

Preacher Reid

World War II Hospital Bed Led To Decision For Ministry

By Lucy Berry

OAK GROVE — For a tobacco road preacher, the Rev. Arthur L. Reid holds an almost cosmopolitan air.

He dons a head of white hair, dresses impeccably and greets everyone with an outstretched hand.

His father, Robert Joyce Reid, a railroad engineer with Norfolk & Western Railway for 45 years, wanted his son to be a lawyer.

Arthur Reid might have followed his father's advice except for an unexpected turn of events several decades ago. At age 22, he found himself in the scarred fields of Verdun, France, during World War II.

Rushed to the front lines as a replacement as the German Army was breaking across the Rhine, he was struck by an enemy bullet. It entered his hip and exited just short of his spine.

When he was taken to an Army hospital he realized that while he had lost his watch, knife and other possessions, the Bible his wife had given him remained. It was a sign, he said, to serve God.

That decision brought him to a remote eastern corner of Stokes County to pastor a tiny congregation of 12 called Oak Grove Baptist Church. He liked it, and they liked him.

Because the church could not afford a full-time pastor, Reid worked four years as a welder at Western Electric to supplement his income. He commuted from Winston-Salem to Oak Grove on Sunday and Wednesday, until he was able to work full-time.

After 34 years serving at Oak Grove, an extra-long term for any preacher, he has watched his flock increase to over 400 members.

He is now retiring.

He and his wife, Zelmo Brewer Reid — his sweetheart since watching her fall while rollerskating in their hometown Winston-Salem — plan to move to Walnut Cove at the end of November. Reid says it is necessary to move away from

the church to give the new preacher time to adjust.

"I don't want to do anything to hurt the next preacher," Reid said. After 34 years, the congregation is accustomed to his style.

Stokes County may not have heard the last from Arthur Reid. He is considering a campaign for county commissioner in the future, he says. That talk sparks head shaking by his wife.

His life as minister is one of a spiritual friend and doctor in a community once accessible by dirt roads. He remembers when a woman's work was in the home. When new members were baptized in the swift current of the Dan River.

"Some people think that the Baptists are funny," he said Sunday night, "because we think the Bible is the final authority."

"Amen," responded a chorus of his members.

He tells his flock not to give up, but to keep praying until the answer comes.

Up-to-date events are mentioned in his sermons — like the crisis in Lebanon.

Each sermon is different from the next, except for some of his favorites he stores away to use again in several years. "Well a lot of times you get in your mind what you want to say," he explains.

He uses anecdotes, jokes, anything to get his message across.

"The heart is the principle thing in all our relationships," he warns. "Is thy heart right with God?"

The congregation has extended an arm to the Mexican migrant community, baptizing four new Mexicans this year, including one 82-year-old woman. About 48 migrants attended services this summer, before returning to their winter residences.

He contemplates an even greater need to spread the gospel to the isolated people of the West Virginia mountains where new Baptist missions are underway.

Reid came to Oak Grove Baptist

at the request of Mrs. Elsie Bowlin. He was 27. He still remembers the topic of his first sermon — "What manner of person you ought to be." That night one person was saved.

Floor boards were missing in the one-room church. He remembers one time when his wife's leg fell through. Another time a black snake crawled in during a service.

Things have changed. Oak Grove now has a modern, brick sanctuary.

He is optimistic for Christianity in modern society. "I think the church is going to stand," he says, mentioning some of society's ills apparent in divorce, drinking, and dirty jokes.

Many roles he has seen change, particularly that of women in his community. "When I first came most of the women were at home. Now about all the women work at public works," he said.

Wednesday nights, once reserved for church and Bible study have gone to civic and school obligations, he said. Prayer meeting attendance has declined noticeably over the years.

Young people have left the community after attending college.

Reid is not the prototype of a staunch, unbending Baptist preacher. He chooses not to dance, he said, because it may lead to bad things. However he is not opposed to having a good time.

An avid sports fan, he has sponsored the church's first girl's softball team in the commercial league for three years now. His idea of a good time is a softball game and going to a restaurant afterwards.

He would like to see more sports for youth in Stokes County, including a bowling alley and skating rink.

He also enjoys hunting rabbits with his beagles in November and watching his dogs run.

He does see a need for Christian politicians. He agrees with Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority ideas — and with the teaching of divine creation.



Rev. and Mrs. Arthur Reid

*'He's been a friend, a pastor,
and everything to us.'*

— Lena Joyce

During his sermons he presents Jesus Christ as an approachable figure. He tells his members to remind God of the promises He has made, particularly of everlasting life and the second coming.

He has driven thousands of miles in his car to visit the sick. For 10 years he has served as a trustee at the Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital in Danbury.

He has delivered over 500 funeral services. The church

cemetery had just four graves when he arrived. Now its almost full.

The one-room church building is just a memory. In its place is a main sanctuary and 22 Sunday School rooms. A large parking lot enables crowds to gather on special occasions.

"He's one of the best," Lena Joyce said about her pastor. "He's been a friend, a pastor, and everything to us."

The bonds he has developed in

the Oak Grove community are strong.

Many preachers yearn for opportunities in different towns — for personal and financial reasons. Some move on because of personality conflicts. Now 61 years of age, Reid says it is time to retire.

His new home will be about five miles away.

He will spend more time with his beagles. But he will continue his "bragging on the Lord."



HOOT OWL—Dr. Ross McKinley exhibits an unusual patient of his— a Great Horned Owl—that has been recuperating at his animal clinic in Madison-Mayodan.

Injured Owl Hoots For Freedom

By Lucy Berry

There is an owl-in-residence at Dr. Ross McKinley's veterinarian clinic in Madison that ruffles its tawny wings and blinks tiger yellow eyes.

Moving its mobile neck back and forth 180 degrees in a single motion, it has the look of wisdom for which owls are noted.

That look is actually caused by owls' severe farsightedness. Owls must tilt their heads to bring close objects into sharp focus.

"The remarkable thing is the acuity of their hearing," he said. "Even when blindfolded a barn owl's strike has been very accurate."

"This will be the first one that we have had success with," McKinley said. The four or five other birds of prey McKinley has tended had to be put to sleep after they were either shot or hit by a car.

This great horned owl displays a healthy, feisty attitude. Its characteristic ear tufts stand alert to the sounds of dogs and cats in adjacent cages at McKinley's Animal Clinic of Madison-Mayodan.

In a few days McKinley plans to

release it into the Rockingham County wilds in time for the owl to find a mate before nesting in early January and February.

A local couple found the starved owl flopping about in their corn field about a month ago.

Apparently, the owl's feet had been mutilated by some caustic substance which stiffened the talon joints — which the owl uses to grasp its prey and tear the meat apart — so that it could not even perch on a tree limb.

After being force-fed chicken livers for three days, the owl began to show signs of recovery — hissing and clacking its beak.

McKinley used an iodine solution to soften the stiff talons. Now the owl can handle dead rabbits and rats McKinley collects for it along roadsides.

He gained experience working with birds of prey while at the University of Georgia veterinary school where he worked with several raptors, including hawks, eagles and owls. After graduating in 1979 McKinley worked with Don Robertson in Winston-Salem, coming to Madison in February 1980.

Although birds of prey are among his favorites, he avoids

making pets of them.

"I can't see that I would like to be cooped up in a cage for the rest of my life," he said.

Birds of prey are not pets, he warns, pointing to the notched spot on his arm, which the owl made with its beak.

Last week it flew into the bushes behind the clinic and was difficult to recapture. Just moments before its escape, the owl had tolerated McKinley's gentle stroking.

Now it seems to sense its eventual release. It frequently flaps its wings silently in the breeze, displaying a wingspan of over four feet.

The couple who brought the owl to the clinic told McKinley they wanted the owl to be released on their property once it had recovered. However, they forgot to leave their name and phone number with the clinic.

Certainly the couple rescued the owl from certain starvation, just as McKinley is saving it from captivity.

McKinley hopes this owl has not developed a trust in humans after its short time in captivity...for not all humans are as understanding as owls.

March 16, 2003

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ROCKINGHAM COUNTY

291 ARTHUR LEO REID B6

MAYODAN — Rev. Arthur Leo Reid, 81, of 211 N. 4th Ave., formerly of Sandy Ridge, died Saturday, March 15, 2003, at the VA Hospital in Salisbury.

The funeral will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, March 17, 2003, at Oak Grove Baptist Church. Burial will follow in Bethel United Methodist Church Cemetery in Winston-Salem.

Rev. Reid was born Jan. 8, 1922, in Forsyth County, to the late Robert Joyce and Myrtle Fagg Reid. He attended Mineral Springs Baptist Church as a boy. On Dec. 24, 1941, he was married to the former Zelmo Brewer of Winston-Salem. He graduated from Mineral Springs High School in 1939, enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1944 and was discharged in 1945 due to wounds received in Germany. Mr. Reid accepted the call to pastor Oak Grove Baptist Church in 1949 and retired Dec. 31, 1982 after serving in the ministry for 33 1/2 years. Reverend Reid served as pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church in 1951 for one year. He graduated from Fruitland Bible Institute in 1956, where he served as president of the student body. He graduated from the School of Pastoral Care at Baptist Hospital in 1957, and served as trustee for Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital for 25 years.

Reverend Reid was preceded in death by his wife, Zelmo Brewer Reid; brothers, Robert Joyce Reid, Carlton J. Reid; and sister, Margaret Brown.

Survivors include his wife of second married (Aug. 21, 1999), Gladys Nelson Hall Reid of the home; sister, Martha Hiatt of Yadkinville; stepdaughter, Amy H. Steele of Madison; stepson, Michael Hall (Nancy) of Richmond, Va.; step-grandson, Andrew Hall; step-granddaughters, Erin Hall of Glen Allen, Va. and Vaughn Steele of Madison; many nieces and nephews; a special friend, Cathy Case; and a host of other friends.

The family will receive friends from 6 to 9 p.m. Sunday, March 16, 2003, at Oak Grove Baptist Church, and all other times at the residence.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Oak Grove Baptist Church Building Fund, c/o Mrs. Janet Roberts, 2336 NC 772, Madison, N.C. 27025 or to Sandy Ridge United Methodist Church, c/o Mrs. Helen Amos, P.O. Box 5, Sandy Ridge, N.C. 27046.

The family would like to acknowledge two special people, Liz McBride and Carolyn Barlow, for all their care, support and especially their love.

Colonial Funeral Home of Madison is serving the family.