

# A History of the Indiana Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church

By JOHN W. MELOY

United Presbyterianism officially began in Indiana with the union of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church and the Associate Presbyterian Church in 1858.<sup>1</sup> At that time four Associate Presbyterian congregations,<sup>2</sup> and twelve Associate Reformed Presbyterian congregations<sup>3</sup> passed into the United Presbyterian fold. Two of the twelve,<sup>4</sup> were later transferred to the Southern Illinois Presbytery. Therefore, it may be said, that, to these four Seceder (Associate Presbyterian) and ten Associate Reformed Presbyterian congregations, together with four other congregations organized later,<sup>5</sup> the present Presbytery of Indiana (United Presbyterian) owes its origin.

In great measure the United Presbyterian congregations that developed in Indiana were descendants of Scotch and Scotch-Irish who in the times of the Stuarts migrated to the American colonies to find peace and religious toleration. In 1883, Dr. James A. Woodburn wrote of these: "For their religion's sake they left their native land, and in their migration to this country by the shiploads, by hundreds and by thousands they brought their religion with them."<sup>6</sup> These Scotch-Irish along with German sects from the Rhine provinces settled in great numbers in the Piedmont Plateau of Virginia and the Carolinas before the Revolutionary War. Both the Scotch-Irish and the Germans who colonized the southern frontier in the colonial period moved southward largely from the Great Valley of Pennsylvania through the

<sup>1</sup> See James A. Woodburn, "United Presbyterian Beginnings," in *Indiana Magazine of History* (March, 1934), XXX, 16-28.

<sup>2</sup> The four were: Carmel (including Bethel, just reunited), Madison, Bloomington, and Ruhama (later known as Scotland).

<sup>3</sup> The twelve were: New Zion (Spring Hill), Caledonia, Shiloh (Mays), Bethesda (Milroy), Richland (in Rush County), Glenwood (Vienna, in Rush County), First Indianapolis, Princeton, Bloomington, Eden (in Gibson County), Morea (Palestine, in Illinois), and Carmi (West Union, in Illinois).

<sup>4</sup> Save the last two in the list in preceding footnote, both of which were located in Illinois.

<sup>5</sup> The four were: Somerville, Woodruff, Rushville, and Witherspoon. A congregation organized at Oakland City had a life of about five years. Another, West Bethel of Duncanville, Illinois, was later transferred to the Southern Illinois Presbytery. A "New Side" Covenanter congregation in Bloomington at the time of the Union in 1858 had merged with the Bloomington United Presbyterian congregation by 1876.

<sup>6</sup> See James A. Woodburn, "History of the United Presbyterian Congregation of Bloomington, Indiana, for Fifty Years, 1833-1883," in a pamphlet, *Semi-Centennial Anniversary of the United Presbyterian Congregation of Bloomington Indiana* (1883).

Shenandoah valley and through or over the Blue Ridge by the water gaps or wind gaps of those mountains. The Scotch-Irish became active supporters of the cause of independence when the crisis came. It was the Scotch-Irish, "descending from the Covenanters of Scotland—as great a people as ever lived on earth—that established here in this then unsettled country the three congregations from which we [United Presbyterian congregation of Bloomington] came. They came to Monroe County from Pennsylvania, the Carolinas, Kentucky and Tennessee."<sup>7</sup>

The first of the old Seceder (Associate Presbyterian) congregations in Indiana was Carmel in Jefferson County, organized in 1812. The people who formed this congregation came from Drennon's Creek, Henry County, near Louisville, Kentucky. Rev. Andrew Fulton came with them and became pastor of the Carmel Congregation. About six years later other Seceders from that part of Kentucky south of Madison, Indiana, organized the Madison congregation. These two congregations continued until dissolution—Madison to 1912 and Carmel to 1928.

The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church at New Zion (Spring Hill) was the next to be founded in Indiana (1825). It was made up of people from the Old Zion congregation near Lexington, Kentucky, who had migrated north because of their attitude upon the slavery question. Apparently the same kind of people settled at what is now Milroy and organized the Bethesda congregation in 1828. The Richland congregation, in the same county (Rush), was organized about ten years later (1837). A history of Rush County relates that this body was composed of Tennesseans, Kentuckians and a few South Carolinians. Shiloh (Mays, since 1832) was made up of Kentuckians for the most part, some of them coming from Harrison County, Kentucky. In the historical accounts and records to which the writer has had access, specific mention is made of several families in the Princeton congregation who came from Tennessee (Blount County), and of some families at Caledonia who came direct from Scotland. The names Scotland and Caledonia adopted by certain congregations certainly suggest such an origin of the people, and the names of many families still on the rolls

<sup>7</sup> Woodburn, in *ibid.*, 38.

of the different congregations indicate Scotch descent, as already intimated.

As to the conditions in Indiana in the early days of these congregations, Dr. Woodburn writes that Indiana was then of the far west. Statehood came only in 1816, when the Mississippi was the frontier line, though colonists were already going into Missouri:

California, Oregon, Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, Utah and Texas were all in a foreign country; we had not a mile of railroad in the state; the wolf and the Indian were still prowling in the woods; Bloomington was then of 400 or 500 population with Vincennes and Madison the nearest markets; intelligence was meager; all implements of labor were rude; in great measure our fathers and mothers built their own houses, made their own clothes, raised their own food, and from one year's end to the other, lived independent of the outside world. All around us was almost an unbroken forest.<sup>8</sup>

Fundamental to the Presbyterian system of government is the grouping of congregations into presbyteries. The number of congregations constituting a presbytery varies, never being less than two and seldom more than two score, depending of course on geographical location and accessibility to the congregations included. Prior to the union of 1858, there were two presbyteries, one in each denomination: the Presbytery of Southern Indiana in the Seceder (Associate Presbyterian) church; and the Presbytery of Indiana in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian denomination.

According to Scouller's *Manual*,<sup>9</sup> the presbytery of the Seceder or Associate Presbyterian Church of Kentucky, including congregations in Kentucky and Tennessee, was organized on November 28, 1798, by authority of "the General Associate Synod" of Scotland. The ministers involved in this organization were Rev. Robert Armstrong and Rev. Andrew Fulton. Congregations formed in Southern Ohio and Indiana were added when Mr. Armstrong and a large part of his charge moved to Massie's Creek and Sugar Creek, Ohio, in 1804. When Rev. Fulton and the greater part of his people moved to Carmel, Indiana, the name of the presbytery was changed on May 28, 1821, by authority of Synod, to the Presbytery of Miami. In 1830 this presbytery was enlarged by the addition of the congregations of the "Western Mission." In

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>9</sup> J. B. Scouller, *Manual of the United Presbyterian Church of North America* (1887).

August, 1838, the presbyteries of Indiana and Illinois were separated from it. The Associate Reformed Presbytery of Miami entered the Union of 1858, adjourning at Springfield, Ohio, December 28, 1858.

According to the same authority, the Presbytery of Ohio was formed by separation from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian presbytery of Kentucky on April 9, 1817. It included the Southwestern portion of Ohio. After the Second Ohio presbytery was formed on August 11, 1824, it was known as the First Ohio and included all the congregations in the states of Illinois and Indiana, except that at Richmond, Indiana. The Presbytery of Western Kentucky, including the part of the state west of a line drawn due south from the mouth of the Great Miami River, was added to the First Ohio Presbytery in 1837. The Presbytery of Illinois was separated from the First Ohio Presbytery in 1842 (April 6), and the Presbytery of Michigan was formed from it on April 13, 1843. The First Ohio Presbytery entered the Union of 1858.

Following the union of 1858, the United Presbyterian congregations in Indiana were realigned. Those south of forty degrees North Latitude and east of the New Albany and Salem Railroad, now known as the "Monon," were organized as Indiana Presbytery. Certain churches in Western Kentucky were also to be included in this presbytery, but the writer has not found their names in any record. The congregations south of the fortieth parallel and west of the New Albany and Salem Railroad were formed into the Princeton Presbytery.

The Princeton Presbytery was organized at Bloomington, Indiana, on May 13, 1859, Rev. William Turner presiding. The ministers forming this presbytery were: Rev. William Turner and Rev. John Bryan of Bloomington; Rev. John L. Craig of Princeton; Rev. Robert Gray of Eden; James Ingles of Scotland; and Thomas Turner of Carmi. The churches at Morea and Duncanville were without pastors at that time. The names of the Elders present are not preserved by Scouler. In 1865, by order of the Second Synod, White River Presbytery was organized, including ministers, William Turner, James Ingles, William G. Spencer, John Bryan and M. M. Brown. In 1870 this presbytery was merged with the

Princeton Presbytery, the consolidation being effected at Princeton on September 29, 1871.

Indiana Presbytery was organized at Spring Hill on April 13, 1859, by representatives of the congregations of the two uniting denominations in southeastern Indiana. The ministers forming the new Presbytery were Moses Arnott of Carmel, Joseph R. Walker of what is now Spring Hill, Nathan McDill of Milroy and Richland, J. F. Hutchison of Mays and Vienna and Thomas Dickson of Caledonia. The church at Madison and the First Indianapolis were without pastors at this time. Scouller's *Manual* does not record the names of the Elders present. This presbytery was augmented by the dissolution of Princeton Presbytery on December 30, 1907. The members of the abandoned presbytery were added to the roll of the Indiana Presbytery. The certified roll of Princeton Presbytery so received included Rev. W. H. Patterson, Ph.D., of Princeton, Rev. T. H. Hanna, Jr., of Bloomington and Rev. W. H. Hemphill of Duncanville, Morea, and West Union. Pastors without charges were Rev. D. A. McClung, Rev. Alex Mayn, and Rev. T. H. Hanna, D. D. These were received at the meeting of the Indiana Presbytery at Milroy on April 7, 1908, W. H. Patterson, Moderator.

During the last quarter century, the Illinois congregations at Duncanville, Morea and Carmi were transferred to the Southern Illinois Presbytery. Eden merged with Somerville in 1908. Madison disbanded in 1912, Glenwood in 1923, and Carmel in 1928. Woodruff was organized in 1892, Rushville in 1879, and Witherspoon in 1907.

The Second Synod meeting in Indianapolis on October 9-10, 1934, authorized the union of Northern Indiana Presbytery of the United Presbyterian Church with Indiana Presbytery and directed that this be effected in April, 1935. The two Presbyteries will meet at Bloomington, Indiana, on April 9-10, 1935, to complete their union. This marks the return of the Indiana portion of Michigan Presbytery (Associate Reformed Presbyterian) which was formed in 1843 as already indicated. In 1864, Michigan Presbytery was divided into Detroit Presbytery consisting of the Michigan congregations, and Wabash Presbytery comprising the several Indiana congregations. In 1862, this Wabash Presbytery received the larger number of the congregations of the Associ-

ate Presbytery of Northern Indiana and the name adopted by the union was Northern Indiana Presbytery. Of some nineteen congregations,<sup>10</sup> ten that belonged at one time to Northern Indiana Presbytery, only three remain to enter the union of 1935. These are: Salem, near Kircklin, Rev. Chas. H. McClung (pastor); Idaville, Rev. R. L. Warnock (stated supply); and Hebron, ————— (pastor). Indiana Presbytery congregations and pastors are as follows at present: Princeton, Rev. John P. Nesbit, D.D.; Milroy, Rev. W. Guy Hamilton; Witherspoon, Rev. D. F. White (stated supply); Bloomington, Rev. John W. Meloy; Scotland, Rev. W. M. Lorimer (stated supply); Woodruff Ave., Indianapolis, Rev. W. C. Ball; First Indianapolis, Rev. J. A. Mears (stated supply); Spring Hill, Rev. W. W. Woodburn; Rushville, Rev. H. E. Lobaugh; Caledonia, Rev. Jacob J. Vellenga; Mays and Somerville, ————. A. W. Jamieson, D.D., and J. P. Cowan, D.D., are members of Presbytery without charges. The new Presbytery when formed will include fifteen congregations, with thirteen pastors and two ministers without charges, representing a total of one thousand seven hundred seventeen communicants. The new Indiana Presbytery will include all United Presbyterian congregations within the state except congregations at Gary, Hammond and Indiana Harbor, which will remain under Chicago Presbytery, Richmond, still in First Ohio Presbytery, and California, near Ray, Indiana, yet in Ohio Northwestern Presbytery.

The appended footnote indicates the approximate chronology of the pastorates.<sup>11</sup> Behind the names and dates there are many notable accomplishments which cannot be discussed in detail. It seems proper to mention one. During the pastorate of forty-four years filled by N. C. McDill at Richland, the Richland Academy flourished for a decade (1858-1868). The Academy was established by Rev. A. S. Montgomery who was preaching for an Associate Reformed congregation at Clarks-

<sup>10</sup> The nineteen congregations follow: Bethsaida, organized 1849; disbanded 1934; Burnett's Creek (now Idaville), organized 1843; Hebron, organized 1830; Murray, organized 1846, disbanded 1912; Fort Wayne, First, organized in 1852, disbanded in 1856; Fort Wayne, Second, organized 1891, disbanded in 1896; Providence (Mt. Pleasant), organized in 1891, disbanded 1934; Salem, organized in 1837; Frankfort, organized in 1849, disbanded in 1857; LaPorte, organized in 1839, disbanded in 1875; LaFayette, First, organized in 1839, disbanded in 1871; LaFayette, Second, organized in 1863, disbanded in 1869; Warren, organized in 1847, disbanded (?); Alexandria, organized in 1893, disbanded in 1901; Mount Hope, organized in 1837, disbanded in 1871; Portland Mills, organized in 1859, disbanded in 1912; Muncie, organized 1902, disbanded 1913; LeRoy, organized in 1888, released from a united charge with Hebron in 1915.

<sup>11</sup> The pastors of the congregations that were in time included in the Presbytery of Indiana are here listed. The dates to 1908 are from the *Cyclopedic Manual of the United*

burg and extended his field of labor to Richland where there were families of his faith. The school was opened and stock to the amount of two thousand dollars subscribed in 1855. Until the building was completed the following year classes met in the Old School Presbyterian Church. The attendance rose from thirty-nine the first year to sixty-nine in 1859-60. An unusual number of young men entered the ministry from this congregation. Probably the Academy and the influence of the church combined were responsible. Following are the names of those who entered the service of the church from this congregation: R. E. Stewart, J. P. Cowan, John C. Stewart, Thomas B. Stewart, Robert E. Stewart, David E. Stewart, Elmer B. Stewart, William M. Butler, Samuel H. McDill, Clarence Pinkerton, Mary E. Logan (missionary to India), and Mary J. Fisher (Freedmen's work in Tennessee). Other communities can also show worthy achievements. Indeed, the congregations of the Indiana Presbytery have had their part in the nurture of men high in the educational world and in the political, industrial and business life of their respective communities.

*Presbyterian Church of North America* by William Melancthon Glasgow; from 1903-35 the dates are from Presbytery Records.

*Madison* (1818-1912): Andrew Isaac, 1820-27; John Wallace, 1831-33; J. M. Henderson, 1834-35; G. M. Hall, 1836-39; James Brown, 1844-55; Sam. Collins, 1860-67; J. F. Hutchison, 1868-76; J. A. Kennedy, 1878-83; J. L. Aten, 1884-94; W. R. Leeper, 1896-97; Edgar McDill, 1899-1911. Disbanded July 17, 1912.

*Carmel* (Jefferson County 1812, A. P., 1928): From Henry County, Ky.; 1812: Andrew Fulton, 1812-18; Andrew Isaac, 1820-27; John Wallace, 1831-32; J. M. Henderson, 1834-44; Moses Arnot, 1847-74; H. P. Jackson, 1876-89; J. D. Lytle, 1890-1910; C. W. Comin, 1910-12; H. D. Gordon, 1914-20; T. F. Campbell, 1921-22. Disbanded in December 18, 1928.

*New Zion* (*Spring Hill*, Decatur County, July 30, 1825. A. R. P.): James Worth, 1830-52; J. R. Walker, 1852-68; S. A. Taggart, 1868-68; William Johnston, 1871-78; William Johnston, 1878-76; W. M. Ritchie, 1877-79; A. S. Vincent, 1880-88; T. H. McMichael, 1890-92; H. H. Crawford, 1898-95; Paul Stewart, 1896-1900; W. N. Ferguson, 1901-15; W. W. McCall, 1906-12; Frederick Elliott, 1913-18; J. S. E. McMichael, 1919-21; J. H. McCann, 1922-29; W. W. Woodburn, 1930-35. Called Spring Hill instead of New Zion after 1878.

*Caledonia* (Jefferson County, A. R. P. 1833): William Horne, 1834-38; N. R. Kirkpatrick, 1854-56; Thomas Dickson, 1858-61; Andrew McBride, 1873-79; N. R. Walker, 1879-82; J. E. Black, 1886-89; J. M. McConnell, 1893-96; H. M. Jamieson, 1900-04; N. B. McClung, 1905-07; F. W. Schmunk, 1908-24; R. H. Cherry, 1925-28; Jacob Vellenga, 1933.

*Shiloh* (*Mays*, Henry County, September 16, 1832. A. R. P.): J. N. Pressly, 1838-41; William Lind, 1841-46; Samuel Millen, 1847-49; R. E. Stewart, 1850-55; J. F. Hutchison, 1857-66; H. W. Crabbe, 1868-69; T. P. Dysart, 1869-73; S. M. Bailey, 1877-81; J. A. Pollock, 1882-86; G. I. Gordon, 1889-95; R. W. Thompson, 1898- ; H. Rabb, 1903-07; J. H. Miller, 1912-13; J. H. McCann, 1914-16; (Walter Cooley, 1917- ); C. Garman Hohnston, 1919-21; (Frank Wilson, 1824 and J. Ashenhurst, 1825, supplies). Joint charge with Rushville 1928.

*Bethesda* (November 18, 1828, A.R.P. Changed to *Milroy*, 1865): James Worth, 1830-37; J. N. Pressly, 1838-51; N. C. McDill, 1852-59; J. I. Frazer, 1861-65; W. A. Hutchison, 1866-69; James Freeborn, 1870-71; A. R. Rankin, 1873-76; J. F. Hutchison, 1876-89; Ainsworth Hope, 1898-1902; F. W. Schmunk, 1902-07; Paul Stewart, 1910-15; Willard Wylie, 1916-18; (J. S. E. McMichael, stated supply, 1919-21); W. Guy Hamilton, 1922- .

*Richland* (Rush County, Indiana, April 14, 1837. A. R. P.): J. N. Pressley, 1838-51; N. C. McDill, 1852-96; Ainsworth Hope, 1898-02; F. W. Schmunk, 1902-07. Disbanded in 1910.

- Vienna* (Rush County, A. R. P., September 11, 1847. Changed to *Glenwood*, 1889): R. E. Stewart, 1850-55; J. F. Hutchison, 1857-59; J. I. Frazier, 1861-65; Adrian Aten, 1866-70; A. R. Rankin, 1878-76; J. F. Hutchison, 1876-89; R. P. Cooke, 1903-07. Disbanded, December 19, 1923.
- First Indianapolis*, 1872: J. L. Clark, 1872-75; H. G. McVey, 1875-76; J. P. Cowan, 1880-92; J. A. Littell, 1893-1900; C. M. Lawrence, 1900-05; D. G. McKay, 1906-08; George L. Brown, 1909-18; (S. H. Bailes, 1919-21; J. A. Henderson, 1921-25, E. S. Daum, 1927-29, J. A. Mears, 1930- stated supplies).
- Woodruff Ave. Indianapolis* (November 21, 1892): J. P. Cowan, 1893-1924; E. W. Welch, 1924-29; W. C. Ball, 1929- .
- Rushville* (October 1, 1879): A. P. Hutchison, 1881-85; S. R. Frazier, 1885-87; N. L. Heldger, 1887-90; W. H. French, 1890-97; E. G. Bailey, 1898-1900; W. P. McGarey, 1901-06; W. H. Clark, 1907-10; A. W. Jamieson, 1910-15; J. T. Aiken, 1916-20; E. G. McKibben, 1921-26; E. Dwight McKune, 1927-30; H. E. Lobaugh, 1930- .
- Princeton* (1834, A. P. & A. R. P.) A. P.: J. L. McLean, 1839-43. Disbanded 1854. A. R. P.: S. C. Baldrige, 1837-53; J. L. Craig, 1854-65; S. F. Clark, 1870-74; W. H. McMaster, 1874-81; J. A. Gordon, 1883-88; J. B. Lee, 1889-91; A. M. Campbell, 1892-1901; W. H. Patterson, 1902-10; Morris Watson, 1911-21; John P. Nesbit, 1922- .
- Princeton Second*: John McMaster, 1870-7. United with preceding, 1874.
- Bloomington* (September 7, 1833) A. R. P.: W. D. Turner, 1836-64. A. P. 1834: James Lyle, 1834-36; I. N. Laughead, 1839-43; John Bryan, 1855-62; changed to Union Church, 1864. R. P.: T. A. Wylie, 1838-69; to Union Church, 1869. U. P.: W. P. Nary, 1871-84; S. R. Lyone, 1885-98; W. A. Littell, 1899-1901; J. D. Barr, 1902-06; T. H. Hanna, Jr., 1907-17; James L. Kelso, 1919-23; J. Merle Rife, 1924-27; John W. Meloy, 1928- .
- Ruhamah* (Greene County, 1852. Changed to *Scotland*, 1859. A. P.): James Ingles, 1858-1902; D. A. McClung, 1902-10; (H. Sleman, stated supply, 1910-18); J. H. McCann, 1917-21; (W. C. Ball, stated supply, 1923-26); Alvin J. McConnell, 1927-28; W. M. Lorimer, stated supply, 1929- .
- Somerville*. (Gibson County, June 2, 1860): Robert Gray, 1862-66; James McCrea, 1868-78; W. G. Spencer, 1877-82; A. S. Montgomery, 1884-90; J. D. Palmer, 1898-1900; D. A. McClung, 1902; (H. Sleman, and J. G. Bradt, supplies); Paul E. Ferguson, 1921-22; W. P. Cooley, 1922-26.
- Eden* (Gibson County, 1839. A. R. P.): C. S. Baldrige, 1840-53; Robert Gray, 1856-62; James McCrea, 1868-72; W. G. Spencer, 1878-82; A. S. Montgomery, 1884-90; J. D. Palmer, 1898-1900; D. A. McClung, 1902. Merged with Somerville, 1908.
- Oakland City*, 1881: W. G. Spencer, 1881-83; A. S. Montgomery, 1884-86. Disbanded, 1886.
- West Bethel* (*Duncanville*, Ill.), 1869; Hugh McHatton, 1874-92; W. T. Warnock, 1895-97; D. A. McClung, 1899-1902. Transferred to Southern Illinois Presbytery.
- Palestine* (Crawford County, Ill. Changed to *Morea*, 1871. A. R. P.) 1849: A. R. Rankin, 1852-56; Alexander McHatton, 1861-71; O. G. Brockett, 1878-82; W. D. Ralston, 1887-94; W. T. Warnock, 1895-96; D. A. McClung, 1899-02. Transferred to Southern Illinois Presbytery.
- Carmi* (White County, Ill., 1837. A. R. P.): S. C. Baldrige, 1840-53; James Morrow, 1853-55; Thomas Turner, 1858-60; A. S. Montgomery, 1864-82; J. D. Palmer, 1898-1900; G. F. Brockett, 1900-02; D. A. McClung, 1902- . Changed to West Union. Transferred to Southern Illinois Presbytery.
- Witherspoon* (Colored), Indianapolis (1907): (D. F. White, stated supply, 1909-11); John Brice, 1912-18; A. P. Clark, 1921-26; D. F. White, 1927-