

“GREAT THINGS HE HATH DONE”

With thanks to Mrs. Ruth Beck and Mrs. Ellen Hemrick for their contributions to this history.

God calls people to carry out His specific plans. He certainly placed Rev. and Mrs. Ray Hemrick in the position of pastor of Free Pilgrim Church, Thomasville North Carolina. While serving in that capacity, God led them to begin a Christian academy in the basement of the church in the fall of 1969. Bro. Hemrick said that he had never felt as good about anything he had undertaken for the Lord, as he did about starting this Christian school. God had burdened his heart, so he felt constrained to do His bidding.



Rev. Ray Hemrick

After much planning, praying, and preparing, a happy group of thirty-one students and four teachers met with Bro. Hemrick in the basement of Free Pilgrim Church on September 2, 1969, for the first day of school. This new institution was to be called Free Pilgrim Academy. Three former staff members of God’s Bible School were asked to serve on the faculty along with Mrs. Hemrick. Mrs. Dorothy Crater taught grades 1-3; Mrs. Ellen Hemrick taught grades 4-8; Mr. Dwight Crater served as high school instructor for history, math, Bible, and Spanish classes; and Mrs. Ruth Beck, principal, taught English, typing, and science in the high school. These teachers cheerfully carried the heavy work load so that the children and young people could have a guarded Christian education. Mrs. Rachel Hepler and Mrs. Barbara Kinley greatly assisted the teachers, along with many other parents who made contributions in various ways. Mrs. Carol Embler was a very efficient secretary, while Mr. Carey J. Davis came to instruct the band.

The high school chapel services on Monday and the all-school chapel on Friday greatly influenced the students spiritually, besides the prayer at the beginning of each class. Rev. Ray Hemrick, President, would usually speak in the Friday chapel. Sometimes, an evangelist from one of the local churches would be asked to speak. The first year, Rev. George Hawthorne, an accomplished accordionist, fascinated the students with his accordion music in addition to his lively sermon. Many times the hearts of the children were moved upon by the Holy Spirit, and they would earnestly seek the Lord. This was very rewarding to all those who had labored and given to have a Christian school.

The students enjoyed studying, practicing, and preparing programs for the PTA Meetings and for the seasonal programs, presented in the upstairs Sanctuary. At the conclusion of such a program, one little boy had been instructed to go out on the stage to let the audience know that the program was over. He boldly walked out and loudly proclaimed, “THE END!!!” Of course, a roar of laughter ensued.

It was so much fun to plan and prepare for the printing of our first YEARBOOK. The typing students were eager to put their expertise to work. [By the way, the start of the typing class was interesting. A friend of the school had ordered NEW typewriters, made in Germany. While waiting for them to arrive, they used borrowed typewriters, of all sizes and models. You should

have seen the excitement in typing class the first day that each student had a new typewriter - that was like the others!!] Everyone had to be on the LOOKOUT, for the photographer might be ready to snap your picture! Many hours were spent in preparation for the publishing of the yearbook; then, all were waiting with anticipation to see the finished product.

On May 29, 1970. Rev Earl Newton, President of the Salisbury Christian School, was the special speaker for the first commencement service. Our first graduate, Cara Hemrick, daughter of the President, after graduating from Hobe Sound Bible College, spent several years on the mission field and teaching in Christian day schools, including her own Alma Mater.

For the various school programs, there were solos, duets, trios, quartets, or sextets sung by the students. In the 1971 Christmas program, we were in need of a male trio to sing "We Three Kings"; so Glenn Hemrick, Donnie Crotts, and Paul Beck were selected. They continued to sing together for several years, calling their trio "The Young Witnesses", [As replacements were needed, Steve Parker and Randall Crotts joined the group; they made a tape recording and sang in various churches in the southern states; then, later Tim Crater sang with them.]



God greatly blessed the school and it soon outgrew its original quarters. Classes met in a new block building on the present 27 acre campus in the fall of 1972. The same year, Mr. Robert Luther joined the staff in an administrative capacity.

Robert Luther At the close of the third year of the academy, the senior class chose to have their graduation exercises in the newly-erected camp tabernacle on the 27-acre campus (the present location of the school). The back wing of the academy building had also been completed. Two rooms of this building were used to prepare and serve camp meals that year. At the beginning of the 1972-73 school year, there was lots of excitement as the staff and students entered the new classrooms. The name of the school was changed from Free Pilgrim Academy to Carolina Christian Academy.

In the early years of the school, we took all the high school students to the national IHC in Huntington, WV. Mrs. Hemrick's choir sang, the "Young Witnesses" sang, and Mr. Carey Davis' band members played in the Mass band. These were unforgettable experiences for the students, as well as for the teachers.

In addition to local ministers, some well-known evangelists from other areas have spoken in our chapel services and June camp meetings - Judy Williams and the Victory Trio, V.O. Agan. D.P. Denton, Fred Watson, T.W. Comadoll, Earl Newton. Philip Newton. Raymond Shreve, Elbert Barrow, B.J. Walker, Archie B. Atwell, Dale Yocum, J. Wesley Adcock, Marshall Smart, J.M. Sullivan, and the list could go on and on. Only eternity will reveal the number of students (and others) who have been saved and/or sanctified as the result of Spirit-anointed messages, given by these ministers. Steve Parker, when speaking

for the 30th Anniversary of CCA, said that one morning during the mid-year revival, he was the only high school student who had not gone to the altar. He was so glad that he had yielded his heart and life to God that very day. Now in 2007, he has been a pastor for 23 years. Many other alumni have gone out to serve God around the globe.

The 1973 Graduating Class instituted a community auction sale for the purpose of raising money for its class trip, valuable gift to the school, etc. It has since become an annual event – greatly beneficial and enjoyable, as well as creating friendly relations with businesses in neighboring towns and cities.

By the time that Bro. Hemrick was translated to glory on August 13, 1973, he had witnessed graduation exercises for twelve students. His sudden home going was such a shock to everyone.

In 1974, it became necessary to enlarge the academy building. A new wing was added which contains offices, classrooms, a library, and the Hemrick Memorial Chapel. We are greatly indebted to Mr. Ed Dunkelberger, Mr. Lank Sechrest, and Mr. E. B. Drury for their generous donations of money and labor toward the construction of this wing. May God bless and reward them and all our friends who have contributed in any way! A dedication service for the Hemrick Memorial Chapel was held during the June Camp.

In 1975, a kitchen/dining hall was erected for use during the annual Carolina Christian Camp. Two beautiful prayer cottages were also built behind the camp tabernacle, through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Houston Mooney, long-time friends of the school. (Mrs. Mooney went home to heaven during 1989.)

After the resignation of Bro. Luther, Bro. Dan Parker was called by the board to serve as the third administrator in 1975. Two years later, he felt led to begin a college department. Bro. Delmar Kaufman was asked to come and serve as the Dean of the College. Following his retirement in 1984, his son-in-law, Rex McDowell became the Acting Dean. In 1986, Bro. Guy Troyer served as the Acting Dean for two years.



Rev. Dan Parker

The College Department was opened in the fall of 1977 and continued in operation until the spring of 1989. The College granted the B.R.E. degree (Bachelor of Religious Education). Besides other graduates, at least four students graduated from both the Academy and College; and one student attended from grade one to College graduation. That student, David Black, has pastored for around 20 years and has been a missionary to the Philippines. His wife, Christina Foley Black, also graduated from our academy and college. Randall Crotts, a graduate of both, has pastored churches in the Alabama Bible Methodist Conference since 1982. Chris Hancock also a graduate of both departments, is presently the vice-president of the Pilgrim Tract Society in Randleman, NC, where millions of tracts are printed and distributed world-wide. There were three other graduates of both departments. Pam McGuff Black taught at CCA after graduation. The other two graduates are

Lois Kaufman Hill and Anita Warmoth Bellis.

The fourth building was erected in 1976. This dormitory was designed to house guests who attended the camp meetings. It was also later used as a men's dorm for the college.

A college classroom building was erected in 1979, and a women's dormitory in 1980. As the result of many new families moving into the area the enrollment of the academy and college reached a total of 147 in 1986-87.



Mr. & Mrs. Lank
Sechrest

During the spring of 1983, a 30-foot extension was added to the tabernacle under the supervision of Bro. Dan Parker. Many people have sought and found victory at an altar of prayer during the annual camp meetings in June, and the youth camps in September. Eternity alone will reveal the results of the efforts of God's people in the school and in the camps.

Following the resignation of Bro. Parker in the summer of 1983, Mr. Lank Sechrest was called to serve as president of the academy and college. He envisioned and promoted the project of erecting two faculty houses, which was literally done in ONE DAY, through the expertise of contractor Ed Miller, who supervised the work of seventy men on October 29, 1983.

David Stetler, who had been Assistant Administrator during Bro. Parker's term, now became Academy Principal and remained so for three years. After David Stetler's resignation in 1986, Mr. Carl Heintzelman was Academy Principal for three years. In 1988, the college department was suspended because of financial considerations.

The driveways and parking lot were first paved in 1986. In order to raise the money for the project, the students and staff addressed envelopes and mailed letters to their relatives and friends in 31 states, Canada, and Mexico. In response to the letters, the money came "rolling in" while the men were "rolling on the asphalt." My, that was really an exciting time around CCA&C! No more loose gravel, mud, or dust to contend with!

God has sent many good, qualified teachers to our school through the years. Space will not permit us to mention them all by name, but God (who is a perfect accountant) is keeping a record of all the work done by each one. Several capable administrators have labored for the school through the years. A list of administrators not previously mentioned is as follows: Jon Delamarter (1989—90), Joe Smith and Richard Tallman as co-principals (1990—91), Charles Sullivan (1991—93), Joe Potts (1993—94), Tim Montgomery (1994—96), Sidney Stewart (1997—2002), David Smith (2002—2005), and Daniel Lee (2005 to present).

In addition to the academics, God has given us a splendid music department through the years. Mrs. Hemrick taught private piano lessons, directed choirs, and taught music classes for many years. Mr. Carey Davis directed the band and taught piano and in-

strumental lessons for a number of years. Mr. David Stetler, Miss Dorothy Bowen, Mr. and Mrs Don Quales, and Mr. Paul Beck have taught in the music department.

To God be all the glory for the great things He has done and is doing, for the school. CCA has had many good teachers and principals throughout the years – ones who have been diligent to teach the academics, yet interested in the all-around welfare of the students. There were many fun times – celebrating the various holidays, birthday parties, trips to scenic attractions and historical places, competition in decorating for Christmas, presenting plays, playing games, and all the other activities. The students will never forget the good spiritual chapels, conventions, revivals, and camp meetings when God’s presence was manifested in outstanding ways, and most of all, the altar services where many sought the Lord and were either saved, sanctified, or heard the call of God for their lives. Many of the alumni are serving the Lord as teachers, preachers, preachers’ wives, gospel singers, and missionaries.