert was a hometown boy undoubtedly played a major role in his selection to fill Rev. Fegley's pulpit. We could also be most certain in surmising that the fact that he was Rev. Fegley's son-in-law was a crucial point in the Lutheran

congregation's choice. It is not to be said that he himself did not merit the position on his experience alone; however, the Lutheran congregation had the Reformed congregation, and its many years with the Helffrich family, as an ever-present example of the advantages of continuity. One only needs look at the fine record of service that had been achieved through successive generations of this family, to see that continuous service was something to be desired. In hiring Rev. Ebert to fill his late father-in-law's position, the Lutheran congregation was in a sense passing the leadership down to the one person who rightfully deserved it. At the same time, it was a safe decision for the Lutheran congregations whom he would serve. How far from the tree could this familial (by marriage) fruit fall? They would also be gaining back a pastor's wife, whom all surely had known and loved as she grew up among them and then had left for a number of years.

On the other hand, the Reformed congregation was not quite as fortunate in being able to make such a safe decision. For the first time in over one hundred years there was a ministerial position available that would not be filled by some member of the Helffrich family. One can only imagine how lost they must have felt in having to really search for a minister. So as one small family dynasty continued, another came to a final, glorious end.

The people entrusted with hiring a replacement began their search. They searched, and searched, and searched some more, and, as spring turned to summer, and then summer began to turn to fall, a decision was made. Their choice was a young minister, fresh from theology school, by the name of Rev. George M. Smith. He was so new at the job, that he hadn't even been ordained yet.

One thing that Rev. Smith had working in his favor, upon arriving at Ebenezer, was that for the first time in its history, Ebenezer would be part of a much smaller charge. Upon the death of Rev. Helffrich in 1906, the old charge was broken up and a new charge created, consisting of only Ebenezer and Heidelberg Churches. Instead of being pulled in the many directions by the many churches that his predecessors had been, Rev. Smith would be able to concentrate his energies more directly on just two churches.

Rev. George M. Smith was born at Walnutport, a son of Lewis and Ann C. (Schaffer) Smith, on November 19, 1880. He attended the public schools in that locale, and upon graduation was admitted to Albright College, from which he then graduated. His spiritual training took place at Ursinus College School of Theology. Upon graduation from this school, he received his call to the Ebenezer-Heidelberg Charge. Rev. George Smith was married on February 22, 1902, to the former Anna M. Caskie of Slatington. In 1914 they would adopt one daughter, Mary H. She was herself to become the wife of a minister, Rev. William H. Banks, and today lives in Ormond Beach, Florida, where she is a church organist.²⁰

We are very fortunate today that Rev. Smith kept extremely good records. At the same time he kept a pastoral diary into which he made some very interesting entries. The bulk of the information contained in this history on the pastorate of George Smith has been drawn from those pages. Reading these entries opens a window into another era, which most should find interesting and oftentimes amusing.

It would appear that Rev. Smith was an idealistic young man, but who of us at that young age isn't! He had come from the seminary filled with idealistic missions, only to find that the real world was nothing like a college classroom. Things aren't as perfect as we grow up believing them to be. He was also an observant man, who at times could be very critical in writing of certain situations. He was not one to let things slip past him unnoticed.

The career of Rev. George Smith began with his ordination on October 7, 1906, at Heidelberg Church. The committee on ordination consisted of Neri F. Peters, chairman; D. A. Winter of Lehighton; and E. J. Fogel of Fogelsville. Both Mr. Peters and Mr. Winter attended the ordination. Rev. Smith states that "Peters ordained me and Winters installed me as pastor of the Heidelberg charge." He continues to state that there was a "large attendance in spite of the heavy roads."

Rev. Smith's first services at New Tripoli consisted of a Friday evening English service and a public examination of catechumens. On Saturday afternoon there was a "Vorbereitung," or Preparatory Service, and confirmation of a class of twenty-seven young men and women. On Sunday morning "the church was filled," and "the weather ideal." At this point, the Smiths were still residing in Walnutport, for he notes that afterwards he returned home to Walnutport. My horse was very lame (scratches). Up to this time I think I drove about 600-700 miles. Frequently he would stay at the Pleasant Corners Hotel, close to both of his churches.²¹ All this would soon change. Shortly after his taking this position, Rev. Smith and his wife moved to New Tripoli and lived in the home presently owned by William Rapp. Throughout his writing, Rev. Smith always refers to his home as "The Manse."

Rev. Smith's first "classical year" at Ebenezer, as he referred to it, was far from eventful. Of the sixteen baptisms he performed that year, only three were at Ebenezer. It is interesting to point out that the first child that Rev. Smith baptized at Ebenezer was Raymond Snyder, a recently deceased member of our church, the baptism, he notes, as having taken place "in the basement of church at Tripoli."

Rev. Smith's records are interesting in that at each birth, marriage, death, etc., he recorded, he generally made some small comment beside it. From these small notations, some interesting conclusions can be drawn. One of these, is that of changing customs. To many young people the idea of being married at a minister's home would be completely out of the question. Also, the thought of a funeral being conducted in the deceased person's home seems ridiculous. In Rev. Smith's day these were the places where services like these were held. It is interesting to see just how those customs changed over the years. In addition, almost all baptisms were performed at the parents' homes.

Another conclusion, that can somewhat safely be drawn from these pages, is how similar many of them are to what we today perceive as "modern social problems." Many people are quick to point out that, in days gone by, the problems didn't exist, that seem to so plague society today... problems such as unwed mothers, divorce, parents not fit to raise children, and alcoholism. However, these records seem to indicate otherwise.

Take for instance an entry made in the early part of the year 1911, in reference to unwed mothers. He writes of a situation where he was baptizing a child who "was very sick." He obviously was not too impressed with the mother, as he states, "This is the 2nd child she had (illegal) since I am here." Another instance he refers to, with regard to parents, is at a baptism in 1907. He tells of a poor young mother who was left all alone by the child's father, who had "run away West, and at this time was not yet caught."

The subject of a divorce, which in those days was strictly taboo, comes up on a number of occasions. At one baptism, the parents are referred to as a "young family (who) is parted." At one 1910 wedding he states, "This was the most ignorant pair. She is a divorced woman." We can obviously see in what light people were held who had been through something as scandalous as a divorce.

Another weakness that didn't pass unnoticed was that of people who seemed to be lacking certain qualities. Whether it was that they were of poor moral fiber, or lacking in parenting skills, he would make note of it. For example, upon the death of a small child in 1908, he was quick to point out, "The parents (were) very reckless." Another baptism brought about the following view of the parents, and even of the sponsors of the child:

"These two couples were poor subjects. Both not fit." Another father was considered by him as a "loose fellow." On yet another occasion he turned his sympathies toward the mother in stating, "This girl is to be pitied. He (her husband) isn't worth a great deal."

Etiquette was another of his pet peeves. In numerous instances he writes of the parents' ungratefulness in that, after performing a service, they "said nothing about pay, not even thanked me." Another event that set him to wondering was at the funeral of an aged member of the Ebenezer congregation, who had passed away at the home of his son. For some reason, now unknown, the son would not attend the services, leaving Rev. Smith to query, "Son wasn't at the funeral, can a man be so hard hearted?"

The subject that probably was nearest and dearest to Rev. Smith's heart was that of temperance. If we could make one assumption about Rev. Smith, based upon his personal writings, it was probably the fact that he was a teetotaler. Though much of Rev. Smith's involvement with the temperance movement would not come until later in his career, he was definitely beginning to lay a solid foundation for it in his years at Ebenezer and Heidelberg. He makes record of numerous run-ins with the Demon-Rum while he served the charge. There were a number of baptisms, one for example, where the father "was in poor shape" due to his having "had some drink," and another where the family was very unhappy because the father was "a drunkard." At one wedding he was even offered a drink, but he refused. Probably the forum, where his preaching about the evils of drink had the most effect, was when drink was directly related to the cause of the person's death. At the funeral of a young man who had died "on the sleigh across the Blue Mountains," which he noted as being a very "strange thing," he got up and "spoke plain about drink." Not all of Rev. Smith's records consist of such biting commentary. He certainly relates situations which would fill you with sorrow. Take, for instance, the sad story he tells of the deaths of little Mazie and Roy Hamm, ages four and five, who died of scarletina in March of 1909. Rev. Smith and the church organist traveled by sleigh, through a blizzard, to perform their

funerals, at which only the mother and father were able to attend. Meanwhile he notes, "There were two others sick with the same disease." Another sad story was the case of a young mother who died, leaving four children behind with a father who drank.

On the other hand, there were many instances in which he could rejoice. As quick as he was to comment upon the pairing of an inappropriate couple, he was equally quick to note when he felt a couple was ideally suited. Numerous notes appear to this effect, such as "There is a nice quiet couple." and "This young couple is a rather nice couple." One situation, in which he surely must have felt pride, was the baptism of Ezra Lentz on December 10, 1910; he very proudly notes of the parents: "I confirmed both and married them." The role he played, that of spiritual guide to the young couple, was one that he obviously seemed to feel honored in having filled.

It would appear from his records that Rev. Smith didn't have a real easy time of it when he first arrived at his new charge. The people had become accustomed to one thing and one thing only—the Helffrichs. Rev. Helffrich had been much closer in age to many of the members of the church; Rev. Smith, on the other hand, was probably looked upon as a young upstart, fresh from college, who probably didn't know what he was doing.

Acceptance, probably did not come easily to him. Fortunately, he had come from a background similar to that of his parishioners, so they weren't able to hold that against him. Luckily for him, it appears to only have taken just under a year to win them over, for by August of 1907, he notes that "The people seem to have placed their confidence in me. Not only did the people seem to place confidence in him but so, too, did the church hierarchy. Rev. Smith had been active in the Synod during the founding of the Reformed Church Seminary at Tiffin, Ohio, and when it came time to prepare an exhibit for the Jamestown Exposition in 1907, it was to him that the Lehigh Classis turned to put it together. An exhibit, that would be seen by the thousands who would attend the exposition, was obviously not an undertaking for just anybody. It was a great vote of confidence on their part to entrust this to him.

Acceptance did not come without a price. The idealistic young college man, who had arrived here in 1906, no longer existed. In his place was a man who had seen the real world, and faced the challenges of ministering to a country church congregation. It seems that by trading in some of his high-minded ideals, Rev. Smith was finally able to gain the acceptance he so desired. By the time he was elected a delegate to the Eastern Synod in 1908, he no longer considered himself the man that he once was. attending with him were others who, just now, were in the same position he had once been in and, in looking at them and reflecting back, he noted in his diary, "Many of the men (attending) came fresh from the Gen. Syn. at York (as I did) and were filled up with missions." It was only then that he must have realized that so much of what we anticipate from life never happens the way that we always expect that it will. When, and if, it ever does happen, it is usually in a much different format.

On the whole, it would appear that the people at Ebenezer presented Rev. Smith with a good base upon which to build his somewhat philosophically-altered missions. His days at Ebenezer seemed to be relatively easy ones. There were problems, but not to the magnitude of those he was faced with at Heidelberg. It seems much of what plagued him during his days with the

charge was generated by Heidelberg Church and, eventually, it appears that this would be much of his reason for finally leaving the charge.

Once a level of acceptance was reached with the people at Ebenezer, Rev. Smith seemed to settle into filling the role of a country pastor. In 1910 he presented an address at the Eastern Synod on "The Opportunity of the Country Pastor," which he notes was "well received." It seems that the role fit him well, and that the congregation had really grown to like him. At Christmas, 1908, he makes the following entry which would seem to attest to that fact: "This Xmas Season (1908) was a very happy one. The New Tripoli members presented me with a fine gold watch, chain and charm (locket)." Others gave him \$17, which he proceeded to use to purchase for himself a seal-skin cap.

As was stated earlier, the year 1906, and the years following it, would be years of great change for our congregations. In looking back, we can pretty much classify the changes that took place during this period into two categories. There were those that took place within the confines of the congregations; these we will refer to as "internal changes." These were usually initiated by, or had something to do directly with, the two congregations and their day-to-day operations. The other category we will refer to as "external changes." These were generally brought on by forces from outside of the church, and were often societal in nature.

The internal changes can best be shown by the following examples. The first, and most important, of these changes was the arrival of two young, new ministers, and their struggle to gain acceptance in this old-line church.

To fully understand the other changes in this category, we must look at the church as it was in those days. The church filled a necessary place in the lives of the people who worshiped there, but up until this period in time, the church had never really been a formally organized type of place. Certainly, there had always been ministers who were paid and, for many years, there were paid organists, and to govern these small operations there were groups of men from each congregation who served on the individual church councils.

Up until this time, the business of the church itself had never been "business"; it had always been to provide spiritual leadership. It appears that, somewhere along the line, somebody must have become tired of doing things the old way and realized that, if the church were to ever survive, it would have to take on some of the more likeable aspects of the business world. Possibly, it was due to some involvement by the government, which usually interferes where finances are concerned. Whatever the true reason was, it is lost to us today. A good example of this new "fiscal responsibility," was the introduction of the "duplex system," an early forerunner to today's offering envelopes.

It seems that Rev. Smith was an early proponent of this system of recording members' payments. In 1909, upon the introduction of the duplex system, of which there appears to have been some debate about its value, he writes, "I don't know whether the system will be a success but I will hear (the final results) before I see the thing go back to its old way of doing things." It is also noted that the initial cost of this system-envelopes and all-was \$8.38.

Another internal change that took place within the congregations was that of the founding of the Joint Council-Consistory in June of 1908. Up until this time, it seems that whatever business there was was handled between individual members but, with a big church building and a large tract of land to take care of, the idea was formulated that a group made up of members of both congregations should be formed, whose task it would be to handle these duties. They stated that they formed to conduct the business of the union congregations, "with such uniformity as to conserve the peace between the pastors and people."

This was to be an ambitious undertaking for all involved. Conserving the peace in a union congregation is of vital importance. It appears that this was well done for many years by this group. There were some union differences between the two congregations. One particularly humorous one took place when the search was on for a new organist after the death of Prof. Theodore Smith in 1909. It appears that the Lutherans must have come to a decision on whom they wanted as a replacement before the Reformed congregation had been in agreement and, as this was always a shared position, this did not set well with the Reformed Consistory. To top it off, the Lutheran Council was going to hold the election in church on a Sunday morning. Taking this as what appears to be a challenge, the Reformed Consistory issued the following statement:

"The consistory of the Reformed congregation of Ebenezer Church authorized its secretary to confer with the secretary of the Lutheran church council. First, that we object to announce the election for an organist on Sunday December 12, 1909, Second, that we object holding the election on a Sunday, Third, that we request an election to be held on a weekday with sufficient time so that it can be announced from both pulpits, Fourth, we request that a meeting of union council be called to draw up an agreement by which the organist is to be governed."

The disagreement could not have been too bad, because by the following week they had chosen Edgar DeLong, of Trumbauersville, as Prof. Smith's replacement.

As you can see by these examples, the internal changes that were made were generally changes that would help the church run more smoothly. By the time this period was over, the church would be more organized and more businesslike. Young people with new ideas would try, and would succeed, in making the church a more structured entity, something it had never really been at any previous point in its history.

Those changes, that we classify as external, were all the result of the changing world, of which the church was a part. Two prime examples of these changes, which we directly took part in, were missions here at home, and missions abroad. During this time period, we began to see an active involvement on the part of all local churches in the establishment of, the running of, and the continual support of homes for crippled children, orphans, and the elderly. Never before in the country's history had there been a need for homes of this type, but as the world changed so, too, did the way care was provided for those who needed it.

In days gone by, there was always some family around to provide support for those who were in need of it. In the ever-changing society that we are a part of, the emphasis on providing family support was beginning to falter. There was an ever-increasing number of people who genuinely needed help, but had nowhere to turn. It was with this thought in mind that places such as the

Topton Orphans' Home, the Good Shepherd Home, the Bethany Children's Home, and the Phoebe Deaconess Home were founded. They would provide the support for these people who had no place else to turn.

All of these homes were founded with a base of support from the Lutheran and the Reformed churches. The idea of providing support was passed down to the local congregations of both churches, and their support was solicited. The congregations in New Tripoli were not ones to shy away from providing a helping hand. The records clearly show substantial donations on a regular basis to all of the above-mentioned institutions. Not all of the donations were monetary in nature. Being the booming agricultural center that it was in those days, the people of the area were always ones to respond with gifts from the farm. An entry in Rev. Smith's diary, dated November 13, 1908, will attest to that fact; he writes:

"Today we sent a consignment of produce (5485 lbs.) to Bethany Orphans Home. This is the greatest gift that we have sent at any one time and also the 'banner' donation of the year. Money valuation \$97.00. This was exceedingly good for Ebenezer."

It is also noted, in November of 1910 that a shipment of just over four tons of produce was sent to Bethany.

In addition to money and produce, the Ladies Aid Society sent quilts and sheets to the various homes and made regular visits to see the residents of these homes.

Another external change we saw during this period was the church's involvement in global missions. The country, on a whole, had just come out of a period of isolationism, and entrance and departure to and from many other countries had been opened wide. The country saw an influx of immigrants, the likes of which have never been seen since.

On the other hand, we now had the ability to go into many foreign countries which, only years before, had never been open to outsiders. Most of these countries were populated by natives who practiced religions that we, as enlightened foreigners, considered strange and pagan. We felt it our duty to go into these countries and provide religious instruction to the natives in order to convert them to our religious teachings.

The concept of missionaries, and the conversion of heathens, was not a new idea. Locally, many of the Moravian settlements were founded with the purpose of converting the Indians to the Moravian Church teachings. At this time though, it was no longer the United States that was receiving the missionaries. The new areas for their teachings were in far-off places like Africa and China.

It seems that the congregations at Ebenezer were given plenty of first-hand opportunity to sample what life in the field was really like. From all that is recorded, it appears that there was a high amount of interest in what was taking place in these foreign missions, so much so, that missionaries visited and spoke at the church.

One of these missionaries was S. Emma Ziemer, the founder of the Ziemer Memorial Girls School in Yochow, China. On a visit to the United States, she was procured by Rev. Smith for a speaking engagement at Ebenezer. He writes:

"Miss S. Emma Ziemer spent the day with us at New Tripoli. This was a 'Red-Letter' day for Ebenezer. A large congregation greeted her in the evening when she spoke in English."

Another reason why the church congregations were so wrapped up in, and so interested by, the work of foreign missions, was because a son of the Reformed congregation was an active participant in these missions.

Rev. William Anson Reimert was born at Klinesville, Berks County, on February 7, 1877. He was a son of William D. and Jane A. (Follweiler) Reimert. He spent his early years at New Tripoli, and attended church at Ebenezer. He was confirmed by Rev. Nevin Helffrich as a member of the first class to be confirmed in the new church. His early schooling took place in the public schools of Lynn Township and, from there, he went on to the Keystone State Normal School at Kutztown, Ursinus College, and the Ursinus School of Theology, graduating in 1901.

Before his graduation he applied to the Board of Foreign Missions, "to go where the harvest is ripest and where the reapers are fewest." He had voiced "the present demand needs, the unexampled crisis and unusual opportunity which the mission field presents," and he declared, "I am ready to obey the Master's command, go."

Rev. Reimert wasn't sent abroad immediately; he first filled a one-year pastorate at St. Paul's Church in Summit Hill. On January 3, 1902, he was elected as the first evangelistic missionary to China. A farewell service was held at Zion's Church in Allentown on October 28, 1902, and shortly thereafter Rev. Reimert, his wife Mary, and their three-month old son William, left for China, arriving in Yochow on Christmas Day, 1902.

He quickly became proficient in the language of the district and, in no time, was making his influence felt. One year after his arrival he wrote:

"Truly the Lord is greatly using us among the Chinese of Yochow. He has set such an open door before us that we behold our privilege with awe and wonder. Souls are waiting. The Lord is calling. Let us be true to our trust."

Rev. Smith notes in his records that the Reimerts did make one visit home during the summer of 1911. A collection was taken up for the furtherance of their work, and on August 13, 1911, a "very impressive farewell service" was held. There were addresses made by Rev. Smith who, it seems, was an ardent supporter of the Reimerts, J. G. Rupp, and J. Albert Beam.

When the Reimerts left for Yochow on August 14, 1911, little did anyone know what a tragic end this story would have. On Sunday, June 13, 1920, some trouble was started at the east gate of the Ziemer School where Rev. Reimert toiled. Upon investigating the disturbance, Rev. Reimert was confronted by a group of undisciplined soldiers, who were looking for food. In attempting to comply with their wishes, Rev. Reimert told the soldiers they could not enter the compound. One

soldier, unhappy with this response, shot and killed Rev. Reimert, who died defending his beloved school.

Rev. Reimert's body was recovered by night, and a man in the country gave his own coffin in which to bury him. His body was laid to rest on Tuesday, June 15th, by the students of Huping College and his associates in the mission. He was buried next to Miss Ziemer, who had visited our church earlier. Memorial services were held in numerous places, including Ebenezer, for the man who would be referred to as our "Martyr Missionary."

Probably the most significant of the external changes to happen at Ebenezer, was the change in the language of the services at the church. It is not known in which year, exactly, the first English service was preached at Ebenezer; however, we do know that whatever the date, the dominant language definitely remained German for the services conducted at Ebenezer.

However, during this period in time, English made its first foothold in what had historically been a predominantly German arena. One would be fooled by thinking that this foothold came easily. We can speculate that the greatest amount of resistance probably came from the older members of both congregations, who wanted to hold on to their heritage but, as youth is often quick to point out, "in with the new, out with the old," no matter what particular merits the old may have.

The ministers, probably realizing the need for progress, yet not wanting to step on too many old toes, passed the decision on to both consistories. Upon very little debate by either group, motions were made, and carried, to add regularly-scheduled English services.

Up until this point, English services had been held sporadically, but the Lutherans decided that as of January 1, 1907, English services would be held every three months, during the afternoon. The Reformed congregation then decided, in April of 1908, that they would hold English services one Sunday evening a month. This type of gradual change was probably the best for everyone concerned. The young, progressive members had their English services and, at the same time, the old-line Germans kept control of the major services.

The English services were a long time in gaining acceptance. Rev. Smith notes, early in 1908, that "The English sermons are hardly appreciated sufficiently." There were even young people who weren't so sure of this language that was being thrust upon them. At one 1910 wedding, Rev. Smith notes that the young couple "felt rather timid about English." However, by the end of the year 1908, Mrs. W. H. Hoffman had donated the first English hymn pamphlets to the church, and they were immediately put into use at English services. By the same time of the following year, when the Sunday School celebrated its semi-centennial, the best attended of all services during the celebration, was the English service.

This change from German to English would not be an overnight change. Although it started during this period of change, the final complete switch would not be made until sometime in the 1930s. Probably the biggest accelerant to change would be World War I.²² It was during this period that just the thought of anything German left a stench in most people's nostrils. Changes were made; first, every fifth service was to be in English, then every third. By the time 1920 came around, it had been changed to every other service, an English service. The final breaths of

German, to be heard in regular church services, were during special communion services held twice a year, and they also were finally changed over to English sometime during the 1930s.²³

It is interesting to note that many of our members have not forgotten their German heritage. Over the years, numerous "special" services in the dialect have been conducted from our pulpit. Who knows, with today's renewed interest in our Pennsylvania-German roots, we may soon hear the words of our forefathers echoing through the church auditorium as they are once again preached from the pulpit in the German language.

The last major change to take place during this period was to be the departure of Rev. Smith, the rather vocal but well-liked leader of the Reformed congregation. It seems that after six years of effective leadership at Ebenezer, Rev. Smith decided to take on a new congregation. Although his decision seems to have been a hasty one, his personal records indicate that a change had been under consideration for quite some time. He notes in fall of 1909 that an erroneous report of his leaving had created quite a stir. At one point in 1910, less than four years after taking his position with the charge, he was approached by another church. The final result was Rev. Smith's preaching a trial sermon at a Lehighton church. However, by the time he went to preach the sermon, his feelings toward the matter had changed, for he writes, "At one time (I) had great prospects, but (now) treated the matter with great indifference." An invitation to preach at Doylestown would follow this.

As mentioned earlier, the great majority of the problems that Rev. Smith had, while employed by the charge, came to him from his congregation and his fellow minister at Heidelberg. It seems that at one particular point in 1911, he had the whole church turned against him at Heidelberg. A problem seems to have arisen over some collection plates that were purchased. This must not have set well with all who were involved, for Rev. Smith notes in his diary:

"There is a great rivalry at Heidelberg brought on thru Sunday School and Missionary Society, but especially thru Rev. Longacre (Heidelberg's Lutheran minister) who is a 'snake in the grass' for everything that means progress. Had a great disturbance on account of collection plates which were bought after the 4 trustees had three constructed."

This whole incident, it appears, went so far as to warrant a special Joint Council-Consistory meeting on the subject. The meeting must have been to no avail, as Rev. Smith writes, "The matter wasn't improved. People are turning against me very much because I am misunderstood. They want to be left alone." By fall of 1911, it appears that situation had lightened up somewhat, as he writes, "The tide has turned."

The tide must not have turned enough, because in December of 1911 he made a trip to Jeannette, to preach for a congregation there. He does write, however, that "This was offered unsolicited." He goes on to note that he felt it was a "nice field." Obviously, the people in Jeannette must have been duly impressed, for on December 27, 1911, Rev. Smith was notified that he had been "unanimously nominated for this pulpit, (with) the election to take place Jan 7, 1912." The election was a success for Rev. Smith. He was elected as pastor of Grace Church in Jeannette, which he accepted.

Rev. Smith's final days at New Tripoli were difficult ones. It seems that had he had more of a choice, he probably would not have left Ebenezer, at least not at this point in time. But, getting away from the problems at Heidelberg, also meant having to leave Ebenezer. He notes that his final services at Heidelberg were difficult, and that even he "broke down at the meeting of the Missionary Society." He notes that his farewell services at New Tripoli were a "hard thing," and points out that the reason was because he had made so many good friends during his tenure there.

Little did he know that his last service at Ebenezer would not be his final ministerial act at the church. The Morning Call of February 8, 1912, states:

"Rev. George M. Smith shipped his household goods to Jeannette, Pa. He will spend a few weeks with his parents at Walnutport before they leave for said place."

Just as he was about to take leave of the area, Jane Reimert, the mother of William Reimert, the missionary, died after undergoing an operation at Strycher's Private Hospital in Reading. For Rev. Smith, this must have come as a bit of a blow, leaving on such a sad note. Instead, he stayed long enough, literally, to preach the funeral service for the mother of his friend, Rev. Reimert, and run to the station to catch the train that would take him on to his new home and his new congregation. Rev. Smith was assisted by Rev. Ebert at this service.

This would not be the last we would see of Rev. Smith. In both August and September of 1917, he would return to assist Rev. Althouse at two funerals, those of Rev. O. B. Wehr and Charles F. Heller. They were both very large funerals, and he had a difficult time for he notes that these were "my two best friends."

Rev. Smith's career was a long and glorious one after leaving New Tripoli. From Jeannette, he went on to a church in Telford, (and from there to a church in Mahanoy City. It was during those years at Mahanoy City, which just happened to coincide with the introduction of prohibition to the United States, that Rev. Smith fought most vigorously against his favorite evil-alcohol. The groundwork that he so carefully laid at Ebenezer, preaching upon the hazards of drink, led him to become one of the leading proponents of the Anti-Saloon League in, what many people think of as an area of the state that takes its drink very seriously, the coal regions. He very proudly chalks up to his victory his personal efforts in leading the anti-saloon fight in Mahanoy City, closing fifty-three saloons, and five more around the church.

His efforts must have been well-noted, for shortly thereafter he broke into the big leagues of preaching, getting a pastorate at a large church on Broad Street in center city Philadelphia, near Temple University. From there he went on to Akron, Ohio, Wilkes-Barre, and back again to Philadelphia.

His final pastorate would just about take him back to the place of his birth. In June of 1950, Rev. Smith would fill his last pulpit at Jacob's Church in Weissport, not many miles from Walnutport. He would preach here until his last days. He died on October 25, 1954, and was buried at the Fairview Cemetery in Slatington. The text that was preached at the funeral was from John 5:35- "He was a burning and a shining light and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in the light." If

nothing else was said about the man that Rev. Smith was, one could probably safely assume that, yes, he was a "burning and shining light" to those around him.

With the departure of Rev. Smith, again the call went out for a new leader for the Reformed congregation. This time an offer was tendered to a young man by the name of Rev. Howard A. Althouse, a native of Reading. He was graduated from the Keystone Teachers College, in the year 1900, with a Bachelor of Education degree. For a short period of time, he taught in the schools of Muhlenberg Township, outside of Reading. He then entered Ursinus School of Theology, from which he graduated in 1904.

In 1904, he was licensed by the Reading Classis, and for a period of time supplied the Berne Church. From there, he went on to fill a post in the Dillsburg Charge, York County. It was there that he was ordained. A charge in Avon, then Pine Grove Church, would follow. It was from this charge that Rev. Althouse was called to Ebenezer. Records show that Rev. Althouse was performing his duties at Ebenezer as early as April, 1912. Obviously, the congregation had made a fairly quick choice in hiring Rev. Althouse. The speed with which Rev. Smith's replacement was hired clearly says something about how the congregation felt towards Rev. Althouse.

Structurally, the church building and the church property went through some change during this period. One problem that constantly faced the congregation was the upkeep of the old cemetery. With all the lots sold off years before, and nothing like perpetual care in existence, the care of this graveyard had fallen into the hands of the church. Obviously, the job had not been done too satisfactorily, for some rather heated discussion pursued during a Joint Council-Consistory meeting in June of 1908. The final result was that "strong sentiments prevailed to make further improvements to the cemetery." A rather eloquent speech was delivered by Elder Moses Mantz, who said that these improvements needed to be done for the "memories of the fathers and mothers whose remains repose in this 'city of the dead.'

The final improvements were an overall cleaning of the cemetery, the building of cement walks leading towards the cemetery, and the building of a fence around it.

The female congregation members were instrumental in providing a few improvements during this period. It is noted that the large globe lights that grace the front entrance of our church, and light the way for all to see, were placed there by the Ladies Aid Society in the year 1911. In addition, it was desired in the early part of 1914 to have a gas motor and blower attached to the organ. Up to this time, the air provided for this job was produced via a pump that was hand-operated, usually by the janitor. Two female choir members, Mrs. Clinton Leiby and Mrs. Isadore Lauchnor, volunteered to canvass the church members for support. They met with success, for in 1915 these donations paid for the blower that was attached to the organ. A gasoline engine, to operate the blower, was presented to the church by William Hoffman and James A. Miller.

Another constant source of trouble to both consistories was the disposition of the church-owned house and farm. Previous to 1909, it appears that a deal had been struck, by which the organist received the house and farm, rent free, in lieu of a salary. However, at a special meeting in 1909,

days after the death of their organist, Prof. Theodore Smith, it was decided to pay the organist and sell or rent the farm.

Before too much was decided about what to do with the farm, on July 16, 1910, a summertime thunderstorm passed through the area, and in its wake, left the smoldering ruins of what was once the church barn. The Joint Council-Consistory's immediate decision was not to rebuild the barn, for it felt that the farm did not pay sufficiently as to warrant a reinvestment of money in a new structure. One thing it did invest in immediately, though, were lightning rods for the church, at a cost of \$37.50.

The rebuilding of the barn was put to a congregational vote, in which the Joint Council-Consistory was soundly defeated. The congregations wanted the barn rebuilt, voting fifty-seven for and eight against. It was ordered that work begin as soon as possible, with a new barn to be built onto what was left of the old foundations. The lumber was to be taken from the church property for the framework.

A final breakdown on the cost was as follows:

"Tilghman Weiss, Labor	\$58.27
Jas. W. Korn, Labor	45.60
Wm. F. Miller, Carpenter work contract	160.00
Wm. F. Miller, Carpenter work extra	5.00
Jas. A. Miller, Insurance policy	3.50
Ontelaunee Slate Co.	112.05
Krauss & Herbert, Painters	10.72
Granville Leiby, Sawing lumber	96.95
David N. Leiby, Hauling & labor	71.85
Henry A. Sittler, Hauling	3.00
Thomas Kern, Lumber	16.20
Freight	.25
Benjamin Henninger, Mason	12.56
Wilson Benninghoff, Mason	10.39

Thomas Kern, Lumber	268.91
Jas. A. Weaver, Timber & labor	5.50
Jas. W. Loy, Hardware	10.78
J. A. Miller & Bro., Cement, sand, & hardware	61.59
Frank Kerschner, Blacksmith	5.35
David N. Leiby, Overseer	<u>15.00</u>
Total	\$973.47"

A final resolution to this problem would be that each year the farm would be auctioned off to the highest bidder for their use, barn and all.