

NORTHERN KENTUCKY VIEWS PRESENTS:

New Columbus
Baptist Church:
a Sketch

by
James C. Bryant, Pastor

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NEW COLUMBUS BAPTIST CHURCH: A HISTORICAL SKETCH

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During the latter part of the summer in which the famous Porter-Ditzler Debate took place in New Columbus, a group of 32 citizens met together on Friday, August 29, 1890, for the purpose of constituting the New Columbus Baptist Church. Those original members were largely recruited from two Baptist churches (now disbanded) outside the township: Pleasnat Grove and Pleasant View. James A. Davis, a resident minister, was called immediately as first pastor of the new church; W. G. Dorman was elected Church Clerk. First Trustees were Andrew Jackson, J. W. Thomason, and G. W. A. Hammonds. Four days after the church's constitution, she was accepted into the Concord Association. Within a week later, the Rev. J. J. Porter, pastor at Owenton, returned to the scene of his recent debate and preached a successful "protracted meeting."

New Columbus built an elegant house of worship and dedicated it in 1892; it was a white, wooden frame structure with arched Gothic windows, a high belfry, and a seating capacity of 400. From the Minutes of the Concord Association, we can learn that New Columbus had the most beautiful house of worship in "the bounds of the Association." It has maintained a dignified and attractive meeting house since then.

The church has been historically missionary. She was a charter member of the Owen County Baptist Association at its organization in 1924. She has maintained a close relationship to the Association throughout her history (except for a brief period when she was unre-

presented by messengers.). When the Concord Association met in 1918, the Clerk recorded the following comment: "We wish to commend the New Columbus Church for their manner of entertainment; their way is an ideal way, and should become the rule of the Association." The church has entertained sessions during the years 1894, 1918, 1947, and 1957.

Three members have been ordained by the church to the work of the full-time gospel ministry: Raymond J. Works (1916), Orlie Hale (1920), and Harold Mefford (1961). Among those pastors serving the church in earlier years were the following: James A. Davis, John William Waldrop (two pastorates), E. F. Muscik, W. O. Harrison, Orlie Hale, George W. Redding, William F. McGibney, James William Thompson, and Harry Lee Wainscott.

Since 1950, the church has seen many changes. Among them was the conversion of some of the unused space into seven Sunday School classrooms, renovation of the sanctuary, new floors, and an oil furnace installed. In 1956, New Columbus became the first church in the Association to possess the newly published Baptist Hymnal. She has maintained a strong music department through the years. In 1964, the church purchased her first electronic organ (price: \$1500). Many visitors to the area have commented that New Columbus has one of the most impressive worship services in the county. The most recent contribution to the church's life is the establishment this year (1965) of a library. There are already more than 100 carefully selected volumes.

Since the first week of the church's organization, she has been giving substantially to the cause of world missions. In recent years, she has maintained a careful percentage basis of giving through the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention. She also gives systematically to Association missions by regular monthly donations.

Sunday School was organized at New Columbus in 1892 with J. A. Abbott serving as first Superintendent. Orlie Hale served as Superintendent in 1915; and in 1920, Mrs. Ozella B. True became the first woman in the church and in the Association to serve as a regularly elected church Sunday School Superintendent. Another woman was elected to that position in 1944, Mrs. Corinee Jones. Sunday School became standard in 1934, under the leadership of J. W. Juett.

Woman's Missionary Union was begun in 1923. Mrs. Addie Wilson and Mrs. Phoebe Davis were among its early presidents. Training Union was begun in 1934, but has suffered a sporadic existence through the years.

The Church has maintained traditionally an emphasis on learning; some of her pastors have been college teachers; George W. Redding, James William Thompson, Eugene Mandrell, James C. Bryant. An

uncommon number of the members have received college training; a high proportion of the church's young people attend college upon their graduation from high school. The church and the community have sought to preserve the strong cultural emphasis which characterized the area in its greatest period. For additional information on this and the history in general, including the early settlers in the New Columbus and lower Eagle Creek communities, see the recently published book by James C. Bryant, New Columbus and the Baptist Church in Historical Perspective (Louisville, 1965).