

THE STORY OF
EMMANUEL

1886 - 1969

THE STORY OF EMMANUEL

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PREFACE

When we were celebrating 75 years of Congregational worship and witness in West Wickham in the Autumn of 1963, I thought it might be of some value to outline the early struggles of our Non -Conformist forefathers in this area. The story of Emmanuel was published in July, 1964.

In October of this year Emmanuel will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary as a church in The Grove and, at the request of a number of friends, I have revised the original manuscript, adding further material here and there, and have written two further chapters to bring the story up-to-date.

The Introduction remains as it was written in 1964.

I want to express my thanks to many friends who have made possible the telling of this story, and hope it may also be of some small value in outlining the wider witness and service of the local Christian churches as they seek together to serve Jesus Christ in this area.

GEORGE HEWITT.

March, 1969.

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INTRODUCTION

Once upon a time, the Trustees of a certain Church invited one of its members to compile a history of the Church since its opening fifty years before. With many misgivings the invitation was accepted, and almost at once the compiler found himself in difficulty.

The problems confronting him regarding the lamentable lack of authentic evidence and the contradiction of statements made at one time or another concerning the doings of the Church in the early days, led him to a firm conclusion. It is that every Church ought to have some careful record of its early history for the benefit of those who in later years seek to write up that history in a more comprehensive way.

Hence this attempt to set down what I have been able to learn of the early days of Congregationalism in West Wickham.

This is not intended to be an exhaustive treatise. It is but the jottings of one who is interested in "the rock from which we were hewn" and has found inspiration from the courage and vision of those early pioneers who blazed the trail of Non-conformity in this area.

I must acknowledge the invaluable help given by Miss Winifred Jay, M.A., of the Bromley Congregational Church in carrying out careful research into the historical documents of that Church, and also for making available to me valuable copies of the Bromley Manual, and the Bromley Record.

Writing in the Bromley Record of September, 1929, the Rev. O. G. Whitefield, Minister of Bromley at that time, said, "We can know no greater joy than to be able to say in years to come, when Emmanuel is well established and doing the great work it is destined to do, that, by the Grace of God, we were enabled to begin it."

The story of Emmanuel recounted here is surely a justification of the faith and vision of those early members of the Bromley Church who penned the opening pages of this story by their zeal for the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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CHAPTER ONE

"THE EARLY DAYS"

The story begins in a Harvest Festival Service at the Bromley Congregational Church on 21st September, 1885. There was a large congregation in Church that day for Bromley was even then a strong and wealthy Church and well established, being founded in the year 1788.

In the course of his sermon, the Minister, Rev. R. H. Lovell, spoke of his concern for the neighbouring village of West Wickham, an "out-of-the-way village, where many of the people are living in spiritual darkness."

He pointed out that no Free Church witness was being made in the village, which had a rural population of nearly 1,000 people, most of whom were agricultural workers employed by the landowners.

"Would that we could send an Evangelist into this village," said Mr. Lovell, but even to send a colporteur to distribute or sell Bible tracts would cost some £40 a year."

It was a cry from the heart. And it did not go unheeded. In the congregation that day was a visitor, a lady whose name has not come down to us. How I wish I could identify her. For, moved by the Minister's appeal that day, she sent £40 to his vestry after the service with the simple message: "Please send a colporteur to West Wickham."

And so it was that a colporteur from Spurgeon's Society came to West Wickham village. He was a Mr. Hardiman, and he took up residence at No. 3, Helvetia Cottages, Kent Road. He was charged to serve not only West Wickham, but also the villages of Hayes and Keston.

Christian witness after the Free Church tradition began in that little cottage in Kent Road, where the colporteur held meetings for prayer and worship.

He was a zealous man of God, this Mr. Hardiman. In one year he made over 10,000 visits and sold 2,500 Bibles, books, text cards, and Christian periodicals. The following year he almost doubled his sales, in addition to the free literature distributed.

Services of worship for adults and children continued in that little cottage, and very slowly the number of worshippers grew. Very slowly, because in those early days Non-conformists were regarded with some suspicion by the members of St. John's, the Parish Church of West Wickham. Indeed, the records show that the landowners of West Wickham, fervent defenders of the Established Church, made it difficult for their tenants or employees to worship at these Cottage Services. To worship at the Cottage was to be regarded with suspicion.

Such a situation has never prevented, and did not then prevent, the people from worshipping in their own way, and attendances at the Cottage Services continued to increase, until the day came when a wealthy and devoted worker at Bromley Church decided that West Wickham should have a Congregational Church of its own. He was Mr. Edward Ford Duncanson.

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The first problem to be faced was the difficulty of finding a suitable piece of ground that might be purchased for this purpose. In this matter there was strong opposition from the Church of England folk in the village. The cry went up, "No Dissenters' Chapel shall be built in West Wickham", and so strong was the influence of the Established Church that no landowner would sell land for this purpose.

Then a lady in sympathy with the Free Church cause offered to sell the area at the end of her garden as a possible building site, and immediately Mr. Duncanson bought it freehold for £90.

Then he opened a Building Fund and the friends in Bromley Church responded at once. Sums totalling £120 were donated immediately. Further gifts were received and on the 21st September, 1887, Mr. Duncanson laid the foundation stone of the Mission Church in North Road.

This was a great day. The builder, Mr. W. Grubb of Bromley, had his scaffolding poles gaily decorated for the occasion.

A formal address was delivered by the Rev. R. H. Lovell and later placed in a bottle in a cavity under the stone. Mr. Duncanson was presented with a silver trowel by the Bromley Minister or, behalf of that Church, and purses containing gifts were placed on the stone. The offertory at the stone-laying ceremony was £50!

On 5th January, 1888, the new building, known as "The Chapel" by the people of the village, was opened by no less a personage than the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, "the Prince of Preachers." His text on this occasion was "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." I wonder what a wealthy landowner within hearing distance of Spurgeon's voice would have made of his choice of text?

The little Church, built to seat 150, was crowded to the doors. The Service was followed by tea and then an evening meeting. Mr. Duncanson took the Chair at this meeting and tributes were paid to his work in making possible the erection of the Mission Church. One of the speeches referred to the new building as "a real Gospel light which, though small, might produce the greatest results.'

Within two months of its opening congregations in the little Chapel were between 60 and 70 people. The main Service was in the evening. In the morning there was a Prayer Meeting, with a Sunday School in the afternoon led by the colporteur. There was also a Thursday Evening Service.

By the end of May the whole cost of the building and furnishings had been met. Sunday by Sunday members of the Bromley Church took active parts in the conduct of the worship. Many spoke of the walk over the fields to West Wickham to join the enthusiastic village congregation as the ideal preparation for worship!

The first list of Church Members in West Wickham, published in 1889 when a Church was inaugurated, shows 17 names on the Roll.

In 1892 Mr. Hardiman left West Wickham. The new colporteur was a Mr. Hewitt. He, along with his wife and a Mr. Humerton (the Superintendent appointed by Bromley Church', carried on the work "with much enthusiasm and success."

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In 1895 a Mothers' Meeting was formed by Mrs. Hewitt. This and the meetings for Prayer and Bible Study and the Band of Hope flourished as the years went by.

The next great milestone was in 1899 when the Rev. Ebenezer Evans was forced by ill-health to retire from a Congregational Church in Huddersfield, and took charge of the Mission Church.

In the following year he wrote, "When one considers the smallness of the village population, and the strong antagonistic influence of the dominant Church, the wonder is that so large a proportion of the poor people attend our Services." Mr. Evans was paid £6 a month!

The opposition from the Established Church continued to be felt. "Some of the people dare not enter the Mission Church," wrote Mr. Evans in 1904; yet there were signs that "the Chapel" was winning its place in the community, and gaining the respect of the local clergy and Anglican residents. The Church Membership increased as Ebenezer Evans continued his ministry. He resigned through ill-health in 1908 and died in 1911, deeply mourned by those he had served so faithfully.

In 1910 a new Superintendent was appointed from the Bromley Church - a Sister Mary Gibson of No. 3, Oakley Villas, West Wickham. After two years' service, Sister Mary moved on to another Mission in Manchester.

Then another Red-Letter Day, when a Mrs. Ellery (a member of Bromley Church who had recently returned from missionary service in the Congo) was appointed Superintendent at West Wickham.

Mrs. Ellery's work was outstanding in its missionary zeal. Under her ministry two members of the little Church offered themselves for missionary service overseas. They were a Miss Hadaway, posted to the Congo, and Miss Hewitt (daughter of the second colporteur) who, after training, became a Missionary Nurse in the Congo.

By 1923 the little Mission Church itself was reaching out by forming Cottage Prayer Meetings in Addington village. Open Air Services were held in West Wickham on Saturday and Sunday evenings, and also in other villages.

The Women's Meeting - the only one of its kind in the village flourished. In its Missionary giving the little Church supported a leper boy in India, and sent money to a school in the Congo.

Relationships with the Church of England were improving. In April, 1925, Mrs. Ellery was invited to represent the Free Church at a function concerned with the Institution and Induction of the new Rector - though it is not clear if she was invited to the Service.

Another example of the willingness to co-operate was the Band of Hope under Miss McAndrew to which Anglican and Congregational children came.

The first marriage at the Mission Chapel was a great occasion. It took place on 3rd April, 1926, and was the first wedding in West Wickham outside the Parish Church. The Mission was beautifully decorated for the occasion with palms, flowers and plants loaned by Mrs. G. Mellin of Wickham Hall. The bride was Kathleen B. Santer, s former Sunday School scholar and teacher, and the bridegroom was Ernest Brown, a London City Missioner. The Service was conducted by Rev. R. O. Whitefield (of the Bromley Church) and the Bromley Church organist, Mr. W. H. Sharland, officiated at the organ.

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CHAPTER TWO

"THE NEXT STEP"

On 23rd March, 1925, a very important letter was written. This was addressed to the Bromley Church and told of the concern of two West Wickham residents, Mr. Francis E. Crabb of "Oakhurst", Beckenham Road, and Mr. W. J. Campbell of "Ellerslie", Grosvenor Road. A copy of this letter is in our possession.

These two men directed the attention of the Church at Bromley to the changing character of the village of West Wickham, which was now being transformed into a London suburb. A Village Church, they felt, could not meet the needs of the new people flooding into the area. Their request was that the Bromley Church might consider building a modern, larger Church on a more central site.

This letter led to a special meeting at Bromley, and the search for a suitable site upon which a new Church might be built. They met with much difficulty, but two-and-a-half years later the site on which Emmanuel now stands was purchased.

On the 14th March, 1928, the Rev. Dr. Sidney Berry, General Secretary of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, presided at a special meeting at Bromley to inaugurate a new Church at West Wickham. It was reported that £8,000 would be needed, and by the 2nd March, gifts and promises amounted to £3,340.

On 15th May, 1928, there was a Public Meeting in West Wickham Lecture Hall to enlist the support of new residents, and soon afterwards building commenced.

Sunday, 9th June, 1929, was an important day for the members of the Mission Church, for the Rev. Charles J. Barry, the Minister of a Congregational Church in Newport, Monmouthshire, came to conduct the services at West Wickham. The Church was crowded to the doors and, as a result of this visit, Mr. Barry was invited to become the first Minister of the new Church we now know as Emmanuel. Mr. Barry accepted the invitation. (It was he who suggested that the Church be named "Emmanuel".)

On 10th July, 1929, some 60 members of The Women's League of Bromley Church visited Emmanuel. They gathered in the church to sing the hymn "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow" and afterwards offered to pay the cost of the new pulpit. The Bromley Church choir donated the cost of the Reading Desk, and the tapestry for the Oak Reredos in the chancel was presented by Mr. B. I. Hellyer. A Communion Table and Chairs were given by Miss Bumstead in memory of her parents. In the early days the Communion Plate belonging to Bromley Church was used, but in September, 1930, a full set of Sheffield Communion Plate was presented by an anonymous donor for use at Emmanuel. The name of the donor was to be placed in a sealed envelope and deposited in the Minute Book for the information of a future historian. It seems to have disappeared!

In September, 1929 canvassers from the Bromley Church covered West Wickham inviting residents to the Opening Ceremony of the Church. Then, on 3rd October, 1929, the Lord Mayor of London, Sir J. E. Kynaston Studd, opened the new Church. So began a new chapter in the history of Congregational witness in this area.

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The following Sunday, Mr. Barry conducted the first Services, and at the organ was Mr. Francis Crabb who, along with Mr. W. J. Campbell, had written the historic letter to Bromley Church. What a great day it must have been for him! Mr. Crabb was appointed Church Treasurer in 1930.

On the 6th November, 1929, Rev. C. J. Barry was inducted as Emmanuel's first Minister, and there began a ministry which was to lay the foundations of the Church Family at Emmanuel of which we today are a part.

Charles Barry was "a live wire" and, as was said at his Induction, he was "likely to hand out a few shocks."

It was no light task he had undertaken. There came to the new Church worshippers from every tradition. Some had previously worshipped within the Anglican Communion, "High" and "Low". As this was the only Free Church in the area, there were people from all the Free Church traditions of worship.

It was quite impossible to produce an Order of Worship to satisfy everyone. Yet such was the personality of Charles Barry that the new Church was firmly established. He was a friend to all, and had an office at the Church to which came men and women, from all walks of life, to receive spiritual guidance and friendly counsel. He was also the children's Minister and soon built up a strong Children's Church. Before very long the name Emmanuel came to stand for something spiritually vital in the area. Not least in importance was the warm friendship which developed between Mr. Barry and the Rector of the Church on the Hill. The Rector read the lesson at Mr. Barry's Induction and, on one occasion, these two stood together at the Railway Station entrance early in the morning to invite business men to worship in the Churches on Sunday. What a long way to have come from the bitterness and opposition to Free Churchmanship of 1886!

On Palm Sunday, 1930, came the Church Enrolment Service when, with solemn ceremony, 138 Founder Members of the Church made profession of Faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, and pledged themselves to be a Family at Emmanuel. The Roll of Membership they signed has been preserved as a permanent reminder of that great day.

It would be right to mention here the name of one of the Founder Members who, because of illness, was unable to be present at the Enrolment Service. He was the Rev. Joseph Wardle, who played a full part in the early struggles of Non-conformity in West Wickham, and had on many occasions conducted the Cottage Prayer Meetings.

Emmanuel was intended to serve all the Free Church people of West Wickham, and it is interesting to note that the records suggest that one third of the Founder Members were of Methodist persuasion.

So Emmanuel was born—a worthy successor of the little North Road Mission Church of 1888.

The Mission Church building still stands in North Road. It is now the Windsor factory.

It would be pleasant, but not historically true, to report that all was plain sailing for the new Church. As we have pointed out, it was no light thing to try to

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weld into one Church Family worshippers from almost every Christian tradition. Mrs. Ellery, who had so faithfully served the Mission Church and had been a member of Bromley Church for 40 years, transferred her membership to the Baptist Tabernacle at West Croydon in 1930.

A small group of worshippers, unable to accept the Order of Worship at Emmanuel, left the Church soon after the Opening to hold Services of Worship after their own "Simple Gospel" pattern in the West Wickham Lecture Hall where they rented a room.

We believe it was from this group that the West Wickham (now West Wickham and Shirley) Baptist Church was founded. They were first constituted an Evangelical Free Church, and known as the West Wickham Gospel Mission. In 1935 they became a Baptist Church. The Methodist Church in West Wickham was founded at a meeting on 12th December, 1932. A Society was formed on 7th October, 1933. The first Service of Public Worship was at the Justin Hall on 26th November, 1933, and the first Church opened on 3rd April, 1935. With the formation of the Methodist Church in West Wickham, a large number of those who had found their spiritual home at Emmanuel but had a Methodist background, transferred their membership to the new Church.

It is interesting to note that the Justin Hall was built in 1933 for the dual purpose of a Masonic Lodge and a Spiritualist Church. The Methodists held their first Public Worship there, and the first Roman Catholic Mass in West Wickham since the Reformation was said there on 2nd February, 1936. For further information on the Churches of West Wickham see [Chapter Six](#).

A delightful note in the Church Meeting minutes of 13th October, 1930 records a motion to appoint a boy to blow the organ at one shilling a week, and expressing thanks to two boys who have done this work free for one year!

The year 1937 was a most important one in the story of Emmanuel. Up to this time the Church was under the authority of the Bromley Congregational Church and its Executive Body was a Church Council with equal representation from Bromley and Emmanuel Churches.

In February, 1937, the Trust Deed of Emmanuel Church was passed over to the London Congregational Union and Emmanuel embarked upon its "independent" life. Now a Diaconate could be appointed, and this was done at the Church Meeting on the 29th April, 1937. Five Deacons were appointed to serve along with the Emmanuel representatives on the old Church Council. From thirteen nominations the following were elected: the Rev. W. J. V. Saville, Mr. J. H. Maddocks, Mr. F. Lang, Mr. T. Beesley and Mr. S. G. Bills. Deacons from the old Church Council were Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Garlett, Mr. A. Brickell, Mr. S. Wright, Mr. E. Peckham, Mr. W. K. Hill, Mr. L. Harrington (Deacons' Secretary), Mr. F. Bodger (Church Treasurer) and Mr. W. Ware (Church Secretary).

Rev. C. J. Barry left Emmanuel and proceeded to North Street Church, Brighton, in October, 1935.

The first Deacons' Meeting was held on the 19th May, 1937. (It was not until July, 1938, that all outstanding financial liabilities to the Bromley Church were discharged.)

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CHAPTER THREE

"INDEPENDENCE AND EXTENSION"

Of the subsequent story of Emmanuel many who read this will be aware.

The Rev. W. Griffith-Jones served the Church until 1951 when he became Moderator of the Province of Wales and Monmouthshire.

In 1949 he served as Chairman of the London Congregational Union, and in 1958-9 was Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

You will recall with gratitude the long and fruitful ministry of the Rev. William Griffith-Jones, which began on the 11th March; 1936, and under which the Church continued to flourish.

Of historic interest was the special Service at Emmanuel on 1st November, 1936, when the "Mailu" New Testament, translated by Rev. W. J. V. Saville, was dedicated. Mr. Saville, after retirement from Missionary service (34 years), served as a Deacon at Emmanuel and in 1945 became its only Life Deacon thus far.

Another important event was the dedication of the new organ on 1st March, 1937, when a recital was given by Reginald Goss-Custard, F.R.C.O. This new organ replaced the small hand-blown, reed organ which had previously served to lead the congregation at worship.

"Griff", as he was affectionately known to many of us, was a much loved Minister, and during his ministry at Emmanuel the need for more accommodation at Emmanuel became an urgent matter. So it was that in November, 1947, a Building Fund Appeal was launched.

The war years had been difficult due to the fact that many people had been evacuated from the London area. Owing to "Blackout" regulations the evening service was held for a time at 3.30 p.m. and on occasions there were as few as 15 children in the Children's Church.

Now in 1947, life was getting back to normal as can be seen from the records which show that there were some 350 children in the Church of Youth (as the Children's Church was now called) and the work was seriously hindered by lack of accommodation.

It is interesting to recall how the problem of overcrowding with regard to the work among children was overcome.

May we remind you that the only accommodation at Emmanuel in 1947, consisted of the Church, the Church Parlour, the Deacons' Vestry (now known as the Lang Room), the Choir Vestry (later made into the Kitchen Extension and at present used again by the Choir on Sundays), and the Minister's Vestry. The main entrance to the Church was by the doors facing the High Street.

This is how the Children's work was carried out. At 10 a.m. the Senior Department (begun in 1937 for children over 13 years) met in the Church Parlour, and for discussion groups went into the Church and one of the vestries. The Emmanuel Youth Fellowship (started in 1943 for young folk over 16 years of age) also met at 10 a.m. in one of the vestries.

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The other departments of the Church of Youth met in the afternoon. The Beginners in a vestry, the Primary overfilled the Church Parlour. The Juniors met in the Church from 2.30 to 3.15 p.m. Then at 3.30 p.m. the Intermediate Department took over the Church from the Juniors. To make this changeover more effective, we understand that the chairs in Church were turned about so that the Intermediate scholars sat with their backs to The Grove! Still there was a long waiting list of children, and no room to receive them. (For some years before 1947 the Intermediates and Juniors met as one Department in the Church, and there were 200 children in that Department alone in 1946.)

The Building Fund of 1947 set out to remedy this problem of accommodation. The work was planned to be carried through in two phases. First must come the new halls for the children's work. So successful was this appeal that on Saturday, 15th December, 1951, phase one the Large Hall and the smaller Griffith-Jones Hall were opened. This was a great day. The Opening Ceremony was carried out by Lady Alexander, with Sir Frank Alexander as Chairman for the occasion.

On the last Sunday afternoon of 1951 there was a special opening of these new halls when the children used them for the first time. This was performed by two of the youngest children in the Beginners' Department, Glenys Dunderdale and Colin Hyde-though there is some doubt as to who turned the key! Glenys and Colin are now members of Emmanuel Youth Fellowship. So, after four years, double sessions on Sunday afternoons came to an end.

And what of Church relations in West Wickham at this time? There was a remarkable change in this matter. This is clearly seen in the fact that on Whit-Sunday evening, the 5th June, 1449, there was broadcast from Emmanuel a United Service under the title "The One Spirit". The service was conducted by the Vicar of St. Francis' Church, the Scriptures were read by the Baptist Minister, addresses were given by Emmanuel's Minister, the Rector of West Wickham (St. John's Church), and the Methodist Minister. Prayers were led by the Vicar of St. Mary's Church. Representatives of all the Churches were present at this act of worship. What a long way to have come in understanding and co-operation between the various branches of the Church since 1886!

As we have already said, the Rev. W. Griffith-Jones left Emmanuel in 1951. On 22nd May, 1952, the Rev. James Todd was inducted as Minister of Emmanuel and soon it was evident that the second phase of the building plans of 1947 must be carried through. Again the Building Extension Committee set to work with the result that May, 1956, saw the opening of an extension to the Church itself, a new vestibule and cloakroom, and a new front entrance to the Church from The Grove. Thus was completed the second phase of the building planned in 1947.

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CHAPTER FOUR

"FAMILY CHURCH"

The Church continued to flourish. On the 7th January, 1962, Emmanuel adopted the Family Church principle, one facet of which involves the carrying out of the Christian Education of the children on Sunday mornings, when the children share with the other members of the Church Family in Worship. This change brought the call for still more accommodation.

The Rev. James Todd left Emmanuel to proceed to the pastorate of Christ Church, Leatherhead, in 1962, after a fruitful ministry of ten years.

On the 3rd January, 1963, I was inducted as Minister of Emmanuel. You cannot fail to recall that on my Induction Day "the snow lay deep and crisp and even!"

In the Autumn of 1963 we recalled that we had reached an important date in our history and we set out to celebrate 75 years of Congregational witness in West Wickham.

On the 9th November we arranged an Exhibition setting forth Emmanuel's contribution to the life of the area. It was an inspiring occasion, when with the co-operation of our own Church organisations and the outside organisations which meet on our premises we filled the Large Hall with interesting exhibits, and also tried to set forth something of the growth of Emmanuel in an area which has grown from a village into a large London suburb.

Then, on 5th January, 1964, came the great occasion when we formally opened the two new halls, one of which is also a stage, and beneath which is a large storage area. These halls also have an entrance from The Grove.

How glad we were to have as our Opener on this occasion Mrs. W. A. Hoskins, a member of Emmanuel who was also a member of the little Mission Church in her early days. Mrs. Hoskins was able to tell us some interesting details of the life and worship of the little "Chapel" where Congregational witness began in West Wickham. We also learned that Mr. W. A. Hoskin lived as a boy in Helvetia Cottage in Kent Road, possibly in the very house where the first colporteur, Mr. Hardiman, lived and conducted the Cottage Prayer Meetings in 1886!

In that Service, too, we were enabled to "see Emmanuel growing" as we added section after section to the beautiful model of the Church built by Mr. J. Colvin, As the lights came up in the model Church and, by means of a tape-recording, we heard the Church Family sing a hymn of praise, our hearts were filled with thanksgiving to God for all His goodness to Emmanuel, and for those of His servants who kindled the Torch of Faith so long ago, and have handed it on to us, that by God's Grace we might bear it onward to His greater Glory.

It is right and fitting that the two new halls which complete our buildings at Emmanuel should bear the names of those pioneers of Congregationalism in West Wickham, Mr. Hardiman and the Rev. C. J. Barry. Let us never forget their devotion and example, and daily pledge ourselves anew to the Lord of the Church that the future history of Emmanuel may be even more glorious than her past.

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CHAPTER FIVE

"CONSOLIDATING FAMILY CHURCH"

This chapter is added to bring the story of Emmanuel up to 1969. It is not an attempt to evaluate the work and witness of Emmanuel in recent years, but rather to mark some of the main movements and changes in the life of the Church as we have set ourselves to the task of furthering the Family Church concept. Now and again we shall look back into the past in the light of new knowledge which has come to hand for the information and interest of newcomers to Emmanuel.

USE OF HALLS

With the opening of the new halls on 5th January, 1964, it became possible for us to re-allocate the rooms for the use of Junior Church on Sundays. The Intermediate Department took over the new Hardiman and Barry rooms, the Junior Department occupied the Large Hall, the Primary Department went into the Griffiths-Jones Hall, the Beginners' Department were now able to use the Church Parlour, and the Creche was established in the Lang Room. (It might be of interest to note here that the "Lang Room", previously called the Deacons' Vestry, was so named following a gift to the Church for refurnishing this room by Mr. F. F. Lang (a previous Church Treasurer) in memory of his wife and son, in 1952.)

When these changes had taken place the kitchen extension was suitably refurnished for the use of the Church Choir. The Emmanuel Youth Fellowship, which hitherto had been meeting at 10 a.m. were transferred to the evening service, after which they meet for a further hour of fellowship at 8 p.m. The Senior Department of Junior Church (now called The Seekers) shares in the evening service for a time prior to proceeding to the Hardiman Room for their own teaching session. On the fourth Sunday of each month The Seekers remain for the whole evening worship and take part in the service.

A pleasing development over the years has been the closer integration of Junior Church and the Uniformed Organisations. This is most clearly expressed in the Annual Promotion Service, which takes place on a Parade Sunday in October each year. The age-groupings in Junior Church Departments have been brought into line with day school ages, and the British Lessons Council syllabus adopted in October, 1968 has taken still further the experiential method of communicating Christian truth set out in the Christian Education Handbooks to the enrichment of Junior Church's work.

At the present time every room in the church is used to full advantage on Sunday mornings for the Christian Education of the children, yet some departments are still in grave danger of overcrowding.

THE DIACONATE

There have been certain changes in the structure of the Diaconate in recent years. The Junior Church Superintendent is now an ex-officio member of the Diaconate, as is the Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer. On 26th July,

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1955, it was agreed that Deacons who had completed their term of appointment should not be eligible for reelection for a period of one year. We may note in passing that this proposal was originally suggested in 1937, when Deacons were first appointed at Emmanuel, and has been raised several times over the years, but rejected. It is now the practice of the church.

On 28th November, 1967, the Church Meeting approved the appointment of three Life Deacons in recognition of outstanding service to Emmanuel and to the wider fellowship of the Church. They were Mrs. Daisy Garlett, Mr. Sidney Bills, and Mr. W. Keith Hill. On Sunday, 7th January, 1968, these new appointments were formally acknowledged by the presentation of Bibles to the new Life Deacons. The only other Life Deacon of Emmanuel was Rev. W. J. V. Saville as recorded in an earlier chapter.

CHANCEL CHANGES

It is of interest to note that of the original structure of the church the chancel has seen most changes over the years. Originally it was backed with a high oak reredos surmounted by a small oak Cross, and decorated with tapestry panels. Unfortunately these tapestries faded very quickly, and they were removed in 1939. Then, in 1957 the locations of the pulpit and lectern were interchanged, and the chancel floor extended into the church to make more room for the choir stalls. (In 1959 the Church Meeting agreed to the robing of the choir, and the new robes were worn for the first time at the Induction of Mr. Sydney Bills as Chairman of the London Congregational Union at Paddington Chapel on 4th January, 1960.)

On 28th April, 1963, new Falls on the pulpit and lectern, presented by The Emmanuel Guild, were dedicated. These are embroidered with the ancient Christian symbols I.H.S. and Chi-Rho-together indicating the shortened spellings of the Name, Jesus Christ. (See note on [Church Magazine](#).)

On Sunday, 27th February, 1966, a new Baptismal Font was dedicated in the Chancel in memory of Mr. W. O. R. Gregory. Then a little later, the entire oak reredos and small Cross were removed, and on 5th June a much larger Cross, backed with velvet curtains, was dedicated in memory of Mrs. John Gritton and Mr. Michael Gritton.

ILLUMINATED CROSS

The architect of Emmanuel had carried out his design with the intention of merging the exterior of the church with the local suburban dwellings, and in order to make it quite plain to modern men that Emmanuel is the House of the Living God, an illuminated Cross was placed high on the church gable which faces the High Street. This Cross was the gift of Mr. H. Thomas' Castle, in memory of his wife, and was dedicated on Sunday, 4th October, 1964, and switched on for the first time by Mr. Castle during the service. (See note on [Church Magazine](#).)

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ORGANISATIONS

A number of changes have taken place in the organisations of the Church.

The Men's Group, formed to meet quarterly in April 1960, changed its name to The Men's Fellowship, and began monthly meetings on 12th October, 1966.

The 'S9 Club, which held its first meeting on 5th April, 1959, and was the successor of The Over Twenty's Club, was closed down on 10th March, 1968.

The Keys, a fellowship for those over 20 years of age, was formed in the Autumn of 1966. The members meet in each others' homes for fellowship, and the name of the group is derived from their practice of meeting on the 21st of each month.

The Emmanuel Players, the church drama group, was formed in 1965; the constitution being formally approved by the Church on 29th June.

The Ladies' Sewing and Social Party changed its name to The Women's Fellowship, and with a slightly changed programme of activities began a new chapter in its long and honourable history on 23rd January, 1969. The Ladies' Sewing and Social Party was one of the first organisations to be formed at Emmanuel. During the early years of the Church's life, when funds were low, the Church treasurer leaned heavily upon this group for financial help, and the ladies responded magnificently. In the early days, in addition to their sewing activities for sales of work, etc., they also had talks and musical afternoons. Mrs. Daisy Garlett was the Secretary.

A glance into our history shows that The Emmanuel Guild began in February, 1949, as The Young Wives' Club. The name was changed in May 1959, "to make possible the formation of a new Young Wives' Club." It is an interesting fact that in the early 1930s there was a Guild of Mothers, which met on alternate Tuesdays. An old magazine reports, "The meetings consisted of a short service followed by instructive lectures on child welfare, etc. A creche is provided in a separate room. Although the Guild is intended for mothers, all married women are welcome!" Is this the beginning of Emmanuel Guild's family tree?

The records also show that The Badminton Club was formed early in 1952 following the opening of the Large Hall.

CHURCH MAGAZINE

In January 1967 The Bulletin was given a new format and a new cover. The picture of Emmanuel on the front cover is based on a photograph taken by Mr. Frank Pitt. The Church's first magazine was "The Emmanuel Church Messenger" which was a printed magazine with advertisements and with The Home Messenger as an insert. The first edition appeared in January, 1934. At first it seems that this was printed free of charge by a new printing firm in the area. It was priced at 2d. The front cover bore a striking drawing of the church by Mr. Sam Wright (a member of the Church Council) Behind the drawing of the church is the radiance of a large Cross, the rays of which illuminate the entire picture. In his letter in the February edition (No. 2, 1934) the Minister, Rev. C. J. Barry, writes of the symbolism of the cover design of "The Church and the Cross": "The

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light of the Cross streams through the Church as through a lens, which focuses it into the world around . . . and behind the Cross, unseen but more real than anything or anyone else in the world, stands the Saviour." Emmanuel's first Minister would have rejoiced in the installation of the present illuminated Cross on the gable of the church. In this same issue of The Messenger is an article for the children explaining the meaning of the symbols on our present pulpit and lectern falls! So it is that the thinking of one generation finds expression in the actions of the generations which follow.

One other note in this 1934 Messenger is also of interest. It reads: "We extend a cordial welcome to Mr. Castle who has kindly consented to fill the post of Cub Master temporarily." Mr. Castle served as Cub Master until 1954! A good word "temporarily"!

The Messenger waxed and waned over the years. In June 1939 The Bulletin was born. This was in a single sheet (four page) printed format. On the front cover was an architect's impression of a very rural Emmanuel surrounded by a small hedge, and with an imaginary hall added to the existing buildings. This drawing, it seems, was not acceptable, for on the front cover of the July issue (No. 14, 1940) is the picture which first appeared on The Messenger. The Bulletin was issued free, with a request for donations. It was suggested that one penny in the vestibule box would cover the cost of a Bulletin!

HISTORY RECAPTURED

Following the writing of The Story of Emmanuel in 1964 I was invited to meet Miss Christina Duncanson, the daughter of Mr. Edward Ford Duncanson, who told me that she was present at the laying of the foundation stone of the Mission Chapel in 1887, and had laid a purse with her gift on top of the stone.

It was largely due to this meeting that I asked for permission to try to remove the foundation stone from the old Mission and bring it to Emmanuel. Unfortunately the stone itself could not be removed without disrupting the working of the factory which now operates in the building, so I did the next best thing, and by removing several bricks from the wall, I was able to locate and remove the bottle (a Mellin's baby food bottle) from beneath the stone and recover the contents placed there in 1887. This was a most exciting experience.

The bottle contained : a copy of The Daily News (dated 21st September, 1887 and priced One Penny); a copy of The Christian World (dated 15th September, 1887 and priced at One Penny); a copy of The Nonconformist and Independent Journal (dated 15th September, 1887 and priced at Fourpence), and the original notes of the address delivered by Rev. R. H. Lovell at the stone-laying ceremony. The newspapers were in excellent condition and make interesting reading, but unfortunately the address notes had been badly affected by damp. I have pieced together the address and preserved the fragments, with the reconstructed text of the address-which I was able to complete from the fragments and old records.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

From its inception Emmanuel has always been ready to engage in whatever community service was open to it, but none has been so exciting as the work which began following a recommendation to the Church Meeting of 2nd April, 1968.

Under the Will of Miss Olive Rutter, a member of Emmanuel, the Church had received a bequest which had enabled us to set up a Memorial Fund. Then came the gracious offer from Miss Marianne Wohlwill to allow the use of her

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home at No. 2, The Grove, aptly named Restawyl, for the use of sick folk who are in need of short term nursing care, and to make available her professional skill for this purpose. The church gladly accepted this wonderful offer of service, and offered the necessary financial help from the Memorial Fund to make this community service possible. Already this project has been of immense value to many sick folk, and we are most grateful for the loving care which is expressed through the work at Restawyl.

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CHAPTER SIX

INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS

The Story of Emmanuel was intended to recount the early days of Non-conformist witness in West Wickham and its growth over the years. In the telling of this story it has seemed right also to trace the growth of the relationships between the Christian churches in the area as new churches have come into being. In this chapter we shall attempt to give such an outline of inter-church relations up to the present time.

As we have seen, St. John the Baptist (The Church on the Hill) is the most ancient church in West Wickham, and the only church in the area for a great number of years, being founded in Pre-Norman times, and mentioned in the Domesday Book. Free-Church worship began in 3, Helvetia Cottages, Kent Road in 1886, and was later moved to the newly built Mission Chapel in North Road. In these early days there was very little-if any--co-operation between these two Christian fellowships.

Then, in 1929, Emmanuel was built and friendly relations began to develop between Anglicans and Congregationalists largely due to the friendship of the Rector of West Wickham, Sir Herbert L. L. Denny, and the Minister of Emmanuel, Rev. Charles J. Barry.

We have already written of the beginnings of the West Wickham and Shirley Baptist Church and the West Wickham Methodist church. From 1932 to 1960 the Baptists worshipped in their church in Surrey Road. On 5th March, 1960, the new church was opened. The present Methodist church was opened on 15th October 1960; the older church now serves as a hall.

The Roman Catholics moved from Justin Hall to the temporary church in Braemar Gardens in May 1938. The present St. Mark's church was opened on 15th May, 1963. There are also Mass Centres at Coney Hall (1964) and at Shrublands (1966).

The history of St. Francis church is interesting. Originally all West Wickham was in the parish of St. John. Then in 1878 the little village church (built c. 1869) was given to the ancient parish by Mr. Lewis Loyd, who lived at "Monk's Orchard", as a chapel-of-ease (of easy access). Prior to its use as a church the building had been used as a village school. It was now dedicated to St. Augustine. Then, in 1933, a Conventional District was formed, and the village church was rededicated to St. Francis of Assisi. On 10th October, 1936, the new Parish Church of St. Francis of Assisi in Ravenswood Avenue was consecrated. The village church was subsequently deconsecrated, and after being used as offices and a storehouse, etc., it was purchased by the Jehovah's Witnesses in 1951.

St. Mary of Nazareth Church, in the Avenue, was opened as a dual-purpose church and hall on 8th December, 1934. The present church was consecrated on 8th December, 1954.

Coney Hill Road Baptist Church began when a dual-purpose hall was erected by The London Baptist Association in 1938 and opened for worship on 15th October in that year. The Church Fellowship was formally constituted in 1940.

One of the starting points for the closer working of the existing churches in West Wickham was the beginning of a local auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society in February 1939. The first President was Rev. W. J. V. Saville, a Deacon at Emmanuel, and Miss Grace Webb was appointed as Collector.

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The West Wickham Council of Christian Churches was formed on 23rd May, 1939, with Rev. W. Griffith-Jones, the Minister of Emmanuel, as its first Chairman. It seems clear that Emmanuel has always been ready to take a lead in ecumenical adventures.

One of the first activities of the newly formed Council was the setting up of a series of discussion groups on the theme "The Outline of a United Church". There were four groups with eight or ten people in each group. From this time the churches began to work more closely together, though the Roman Catholics were not yet involved in these relationships.

Then came a new surge forward, when on 12th October, 1967, "The People Next Door" project, sponsored by The British Council of Churches, was launched in West Wickham. There were fifteen house groups, involving about one hundred and seventy people from St. Francis, St. John's, the Methodist Church, and Emmanuel. This was a most exciting project, and all who were engaged in it were most enthusiastic about the prospect of a closer integration of the work of the churches in the area.

Arising out of the P.N.D. study groups it was recommended that church congregations should have the opportunity of sharing in each other's worship, and that the churches should be closed in turn to make this possible. It was also decided to seek permission for a United Communion Service in which all who had shared in P.N.D. might join. These recommendations were carried into effect. We were delighted to have the congregation of St. Francis Church sharing in our evening worship on 19th May, 1968, and we closed Emmanuel on the evening of 27th October, 1968, so that our congregation might share in Evening at St. Francis. The other churches made similar arrangements.

Then, on 23rd May, 1968, came the great day when, in St. Francis Church, for the first time in West Wickham, Anglican and Free-Church worshippers knelt together at the Table of the Lord. It was, for all of us, a solemn occasion, and a time of heartfelt thanksgiving to God.

These are the mainstream events which have led up to Mission '69. This united Mission began with an invitation from Father L. Callan, priest of St. Mark's, to share in a united visitation of the area. In order to discuss the implications of such an invitation a meeting of clergy and ministers was arranged at St. John's Rectory on 24th May, 1968. As a preparation for our discussions we knelt together in prayer in the delightful little Chapel of St. Christopher which is in the Rectory grounds; the Roman Catholic priest, two Anglican clergymen, the Methodist Minister and myself, waiting together before God, asking only that He might guide us in the carrying out of the adventure we felt convinced He had laid upon our hearts.

This was a most memorable occasion, and out of it has come the united action which will find expression in Mission '69, when every house in West Wickham will be visited, and families invited to share in the worship and activities of the six participating churches during a special week of Mission, 16th to 23rd March, 1969.

At the moment of writing the Mission Week is almost upon us, and we look forward with confidence to this united endeavour to win men and women for Jesus Christ. It is a source of sincere regret that the two Baptist Churches feel unable to share with us in this Mission, but we rejoice that the Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists, and Congregationalists have entered into this project with great enthusiasm. Our prayer is that God will use us all for the furthering of His Kingdom in the area we seek to serve in His Name.

Emmanuel will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary as a Church on October 3rd, 1969, and as we look back over the years to the beginnings of Congregational

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witness in that little cottage in Kent Road in 1886, we give thanks to Almighty God for the ways in which He has led us, and for the growing co-operation between the Churches in West Wickham. We are humbly grateful for the part we at Emmanuel have been able to play in furthering these inter-church relationships, and pray that we all of us may be led ever onward as we seek that visible unity which we believe to be our Lord's Will for His Church.

To His Name be the Glory and the Praise.

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APPENDIX ONE

Some excerpts from the Diary of Emmanuel's first year of witness. These are taken from a contribution to The Bromley Church Record of October, 1930, by one who signed himself "W.W.W." (West Wickham Wesleyan). After joining Emmanuel Church as a full member, he signed himself "The Scribe."

1929

- October 3rd.* Opening of Emmanuel Church in The Grove.
October 6th. First Sunday Services, 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. Children's Church at 3 p.m
October 27th. First Harvest Festival.
November 2nd. West Wickham (Emmanuel Church) Girl Guides formed. Captain: Miss Eileen Edmonds.
November 6th. Induction of Rev. C. J. Barry.
November 9th. Mr. F. Boxall appointed Choirmaster.
November 24th. First celebration of Holy Communion. There were 68 communicants.
November 28th. First meeting of Young People's Fellowship.
December 1st. New Organ dedicated. Mr. F. Crabb organist.
December 16th. Advisory Church Council formed. Mr. E. V. Mitchelmore appointed Hon. Secretary. Mr. J. Edmonds appointed Hon. Secretary of Freewill Offering Scheme -
December 29th. First Christenings: Philip Randall Smith, and Jane Mellonie, by Rev. C. J. Barry.

1930

- January 16th.* Young Men's Club formed. Mr. Stanley Turner. Hon. Secretary.
January 29th. Young Women's Arts and Crafts Guild formed. Miss Edna Bolton appointed Hon. Secretary.
February 6th. Women's Working and Social Party formed. President: Mrs. Barry.
February 13th. First General Meeting of Children's Church. Patterson Barry and Bernard Waite, Joint Hon. Secretaries.
March 2nd. First Cradle Roll Service. Twenty infants enrolled.
March 2nd. First special Young People's Service, followed by Social Hour.
March 16th. Dedication of Guides' Flag, presented to the Company by Mr. John Edmonds and his son George.
April 7th. Joint invitation to residents of West Wickham to attend Divine Service during Easter-tide issued, signed by the Rector (Sir H. L. L. Denny) and Rev. C. J. Barry.
April 13th. (Palm Sunday) Foundation Membership Enrolment Service. Roll signed by 138 members.
April 29th. Emmanuel Church, registered for the solemnization of marriages, by transfer from old Mission Church.
May 21st. First Church Meeting. Consideration of Draft Rules.
May 31st. First Wedding. Marriage of Mr. Robin Galloway and Miss Mildred A. Hawdon.
June 23rd. First Collection for John Williams Missionary Ship authorised.

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- August 3rd.* Memorial Service for Eric Hook, who lost his life attempting to fly to Australia.
- September 15th.* First Investiture of members of West Wickham(Emmanuel Church) B.P. Scouts. Mr. H. W. Sindall, Scoutmaster.
- September 17th.* Church Meeting for election of representatives to Church Council. Elected: Mr. Norledge, Mrs. Usherwood, and Messrs S. H. Beasley, F. Boxall, J. Edmonds, G. Hennell, E. V. Mitchelmore, H. E. Waite and A. J. Webb.

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APPENDIX TWO

Members of Emmanuel ordained into the Congregational Ministry.
Rev. Ronald C'. Christopher. 1940. (*Crossway Central Mission Assistant Minister.*)

Church Treasurer: Mr. H. E. Grief, 31 Woodland Way, West Wickham
Rev. Harold J. Rowse. 1951. (*Selhurst.*)
Rev. Derek M. Wales, M.A., B.D. 1967. (*Thames Ditton.*)