

**August 1978 - August 2003**

**25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**GRAND VIEW CHURCH OF CHRIST**

2736 Hubbell Avenue  
Des Moines, Iowa 50317

**The “Grand View”**  
**Story Revised and Edited: 8-10-2003**

**In the Beginning**

Prior to 1978 the Des Moines area was served by several congregations of the Lord’s church: Hickman Avenue and West Madison, located at Madison and Beaver area, both of which employed full time gospel preachers; and also the oldest congregation in the city, located on Dean Avenue, which did not employ a full-time gospel preacher, as well as the congregation located at 59<sup>th</sup> Street and University Avenue. The Southside Church of Christ located at # I Emma on the south side of the city was begun in 1968 and was composed of members of both Hickman and West Madison and led by members of the Iowa Campaigns For Christ team. There were also several other smaller congregations of a very conservative nature in the city.

No church had ever existed in the N. E. quadrant of the city nor had any evangelistic work ever been attempted here. The Hickman Avenue congregation decided to try to develop a work in this area of town. In 1977-1978, the Hickman congregation authorized George Mayfield to travel to Dallas, TX to meet with the elders of the Preston Road church of Christ. He had learned that this congregation had an interest in mission work, and Brother Mayfield went to Dallas with proposal for a 10-year program of work. This trip was eventfully deemed a success as the Preston Road congregation developed an interest in the idea of establishing such a work. In the Spring of 1978, Brother Charles Dameron (elder) and Jon Bailey (preacher student in the PR School of Preaching) came to Des Moines to meet with area elders, preachers and members of congregations to consider the merits of the proposal. After much discussion, elders from Southside, West Madison, and the men at Hickman agreed to the proposal. Brother Dameron returned to Dallas to share the information with their elders and await a decision. Area leaders agreed not to discourage any of their members from joining this new work.

One critical fact in this process is that G.V. began with the support of the three congregations, which were involved in these initial discussions.

**Support by Preston Road Church**

After careful consideration the Preston Road brethren decided to fund the cost of the venture only if more local leadership would commit to the project to insure its success. At this point George Mayfield called Paul Harp requesting that his family consider making a commitment to this new work because they lived hi the area to be served. Paul and Jackie discussed the matter as a family and, feeling they could not drive past a small struggling church to attend a strong church 11 miles away (Southside), they agreed to go with the new church. With that commitment, the Preston Road brethren made a 10-year financial commitment that would begin in the summer of 1978 when Jon Bailey was due to graduate. The first year they agreed to pay 100% of the preacher’s salary, with a one-tenth reduction in support each succeeding year with a total phase-out after the 10th year. Grandview met the challenge and was fully self-supporting in 10 years.

On Sunday morning, May 28<sup>th</sup>, Paul resigned as an elder of the Southside Church and began preliminary work of locating a meeting place and talking with those who were expressing interest in the new work. Jon Bailey made a trip to Des Moines in mid-July to attend an organizational meeting held at the Harp’s. Several people who either had made a commitment or were seriously considering making a commitment to become a part of the new congregation attended this meeting. At this meeting, the name Grand View

Church of Christ was decided upon because, at that point, no one had any idea where the future building would be located and the name Grandview Golf Course, Grandview Park and Grand View College were familiar names in the area. Therefore, we settled on “Grand View” as the spelling of choice, however, subsequently the name has gradually become “Grandview” even though “Grand View” is on the papers of incorporation. (G.V. is used throughout this document as the abbreviated designation.) It was decided at this meeting that August 6th would be the date for the first meeting of the church. About a week later the group met at the Nelson’s home in West Des Moines for further discussion and planning.

### **G.V. Meets for the First Time**

On Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m, August 6, 1978, the Grand View church of Christ met for the first time in the Mid Iowa Boy Scouts of America headquarters at 1659 E. Euclid Avenue next to the railroad tracks just east of 1411 and Euclid. The Scout Master had drawn up an agreement whereby we would have access to certain areas of the building three times per week in exchange for a “donation” of \$40.00 per week and a \$200.00 deposit to cover any damage that<sup>1</sup> might occur. As time passed a bond of trust developed, and the Scout organization turned over the entire building for our use. The initial understanding that we would be there no more than six months turned into a 10-year relationship in which we were accorded every consideration because of the high esteem in which we were held by the Scouts. An adult class was even held in the Director’s office around his conference table. We were given free access to the Scout Camp near Luther for men’s retreats.

Paul Harp opened the first service with greetings, and among other comments the following statement was made to the congregation assembled (32 in all):

“This is a great day for this part of the city. They don’t know it, but the finest thing that could happen to N.E. Des Moines has happened - the planting of a true N.T. Church.

- A bit of leaven has been placed here - let it grow and permeate!
- A bit of salt has been sprinkled here - let it season!
- A light has been turned on here - let it shine!
- A mustard seed has been planted here - let it grow!
- A Pearl of Great Price has been found - sound the good news!”

After the worship service, “Share-the-Work” forms were distributed and every member was asked to pick areas of work for which they felt qualified and to begin an active involvement in building the Church to be leaven, salt, etc. The first contribution was \$356.00. Of the 32 people present, one family came from Hickman (Don Reeves, family of four); two elderly ladies from West Madison who lived in our area (Annie Shafer and Cordia Rabum), and the rest came from the Southside Church. Of the 32 present that day there were just six who were still with G.V. for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in August 1998. Today, Frank Ingersoll and Don and Nan, who are here for the summer, are the only members from that original group which met on August 6, 1978.

### **G.V. Hosts Gospel Meeting**

In the summer of 1979, G.V. hosted an area-wide gospel meeting held in the Goodrell J.H. auditorium. Gordon Ferguson was the speaker, and the event was well attended by brethren in the area. During this first year (summer 1979) GV joined forces with Hickman and conducted an evangelistic campaign across the north half of Des Moines. The follow-up results were very minimal because all the records were not retained by Jon Bailey when he left town. Jon resigned on October 31, 1979. In anticipation of his departure, Preston Road had been consulted and they assured us of their continued support. Another joint

campaign with Hickman was conducted in the summer of 1981.

### **Mission Work**

Mission work has been a part of Grand View from its inception with the \$300.00 monthly support for Jim and Laura Reppart in Cameroon, West Africa. When their work ceased, we began an association with Monte and Beth Cox in Kenya, East Africa, which lasted for 10 years. The Coxes returned in February 1992 and shortly there after we began supporting Steve Meeks, a former teammate of the Coxes, to continue the work in Eldoret, Kenya. During this period (1993 and 1994) we fully funded the summer survey trips to unchurched tribes in Africa by Mark Berryman. G.V. helped support Alan Wright in Suva, Fiji, South Pacific until October 1998. At times our commitment has been as much as 20% of our yearly budget. Other mission efforts have, been supported since 1998.

### **Gary Lambrecht Hired as Preacher**

In a few weeks after Jon Bailey left, G.V. hired its second preacher, Gary Lambrecht, a recent graduate of Harding University's preacher training program. He was inexperienced but had unlimited zeal which generated a lot of activity in the city and state. During his tenure, an effort was attempted to form one city-wide congregation by merging the four congregations in the city by selling their buildings and purchasing one large building to house all the Christians in the city. This would thereby cut overhead and exert a greater impact on the city due to the size and talent that would be contained in such a merger. Hickman, West Madison and Grand View gave serious attention to the proposal - Southside declined. Orrin, then an elder at Hickman, reports that 76% of Hickman membership voted for the merger. The proposal finally failed primarily for lack of support from key leaders.

### **Pray Over Iowa/Sing Over Iowa**

Another initiative taken by "little GV" was to introduce a new thing, "Pray Over Iowa" (POI) held at the Holiday Inn, 6th Avenue and 1-235. Brethren from around the state attended to enjoy food and fellowship. Jim Waddell spoke. G.V. continued to provide the leadership and finances for this program for the first four years. Subsequent "POI" gatherings were held at Adventureland. After we decided not to continue the program, other congregations around the state picked up the baton and took turns hosting the affair. It has continued in modified forms annually since its inception. "Sing Over Iowa" was a take-off of this program and has continued for several years under the leadership of the Church of Christ in Iowa City. It was during the first year of Lambrecht's tenure that Don Nelson and Paul Harp were appointed as the first elders - no deacons. At the end of three years Gary Lambrecht left, the eldership dissolved, and the work continued without a preacher for several months.

### **G.V. Leadership**

Late in 1982 Paul and Jackie met with Orrin and Marjory Nearhoof and laid out the need we had at GV for additional leadership and invited them to join forces with us. On December 5, 1982, Orrin came over to preach for us and at the end of the invitation stepped back up and announced they were placing their membership with the Grand View church of Christ. The following February the congregation hired Larry Yurk as the third GV preacher and a long night of discouragement vanished with a burst of enthusiasm and renewed zeal. Larry came in February 1983, and continued with us until October 15, 1991. During these almost nine years several significant things occurred. Paul and Orrin were appointed elders in December 1984, and subsequently Joe Longfellow and Leon McDaniels as the first deacons.

## **Building Fund**

Because of low overhead and the high interest rates during the Carter years, GV was able to accumulate a sizable building fund. Paul had scouted out the present Hubbell property back in 1978 as a desirable location for the church; however, the price was about \$115,000. The executor of the estate was a bit greedy and held the price high and the property remained on the market for most of the 10-year Scout Hall experience. One fall evening several months before we made an offer on the property, Paul walked to the property around 10:00 p.m. and knelt down by an old, old tree located in the vicinity of a shed located on this property, and he prayed fervently that God would make this property available to the needs of the GV Church. Shortly thereafter, the price began to drop because the executor's wife died, and he was terminally ill with cancer, in the spring the price dropped below \$80,000.00, we offered \$54,000.00 which was accepted, and we began plans to build. We had amassed approximately \$120,000.00 by this time, and building plans began to take shape.

Leon McDaniel, deacon, was given the responsibility for developing building plans and obtaining estimates. The cost was very high and the only affordable direction seemed to be a metal building that would have cost \$175,000.00 if the members did the finish work in the basement. Leon had to move in 1987 because of a job phase-out and the elders took over the project. We soon learned of a retired contractor, Harold Ober from Saylorville, who met with the elders and assured us that he could give us a brick building of equal size with a finished basement at a cost of only \$119,000.00, and the members would only do the painting and floor tile work. Paul, Jackie, Orrin and Marjory left G.V. that next Sunday evening immediately after worship and drove together to the Saylorville Baptist Church to review the work Harold Ober had done in the construction of this facility. Based on all these observations and discussions, it was agreed to present an alternative option to the congregation

The following Wednesday evening Paul stood before the congregation and announced that we had two bids on the building that would now be presented for a consensus decision by the congregation. He said: "We can choose an all-metal building with us doing all the basement finish work for \$175,000.00, or we can choose to build an all brick building including a completely finished basement with us doing only the painting and floor tile work for \$119,000.00. All in favor of the brick building please stand and sing, 'Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow!'" A stunned congregation rose as one and sang as they had never sung before, and the building project was enthusiastically launched.

We quickly obtained a building plan developed by architects Porter-Brierly and a building permit dated September 11, 1987. The building took shape and was ready for work parties to do the painting and tile work by the first of February. The building was ready for occupancy the last of March. The building was complete with pews and other furnishings with only a \$35,000.00 debt at 7%. Approximately \$25,000.00 had been raised internally to supplement the savings of \$120,000.00.

## **G.V. Moves to Hubbell Avenue**

On Wednesday, March 30, the congregation met for the last time in the Scout Hall for a devotional and instructions on how the "Exodus" would proceed in caravan format as we took all of our supplies and materials to the new building. It was decided that Paul Harp would lead the way because he had been an original elder. The Nearhoofs locked the doors after the last members departed and brought up the rear. We proceeded to the present building and met in the basement where Orrin spoke to the membership concerning rules for the new building, etc. After a devotional, we shared treats. We wanted to save the

auditorium for our first worship service that took place on Sunday, April 3, 1988 with a membership of approximately 50. Our plan was to outgrow the new building within five years and then add on. Within a year, our attendance was exceeding 100 fairly consistently. 165 was our record in these early years, and it occurred the last night of VBS. The next year was a great year for leadership expansion. Alan Phipps was added to the eldership in the fall of 1989. Three deacons were added in December 1989: Randy Albers, Tom Doty and Kimball Matkins. The congregation was greatly saddened by the passing of Alan due to a sudden heart attack in August of 1991 after serving only two years.

### **Additional Space / New Deacons**

Within two short years, we had outgrown the building and were ready for phase two - the present auditorium. We had built up a nice building fund during the two years, and we launched a fund raiser within the congregation that raised about \$45,000.00. This allowed us to complete the present addition with only a \$25,000 00 indebtedness that was paid off within a couple of years. Larry Yurk resigned in mid October 1991, leaving us without a preacher until July of 1992. We again experienced leadership expansion with the addition of four more deacons: Alan Augspurger, Dan Bailey, Don Nelson and Richard Potter. At the same time, we completed the new building addition with the members doing the finish work.

### **Mike McFarland Hired**

Our fourth preacher, Mike McFarland, was hired in July 1992. The years during which Mike served the congregation as our preacher can best be described as plateau years with the attendance remaining fairly constant. In January 1993, Don Nelson was appointed to serve the congregation as a third elder. Mike McFarland's tenure ceased mid-November 1995 with his departure for a work in Arizona.

### **Lyle Asbill Hired/ More Expansion**

Lyle Asbill began work as our fifth preacher in January 1996, and we added a fourth elder (Kimball Matkins) and one additional deacon (Brian Showen) in January 1996. It became obvious that we were poised for expansion both in numbers and effectiveness to our world with the renewed enthusiasm that emerged in early 1996; thus, in March, the elders announced plans to expand the current building and to add more parking spaces. At the time the challenge to build was announced we had \$74,000 in the building expansion fund, and the congregation responded to the challenge by donating \$65,000 for the project and by loaning \$55,000. The members' responses and support were encouraging, and we began using the new classrooms in March 1997. Due to the characteristic G. V. spirit, the loans from members were repaid ahead of schedule, and we were debt-free by December 1998.

In January 1998, we added three new deacons: Archie Cook, Mike Mazak and Ron Melvin. Also in June 1998, Don and Nan Nelson left Grandview to begin their work with the Sojourners.

### **Special Remembrances in 1998**

We scheduled a 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration for August 1998, to coincide with the date of the first official meeting and worship for G.V. With a great deal of congregational input and planning, we hosted a special weekend of activities culminating in the anniversary activities. Members prepared a memory book of 20 years, former members returned for the weekend, and the spirit of the weekend was positive and filled with sharing of good memories of the first 20 years.

A month later, G.V. hosted Pray Over Iowa for the first since 1984, when we gave up the option to host

this state-wide program. In view of the fact that brother Gary Lambrecht had promoted the concept, we invited him to speak at this special state-wide activity. POI was once again very well attended, and we planned and served the meal with great support and involvement by the G.V. family.

As 1998 drew to a close, brother Lyle Asbill informed the elders that he was interviewing for another preaching opportunity, and this announcement coincided with ongoing congregational planning to enlarge the leadership at G.V.

### **1999 A Year Of Transitions**

As 1998 was drawing to a close, the congregation was involved in an elder selection process, which resulted in the selection of Alan Augspurger and Ron Melvin as two additional elders to serve the congregation.

Lyle Asbill had already announced his intention to accept a new work with the Grapevine church of Christ, Grapevine, TX, and he would be leaving G.V. in January 1999.

Immediately after the installation of the two new elders, Alan and Ron, in January 1999, brother Paul Harp announced to the elders, in their first combined meeting, his intention to resign as an elder so that he and Jackie could move to Arkansas to be nearer their family. Subsequently, on Wednesday night of this same week, he announced to the congregation his resignation as an elder of the G.V. church of Christ. Brother Paul had served the congregation as an elder on two tours: first in the early 1980s with Don Nelson and since December 1984.

The new eldership was faced with the responsibility of a preacher search and also the ongoing plans for deacon selection, and at the same time, the new eldership was involved in the development of a new program, the Central Iowa Mission (CIM) Program as it is now termed.

### **The CIM Program**

In early November 1998, the then elders began discussions on the concept of a mission effort to central Iowa. This discussion emanated from observations that several congregations were suffering decline and lack of local leadership, and G.V. had been approached by those congregations to assist them in some way. This concept was purposely included in a sermon presented by Orrin Nearhoof on November 17, 1998.

This concept was discussed with Brother Lyle Asbill, and at that time, we had vested in him major leadership for the program. However, as this same meeting Bro. Asbill announced his opportunity for a job interview.

The elders continued to develop the concept, and finally a written outline was prepared, and the elders approved it. It called for the employment of an individual to coordinate the program with the pulpit minister/evangelist, under the direction of the elders.

At this time, we learned that Brother Art Wallis, an experienced gospel preacher, was considering a move to Iowa, and in particular Des Moines. He had submitted an application letter to the Evergreen church of Christ. We contacted Brother Wallis, and he came to Des Moines and the elders met with him the Saturday night before he spoke at Evergreen and Grand View. As a part of the introduction for Brother

Wallis, Orrin Nearhoof again reviewed with the congregation the “domestic mission concept,” and indicated that Brother Wallis was interested in this opportunity.

When it became apparent that Brother Wallis was not interested hi the opportunity at Evergreen, the elders then in place moved to offer him the position under these conditions: (Quoting the elders’ statement, January 1999)

- “1) This is a developing concept and a totally new program for Grand View.
- 2) We had the resources for a one-year commitment. We could initiate this program and not negatively effect any other program.
- 3) The program will be evaluated by the congregation and the elders in the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the program to determine its effectiveness.
- 4) Brother Wallis was willing to accept the position for the one-year term without any assurance or guarantee of continuation beyond that year, pending program evaluation.”

With those understandings, Brother Art Wallis accepted the position, and he began work in February 1999, and he began to outline and develop the concept in coordination with the elders. The first full-time working relationships for the CIM were with Knoxville (Knoxville church of Christ) and the Evergreen church of Christ. Since the inception of the program, the CIM has offered a preacher training program, which has included many men from the G.V. congregation as well as men from other congregations. Brother Art has offered his sequence of classes in other locations also, and his work in this area continues to the present time.

Since its inception, the CIM has assisted several congregations in Iowa: Knoxville and Evergreen were the first as noted above, and then CIM has aided Menlo, Newton, Montezuma on a regular, but periodic basis; and in addition the CIM has provided men to speak at other congregations on a periodic and “fill-in” basis: Ogden, Blockton, Boone, Cerdarloo, Boone Street congregation and the Center Street congregation in Marshalltown, Mason City, and Osceola.

This program continues to serve the central Iowa area very effectively.

As the CIM program began to develop, the congregation’s attention turned to two major activities: the deacon selection process and the preacher search. During this preacher search, the elders involved a screening committee to assist in the review of applicants. Both processes were longer than planned and involved a great deal of patience and prayer; however, when they were completed, Mike Dorell, Mitch Mort, and Joe Longfellow were installed as deacons (joining Archie Cook, Dan Bailey, and Mike Mazak) and Jeff Reed was employed at the pulpit minister.

Also in 1999, we began to support two missionaries, Russian born, who were trained as gospel preachers in Russian and who served in Ulyanovsk, Russian. The program also involved the Lord’s church in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

However, another transition occurred in September 1999 when Kimball Matkins resigned as an elder in order to devote more time to the care and support of his wife, Debbie, who had been diagnosed with lung cancer. She eventually died from the disease in March 2000.

Under Jeff's tenure, we experienced a heightened emphasis on outreach especially to the woman's prison in Mitchellville, and a lively correspondence program was developed and in addition there was one opportunity for Jeff, with the support of a few members from G.V., to preach the gospel at Mitchellville one Sunday evening. However, after two years of involvement, the prison Chaplain finally shut off much of the access for the program. The tenure of Jeff's work is best characterized as one of another plateau for G.V. with leveled attendance. Jeff announced his plans to return to Rapid City, S.D. in mid-January 2003, and his last Lord's Day with G.V. was February 5, 2003.

G.V. continues to move forward with its yearly activities and outreach as we are involved in the preacher search. We have completed a good VBS, and we are poised for a weekend of remembrances with the 25th Anniversary Celebration.

### **The Future!**

Clearly, God has providentially guided and blessed Grandview. The future is bright for Grand View as we strive to mature in our service to the Lord, to one another, to our community, and to the world. Each member can and must play a significant role in determining the future chapters of the history of this special body of believers! Give of your best to the Master and with His guidance, it shall be so.