Surry Pastor Takes Lead In Building Church With ‘Hammer And Saw, Preaching And Visiting’

Thomas W. Wagner is a church builder. In five years as pastor of Dover Church in White Plains, Surry Association, he has led in building the membership from 120 to 175. He does it “by preaching, by visiting, and by loving the people” of the picturesque village five miles south of Mount Airy.

But Thomas Wagner is a church builder in other ways too. With saw and hammer and with blowtorch and pipework he is hard at work with building a new sanctuary and educational space at Dover Church.

The brick veneer structure is scheduled for occupancy by April 4 when it is expected to be filled for a morning worship service.

In the pulpit will stand a tall, crewcut, muscular young man who will know every board and nail, every brick and every shingle in the building. He will know because he was on the job every day in the week as the church was being built. After a six day week as construction man, Wagner preaches in the building next door every Sunday.

The preacher’s building specialty is plumbing, heating and electrical work. He is doing his share of all these during the building. He does not stop there, however. In carpentry, even the highly skilled finish work, he can hold his own with the master craftsmen.

Dover was organized some 10 years ago and occupied an unused frame church building on the edge of town. Five years later it called Wagner as pastor. Attendance and enthusiasm began to mount as the young man and his family led the congregation into a full church program.

Wagner and the people built a parsonage across the dirt road from the church, the pastor doing much of the work. The $12,000 raised paid the bills and the church had a building valued at much more.

Last summer work began on the new sanctuary with educational plant on the ground floor. Architects estimate the finished building will be worth $50,000. Total bills will be $22,000 with more than half the money now in hand.

Wagner, ordained eight years ago in Greenwood Church, Thomasville, says the manual labor gives him needed exercise and helps him to better know the people. He adds that it also helps him to better appreciate the church.

The proprietor of a nearby store puts it thus: “That Preacher Wagner he sure is a church building man!” He could have added that the brick and lumber building will merely house the true church within.
Rev. Thomas W. Wagner has assumed his duties as the new pastor of Edgewood Baptist Church and will conduct revival services next week.

Wagner was formerly pastor of Dover Baptist Church at Mt. Airy. While there he led the church in an extensive building program.

A native of Thomasville, he is a graduate of Wingate College. Next fall he plans to attend Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest.

Wagner, his wife and family will reside at the church parsonage in Edgewood.
Tommy Wagner Resigns Pastorate

The Rev. Tommy Wagner, pastor of the East Erwin Baptist Church has resigned. His resignation is effective June 6. Mr. Wagner has served the East Erwin Church for the last two years. Mr. Wagner came to Erwin from the Edgewood Church in Mebane where he served as pastor while a student in the seminary. He is a graduate of Wingate Baptist College and Southeastern Baptist Seminary.

(Continued on Page 12)

During his ministry in Erwin, he has been active in the work of the Little River Baptist Association and the Pastors' Conference, and also a member of the Dunn and Erwin Minister's Associations.

The East Erwin Church has grown in membership under his ministry and progress has been made in many areas of the church's ministry to the community. The Wagners have three children; Debbie a 1970 graduate of Erwin High School and now a student at Sampson Technical Institute; Barry, a ninth grade student at Erwin High and Annette, a second grade student at Gentry School.

The Wagners will be moving to Roxboro in June to begin his duties as the new pastor of the Somerset Baptist Church.
The Rev. Tommy Wagner has resigned as pastor of Somerset Baptist Church to become pastor of the First Baptist Church of Crossnore.

Rev. Wagner informed his congregation that he will leave the church where he has served for the past six years to become pastor of the Crossnore church, located near Boone, on Nov. 7.

Rev. Wagner came to the Somerset church in June, 1971, and has seen the church membership grow from 289 to 356. Church income has grown from $32,304 in 1970 to $58,839 in 1977 and mission gifts from $5,910 to $11,766 this year. In addition, the church has purchased a bus, built a conference room and an office, air conditioned several buildings, and relocated its kitchen and fellowship hall, in addition to retiring a church debt of over $25,000.

The Wagners have three children, Debbie, 25, Barry, 21, and Annette, 14. Mrs. Wagner has served as church secretary for six years.

In announcing his resignation, the Rev. Wagner said, “I pray you will remember me, my wife, and family and speak of what we did and tried to do and not what we could not accomplish. I assure you, there will always be warm places in our hearts for you.”

The Wagners will move to Crossnore around Nov. 7.
The Rev. Tommy Wagner has resigned as pastor of Somerset Baptist Church to become pastor of the First Baptist Church of Crossnore.

Rev. Wagner informed his congregation that he will leave the church where he has served for the past six years to become pastor of the Crossnore church, located near Boone, on Nov. 7.

The Wagners have three children, Debbie, 25, Barry, 21, and Annette, 14. Mrs. Wagner has served as church secretary for six years.

In announcing his resignation, the Rev. Wagner said, "I pray you will remember me, my wife, and family and speak of what we did and tried to do and not what we could not accomplish. I assure you, there will always be warm places in our hearts for you."

Rev. Wagner came to the Somerset church in June, 1971, Crossnore around Nov. 7.

and has seen the church membership grow from 289 to 356. Church income has grown from $32,304 in 1970 to $58,839 in 1977 and mission gifts from $5,910 to $11,766 this year. In addition, the church has purchased a bus, built a conference room and an office, air conditioned several buildings, and relocated its kitchen and fellowship hall, in addition to retiring a church debt of over $25,000.

The Wagners will move to Crossnore.
Rev. Wagner retiring at Southside

The Rev. Thomas (Tommy) W. Wagner, pastor of Southside Baptist Church, has announced plans for his retirement on Dec. 31. The Rev. Mr. Wagner is in his 14th year as pastor at Southside Baptist.

He was born and reared in Thomasville and attended Pilot High School. Rev. Wagner and his wife, Roberta, and their two children, Debbie and Barry, left Thomasville in 1957 so he could attend Wingate College in preparation for the ministry. He obtained several degrees. The couple’s third child was born in 1963 in Mt. Airy.

His first church was in Paceland, S.C. The remaining 25 years were spent in churches throughout North Carolina. Just before returning to Thomasville, he was pastor of First Baptist in Crossnore for almost six years.

Southside Baptist has grown under his leadership. In 1981 the church income was $39,000 and by 1990 it had grown to $107,000. In the same period, 100 new members were added to the church roll.

Prior to the church celebration of the 75th anniversary, the sanctuary was remodeled with a choir loft, piano and organ booths. In 1989-’90, a new 29-passenger bus was purchased for the church in 1989 and a sound booth and tape ministry was started. The church nursery and Sunday school classes were renovated, a new brick sign constructed, a covered, paved drive added and the pastor’s study remodeled. A new 13-passenger van was purchased in 1992 and new office equipment purchases have been made.

Rev. and Mrs. Wagner will remain in Thomasville and will be available for speaking opportunities.
Rev. Wagner Retiring At Southside Baptist

The Rev. Thomas (Tommy) W. Wagner, pastor of Southside Baptist Church, has announced plans for his retirement on Dec. 31. The Rev. Mr. Wagner is in his 14th year as pastor at Southside Baptist.

He was born and reared in Thomasville and attended Pilot High School. Rev. Wagner and his wife, Robena, and their two children, Debbie and Barry, left Thomasville in 1957 so he could attend Wingate College. In preparation for the ministry, he obtained several degrees. The couple's third child, Annette, was born in 1963 in Mt. Airy.

His first church was in Paceland, SC. The remaining 25 years were spent in churches throughout North Carolina. Just before returning to Thomasville, he was pastor of First Baptist in Crossnore for almost six years.

Southside Baptist has grown under his leadership. In 1981 the church income was $39,000 and by 1990 it had grown to $107,000. In the same period, 100 new members were added to the church roll.

Prior to the church celebration of the 75th anniversary, the sanctuary was remodeled with a choir loft, piano and organ booths. In 1989-'90 a new 29-passenger bus was purchased for the church in 1989 and a sound booth and tape ministry was started. The church nursery and Sunday school classes were renovated, a new brick sign constructed, a covered, paved drive added and the pastor's study remodeled. A new 13-passenger van was purchased in 1992 and new office equipment purchases have been made.

Rev. and Mrs. Wagner will remain in Thomasville and he will be available for speaking opportunities.