

# Rev. Donaldson Leaving Ministry

By NINA RUBEL  
News-Gazette Staff Writer

Half a century of service in the ministry comes to an end today when the Rev. W. Howe Donaldson delivers his retirement sermon at Salem Baptist Church on the 50th anniversary of his first sermon.

Donaldson gave his first sermon on Sunday, April 26, 1931 at the Trinity Baptist Church in Pontiac, Mich.

He has seen a lot of changes in his 78 years of life, he said.

He grew up in a small town in Arkansas, De Valls

Bluff, at a time when black children's schooling in the town ended with the eighth grade while white children went to a high school two blocks from the black school.

"On my last visit there, last October, the schools were completely integrated and my niece was president of the high school's PTA," he said.

He said about his childhood life, "There was always fear because you had no recourse of address.

"When I was a boy, there was always lynchings. When I was five or six years old, they lynched a man just a few blocks from my home. I still remember the tremendous impression it made on me."

Through the greater part of his manhood he lived under the shameful restrictions of segregation.

"You would go into a railroad station and there were separate ticket sales for White and Colored. Separate restrooms, separate railroad cars.

"Until not so long ago, when you took a train down to New Orleans from here, blacks had to change into separate cars at Cairo because we were going into Dixie.

"That was just the way it was. It was accepted for a long time, even though it seems incredible now."

The son of a Baptist minister and his school-teacher wife, Donaldson grew up as one of 12 children.

He attended high school in East St. Louis for a while, living with an aunt, but returned to De Valls Bluff when his father lost his sight so that he could go to work to help support his six younger siblings.

In his first job he worked for Grand Trunk Railroad, shoveling coal into the steam engines at the roundhouse.

After the family moved to Pontiac, he worked for General Motors. His job was to stack the lumber used for car body exteriors near the kilns.

Donaldson became a de-

acon of the Pontiac church at the age of 19 and became the pastor at the age of 28.

In 1935 he left the church to study for his bachelor of theology degree at the American Baptist Theological Seminary and A & I University in Nashville, Tenn.

During his studies, which lasted six years, he served first as pastor of First Baptist Church in Rossford, Ohio, and then as pastor of the Rogers Height Church in Nashville.

After receiving his degree he served as pastor of First Baptist Church in Murfreesboro, Tenn., for eight years.

He then became minister of Salem Baptist Church, leaving after four years to pastor for 10½ years at Zion Baptist Church in Peoria, followed by five years at Mount Zion Baptist Church in East Moline.

He returned to Salem Baptist Church in 1968.

The oldest black church in Champaign, Salem Bap-



News-Gazette Photo By Robert K. O'Daniell

**REV. W. HOWE DONALDSON**  
4/26/81 retiring from ministry after 50 years

tist was founded in 1866. The church is located at 500 E. Park Ave. in Champaign.

The church has a membership of about 325.

"When I left in 1953, the membership was close to 500," Donaldson said. "When I returned, the membership had split into several churches."

He decried the tendency of black Baptist churches to split.

"We have about six or seven black Baptist churches here with our small population. I think that is very detrimental to us," he said.

"The splits take place not so much over doctrine but more over the minister or for personal reasons."

He said about the Baptist church as a whole, "I have

provements in conditions for American blacks he said, "I think things have changed as people have become more educated and Christian.

"All those years it was fear and helplessness for the black man. The Martin Luther King movement really turned the light on but King built on the work of Booker T. Washington."

He sees the future of race relations as "somewhat shaky."

He said, "Someone is going to suffer. There are going to be clashes. But, believing in divine providence as I do, I think the Christian faith will have an impact.

"Fascist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan will ultimately be put down. The government will have to

Mainly I have seen a falling away on behalf of the people and a decrease in the discipline. I think the church has taken a materialistic interest rather than a spiritual."

He estimates he has performed funerals, weddings and baptisms "in the thousands" through his career.

Donaldson's first wife, Clara, died in 1967 after 36 years of marriage. The couple's adopted son, Gregory, works for the Chrysler Corporation and lives in Detroit with his wife and two daughters.

Donaldson's second wife, Robbie Lee, died in 1979.

His third wife, Esther, is a retired special education teacher who is listed in Who's Who of American Women. She and her son and two daughters from her first marriage all have earned master's degrees in education.

Donaldson has been active in the Champaign-Urbana Ministerial Association and served for three years on the Champaign Human Relations Committee.

He also has been active in a variety of works through Empty Tomb, Inc., a Christian outreach group which provides volunteer opportunities for area residents through Champaign County churches.

Talking about the im-

"I think the future is a fearful thing. When you have such a high percentage of unemployment, caused by automation and population expansion, as we do, there is danger.

"Burglaries and hold-ups are increasing day by day. We cannot isolate these things. We are mistaken when we think it does not matter. It is across the track. But it will finally reach the other side of the track.

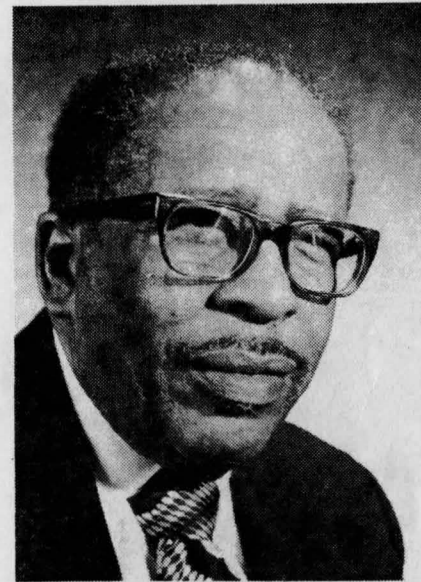
"The answer is beyond the government. It is in a person and that person is Jesus Christ. The philosophy of Christ is the only thing that is going to save us.

"It will change men and they will have compassion and concern for all people."

*His Keys*

In Appreciation Of  
Fourteen Years of Service  
Salem Baptist Church  
Honors

Pastor and Mrs. W.H. Donaldson  
July 5, 6, 7 & 9, 1978



Theme: Pressing Forward to a Higher Calling  
Phil. 3:14

Anniversry Chairlady Corrine Buchanan  
Co. Chairlady Marilyn Johnson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We, the members of the appreciation committee, wish to express our sincere gratitude to those who helped make this Anniversary a success. First and foremost, to the members and friends, thanks to you for your unselfish and untiring effort to help make our pastor and wife happy by showing our love to them. We look forward to this congenial and warm relationship.

Sis. Corrine Buchanan  
Chairlady

AFTERNOON SERVICES

PASTOR'S APPRECIATION SERVICE(Climax) 3:30 P.M.

WEEKLY CALENDAR

MONDAY NO MEETINGS  
TUESDAY NO MEETINGS  
WEDNESDAY 7:30 P.M. PRAYER SERVICE  
THURSDAY 7:00 P.M. CHOIR REHEARSAL  
FRIDAY NO MEETINGS  
SATURDAY 1:00 P.M. SUNSHINE CHOIR REHEARSAL  
BIBLE STUDY

SICK AND SHUT-IN

"GOD DOES ANSWER PRAYER" . . . . .Let us remember our sick and shut-in; and if a visit is not possible why not call or send a card to cheer them.

SIS. ETTA JONES 507 E. Park, Champaign, IL  
SIS. RUTH TAYLOR 106 E. Hill, Champaign, IL  
SIS. FLORA SCOTT 207 E. Washington, Champaign  
SIS. VELMA COLLEY 2000E. John, #308, Champaign  
SIS. MARY STOKES 206 E. Jefferson, Onargo, IL  
BRO. WILLIE WILLIAMS 412 E. Tremont, Champaign  
BRO. ONIE PEARSON Americana Nursing Home, C.  
BRO. BILL PUES VA Hospital, Danville  
BRO. TYSON MCDONALD Nursing Home, Mattoon, IL  
BRO. ARNOLD YARBER 54 East Columbia, Champaign  
BRO. JAEK JAMES VA Hospital, Danville, IL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today will observe our Pastor and Wife's 14th Anniversary here at Salem Baptist Church. Rev. Morris Clark, Pastor of 2nd Baptist Church, Mattoon, and his congregation will worship with us at 11:00 AM service. Rev. Cecil Webb, Pastor of Union Baptist Church, Danville and congregation will be here this afternoon at 3:30pm to climax this special occasion. Dinner will be served for all the guest and members..

The Woodriver District Association will convene Monday, July 10 thru Friday, July 14, 1978. Several members of our church will be going as delegates to the association. Mrs. Helen Hite, president of the Missionary will be giving her annual address, Monday, July 10, 1978 at 7:30pm and several members will be going to Madison, IL to hear her. Mr. Alvin Harris and Mr. Earnest Hite will be rendering special selections for Salem.

Financial Report for Sunday, July 2, 1978

\$1,231.80

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Words are very poor vehicles of conveying what one feels in his heart. Someone has said, "words are cheap and I heartily agree, for it takes time and action to prove one's gratitude. Why am I saying **this**, well, it is because I know I am not worthy of the deep feeling and concern some of you have toward your pastor and his wife. To use the words of the Apostle Paul, I know if were possible some of you "would pluck out your eyes and give them to me." (Gal. 4:15). I am not worthy of such; I am among you as one who serves, and my greatest wish is that you will try to understand and seek to put into practice the things I try to teach, both by word of mouth and by my actions from day to day. As my young minister said one evening last week: "Our pastor is not perfect, but he tries to live up to what he teaches and preaches." I am the first to say, "Amen" to that statement. It will not be the amount of money you give me at this appreciation service that will make me happiest, but to know that you love the Lord Jesus Christ, and that you are trying to be true to him; that you are growing in him, that he has first priority in your life. This will bring joy beyond expression to my heart. Again, I quote Paul: "I thank God upon every remembrance of you. Always in my prayers making request of you with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel .... And this I pray, that your LOVE may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in judgment; that you may approve things that are excellent; that you may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ." (Phil. 1:3-4, 9-10). The following verse in

III John 2: "Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be health, even as thy soul prospereth. Verse 4 expresses my feeling for all of you: "I have no greater JOY than to hear that my children walk in the truth." I wish above all else that you shall know, that I seek not yours, but YOU. You are my joy and my crown.

Remember: "God wants us to cooperate;  
His plans need our fulfilling.  
He does not ask us to be great  
But only to be willing."

-- Anon.

Pastor W. Howe Donaldson