

THE HISTORY OF
EMERSON UNITARIAN CHURCH
HOUSTON, TEXAS
BY
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I wish to thank Dr. Frank Schulman, our minister, for adding interest and authenticity to this manuscript by recording some of his personal experiences and philosophy on tape; and Alice Schulman for her skillful editing of the manuscript and supplying new information, especially about the church school.

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Alice S. Cowles
January 1, 1982

CHAPTER I
THE ROOTS OF EMERSON CHURCH
1950-1960

"Building a church is an act of faith. It requires vision and courage, liberal giving, and concerted action. This physical structure we shall build is a symbol of our higher aspirations. We are the real church..."
Dr. F. Hartman Kilgore

Dr. F. Hartman Kilgore made a brief speech -- "opening remarks," he called them --before he turned the first shovel of earth at the ground-breaking ceremony for the first of the new Unitarian church buildings, the one that would eventually be called Westwood Hall. The time was Sunday morning, February 14, 1960, and the day was cold and wet with a brisk north wind, following a "wet norther" which had flooded our lot on Bering Drive. Spectators, dressed in raincoats and boots, stood on the only dry spot, the center of the street. Planks had been laid to a temporary wooden platform on the lot. Led by the Reverend Horace Westwood, minister of the First Unitarian Church of Houston, representatives from each of First Church's organizations and members of the building committee for the new church turned up shovelfuls of mud.

Despite the cold weather, the audience was in a cheerful mood. The ground-breaking was the climax of the diligent work of Mr. Westwood, the New Church Building Committee, and many other Unitarians who wanted "another church of liberal religion" in Houston.

The late fifties and early sixties were a period of unusual growth in Unitarianism in the Southwest. Horace Westwood and his capable and lovable wife Virginia were called to Houston by the members of First Unitarian Church in 1950. Mr. Westwood was a young man with plenty of enthusiasm, which he communicated to his congregation. A new church to replace the two small wooden buildings at 5210 Fannin Street was much needed, and very soon Mr. Westwood inspired his congregation to

proceed with plans for the new First Unitarian Church. Raising money from a small group, most of whom had little, securing an architect, arranging financing, and watching construction of a new church on the small lot also constituted an "act of faith" by Houston Unitarians. The First Unitarian Church emerged in 1952 as a charming and practical building.

Many people were attracted to the new First Church, and in three years it grew so fast that more room was needed both in the church school and in the sanctuary, where chairs were brought in frequently to seat the overflow on Sunday morning. New rooms for the church school could be added, but there was no way to enlarge the sanctuary. Seeing the growth of the city and the number of new Unitarians coming to First Church, Horace Westwood said in his report at the annual congregational meeting in January 1955:

"I would like to suggest that we continue our present plan of using open offerings to hasten amortization of our building loan so that by the end of 1957 ... we will be free of our bankers to all intents and purposes. At that time we should have a committee actively surveying population growth Unitarian-wise in Houston, that we may determine where we can most profitably purchase land to build a second Unitarian church for this great city. In a word, I favor small community churches close to the homes and families, their problems, and needs..."

A month later Mr. Westwood reported to the Board of Trustees that the Religious Education Committee had proposed that both the church school and the Sunday morning services be changed to a two-session schedule as the only means of solving the overcrowding of church facilities. Building a second church was discussed and a New Church Committee was authorized, whose first task was to find a lot in the fastest growing "Unitarian-wise" part of the city. The committee appointed included Dr. Hartman Kilgore, Wallace Thompson, and John Vetter, with William Gray as Chairman.

On July 31, 1955, a special congregational meeting was held, and the following resolution was brought before the congregation:

"For the purpose of providing another Unitarian church in the future the Board of Trustees shall purchase the following described tract of land: The north half of Tract 19 in Post Oak Gardens on Bering Street ... the dimensions of said tract to be approximately 169' x 515.5' ... The Board of Trustees shall not pay in excess of \$10,000 for said tract."

The board noted that the construction of the new church

"will probably not begin for at least two years, and the congregation of the new church will probably be able to handle its own financing."

A special fund drive was authorized, headed by Wallace Thompson.

The two-acre lot on Bering Drive in the fast-growing western part of the city had been found by the New Church Committee. Dr. F. Hartman Kilgore, Wallace Thompson, John Vetter, and Bill Gray had put up their own money to buy the lot. Later these men gave the land for the proposed second church.

Almost two years passed and there was little action in the matter of a new church. Unitarians in the Memorial and Spring Branch areas of the city met to discuss their needs. The Spring Branch group wanted to put up a temporary building on the Bering lot so that they could have a creative workshop for their children. Three members talked with Mr. Westwood, whose opinion was that all efforts should go to establish a second church. He suggested that they make a study of the needs for such a building and its cost.

Utilizing in part study material from the American Unitarian Association, the Spring Branch group wrote an excellent and thorough report and presented it to Mr. Gray and his committee. The Spring Branch people were a small, compatible group of men and women and were eager to organize. They soon acquired a small building on Wirt Road, and so was born the Spring Branch Fellowship, the first Unitarian fellowship in the Houston area.

Meanwhile Mr. Gray and his New Church Committee had decided it was a bad time to build, and Mr. Gray wished to dissolve the committee. He took the matter to the First Church Board, first reporting what buildings might be placed on the two-acre

lot on Bering Drive:

"It will be possible to provide building space for a sanctuary for 250, a fellowship hall slightly smaller than Channing Hall, a church school building with ten classrooms, an office for the minister, the associate minister, a library, and parking for 139 cars .. The estimated cost of the sanctuary at \$15/sq. ft. would be \$85,000."

The other buildings would cost \$10/sq. ft., and with grading and other expenses the total cost would be around \$200,000. But, Mr. Gray concluded:

"A number of members who would make substantial contributions was canvassed and they are unwilling to undertake the project at this time because of economic conditions."

Mr. Gray's request to dissolve the committee was tabled pending a meeting of the minister with persons interested in a second church. Mr. Westwood reported at the board meeting on April 10, 1958:

"There was a better mutual understanding (among persons who might attend a second church). It was felt the new church school classrooms should be built soon, and half the people present said they would probably attend the new church."

At a special congregational meeting in May Mr. Gray's report was accepted with thanks and his committee dissolved. But a new committee was to be appointed "to keep the matter of the new church under consideration and advisement." Andrew Delaney was chairman of this new committee, and with his skilled leadership financial problems were solved and specific plans were presented to the First Church board. In January 1959 at the annual meeting the congregation approved this resolution:

"BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Trustees of the First Unitarian Church of Houston be directed to build a second church on the Bering Road property, said powers specifically to include the following objectives and instructions:

"First: The financing of the second church to be accomplished by raising approximately \$40,000 cash from the present membership of the First Unitarian Church and the mortgaging of both the Fannin Street property and the Bering Road property.

"Second: To exercise every effort to have the second church (with the exception of the sanctuary) completed by December 1959."

Now that a second church appeared about to become a reality, additional committee members were chosen quickly. Andrew Delaney and David Hull became co-chairmen. Sub-committees were:

Building Committee, Bramlette McClelland, Ch. Dr. Kilgore was to serve this committee in a special capacity to select an architect.

Church Structure, Roger Stanwood, Ch., would "develop the lines of organizational structure."

Church School Committee, Laurence Cowles, Ch. This committee was later taken over by Mrs. Nancy Tucker and Mrs. Wynelle Delaney.

Legal Committee, William Ballew, Ch.

Denominational Committee, Dr. Joseph Adler, Ch., would handle relations with the American Unitarian Association.

Financial Campaign, David Hull, Ch., with Mrs. Agnese Nelms to chair a sub-committee for special gifts.

These men and women were a younger group than the members of Mr. Gray's committee. Most of them felt very personally about the new church and expected to be active members. They were an enthusiastic, visionary, and cooperative group.

On March 8, 1959, Bram McClelland reported at a special congregational meeting that the two-acre Bering lot was too small for the proposed buildings with adequate parking. He recommended that new acreage be acquired, either by buying the two adjacent acres to the south or by finding a new site. Following a lengthy discussion, the consensus was that the Building Committee should investigate other sites. Mr. Delaney was later authorized by the First Church Board to put an option, costing \$250, on the two southern acres on Bering Drive so that the land could not be sold without First Church's being able to bid on it. In August the two acres were acquired for \$14,000. And so the Emerson Church lot was purchased for \$24,000 --land that is now worth over two million dollars!

At the March 8th meeting First Church members decided that the new church would remain under the supervision and control of First Church until "it can accept full

responsibility for its finances and organization." Mr. Westwood would serve both churches as minister until the second church was able financially to call its own minister.

The preliminary planning of the new church now proceeded rapidly. Probably the best news came when Mr. Ballew and Mr. Delaney reported that the M. D. Anderson Foundation had tentatively agreed to lend \$150,000 for ten years at 5½% interest. The First Church board then authorized Mr. Delaney to apply for the loan, offering as security the Fannin Street and the Bering Drive properties.

Dr. Kilgore's subcommittee, after hours spent in looking at churches and considering architects, finally recommended to the board the firm of Caudill, Rowlett and Scott. Their representative, Charles Lawrence, met with Mr. McClelland, Mr. Westwood, and others on April 15th to discuss plans for the fellowship hall, and, in defining the character of the new church, Mr. Westwood said,

"The sanctuary should have a feeling of reverence through the spirit of tradition without resorting to traditional symbolism ... It must have simplicity and honesty of expression."

The fund-raising drive was set for the first two weeks of June 1959 and was directed by David Hull. All members and friends of First Church were canvassed, and by August \$32,000 was pledged by 38 persons, with pledges by 17 persons of \$1,000 or more. Other gifts continued to come in, and the total amounted to \$38,670 -- almost the \$40,000 goal.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lawrence met with representatives of the diverse organizations within First Church concerning their needs and what they would like to see in the new church. Mr. Lawrence wrote in despair:

"It is evident that we had such a conflict between owner's budget and owner's desires we could not finish preliminary designs."

But each side continued to study the plans, and on August 30th Mr. Lawrence presented his modified designs at a congregational meeting, illustrating his talk with slides and sketches. He estimated the cost of the new fellowship hall with a separate religious

education building of eight classrooms in these figures:

Minimum Construction Cost	\$ 125,000
Cost of additional 2 acres	14,000
Miscellaneous costs (paving, architect's fee, furniture, etc.)	36,000
Mortgage remaining on First Church	5,000
Total	<u>\$ 180,000</u>

The congregation approved the plans but was reluctant to become indebted for more than previously estimated (\$130,000). This resolution was passed:

"BE IT RESOLVED, that the congregation approve the plans as submitted, subject to a total building cost of \$130,000, with an additional \$5,000 expenditure if a feasible plan of central air conditioning for the religious education building can be effected within that price."

The New Church Building Committee approved the architect's final plans on November 27, 1959. As the loan from the Anderson Foundation would not be in effect until the buildings were completed, Mr. Delaney secured a loan from the Bank of the Southwest, which advanced monthly payments for construction expenses.

All was now in readiness to ask for bids by construction companies by the end of 1959 -- the date that had originally been set, hopefully but unrealistically, for the date of completion of the new church. Sixteen firms submitted bids, and Scheffe Construction Company of 3318 Mercer was the third lowest bidder. The two lowest bids had to be rejected as incomplete. Scheffe's bid was for \$151,000. Many cuts and substitutions were made before the bid could be brought down to the \$130,000 authorized -- e.g., the paving was changed from hardtop to shell, saving \$5,856; classroom cabinets were omitted, saving \$1,300; and so on for a two-page list. At long last, in late January 1960, the contract with Scheffe was signed, and construction could begin.

And so, on February 14, 1960, came the ground-breaking described in the opening of this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

WESTWOOD HALL IS BUILT AND DEDICATED 1960-1962

"In the beginning any social institution consists of a few people with shared enthusiasms and ideals which they desire to translate into reality... We are now engaged in trying to give life to a new church to be created from the life of our existing church. We want the new church to be an expression of our ideals and a reflection of the needs of its membership."

Report of the Spring Branch group
(later Fellowship) to the New Church
Planning Committee, February 1958

The leaders of the new church had been substantial contributors to First Church and to the building fund of the new one. Perhaps, therefore, the board of First Church decided the new church could stand on its own feet by 1961 and should be supported only through 1960.

By the end of May 1960 when the members of the planning committee met at the home of Andrew Delaney, the new building was progressing so well that a tentative schedule for the opening Sunday was discussed. The committee hoped the first services could be held by mid-September. Horace Westwood would give the opening sermon at 9:30 Sunday morning. In the evening there would be a charter membership rally and an organizational meeting at which "interim committees would be set up for immediate church operation." The chairmen of these committees would head a membership drive and a financial drive for the 1961 budget. At the May meeting Mr. Delaney announced that 69 families pledging about \$15,000 to First Church were definitely committed to the new church. There were 41 undecided families, some of whom might wish to become charter members. Charter membership, the committee felt, might be a special reason to join the church.

"It was felt that all that was needed to start the new church in its opening would be to have an active Religious Education Committee with facilities ready for church school, and to have the necessary furniture in the building by September 11. The committee agreed that most problems could be worked out on the spot, and if all goes

well, the new church should be able to call a minister by September, 1961.

Minutes of May 1960 meeting of
the First Unitarian Church Board

On July 21, 1960, The Bering Bulletin Vol. 1, No. 1, appeared. Contributors were Andrew Delaney, Bramlette McClelland, David Hull and new Religious Education Chairwoman Wynelle Delaney. The Bulletin asked for help and advice from anyone interested in the problems of organizing and administering the new church. There was a list of over 100 items needed in the new church school -- everything from a paper towel holder to "3 small trees to plant."

The editor of the Bulletin urged readers to think about naming the new church. "NEW CHURCH" is a most unimpressive name for the impressive new structure on Bering Drive," the Bulletin said. Two cartoon characters were pictured, the female saying, "Hey, why don't we rent the University computer and let it figure out a name for the new church?" The male replies, "TERRIFIC IDEA -- it'll come up with 4 million possible names and all we'll have to do is PICK ONE OF THEM!"

Before the new church had a name it had a "Church School Handbook for 1960-61," which discussed principles on which Unitarians base their religious education. It gave procedures of administration and named a Religious Education Committee of a dozen persons. Wynelle Delaney should receive much credit for her brilliant organization of the new church school. The furniture, materials, and staff were ready when the church had a slightly delayed opening on Sunday, October 16.

As soon as the new buildings were accepted as complete, at the end of September, the Anderson Foundation granted the New Church Committee, acting for the future congregation, a loan of \$150,000. The obligation to the Bank of the Southwest was then repaid. The committee also assumed a \$17,000 note of First Church to the American Unitarian Association. In return First Church agreed to transfer to the second church the title to the first two acres purchased on Bering Drive.

The legal work was handled by William Ballew, who generously contributed his skill as a lawyer.

The final cost of the fellowship hall and the five new classrooms in the religious education building was estimated as \$153,000, which included the \$24,000 paid for the lots.

Several of the local papers carried the news of the opening, some with pictures of the fellowship hall. The announcements described the buildings and said the Reverend Horace Westwood would take as his topic for the opening Sunday "Dimensions of Growth." The First Church choir would sing an anthem from Bach's "Magnificat." The solo would be "Hommage a Rameau" by Debussy with Dr. Elmer Schoettle as guest pianist.

There was standing room only on the opening Sunday, and Wynelle Delaney reported 154 children at church school. The fellowship hall with its unusual laminated-wood arched roof combined the functional with the artistic. The newsletter (now The Emerson Emissary for one issue) reported, "The rain had no effect. Everyone seemed pleased. The new church looked so fresh, new, and beautiful." One of the most happy persons was Horace Westwood, who now saw his dream of a second Unitarian church in Houston fulfilled.

Opening Sunday was a busy day for the new church members. At 7:30 p.m. 140 interested persons attended the organizational meeting, presided over by Andrew Delaney. The first order of business was the naming of the new church. The first ballot was for any suggested name; the second was to choose one of the top three names -- All Souls, Jefferson, or Emerson. Emerson easily won. Then, by acclamation, the fellowship hall was named Westwood Hall -- "to my great surprise and delight," wrote Horace Westwood.

John Moran, Chairman of the Finance Committee, presented a proposed budget of \$46,380, to be acted on later. Roger Stanwood, Chairman of the Organization

Committee, presented a proposed Constitution and By-Laws, which were adopted with one important sentence added, suggested by Dr. Kilgore: "No person shall be denied membership by reason of race or color."

The New Church Committee was asked to appoint before it dissolved a nominating committee to propose candidates for office for the coming year. At the next congregational meeting on October 30, this committee, headed by James Ryan Wright, brought in a slate of officers for 1961:

William Ballew David Hull John Moran	to serve for one year
Wynelle Delaney Bramlette McClelland Cornelius Starr	to serve for two years
Robert Henry Mildred Meltzer Millard Neptune	to serve for three years

These persons were elected unanimously. At the board meeting that followed David Hull was named Board Chairman; John Moran, Vice Chairman; James Wright, Treasurer; and Mary Frances (M. F.) Chadderdon, Parish Clerk.

Establishing committees was the first order of business for the new board. Everyone was asked to sign an interest-finding card. From these cards the board chairman, with the help of Horace Westwood and M. F. Chadderdon, appointed eleven committee chairmen, who were listed in the November 16 bulletin, now renamed The Window.

The new committees and their chairmen were:

- Altar -- Mrs. Ruth Wigby
- Denominational Affairs -- Roger Stanwood
- Finance -- John Moran
- Hospitality -- Mrs. Frances Olson
- House and Grounds -- Mrs. Rose Moran
- Membership -- Benjamin Simmons
- Music -- Ed Bottler
- Publicity and Promotion -- Mike Zeigfinger
- Pulpit -- Dr. Hartman Kilgore
- Ushering -- J. G. Joyce and Robert Lankford
- Volunteer Office Workers -- Mrs. Pat Carlson

At an all-committee supper in early December the principles of good committee work were discussed by all participants, who then met in groups to iron out specific problems. Enthusiastic committees soon had the church program functioning efficiently. The Ushering Committee, e.g., issued precise, if optimistic, instructions for after-service coffee-drinkers:

"At the end of the Sunday morning service, exit the fellowship hall by the south door. Go around to the east door and enter the kitchen area to pick up your coffee and come back to Westwood Hall, which by that time will be cleared of half its chairs for the coffee hour."

An adult education class conducted by Raymond Lankford got off to an early start. Organizing a choir took a little time, but there were soon ten good voices. A junior choir was directed by Bob Burchfield. A young people's group, the Emerson Uniteens, for junior high school students, was sponsored by six parents. The women of the church continued to meet with the First Church Alliance until April 1961, when they held an organizational meeting and Elizabeth Lankford was elected President. Somewhat later the Laymen's League was begun; its first activity was a Hallowe'en party and dance, which The Window called a "whopping success."

Jackie Frank, with the assistance of Horace Westwood and M. F. Chadderdon, produced the weekly Window, a lively and provocative sheet often embellished by small cartoons pertaining to the subject matter. In September 1961 Nancy Parks became the editor for almost two years. The V.O.W.s (Volunteer Office Workers) helped in folding and addressing The Window. M. F. Chadderdon ran the office and was Parish Clerk. She was an indefatigable person and had a hand in many church matters.

To climax this year of great accomplishment for Emerson Church a festive Christmas party was held on December 18, 1960, to which everyone, young and old, was invited.

The charter membership book was closed on December 31. There were then 217 charter members, representing 120 families, and there were 110 pledges, assuring the 1961 budget.

The year had been a difficult one for Horace Westwood. Preaching at two churches on Sunday mornings (he reported an 18-minute drive between the two and there was no freeway then) and serving as minister to two congregations left him little time to do the things he wished, such as parish calling. But planning for what he called "The Act of Congregational Commitment and the Dedication Service of the First Buildings of the Emerson Unitarian Church" was a happy task. His father, the Reverend Horace Westwood, D.D., had preached at his son's installation at First Church, and the Reverend Arnold Westwood, his brother, had taken part in the service. Horace Westwood felt that now, after his father's death, his brother might quite appropriately preach the dedication sermon for Emerson Church. The Emerson board agreed and extended the invitation, which was promptly accepted. Horace Westwood was pleased also, when five of the Southwest Conference Unitarian ministers accepted his invitation to participate in the service.

The Act of Congregational Commitment at the evening service on January 25, 1961, was led by the Reverend Philip Schug, Regional Director of the Southwest Unitarian Conference and minister of the San Antonio Unitarian Church. It is printed here to remind readers of the principles on which Unitarian churches are founded.

THE MINISTER:

You have signified your desire as a congregation to be gathered together as the Emerson Unitarian Church of Houston, Texas, to become a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association, and to share alike its privileges and its duties. Your request for denominational affiliation signifies a general agreement with the purposes and objectives of a free faith, united in seeking:

- 1) To strengthen one another in a free and disciplined search for truth as the foundation of our religious fellowship;
- 2) To cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially summarized in the Judeo-Christian heritage as love to God and love to man;
- 3) To affirm, defend and promote the supreme worth of

every human personality, the dignity of man, and the use of the democratic method in human relationships;

4) To implement our vision of one world by striving for a world community founded on ideals of brotherhood, justice and peace;

5) To serve the needs of member churches and fellowships, to organize new churches and fellowships, and to extend and strengthen liberal religion;

6) To encourage cooperation with men of good will in every land.

THE CONGREGATION:

In full knowledge that the Unitarian Universalist Association declares and affirms the independence and autonomy of local churches, and that nothing in the constitution and by-laws of the Association shall be deemed to infringe upon the congregational polity of our church, we, in the spirit of togetherness with other Unitarian and Universalist Churches throughout the world, agree that in the deep things of the spirit we should walk in one company together. In the love of truth and in the spirit of Jesus, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

In January 1961 Emerson Church became self-sustaining, no longer dependent financially on the First Unitarian Church. It now faced the problem of finding a new minister. Members filled out questionnaires listing the qualifications they felt most important for a new minister. Pulpit committee members visited other churches to hear possible candidates. The American Unitarian Association in Boston was alerted to the needs of Emerson Church. Several prospective ministers were considered and rejected. Finally the pulpit committee chose the Reverend Eugene Askew as a candidate, and he was accepted by the congregation. Mr. Askew accepted the call and he and his wife and five children came to Houston in August 1961. A parsonage had been rented and prepared for them.

Within a short time friction developed between the minister, the staff, the Board, and some members of the congregation. The conflict was not resolved, and Mr. Askew resigned in September 1962 after only thirteen months as Emerson's minister.

A statement dated September 30, 1962, made by the Board of Trustees to the congregation says:

"The basic problem, as recognized by the Board, was the steady and continuing attrition of the leadership of the church ... felt in the loss of enthusiasm, reluctance to carry on difficult tasks under unpleasant circumstances, aversion to attending worship services, and despair concerning the future outlook of the church..."

Following the resignation of the minister and the division of allegiance that occurred, Emerson Church suffered a loss of membership. Attendance at Sunday services held up well until spring, but then it dropped below the 100 mark and even as low as 70. At the same time there was less interest in church organizations. The Women's Alliance did not meet, and the Laymen's League met with the First Church group. However, the Playschool met twice a week, and the Uniteens, sponsored by Roger and Margaret Stanwood, met regularly.

The period without a minister drew on the ingenuity of the board. Roger Stanwood, directing the worship service, was able to secure excellent speakers from the membership and the community. Well-known professors, ministers, men prominent in city affairs, lawyers, and many other professional persons spoke on Sunday mornings. Dr. Dana Greeley, President of the newly formed Unitarian Universalist Association, spoke at Emerson Church on March 3, 1962. The lack of a permanent minister, however, placed an added burden on the staff and the board.

CHAPTER 3

EMERSON CHURCH CALLS FRANK AND ALICE SCHULMAN 1962-1964

"On one point there was clearly no disagreement: our church is a vital part of our lives and we take it very seriously. To use Dr. Kilgore's metaphor: The largest gathering of Unitarians we have seen in some time rallied to 'put a foot in the hole --start bailing, rowing, and navigating.' "

Report of a congregational meeting,
The Window, 10/3/62

Although the experience of the previous months had been a setback and a disappointment, the leadership of the church was almost intact and began at once to look and plan for a happier future. In a desire to make the Pulpit Committee larger and more representative of the total congregation, church members voted at a special congregational meeting on September 30, 1962, for a Pulpit Committee of fifteen persons, plus the Chairman, Millard Neptune. The Department of Ministry of the U.U.A. supplied a list of fifteen ministers who wished to change churches and these men were all contacted.

In April 1963 The Window announced that a delegation from the Pulpit Committee would attend the annual U.U.A. meeting in May in Chicago. On this occasion Frank Schulman was one of the persons interviewed, although, as he says, he was not one of the men who wished a change. Dr. Schulman has made a tape recording,* telling the story of how the Schulman family happened to come to Houston, and with his permission part of it is quoted here.

"In March 1963 I had a letter from Millard Neptune ... He sent me a packet with a description of Emerson Church, its history, potential, etc.

*This tape is available upon request.

"I was in Youngstown, Ohio, at that time ... I told Mr. Neptune I was quite happy there, and, though I was familiar with the Southwest, having served with Frank Holmes of Oklahoma City, I wasn't interested in moving at that time. I got another letter back, saying they respected my views ... The Pulpit Committee would be at the General Assembly (of the U.U.A.) in Chicago in May. Would I meet with them there? I said I would.

"The meetings were at the Sheraton Chicago. I set my appointment for 3:30, thinking I would be through for dinner. I went up to the 43rd floor. As I got off the elevator, I saw a big sign that said 'Emerson Church Employment Office.' The whole committee except for two people had flown up in a private plane ... The interview lasted from 3:30 to 8:30. We went to dinner and came back and continued the conversation. We had quite a free and frank discussion of the ministry, the potentials of Emerson Church, and so on. They were interviewing people constantly. They didn't attend a single meeting.

"Subsequent to that I had a phone call from Millard Neptune. He said that two members of the committee (Hartman Kilgore and Bill Shiffick) could not come to Chicago and would like to come to Youngstown ... I told them, 'Fine! Come ahead!' They could come to the church and sit as visitors without introducing themselves to me. They did come, contacted me before the Sunday service. After the Sunday service they wanted me to go back with them right then. I said, 'No, that's out of the question.' Could I come the next Sunday? I said, 'No. Next Sunday is the last Sunday of our church year. We close for the summer.' ... Alice and I came down June 16th. I preached only one Sunday.* Normally, it's an 8-day process with two Sundays. We stayed a week. Then they voted on our coming. As I remember it was 87-3 in favor of calling us. It wasn't unanimous. We accepted the call. I gave notice to my Youngstown church. We stayed in Youngstown to the end of my term, and my Emerson Church term began October 1, 1963. I believe my first Sunday to preach was October 6."

Ben Simmons, Emerson Board Chairman in 1963, introduced Dr. Schulman in the August 28 Window with these words:

"In case any of you were unable to meet Reverend Schulman while he was here in June or hear the fine report of the Pulpit Committee given by Millard Neptune, I shall take the liberty of repeating some of the statistics concerning him ...

* Mr. Schulman's candidating sermon is entitled "Religious Agnosticism." It examines the position of the agnostic and maintains that he can be a truly religious person.

"Frank Schulman is 36 years old, one of twin sons of a Jewish family of four sons of Nashville, Tennessee. While serving in the U. S. Navy, he was located for awhile at Norman, Oklahoma, and after his discharge from the Navy, he went back to the University of Oklahoma as a student. He attended the Unitarian church in Oklahoma City while on a date and, liking the church, began to attend it regularly. Reverend Frank Holmes was instrumental in getting him to change his course of study from economics to psychology and philosophy and eventually to study for the Unitarian ministry. He took his ministerial training at Harvard and during one summer of this period assisted in the establishment of the Unitarian Fellowship in Galveston. He was ordained at Arlington Street Church in Boston in 1954 and served his first church at Worcester, Massachusetts. From there he went to the church at Youngstown, Ohio.

"Reverend Schulman met his wife, the former Miss Alice Southworth, while he was a student at Harvard. Both of Mrs. Schulman's grandfathers and one grandmother were Unitarian ministers. The Schulmans have three small children ranging from less than one year to six years in age.

"Prior to Reverend Schulman, the Youngstown church had five ministers in six years. In his six years at Youngstown, the church membership has grown from 189 to 275 and its annual budget from \$14,250 to \$38,350. In addition to his ministry, Reverend Schulman taught a course in philosophy at Youngstown University and conducted a weekly radio program that represents the liberal view in religion. He is a member of the American Civil Liberties Union and has been active in various civic programs in Youngstown.

"This is the skeleton of the career of J. Frank Schulman. The flesh and blood of his life that will fill in the spaces attest to the fact that he is a good Unitarian, an excellent preacher, intelligent, with a fine sense of humor. He likes people and understands them and their problems. He has a thorough knowledge of churchmanship and has the help of an attractive, intelligent, talented and very personable wife. He has been successful in Youngstown, and he has been recommended by the Department of the Ministry..."

The Schulman family moved into a new manse at 8002 Skyline Drive in the Briar Meadow addition of Houston in October, 1963. It was a four-bedroom, two-story home, which was purchased with board approval for \$26,850, with a \$3,100 cash down payment. The L.R.Y. cleaned, swept, and polished the manse just before the Schulmans arrived, and, when the moving van was late, Emersonians lent the household articles necessary for coping with the care of three young children.

On Mr. Schulman's first Sunday, October 6, 1963, he preached a sermon on "The Faith of a Heretic" to a congregation of 132 persons. He was looking forward, he had said in The Window, to a wonderful ministry in Houston. He felt that Emerson Church had much promise. "But no one has suggested that building a strong Unitarian church will be easy, either for you or me. They tell me that one reason most people don't recognize opportunity, though, is that it usually comes disguised as hard work."

The Schulmans and the congregation soon became acquainted. The Building and Grounds Committee had a get-acquainted supper on Sunday, November 17, with folk singing afterwards, profits going toward the landscaping of the church grounds. Mr. Schulman reported to the board (11/7/63) that he had initiated several luncheons in town in order to become better acquainted with the men of the church. He also attended a meeting of the Houston Unitarian Council, comprised of First Church, Emerson Church, and the Baytown and Spring Branch Fellowships.

The responsibility for running the church had been assumed by the board and the eleven committees, and they had done their work well. But as Mr. Schulman said, the leadership of a central responsible person who would coordinate their work and move the church in a positive direction was needed and welcomed. Reviewing the early years, Mr. Schulman said:

"Our church was in its infancy. It had not developed its own direction or its own character ... There needed to be developed a good concept of the church -- why it's here, where it's going, and how it's going to get there ... The first two years were a real struggle."

Mr. Schulman's installation on Sunday evening, January 13, 1964, was a happy, though serious, milestone for both him and Emerson Church. Six of the Southwestern U.U. ministers (Walter Baese from Ft. Worth, Dr. Frank Holmes from Oklahoma City, Brandoch Lovely of Austin, Robert Raible of Dallas, Philip Schug of San Antonio, and First Church's Horace Westwood) took part in the service. Mr. Westwood, who had been close to many of the Emerson people, preached the sermon. The Act of

Installation was conducted by Emerson Board Chairman Ben Simmons, who extended the Invitation to Mr. Schulman, to which he responded. Then the members of Emerson Church stood and read the Act of Installation. A reception followed. The prognosis was for a good future.

CHAPTER 4

A NEW EMERSON CHURCH EMERGES 1963-1969

"He is ambitious and capable of a terrific work load, but blends humility, tact, and tenderness with these qualities."

Ben Simmons, Board Chariman,
writing of Frank Schulman in
The Window, January 1964

Frank Schulman's capacity for work soon produced a full calendar of appealing activities with something for almost everyone. A cooperative and enthusiastic congregation helped to activate the program. The Women's Alliance*, which had not met for almost a year, was revitalized under the leadership of Idelle Maddox and Margaret Nickerson, and Mr. Schulman spoke at their opening meeting in November 1963. The Laymen's League had an organizational meeting in November, and in January 1964 elected Tom Nickerson President. At the January meeting Dr. Bromley Freeman, a noted plastic surgeon, showed slides of his work. The League usually heard a speaker on some pertinent subject who, like Dr. Freeman, was often a church member. The League is inactive at present.

Adult education classes resumed in October 1963 on Sunday mornings before the regular church service. David Hull directed the study group and gave a course on "The Age and Literature of the New Testament."

The Cooperative Playschool (later the Preschool) met twice a week and in 1965 was joined by the First Church's playschool. The Preschool disbanded in 1966 when the board decided it must move elsewhere.

Of course, the church school** was an integral part of the church program. In

* More information about the Women's Alliance is given on pages 30-31.

** For more about the church school, see Chapter 5.

1963-64 the school was directed by Mildred Meltzer and had the help of many parents as teachers or in other capacities.

M. F. Chadderdon had her Emerson Bookshop open on Sundays, and the Emerson Library, housed in an upstairs room of Westwood Hall, was directed by Meredith Vogt, librarian, and the Library Committee, chaired by Albert Newhouse.

In 1963 the Jefferson Club for high school students was an active group sponsored by Nancy and Jack Tucker. In early 1966 it became the Emerson L.R.Y. In November 1964 a youth group for junior highers was organized and became the Schweitzer Club. The programs of the two student groups have fostered friendship among our young people and a responsibility to the church. The students have often contributed their services at church suppers, worked on paper drives, and served the church in other ways. They conduct a yearly church service.

When the church opened in 1960, Millard and Helen Neptune gave a Hammond organ which they had used when living in Libya. It required rewiring and repair of the power supply. The work was contributed by Tom Nickerson, who is skilled in resolving electronic and mechanical problems. In November 1963 he directed the installation of four speakers for organ amplification. During the fifteen years services were held in Westwood Hall the Hammond was used by the choir. When the choir moved into the new church building in 1975, the Hammond was replaced by the Kilgore-Olson Memorial Organ, and found a home at the Spindletop Unitarian Church in Beaumont.

Fran Roberts says that the choir consisted at first of eight to twelve persons but sometimes only four would show up on Sunday morning. In 1963 the choir sat to the left of the congregation. The minister occupied a raised platform on the north side of Westwood Hall, facing the congregation. In 1965 a new larger altar was built on the west side of the hall, and in 1967 the choir moved to the upstairs loft at the east end, making room for thirty more persons downstairs. Tom Nickerson, Steve Olson, and Bill Roberts moved the organ upstairs.

To raise money for robes the choir presented a "musical potpourri" in April 1964. Lynn Morse directed the choir and Merritt Fossler and Tom Olson, who was organist for several years, played the organ. The musical evening was a pleasant occasion and raised \$112, but the choir had to wait for further contributions before robes could be bought.

Herman Naeseth was an organist with the choir before he became its director in the fall of 1967. He was a fine musician and wrote an "Amen" that the choir used for many years. Mr. Naeseth also composed anthems and wrote "Hymn of Affirmation" for the graduation of the minister's first affirmation class. One of his anthems, "The Law of the Lord Is Perfect," composed in 1971, was sent by the U. U. Religious Arts Guild to all Unitarian and Universalist churches. Mr. Naeseth organized a children's choir in the spring of 1967 which sang on Palm Sunday 1968, and in 1969 a junior choir for grades 7 and up was added. Today there is a children's choir for kindergarten through fifth grade students.

When the adult choir moved to the organ loft, there was a need for a practice piano. The Women's Alliance gave a huge garage sale under the supervision of Catherine Newman, and \$400 was raised for the piano. Private contributions and money from memorial gifts for Mary Roberts, a former choir member, made the purchase of a Yamaha piano possible.*

Memorial funds for Mary Roberts also purchased a tape recorder and microphone so that anthems could be taped and the choir could evaluate its own singing. The Lester grand piano was given in 1965 by Tom and Frances Olson. It was used in Westwood Hall and later moved to the sanctuary.

* The Yamaha is now used in the choir practice room to the right of the chancel.

In February 1969 choir members were delighted to have a workshop directed by Jay Froman, "a real professional."

In March 1964 Mr. Schulman began his first minister's class for high school seniors "to teach our seniors something of the history and theology of Unitarianism ... to help them develop their own theology." The class met on Saturday mornings until May and was the forerunner of the Minister's Affirmation Class, now a part of the church school curriculum. The present class is more structured, an "intensive course on Unitarianism" running for six or eight Sundays and ending on Palm Sunday, when the students are officially recognized at the regular worship service as "Affirmants of the Unitarian faith." Mr. Schulman called the ceremony "a rite of passage, indicating the student's transition from childhood."

In rereading the Windows of these early years one is conscious of the many activities of a social nature that brought church members together. There was a jubilant, all-congregation Christmas party in 1963. The Building and Grounds Committee under Forest Ralph and Rex Parks gave many a dance and box supper to raise money for improvements to both manse and church. The Colony Suppers were begun in the fall of 1966 to provide an opportunity for sharing, not only food, but also conversation and ideas. These suppers, renamed the Friday Niters, continue to promote fellowship among Emerson members.

The Building and Grounds Committee added a minister's study to the manse garage in 1965 -- a major undertaking that involved the help of many men in the congregation. The committee built a fence for the playschool and a storage area on the north side of Westwood Hall. It improved church and manse grounds by planting grass and shrubbery. It has always supervised repairs to church property, and risen to emergencies, such as a burst pipe in the women's room of Westwood Hall that left the hall "awash" a few hours before services on a March morning in 1968. Dan Neale was called at 7:30 a.m. and rushed over to stop the rising water. The editor of The Window

referred to him as Dan the Diver.

A blood drive for Ben Taub Hospital was sponsored in 1964. The Window called it "The most successful drive of any Houston church" -- of a comparable size, no doubt. The bloodletting has continued once or twice a year.

With many activities under way Mr. Schulman made time also for the work of the S.W.U.U.C. and its Summer Institute in August at Lake Murray or Lake Texhoma, Oklahoma, to which Emerson Church has always sent a delegation. Dr. Schulman has held all the ministerial positions involved. His worship service programs for the 1967 Institute were printed and circulated to more than 1,000 U.U. churches and fellowships. Our minister has had a keen interest in all fellowships from his theological days when he helped with the new Galveston Fellowship. In the spring of 1965 he helped organize a fellowship in LaPorte, now the Bay Area Fellowship. In 1969 the Emerson Church board sent both Frank and Alice Schulman to the Amarillo Fellowship for a week to help with a building drive for a new church.

Eleanor Musselman, a church member, was a skilled and well-known weaver. She came to Frank Schulman one day in 1965 to say she would like to weave a hanging for the bare west wall of Westwood Hall. The consent of the board was secured, and Mrs. Musselman wove a handsome 45" x 13' abstract tapestry in colors of brown, red, and orange to blend in with the background of the hall.

Mr. Schulman had never been happy with the small chancel on the north side of Westwood hall. The new tapestry inspired him to move the chancel to the west side, enlarge it, and have a new enclosed pulpit built, which bears a plaque reading "In memory of Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Ingraham." The Building and Grounds Committee built and paid for the raised platform, which was covered with a "mottled red carpet," and added an upholstered chair. It also provided a new altar table by putting legs on the former shelf pulpit. The new chancel was ready for Sunday morning services in September 1965.

The \$150 for the new Ingraham Pulpit was taken from the memorial fund set up by the board in early 1965 to include all memorial gifts not designated for other uses. In 1964 Ethel and E. B. Ingraham, charter members of the church, died and their will left about \$9,000 to Emerson Church. In addition, the will left the church a small lot on the northwest side of Houston, at first thought to be of minimal value, which was sold ten years later, for \$2,500.

Mr. Schulman began a 15-minute radio series on KODA on Sunday, April 16, 1964, which he called "The Search for Truth." The series was an outgrowth of his radio talks in Youngstown. He has had a weekly radio program most of the time since, and KLEF now carries a short broadcast on Friday mornings. In addition to writing his sermons, booklets, and talks, the minister has often had book reports in the denominational publications. In March 1965 a Wayside Pulpit quotation of his -- "The weakest faith is that which fears to doubt" -- was circulated to all U.U. churches. Another of his quotations for the Wayside Pulpit is "Every picture of God is a self-portrait." Mr. Schulman edited the weekly Emerson Window until Polly Edwards assumed editorship in February 1965 for several years, when he again became editor.

Mr. Schulman's intense interest in Ralph Waldo Emerson, our Unitarian saint, was the outgrowth of three sermons on Emerson's works he preached in the fall of 1964. The sermons led to the publication of a 32-page booklet, Ralph Waldo Emerson, His Life, His Work, His Theology, published by Emerson Church in September 1965 on the fifth anniversary of the founding of the church. Marian Orgain, Curator of Special Collections at the University of Houston, wrote of it in the Houston Chronicle:

"In a short, but carefully researched pamphlet, J. Frank Schulman has attempted to make vital for today the life and work of one of our seminal writers. Larding his book with Emerson's own words from the Essays or the Journals, Mr. Schulman has presented Emerson's thinking on aspects of theology and philosophy ... As an introduction to Emerson's life and works, Mr. Schulman's study is excellent."

The booklet could be obtained "specially bound in a rich blue and gold cover, imprinted

with the family name on the front" for \$10, or in the regular edition for \$1.

In 1969 the Public Relations Committee issued the first of a series of pamphlets on Unitarianism, "Theology of Unitarianism," followed at yearly intervals by seven others, each prepared by Mr. Schulman. Another of his pamphlets, written in 1960, is "Unitarians Believe." These pamphlets as well as the minister's mimeographed sermons are available in the pamphlet racks of the church narthex and Westwood Hall.

Two important changes in the By-Laws were made in the early years. In 1966 the voting age of church members was lowered from 18 to 16, and in 1967 the immediate past president of the board was made a board member.

It is impossible to cover all the activities of a busy minister. In September 1963, just before Frank Schulman started his ministry at Emerson Church, a quotation from his pamphlet "Unitarians Believe" had appeared in The Window. It said in part:

"The minister is called by the congregation to lead, to minister, and to help. He is called in a dual capacity -- as priest and as prophet ...

"As 'priest' he conducts worship and comforts. He calls on the sick, counsels those who need help, and presides at various functions of the church. He represents the church at community affairs ...

"As 'prophet' he is expected to stimulate his congregation in the ways he feels are needed. As Dr. Pfeiffer at Harvard used to say, his role is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable ...

"The minister, of course, spends much of his time as an administrator ... He must be prepared to lead, serve, and work with the people."

In the fall of 1968 Alice and Frank Schulman enjoyed a three-week vacation in Europe through the generosity of certain church members. The gift reflected gratitude for their accomplishments and labors in Emerson Church. In late 1969 the board employed the first parish assistant to Mr. Schulman, Mrs. Kit Fournier. In 1970 a Minister's Retirement Fund was established. The manse was renovated and a room added in 1972-73. But probably the most meaningful gift of all to Frank Schulman came in late 1971, when the Board approved his request to complete his doctorate at Meadville Theological Seminary in Chicago. In May 1974 he became Dr. Schulman.

More About the Emerson Women's Alliance

The Women's Alliance -- in 1981 it has 50 members -- has been an active organization since its founding in April 1961 with the exception of one year (1962-63) when the church was without a minister. The women of the church, both young and old, meet monthly from September through May for the purposes of intellectual stimulation, provided through the programs and speakers, social fellowship, and planning for service to the church and community.

These are some of the Alliance community projects:

In 1964 bunk beds were provided for the seven needy children of a black widow in the Piney Point (sometimes called Carverdale) neighborhood, a black section east of Fondren and south of Westheimer;

In the summer of 1965 many Alliance women volunteered their help with the Headstart project for disadvantaged, mostly black, children;

The Alliance helped the Social Concerns Committee to provide scholarships for black kindergarten children in the Piney Point area in 1968 and took a truckload of clothing for school children to the same area;

A thrift shop in the Carverdale area was begun in 1971 by Alliance member Karen Guarino. The Alliance helped this project by contributing clothing and assisting in the shop until it could function independently;

In 1975 a continuing project of care and concern for needy old people was started by Gwen Essinger at the Blalock Nursing Home at 2808 Stoney Brook in southwest Houston. Each month the Alliance has a birthday party at the home with home-baked cakes and small gifts for those with birthdays;

In 1980 the Alliance paid rent for a family about to be evicted and helped them get on their feet.

The Alliance serves our church also by buying or helping to buy needed equipment, contributing to landscaping, and assisting in carrying out the church program. These are some service projects:

The Alliance has bought dishes and kitchen equipment for Westwood Hall. The members are well-known for good food and artistic table

decorations and have frequently been called on to serve at dinners, receptions, and coffees. In 1981 the Alliance supervised the complete renovation of the kitchen in Westwood Hall.

The Alliance gave the money for robes for the church school choir and has supported other projects of the young people such as helping to buy the movie projector. It helped buy the Yamaha practice piano for the adult choir. In 1981 the Alliance paid for the full-length mirrors in the vestry (the choir or bride's room).

The Alliance has sometimes provided funds to send representatives to local denominational conferences.

In 1981 the Alliance contributed \$150 to the Clara Barton Home for Diabetic Children in Massachusetts which is supported by the U.U. Women's Federation.

One of the most important contributions the Alliance has made in recent years is assuming complete responsibility for paper and aluminum drives. Our recycling program, one of the first in the city, was begun as a project of conscience to help the environment. No one expected it to make money, but it did. In fact, church landscaping has been largely paid for from the funds made by this conservation project. (Members of the congregation have contributed gifts also with memorial funds, as in the memorial gardens between the church and Westwood Hall.) In the first five years of recycling, \$3,000 was cleared. In 1980-81 the income was \$783.

Glass was collected as well as paper and aluminum the first year, and there was no regular day for collections. There was soon a problem of newspapers blowing around the lot, and dirty bottles and newspaper attracted roaches. Saturday morning work parties were held, and the glass was crushed in an improvised crusher, loaded on trucks (usually belonging to husbands of Alliance members) and trucked across town to the warehouse of a company which bought it. Glass-collecting was abandoned after the first year and regular collection hours instituted. Now newspapers and aluminum are brought to the church one weekend a month.

CHAPTER 5
THE EMERSON CHURCH SCHOOL
1963-1981

"One opinion was that the Sunday School had the duty to impart religious literacy. The principal ingredient of this was held to be a broad knowledge of the Bible ... The other opinion held that the duty of the Sunday School was to help each of our children to develop a religion of his own. This group did not consider it necessary to impart any particular body of information to the children in attempting to achieve this goal. They thought it more important to discuss and interpret facts already known than to teach additional facts ..."

Blandin Jones in The Window,
11/6/63

Blandin Jones was R. E. Director in the fall of 1963 when Frank Schulman came to Houston. Mr. Jones wrote a weekly column in The Window, bringing before the congregation the needs and problems of the church school. He wrote on diverse subjects and frequently touched on the Unitarian philosophy of religious education, as in the above quotation.

Dr. Schulman says the church school had a problem of "developing a coherent curriculum." He met with a "top-notch committee" -- Bill Ballew, John Vetter, Alex Pokorny, and others -- once or twice a month to talk about theory. "We finally decided the church school ought to be moving in the general direction the church is moving," Mr. Schulman says. "Having decided this, the question of whether we were going to talk about God and the Bible was eliminated. The answer was 'yes!'"*

He felt also that the yearly rotation of church school directors did not offer enough leadership continuity. That problem was solved, but not for another year, when funds could be included in the budget for paying a qualified person on a continuing part-time basis. In August 1965 Mrs. Lois Jackson, a church member and a teacher with a

* From a tape made by Dr. Schulman for the Church History

MEd degree and excellent qualifications, was hired as Church School Director. She and Dr. Tom Matney prepared a new church school prospectus, "Youth Curriculum and Program," describing the the subject matter and goals for each class. It was given to parents in the fall when they registered their children.

The employment of Lois Jackson marked a significant step in establishing that "coherent curriculum" that Mr. Schulman thought necessary. Having a director assured the continuity of the R. E. program, which before 1965 had depended on a volunteer chosen annually who could devote only a brief time each week to the work. The paid directors have been women with professional training and/or practical experience who have given church school personnel the benefits derived from their backgrounds.

In 1963 the church school building had five classrooms and also used the small school kitchen for a kindergarten and the church office in Westwood Hall for a combined 7th and 8th grade class. The kitchen, as Blandin Jones wrote, was "adequate in size for two or three lively children but not a dozen," while the office was subject to "all sorts of distractions because of the worship service going on simultaneously in Westwood Hall."

The problem of space being acute, the church board in May 1964 named a committee to study the matter and make some recommendations that might lead to a solution. The temporary solution was to rent rooms in Rogers Junior High School, a block away. The Houston Independent School District asked \$36 a Sunday for space that allowed seven classes of upper-grade children to meet, but would sign a contract for only three years. Meanwhile, the R.E. Committee was enabled "to make a more meaningful division of the children into more manageable groups that could be handled more easily and effectively by church school teachers."

David Hull was chairman of the ongoing Planning Committee to work on all phases of building additional church school rooms and a church (often referred to as the

sanctuary). At the annual congregational meeting in January 1966, the church school enrollment having risen to 262 from 166 two years previously, and the rooms rented at Rogers School being available for only 18 months more, the Planning Committee recommended that the architectural firm of Alexander, Walton, and Hatteburg be retained to work on "the expansion of the present church facilities, the former firm (Caudill, Rowlett, and Scott) who had planned Westwood Hall, being unavailable for this project." No action was taken at this time.

When new officers took over in late January, Rick Fogle became the new chairman of the Planning Committee. At the March Board meeting the chairman of the Subcommittee on Architectural Selection, Bramlette McClelland, discussed the terms of a contract with Alexander, Walton, and Hatteburg. The proposed buildings were a church to seat three or four hundred persons plus 4,000 sq. ft. of classroom space. Architectural fees of 7% of actual construction costs would be paid as certain stages of building took place. The architects thought the buildings could be finished by January 1, 1967. Mr. McClelland moved that a contract be signed with Alexander et al, and the board agreed.

The architectural firm could now go ahead with the building schematics. In early June two architects met with the Planning Committee in Westwood Hall to show church members the first plans. At that time only those for the church were ready. An architectural fee of \$3,049 was due. The schematics for the church school addition were presented later with a bill for \$460.

The Planning Committee estimated that a new church building and the church school addition could both be built for around \$300,000 and that, if \$150,000 could be raised in pledges to the building fund, an equal amount could be borrowed. When architectural estimates were completed, the board learned that the complete building program would cost about \$475,000. Although Dr. Kilgore, Chairman of the Finance Subcommittee, had optimistically planned on raising \$150,000 in a building fund drive,

he and the board felt they would probably have to look for alternatives to building the whole plant at one time.

The Planning Committee met on August 23, 1966, with Jack Lyon, a representative of Burrill, Inc., finance consultants, who said he felt Emerson Church could raise \$150,000 in 26-month pledges in a four-week campaign. Burrill would charge a fee of \$3,600, plus expenses of \$5 per prospect. The matter of using financial experts was voted on at a September congregational meeting, and members approved hiring Burrill, Inc., to raise funds for the proposed new buildings.

Dr. Kilgore drew up figures for the 1967 budget to run the church. This money would be raised simultaneously with pledges for the new buildings. The proposed operating budget totalled \$57,765 and the proposed building expenses to be met in 1967 were estimated as \$8,500, making a sum of \$66,265. This budget was approved by the congregation on October 10.

Although Burrill, Inc., directed the drive and many hard-working Emerson members called on prospective donors, The Window meanwhile putting an optimistic light on progress, the fact is that the drive failed. As Dr. Schulman said later, the time was not right. The market was down and there was a recession -- although Houston wasn't greatly affected. The amount pledged to the building fund was \$123,685 and to the budget \$44,000.

The board discussed the disappointing news and what alternative plans should now be made. Most board members felt building the church school modules should be the next step. Several members felt that persons who had given generously would be very disappointed not to have a new church. It was left to Rick Fogle, Board Chairman, to present the situation at a congregational meeting on November 20, 1966. After debate, the congregation approved immediate construction of three church school modules (eleven classrooms and two restrooms) and "other facilities as the board determines necessary and within our resources." The suggestion was made that one

room might be an assembly room that could be used by either the church school or the congregation.

Bids for construction were received in December. In January it was announced that Hull and Hull, contractors, would do the work. Sunday, January 29, 1967, was ground-breaking day. "Who will ever forget," Polly Edwards asked in The Window, "the beautiful day we had last Sunday and the hundreds (literally) of people crowded around and milling about to get a better look at that silver-plated (well! silver-painted) shovel?" Polly kept track of progress on the building. She announced in the February 12 Window":

"The footings have been dug, the foundations poured, and the three Sunday School modules are under way. If you haven't taken the time to see for yourself, slish over after church Sunday ...

"With straight faces, the men on the job this week told Ye Editor they had dug for the footings until they came to rocks in the soil. 'Down to rock-bottom,' one of them said ..."

Certain cutbacks in the plans had to be made. A list with costs appeared in The Window, and some items were made possible by extra gifts. Emerson Church has a history of generous donors who, often anonymously, take up the slack. Two of these "guardian angels" were Mr. and Mrs. Tommy Thornhill whose generous gift of \$2500 made possible the finishing of what is now known as the Schweitzer Room but was then referred to as the Activities Room. The new room was made by enlarging the old nursery and taking in the end of the tunnel next to it, thereby doubling the area of the room and shortening the tunnel.

Mimi Freeman and Peggy Shiffick supervised the furnishing of the room. Many gifts were made for this purpose. Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Thompson gave a hand-carved lectern. The \$400 made from a second giant rummage sale supervised by Catherine Newman was added. Gifts came from memorials for Bennett Hull, son of Mr. and Mrs. David Hull, and for Mrs. Ella Fox.

Alliance meetings were held in this room for years until Woodland Hall School

rented the church school rooms and the Alliance moved to Westwood Hall. The Alliance paid for black-out curtains and contributed to a movie projector for the Activities Room. The women collected and saved trading stamps to buy folding chairs. A few members sanded the old built-up wax off the floor, but might have put their efforts elsewhere had they known the floor would soon be carpeted. When the room was finished, the board called for a contest to name it. At the 1966 annual meeting the congregation voted for the Albert Schweitzer room.

On September 11, 1967, the Board President, Rick Fogle, was given a Certificate of Substantial Completion by the architects. The rooms were ready for the church school when it opened, and Rogers School was no longer needed. On October 15, 1967, at 4:20 p.m. the new addition was dedicated with worship in Westwood Hall and refreshments in the new Schweitzer Room. The total cost of the church school addition was \$121,648.

Now that the children who had been at Rogers School were "on campus," added parking space was a necessity. There was no money in the budget for the project. The Ralph Waldo Emerson fund of \$1,000 was added to the Building Fund, and in January 1968 at the annual congregational meeting a resolution was passed authorizing the board to borrow from the South Main Bank the funds necessary, up to \$5,000, to proceed with the parking project for 39 more spaces to bring the total parking space up to enough for 125 cars. The work was completed in March, and Dr. Kilgore and his helpers were busy painting parking stripes by March 24.

Alice Schulman says that when she assumed the position of part-time, paid Church School Director in September 1974 she found the religious education program "well thought out and running smoothly." The hard work and talents of Emerson parents and three part-time church school directors over a fourteen-year period, as well as help and advice from the minister, had made this possible. Mrs. Schulman's predecessors in

the paid position of Director were Lois Jackson, who served from 1965 to 1970; Joan Few, 1970-73; and Dee Horsted, 1973-74.

Emerson Church School teachers, parents, and directors have held many discussions and seminars with other educators, usually Unitarians, on the local level -- First Church, Emerson Church, and the Fellowships participating. The programs of S.W.U.U.C. provide opportunities for discussion and leadership at the district level, and some persons in the R. E. program are able to participate at the national level at annual U.U.A. meetings. There have been opportunities to hear speakers who have written material sent out by the U.U.A. and are active in the denomination. Alice Schulman served on the Southwest District R. E. Committee from 1974-1980, the last two years as chairperson. She has attended up to six conferences a year and "brought back many ideas and good material to Emerson."

Mrs. Schulman says that at present "the curriculum is a combination of Sophia Fahs' New Beacon Curriculum, material from multi-media kits, and material developed in the Emerson Church School." In 1972 Linda Gilbreath and Barbara Cecil wrote the pre-school curriculum because the U.U.A. published nothing for that age until 1980.

Alice Schulman sees her own responsibilities as "the detail work to keep things going smoothly, working with a strong R.E. Committee to decide on program changes and additions, and carrying them out," She believes that

"each child is a special, important individual, part of the association that is Emerson Church, with much to give and much to learn, able to make use of whatever opportunities we can provide here to make an impact on the world ... Religious education is a challenge. We have a responsibility to the ages and to all humanity, and we ourselves grow as we work with it ..."*

The latest prospectus gives the subject matter taught from nursery through the 12th grade. For the pre-school child the program emphasizes helping the child to relate to self, family, other people, and the world. In grades one through five courses

* Quotations are from a paper on the Emerson Church School prepared by Alice Schulman for the Church History.

help the children to discover their place in the natural world, explore man's early religious questions, introduce the Bible and the Old Testament in detail, and discuss their own Unitarian-Universalist heritage. In grades six through nine ethical questions, the New Testament, and other churches and religions are presented. In grades ten, eleven, and twelve the students are helped to develop a religion of their own. The program might very well be an answer to Blandin Jones' questions of whether we teach Bible stories or help the children to find their own religion. Emerson Church School does both in a carefully planned program.

When the church school could expand physically after the completion of the 1967 building program, enrollment increased. It has varied, but today, despite a nationwide decline in church-going, Emerson Church School ranks 13th in size in the Unitarian denomination. Church school enrollment presently is about 200, and average attendance about 100 pupils each Sunday. (Irregularity of attendance is always a problem in Unitarian church schools.) Emerson is a "family church."

Emerson students have been encouraged to understand and help people less fortunate than themselves. In 1964 they raised funds for the work of an American missionary to India who had spoken at the church. Later that year they "adopted" the Alberta Thomas family, a black mother with nine children, who was selected after consultation with the State Department of Public Welfare. They paid for a beauty course to provide the mother with training to work in that field. (This project had an unsuccessful end when the board said it would pay a \$40 debt incurred by the church school and would not be responsible further.) The students have raised money for the Albert Schweitzer hospital in Lambarene. They raise money for UNICEF at their annual Hallowe'en carnival. They give help regularly to a retarded orphan girl at Richmond State School, and have contributed to other causes.

A Helping Hands Service Committee to coordinate projects of social help has

been formed among the children, and a Junior Finance Committee handles church school collections and makes recommendations as to how the money should be spent. In the past the finance committee has helped purchase a projector for the Schweitzer Room, purchased wall clocks for each classroom and a buzzer to sound the end of the church school hour, and has made other gifts to the church and to outside charities.

In 1969, the committee established the Church School Chapel Fund, and has added to it regularly until now it amounts to \$1300. Seeing inflation consuming the value of the fund while the cost of building escalates, the junior financiers are in a quandary about how the chapel money should be used. Family worship services have been held in the main church building and in Westwood Hall at 10:30 on Sunday mornings, but these locations are not ideal for a number of reasons.

A different activity of our students is the publication of the Emerson Youth Newsletter, part of which they write themselves.

Annual traditions of the church school include the Christmas live nativity scene, Field Day, and birthday parties for Emerson and for Jesus. The Summerhouse is a one-week summer program begun in June 1978 and directed by a member of the Religious Education Committee.

The R. E. Committee supports the children's choir. The Schweitzer Club and the L.R.Y. are under the Youth Activities Committee. The minister's affirmation class for grades ten and eleven and a discussion course for sixth and seventh grades, "U-U and You," are also a part of the R. E. program.

CHAPTER 6

SOCIAL CONCERNS OF THE SIXTIES - THEIR EFFECT ON THE U.U.A. AND LOCAL CHURCHES 1965-1970

"The history of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of freedom." Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

This sentence was found hanging over the desk of the Reverend James Reeb and was quoted by the Reverend Horace Westwood in his sermon, "My Experiences in Selma."

That the decade of the sixties was one of social unrest is well-known. We are all aware of the protest marches, the sit-ins and lie-downs, the riots in the ghettos and on the campuses. What younger or newer Unitarians may not know is how the U.U.A., and by extension the local churches, were affected by the events of the decade. In Houston the First Church was involved in draft counseling and for a short time had as a member a vice president of the Black Unitarian-Universalist Caucus (B.U.U.C.) which later made fantastic demands of the U.U.A. At Emerson Church Mr. Schulman preached a number of sermons on the black groups and social unrest, and in 1968 a social concerns committee was formed.

Although the passage of the Voting Rights Bill in 1965 gave Negroes the right to register to vote, the southern Negro had learned that the governors of southern states would use all their police power to oppose him. Liberal youth, particularly students, often risked their lives to help Negroes register in states like Alabama and Mississippi. The wrath of state troopers, local police, "rednecks," and even governors, was aroused at what they saw as intrusion by outsiders into their affairs.

In March 1965 the Reverend James Reeb, a young Unitarian minister, went with two fellow ministers to Selma, Alabama, to participate in a black march from Selma to Montgomery, where the Negroes would call on Governor Wallace to ask for the right to register. Governor Wallace, however, sent state troopers to Selma to maintain order and stop the march. As they left a restaurant Mr. Reeb and his colleagues were

attacked by a group of local white men. James Reeb was hit on the head with a club and died a day later of his wounds. National attention was focused on Selma, and there was great sympathy among liberals for Mr. Reeb's widow and her four young children. Emerson Church raised over \$700 to send her.

As a member of the Board of the U.U.A., First Church's Horace Westwood was asked to attend Mr. Reeb's funeral. His "My Experiences in Selma," written immediately on his return to Houston, reflects the heat and excitement in Selma when a group of men and women (Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians and Unitarians are mentioned) joined Negroes in a march to the courthouse --

"The line is the place where many marches have been stopped... On one side there are ministers, nuns, rabbis, Negro young people, white young people ... On the other side were the troopers, the city police and the sheriff's posse. They were sitting in their cars fifteen or twenty deep, with the engines running and the heaters going so that they could stay warm. Where I stood was a line of sawhorses to mark the point beyond which no one could go.

"The hours I spent on the line were very stimulating. For the most part we sang. A Negro with a strong voice would stand on a chair and improvise verses between each refrain. The words spoke of tear gas, billy clubs, knots on one's head ... bull whips ... and of James Reeb and Jimmie Lee Jackson ..."

Dr. Martin Luther King spoke at the funeral service for James Reeb and in 1966 gave the keynote address at the May meeting of the U.U.A. He was a powerful leader of the Negro moderates. When he was shot in April 1968, there was no one who could take his place. The Black Panthers and Black Muslims became leaders. The Muslims in particular hated "Whitey." Negroes were now "Blacks." They felt they had waited long enough to get their rights and became demanding.

Within the U.U.A a group calling themselves the Black Unitarian-Universalist Caucus arose and was supported by some white Unitarian ministers. From it evolved Black Action Caucus (B.A.C.) and opposed to B.A.C. was B.A.W.A. -- Black and White Action -- an integrated group which protested the separatist approach of B.A.C. At the annual meeting of the U.U.A. in Cleveland in June 1968 B.A.C. demanded that the

U.U.A. give them one million dollars over four years -- \$250,000 in 1968, and \$150,000 of this amount before July 1. The General Assembly voted 826 to 327 in favor of the demand. The money was to be invested largely in black businesses.

U.U.A. Now, the quarterly publication of the denomination, reflected the rosy glow of altruism felt by some Unitarians after the Assembly's action. "A magnificent alchemy is at work here. The quality of confrontation is great. It can be a rebirth of this denomination if rooted in the experience of B.A.C. Churches do not mature until they face the opportunity before them," said Brad Norris of Cleveland, a U.U.A. Board trustee. Harvard theologian Dr. James Luther Adams said that B.A.C. "has sensitized this denomination so it can march into a new period of American history."

It soon became evident that many U.U. churches thought the General Assembly had acted precipitately in voting a tenth of its budget to the Black Caucus. There was also extensive and bitter opposition to the General Assembly's proposal to levy payments on individual churches so that the U.U.A. budget could be met. Some of these churches reacted by cutting contributions to the U.U.A., which soon found itself in financial difficulties and ended the fiscal year with a \$655,000 deficit.

In the spring of 1969 Kelton Sams, a national vice president of B.U.U.C. and a leader of the blacks at the General Assembly, came to Houston and became a member of First Church. He spoke to the Laymen's League in both Houston's Unitarian churches. It was evident (at least at First Church, of which your historian was then a member) that Kelton Sams aroused little sympathy for the B.U.U.C. proposals.

Frank Schulman preached frequent sermons about the "violent society" of the sixties. In a sermon ("The Violent Society: A Plea for Moderation") preached on May 11, 1969, he said:

"The black militants and the Students for a Democratic Society believe in revolution. They say we have a sick society and good can come only through revolution, never through orderly channels. They don't know what they want, but they know that anything that comes from a revolution will be better than what we now have. 'Only destroy!' So the black militants and the S.D.S. say to us, 'You are

racist, you are evil, we hate you. But keep the checks coming!" "

The real danger, Mr. Schulman felt, was that the radicals "are setting the stage for a political reaction to the far right such as this country has never seen." His plea was for moderation, for faith in the inherent goodness of man.

On May 21, 1969, a group calling themselves the International Radical Caucus invaded U.U.S.C. headquarters in Boston, ejected all staff personnel, boarded up doors, and held the office for ten days. They demanded that the Service Committee end its program in Saigon and pay \$200,000 a year for five years to the I.R.C. Mr. Schulman wrote in The Window (6/15/69):

"This is an abominable situation. The Service Committee deserves its fine reputation as a humanitarian organization ...

The time has come to stop this and similar activities. The time has come for headquarters to stop feeding out printed materials which encourage revolution, violence and anarchy. I object strenuously to being required to pay for this kind of political propaganda."

Mr. Schulman attended the General Assembly in Boston in July 1969 and gave the congregation at Emerson a full report. The B.A.C. had been joined by radical members of the Student Religious Liberals (college-age), L.R.Y., and the Laymen's League. Each group had its own demands. The meetings were disorderly. Microphones were seized by the blacks, votes of blacks and their supporters were made with clenched fists, the Viet Cong flag was unfurled. The Black Caucus wanted any support of B.A.W.A. (the moderate group) terminated, and when this was voted down, they walked out. They returned on the third day when they were promised that their demands would be placed before the Assembly. These demands included a five million dollar investment in the Black Caucus, which would be spent under their direction only; a two and a half million dollar investment in programs for poor whites, Latins, American Indians, etc; that local churches invest two and a half million dollars in similar fashion; that all Unitarian churches stop building programs for five years and turn the money over to the B.A.C; that Unitarian churches bordering black communities be turned over to B.A.C. etc.

When the first item on the list was brought up and moved, the head of the U.U.A. Finance Committee pointed out that the U.U.A. had no free funds, and restricted funds could not be used in this way. He moved to substitute "that we accept the recommendations of the Board" -- that is, reject Black Caucus demands. The motion carried. The next day the Black Caucus said it was uninterested in further discussion of its agenda. (The Black Caucus did receive the \$250,000 allotted in the budget as a second payment on the amount voted by the 1968 General Assembly.) By its divisiveness and exaggerated demands B.A.C. not only defeated its own ends; it also alienated many Unitarians who had previously been sympathetic with black causes.

By 1970, when the annual meeting was held in Seattle, there was a return to moderation. Frank Schulman reported of the 1970 General Assembly:

"The blacks made their usual emotional appeals, but the mood of the delegates was not a receptive one. There was very broad agreement ... that (1) we must save the denomination, or we will be in no position to help anyone; (2) social action is properly the function of the U.U.S.C., and the U.U.A. should not become merely a channel through which money is diverted to other groups."

The delegates adopted a balanced U.U.A. budget for the following year.

On June 16, 1968, Dan Neale, President of the Emerson Board in 1968-69, preached a sermon entitled "Emerson Church in the Community." The Window said of Mr. Neale's talk that it and the following talk-back "aroused considerable interest and posed a significant challenge for Emerson Church." Mr. Neale proposed to the board that a social responsibility committee "to study ways our church can be more effective in aiding community needs" should be established. At two open meetings interested persons discussed what projects might be undertaken and spent some time trying to determine the "proper nature" of the committee, of which Ned Stroud was chairman.

The Women's Alliance had become interested in the nearby black community called Carverdale. The Social Concerns Committee invited Mrs. Mary Block, a member of the Carverdale Community Council, to discuss with them ways in which Emerson

Church could be of help. As a result there was a large collection of clothing for school children by the Women's Alliance and the Social Concerns Committee in the fall of 1968. In the following year the committee raised \$465 for kindergarten tuitions for needy children in the community, which was given to the Dunvale School in the black neighborhood.

Ten members of Emerson Church attended a workshop on social responsibility held at First Church in January 1969. That spring the Board of Emerson Church approved allowing the Social Concerns Committee to sponsor an appearance at Emerson of Kelton Sams who represented B.U.U.C. In this connection The Window (4/6/69) reported:

"It was felt by the committee members that its best work would be to keep the congregation informed about denominational organizations and activities. The group plans to schedule a meeting soon ... with representatives from Houston who attended the national convention of the Black Caucus in Detroit recently. Members of Emerson Church, through individual contributions, helped send two delegates to the convention."

"Project Equality," by which the church agreed to support equal-opportunity employers and purchase only from them, was adopted as a board policy at the recommendation of the Social Concerns Committee.

In December 1969 the board reviewed and turned over to the committee an appeal for help to the Pachucos, a group of under-privileged Latin-American boys aged 15 to 17, who needed help in establishing a settlement house on the northeast side of town. Donations of articles for the boys were made by the congregation. In June 1970 the board voted to allow Social Concerns to raise funds for use at the settlement house.

Board minutes in early 1971 noted that "there is no Social Concerns Committee this year." Its demise, probably viewed with relief by some board members, is not explained. One reason may have been the lack of a chairman, or perhaps other church organizations were carrying on their own social service projects.

As the Viet Nam war came to a close, tensions relaxed, and there were fewer

student activists. The U.U.A. eventually got its affairs on a firmer financial footing, and General Assemblies once again became more willing to debate with less heat on controversial subjects. Frank Schulman on September 20, 1970, preached a "Funeral Oration for the New Left," which he said had deteriorated because of its own violence and its alienation of groups that had been sympathetic with the blacks. Mr. Schulman said, "We need to be ready to fill the vacuum with our own determination to do justice and to love kindness."

Social concerns were not dead at Emerson Church but had only been transferred to the Women's Alliance, which in 1971 started its recycling program and its thrift shop for the blacks in Carverdale, and the church school, which at about this time began to work with the retarded at the Richmond State School.

CHAPTER 7
THE EARLY SEVENTIES
1970-1974

"Theology is the reason for the existence of the church ...
Theology is here defined as 'the general theory of truth ...'
Dr. Schulman's sermon, 4/8/73

In late October 1970 one hundred members attended the tenth anniversary dinner which celebrated the founding of Emerson Church. David Hull, the "George Washington of Emerson Church" (its first President), was the speaker. In announcing the event, The Window of September 15, 1970 described the church as a "solid organization."

However, 1970 had been a tough year financially. Insurance costs tripled to \$4583. A minister's retirement fund was set up. There was a water problem -- the water level dropped, and a more effective pump was installed. The only permanent solution was to connect to city water at a prospective cost of over \$3,000. In the summer of 1970 pledge payments came in so slowly that the treasurer was authorized to borrow from the bank to cover necessary expenses. In addition, the church note to the M. D. Anderson Foundation was due in September with a final "balloon" payment of \$68,000. By persistence and persuasion John Vetter was able to refinance this loan with new payments of \$1,000 a month. Then the 1971 budget was undersubscribed, and Bub Joyce, the first Board President to serve two years,* had to rework the budget and cut expenses to fit the anticipated income.

By 1970 the program at Emerson fitted a yearly pattern of events with both minister and congregation contributing new ideas to make it interesting. A new, lively discussion group on contemporary problems developed. There was a continuing Great Books class. The Singles Group was popular, and from time to time there was a Couples

* Other two-term Board Presidents: Rudy Weichert, 1978-80;
Walter Kaye, 1980-82

Club. Mr. Schulman conducted a class in theology, and Jeff Montgomery gave a course in ethics for 11th and 12th graders.

The L.R.Y. had a successful workshop on racial problems, to which all L.R.Y.ers in the Houston area were invited. The Women's Alliance was working with the Dunvale school in Carverdale, and in January 1971 began its Thrift Shop to help the blacks of this area. Lois Jackson resigned as R.E. Director and was replaced by Joan Few. Catherine Newman became the new parish assistant to Frank Schulman.

When the minister returned from the General Assembly held in July in Seattle and reported that the U.U.A. would no longer support the Black Caucus, there were doubtless many Emersonians who thought that the U.U.A. appeared to be returning to sanity. The denomination's finances, Frank Schulman said, were in a "shambles." The U.U.A. had to look to its member churches to help rebuild its financial standing, and many Unitarians had vehemently opposed the U.U.A. giveaway and now regarded requests for contributions with little sympathy.

Emerson Church had its share of visitors from Boston that year. First was Mrs. Ruth Crary Young, a member of the U.U.S.C. Board which was meeting in Houston. Mrs. Young occupied the pulpit on Sunday morning, February 22, and talked about "Service Today" and the affairs of the U.U.S.C.

In March a barbecue dinner was planned for the U.U.A. President, the Reverend Robert West. At the last minute the Reverend Christopher Raible, Director of Communications for the U.U.A., came as a substitute. His message was that "having exhausted its unrestricted capital, the denomination now must operate on a vastly reduced budget, and it is critically important that more money be raised."

In late April the Reverend Russell Lockwood, Executive Director of S.W.U.U.C., came to Houston to talk with local Unitarians about forming a "cluster group" of Unitarian churches and fellowships in the Houston area to assist each other in

matters of common concern and to act as a coordinating group in denominational affairs. From this proposal came H.A.U.U.C. (Houston Area U.U. Churches) which included First Church, Emerson Church, and the Spring Branch and Baytown Fellowships. A year later when the U.U.A. asked each church to set up a group of "Sustaining Friends," the Board of Emerson Church voted to refer the matter to H.A.U.U.C. and "to proceed as in the past" with individual gifts. H.A.U.U.C. lasted several years and was a common bond among Houston Unitarians.

Dr. West was honored at a \$10-a-plate dinner for Houston area U.U.s at Emerson Church on December 2, 1970. The program included a "rousing performance" of Herman Naeseth's new anthem, "A Prayer for Peace," and an address by Dr. West.

In January 1972 Dr. Phillip Giles, Vice President of the U.U.A., came to Houston to talk about "the present financial condition of the U.U.A." with Houston U.U.s. Thereafter, visitors from headquarters were less frequent as the financial condition of the U.U.A. slowly improved.

In 1970 Mr. Schulman had a series of twelve radio programs on KTRH in which he talked about Unitarian concepts. The talks were so popular and so many requests for reprints were received that Mr. Schulman's radio broadcasts were continued. They were sponsored by the Industrial Fabrication Company and paid for by James Lightfoot, a church member. In 1974 KLEF took over Mr. Schulman's talks and continued them as a public service.

Early in the summer of 1970 the Schulmans took their family East for the first time since they had arrived in Houston in 1963. En route Mr. Schulman preached at All Souls Unitarian Church in New York City and visited his former church at Youngstown. He was the theme speaker at S.W.U.U.S.I. at Ardmore in August.

At Christmas the church school collected toys for the Lufkin State School for the Retarded. This experience led to the "adoption" of Nancy Ford, who later moved to the Richmond School for the Retarded. Each year the church school takes gifts to

Nancy and her friends.

The L.R.Y. collected toys and donations for Hester House, a settlement house, and added the \$48 made on a sale of hand-made items. The Schweitzer Club planned and gave a party for the Dunvale School. The Women's Alliance's Christmas gift to the church was a set of dishes for 200 persons to be used for parish dinners.

After the addition to the church school buildings, the library was made more accessible by moving it to the room now used as an office by the Woodland Hall School. The library was later returned to an upstairs room in Westwood Hall where at present it is little used.

Dr. Garna Christian has had charge of the portable Emerson Bookshop for many years.

There were more water problems in the spring and summer of 1971. Bill Roberts, Chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee, managed to cope with them. The board had paid the City of Houston a \$989 deposit to connect the city water, but pipes had to be laid, and the system was not complete until September. Mr. Roberts was worried also about the roof of Westwood Hall. A few repairs held off a complete reroofing until November 1975.

The board set up a Landscaping Committee with Yvonne Turung as chairwoman. She was president of the Women's Alliance at the same time. Mrs. Turung had a professional landscape service consultant draw up a simple plan and submitted it to the board. As the new sanctuary building was then under construction, the board decided the landscaping should wait until the new building was completed.

Board minutes indicate that Mr. Schulman usually gave a monthly report of his activities, which included weddings, christenings, and funerals. He enjoyed telling about one wedding service he did not perform. A young woman phoned to ask if he would officiate at a marriage to be held in a private "club." Upon asking the address, the minister was informed it was a "go-go, topless club," and the attendants would be

"attired" like the bride. Mr. Schulman declined the opportunity.

In December 1971 Frank Schulman was elected President of Houston Metropolitan Ministries, a "comprehensive social agency operating such facilities as Allen Parkway Village and many programs for the elderly." This was the first time a Unitarian minister had headed the organization. In the spring of 1972 he was asked to chair the Health Committee of H.I.S.D. which made recommendations about instruction in sex education, the abuse of drugs, and other health problems in the public schools.

October 16, 1973 marked Frank Schulman's tenth anniversary as minister of Emerson Church. In a letter to the congregation he noted that in 1963 the church had 168 members; in 1973, 420 members. More than the gratification of reaching a larger audience was the fact that "we have grown spiritually together in our search for truth." The Schulmans were presented a pair of pewter candlesticks to mark this anniversary.

In August 1971 the Meadville-Lombard Theological School, affiliated with the University of Chicago, announced an experimental program of study for "seasoned" ministers -- "kind of middle-aged," Mr. Schulman said. The degree of Doctor of the Ministry would be given upon successful completion of a program of study that included two weeks of classes, study, and research three times a year at Meadville for a total of eight periods. Work on a dissertation would be carried on at home between sessions. Frank Schulman says that as the program would take half his time in summer and a third of his time the rest of the year, he went to the board to ask advice. Not only did the board grant permission for the minister to apply for this program, it also budgeted \$1500 toward his expenses.

Meadville accepted Mr. Schulman in the first class beginning in May 1972. He arranged his time so that he could leave after church one Sunday, have a guest speaker the following Sunday, and be back in Houston the third Sunday to conduct the service.

The D.Min. degree was granted to parish ministers and was not given to those in research or teaching, where the Ph.D. was more appropriate.

Frank Schulman had long wanted to write a biography of Emerson, he says, but by necessity had to limit his research and chose as his dissertation subject "The Reasons Emerson Left the Parish Ministry." The subject involved a great deal of Emerson's biography, genealogy, thought process, etc," Dr. Schulman says, and added in a tape:

"It was a pretty gruelling two years ... During the two weeks we were up there we worked from about 9 in the morning to roughly 9 or 10 at night, and in fact, we did about a whole semester's work in two weeks ... Of the ten men only four of us actually completed it on time -- indeed, only two of us did dissertations. They changed the rules about half way through so that one could do a dissertation or three graduate-level papers, but I wanted to do the dissertation ... Dr. James Luther Adams was my advisor ...

"I learned an awful lot about Emerson, and the reasons he left the parish ministry, oddly enough, had never been written on, at least, not that anybody could find, and I did some extensive research on it. On the way I got well-acquainted with the Emerson family, which I still keep in touch with ...

"It was a tough course, and, indeed, the American Association of Theological Schools, the accrediting association, investigated Meadville along with all the other seminaries, and only six schools were approved, and Meadville was one of them.

"After I got the degree (May 1974) I went on my vacation and then came home to find the church had planned a big party for me. Anna Louise Bruner wrote a clever skit about Emerson revisiting earth and seeing what I was up to ... Emerson Church is an informal place, and we always call one another by first names. I joked with the congregation and told them that after I got my degree I wanted them to call me 'Doctor' for one week, after which we could all go back to first names.

"Meadville never did repeat that particular degree offering. They still give the D.Min., but only on a full-time study basis. I was lucky to get in on the first and only class they had."

The vacation Dr. Schulman refers to included attending the General Assembly in New York City, preaching at All Souls there, and preaching at the First Unitarian Church of Worcester (where he had been an assistant minister) and at King's Chapel in Boston.

Frank Schulman promised the congregation they would hear much about Emerson, his family, and his works. The Window was liberally sprinkled with quotations from Emerson and often included delightful anecdotes about him. Dr. Schulman frequently gave a sermon on Emerson on a Sunday near Emerson's birthday, May 25. One year when fresh material seemed in short supply, Dr. Schulman received a gift from Raymond Emerson, grandson of Ralph Waldo Emerson. It was a rare, privately printed book written by Emerson's son Edward, who retired from a medical practice to collect and edit his father's works. The book contained a chapter on Emerson's religion, which was of much interest to Dr. Schulman, and he preached a sermon on this subject in June 1975. This sermon was the last in a series on Unitarianism preached by the minister to mark the 150th anniversary of the U.U.A. and the Bi-Centennial.

"Pray Without Ceasing," was the title of Emerson's first sermon preached on October 16, 1826. It was given at Emerson Church in October 1975 just as it was preached 149 years before, with an identical service as far as it could be reproduced. Dr. Schulman wore clothing similar to that Emerson might have worn, and the reception afterward included food that might have been served in New England in the early nineteenth century.

"Why Emerson Left the Ministry," an article by Dr. Schulman based on his dissertation, was published in the U.U. Christian Quarterly in the spring of 1975. The Minister's booklet, Ralph W. Emerson -- His Life, His Works, His Theology, which had been out of print several years, was reprinted, and The Emerson Memorial Society of Concord still sells many copies to visitors at the Emerson home in Concord.

Dr. and Mrs. Bromley Freeman gave a complete set of Emerson's Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks (9 volumes) to the church in 1973.

Beginning in March 1973 a drawing of the new church sanctuary building was used in the heading of the weekly Window. Dr. Schulman called for a new name for the weekly newsletter and shortly afterwards it became The Emersonian.

With a family of four children Alice and Frank Schulman found the manse rather crowded and asked the board to put on another room or let them look for a new house. The board investigated and in February 1973 contracted with Harrison Goodrich for "the addition of a room (18' x 24') at the back of the manse at 8002 Skyline Drive and the subdivision of an upstairs bedroom." At the suggestion of a board member, a half bath for the new room was voted. A new 4-ton air conditioner was also installed. The work was completed by the end of April 1973, and the Schulmans held open house. The total cost of the renovation was about \$9,000.

Three years later the Schulmans bought the house from the church for \$28,000. Shortly afterwards a foundation problem was discovered which necessitated a costly repair. The board in February 1978 voted to bear half the expense of the work.

Alice Schulman became the new R.E. Director in June 1974, a position she presently holds. The excellence of the R.E. program results in large measure from her work and leadership, although she would probably say that her many helpers deserve most of the praise.

The board had many requests to rent Westwood Hall and the church school rooms and usually acted favorably and charged a modest fee. Los Amigos de las Americas, sponsored by church member Bill McCullough, rented rooms in 1973 and again in 1974. This was a group of about 70 young people, high school students, who paid \$200 each for the privilege of going to Central America to work in the jungles giving inoculations to the natives. They were instructed in medical techniques and matters pertaining to their summer's work. Los Amigos were not the best of tenants. They left doors unlocked and lights on and were not invited to come back a third year. They presented the board with a plaque "in recognition of the support Emerson Church has given the program."

The subject of a new sanctuary building for Emerson Church was in everyone's thoughts. It was inevitable that Emerson would build and only a matter of time, as the next chapter indicates.

CHAPTER 8
BUILDING THE NEW CHURCH SANCTUARY
1970-1975

"God does not need a house, but man does need that God should have a house."

John Donne, as quoted by Frank
Schulman

By the tenth birthday of Emerson Church in October 1970 there were two sets of plans for a new church building with a sanctuary, drawn by two different architectural firms. The money for executing either one of the plans was never available. Even before he accepted Emerson's ministry, Mr. Schulman had said the worship facilities were inadequate. In 1971, five years after the money was raised for the church school addition, Mr. Schulman and Bub Joyce, the Board President, discussed a third attempt to complete the building program. The increasing membership taxed the capacity of Westwood Hall, but it also provided a stronger base for giving for a new building.

At the April 6, 1971, board meeting Mr. Joyce told members of the board, "We have a \$250,000 to \$300,000 plan for a new sanctuary. We must either build it or convert our present area (part of the church school addition) to resemble one." He suggested that board members form a planning committee and give serious consideration to a building program.

In June he elaborated on his ideas. The original plans by architect John Hatteburg to build a church to seat 400 persons would cost \$300,000 to execute in 1971. As an alternative Mr. Joyce proposed that the Schweitzer room be enlarged by taking in a classroom -- "then expand the large building to the back of the lot, add pews and carpet, and knock out existing closets. The resulting building would seat 225 persons at a cost of about \$85,000." The board decided to "kick the idea around." After much discussion, Bub Joyce was asked to organize a planning committee for a new sanctuary.

His suggestion, that a Board of Advisors made up of past presidents of the board be formed and become a long-range planning committee, was approved by the board.

This committee met twice and recommended to the board (March 6, 1972) that "we proceed forthwith to build a sanctuary at an early date." It requested the board to appoint a building committee to explore costs and selection of an architect and "tell the committee specifically what it can do, so it can move without having to go back to the board for every decision." Bill Roberts moved that the long-range Planning Committee:

"be broadened in power to serve as a nucleus of a building committee, recruiting necessary people to handle sub-committees as needed, to proceed with informal planning towards building a sanctuary."
(Board meeting, 3/6/72)

No funds were to be spent at this time.

The long-range Planning Committee appointed an Architectural Selection Committee in April, 1972, of which Rick Fogle was chairman. By May this committee had met with eight architectural firms and narrowed their selection down to three. Of these MacKie and Kamrath was the committee's first choice. Karl Kamrath spoke to the board at a special called meeting on June 15th. He said he would meet with three persons from the building committee, and he wished the building committee to work out a program "conveying our (Emerson Church's) needs to him (Mr. Kamrath), considering items such as the site, money, functional needs, seating number, music (organ) and any other items necessary in the building of our sanctuary."

Calling a congregational meeting after church on July 9th, Mr. Joyce wrote a comprehensive letter detailing the history of Emerson Church's building program. Mr. Kamrath, a nationally known Houston architect, was recommended as "best qualified to help us in the construction of a sanctuary." Fifty-five members attended the meeting and they asked many questions about the need for and cost of a new sanctuary. They approved the retaining of MacKie and Kamrath as architects for the new building. The architects' fee would be 9½ percent of the building costs, which were estimated at around \$350,000.

The full Building Committee was announced in September 1972 with Rick Fogle as chairman. Three divisions of the committee were made: Finance, Eric McMaster, ch.; Design and Engineering, Leonard Smith, ch.; Publicity, Elizabeth Babcock, ch.

Mr. Kamrath requested suggestions from the congregation, so questionnaires were sent out. Over 100 responses were received, and the consensus was that the members wished a church that would seat 400, preferred that it be "formal," wished some stained glass and a pipe organ, preferably in the back of the church. Using this information, Mr. Kamrath went ahead with preliminary plans.

At the annual meeting on January 21, 1973 Leonard Smith reported that "Mr. Kamrath had presented ... an exciting floor plan and that within 4-6 weeks would have a complete schematic." The Building Committee would then go over the plans and, if they were approved, submit them to a vote of the congregation. In February Frank Schulman wrote in The Window,

"Mr. Kamrath is nearly ready with plans for the new church ... I have seen only the floor plan. Those who like formality will be pleased. I may say that some features of the building are unique; 'shocking' might be an appropriate word."

The plans were some months taking shape, but finally a congregational meeting was called for Sunday, May 27, 1973, when Mr. Kamrath presented his plans for the new church. Included were a site plan, a floor plan (the church being in the shape of a Greek cross), the exterior perspective, and the interior perspective. The total package, including the architect's fee, pipe organ, landscaping, and parking would cost about \$450,000, of which about \$300,000 could be borrowed, according to Finance Committee chairman Eric McMaster. Mr. McMaster said that "our financial situation seems favorable. Emerson Church has assets of about \$740,000 and debts of about \$47,000."

There was discussion, after which Rick Fogle presented this resolution:

"Resolved that the congregation empowers the Board of Trustees of

Emerson Unitarian Church to contract for the completion of the plans; to advertise for bids and to enter into a contract for construction; and be empowered to borrow money, to finance the project and to sign the necessary evidences of indebtedness required by the lender; and to take other such steps as are necessary to build the sanctuary."

The vote was 62 to 16 in favor of the resolution.

The summer of 1973 was a working one. Mr. Kamrath completed the plans and received his initial fee of \$11,399 in July. The Finance Committee formulated plans for the dual fund-raising of the 1974 budget and building fund. The 1974 operating budget was frozen to the amount of the 1973 budget, \$72,800. The board agreed to sell the building lot left to the church by the Ingrahams and add the proceeds to the building fund. A shrimp boil was given by the men of the church, and paintings by Royce Jones, a former prisoner befriended by Dr. Schulman, were auctioned for \$230 for the fund. Larger contributors were approached and John Todd, a friend of the church, agreed to give \$10,000 if the chancel was named "The Frank Schulman Chancel." The board accepted the offer immediately. An Investment Committee was set up, chaired by Dick Schmidt, to manage gifts of stock that were contributed.

A kickoff dinner was held on October 26 when church members met to have the building drive explained and to learn more of the plans for and progress on the new sanctuary. The canvass itself began on October 28.

In early December when the Building Committee advertised for construction bids, \$168,000 had been pledged to the building fund. The bids submitted ranged from \$398,000 to \$578,000. The lowest bidder could not give a performance bond. The next lowest bid was for \$507,000. This figure was \$57,000 above the previously estimated cost of the building. Board members felt something must be done to bring the estimated cost closer to the \$400,000 projected cost.

At the February 1974 board meeting all previous bids were rejected and Rick Fogle and Leonard Smith agreed that by selecting a contractor on a negotiating basis to rework the plans, "we will see if we can get the construction costs for the sanctuary

down to \$400,000." The firm finally selected was the P. G. Bell Construction Company which usually bid on larger jobs but, because of a slight recession in the building industry, agreed to take on the Emerson Church work. Mr. Bell was able to show where money could be saved but, even so, his estimate was \$436,000, which included his fee of \$30,000. The agreement was that if there were savings in material costs, Emerson Church would get 70% and the contractor 30% of the savings. Mr. Bell's figure was \$100,000 less than his original estimate.

At a meeting on April 25, 1974, the board considered the higher cost. Frank Schulman pointed out that a recent gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kemp would give the church an endowment of \$100,000 and would be added to in the future.* The fund could not be spent in building the sanctuary but did point to a more secure financial future. The Board voted to enter an agreement with the P. G. Bell Company to build the new church building in accordance with their estimate of \$436,000.

Ground-breaking Sunday was May 7, 1974. Worship service was at eleven, as usual. At 11:30 the congregation

"sloshed through the swamp and dug a good bit of the ground. Everybody took his turn at the shovel, including architect Karl Kamrath and builder Paul Bell. Mr. Henry Kemp led us in hurrahs for the Finance Committee. Charlotte Matney (L.R.Y. President) presented \$30 from the L.R.Y.'s spaghetti supper. Rick Fogle turned the first shovel. Mr. Schulman dug his soil where the pulpit will be; Herman Naeseth, choir director, couldn't quite make it to the choir stalls ...

"The shovel used was the same shovel used for the original groundbreaking in 1960 and the Sunday School wing in 1967. It will be available next Sunday for those who missed last week and want to help dig. Children especially are invited to help tear the lawn up."

The Window, 5/12/74

The Anderson Foundation would give a loan when the church was built, but interim financing to pay bills during the construction period had to be arranged. There

* The Kemp Fund was listed at \$282,000 on the most recent balance sheet.

were three liens against the property: first lien, Anderson Foundation \$26,000; second lien, Water Dept. \$1,500; third lien, U.U.A., \$1,000. The Finance Committee resolved the situation by paying off the Water Department debt and the U.U.A. loan and consolidating the old and new Anderson loans, so that the Anderson Foundation now held a \$450,000 mortgage on Emerson Church, repayable over a 20-year period at 8½%.

The Window for June 30 made a significant announcement -- the contract for the new pipe organ costing \$37,000 had been signed with the M. P. Moeller Company. The organ committee had spent many hours listening to and discussing organs and accoustical problems. The organ would have two manuals and seventeen ranks, including the celeste, and was designed so that another rank could be added later.

The organ fund was begun in 1965 with a gift of \$500 from Dr. and Mrs. Hartman Kilgore. After Tom Olson died in 1967, memorial funds for him were added to it. Tom and Fran Kilgore Olson sang in the Emerson choir for many years, and Tom Olson "played the organ as a pinch hitter," Dr. Kilgore says. Members of the Kilgore family contributed the funds to make the organ purchase possible. The organ is known as the Kilgore-Olson organ.

Members of the Music Committee were very eager for an additional rank, the fagot, which would greatly extend the range and usefulness of the organ. After it was installed Mrs. Mary Podea, niece of Dr. Kilgore, supplied the eighteenth rank by a gift of \$5,000. The total price of the organ was \$42,000.

The same Window contained Catherine Newman's note:

"... Huge trucks started dumping dirt where the new building will be. As fast as they dumped it, a bull-dozer would flatten it out. One after another they came, all day for 6 days, dumping dirt. A week ago the bulldozer was gone and some surveying took place. Little sticks with red flags on them are all over our new hill, marking different rooms ... Then a huge foundation post-hole digger was busy digging foundation holes and then a cement-mixing truck went to each hole and filled it with cement ... Then they would push a steel frame into the hole to reinforce it ... Things are really moving now. Come see for yourself."

In August the slab was poured. It had been delayed by rain. The Window of

August 25, 1974, says:

"... Soon the sides will be going up. Then our main job will be patience."

By September 29,

"We're at that happy stage where progress is very visible. The steel girders are up and they're putting in the lath work. Next they will pour the sides and the roof ... After 14 years of waiting, it seems hard to believe we will be in our new church in another 4 months ... The organ, carpets, furniture, and other accessories have been ordered."

Pews of a light African mahogany costing \$14,000 were ordered. The seat cushions were a bright turquoise with gold thread. A gold acrylic carpet costing \$4,450 was installed.

The dual pulpit and lectern, "representing the priestly and the prophetic," caused a difference of opinion between the architect and the minister. Dr. Schulman said the pulpit should go to the left (as the congregation faces the minister.)

"He (Kamrath) said, 'No, the pulpit goes on the right.' 'No, I want it on the left.' He said, 'Look Schulman, I've been building churches for forty years, and I know where the pulpit goes.' I said, 'Mr. Kamrath, you may have been building churches, but you have never built a cathedral. In a cathedral the pulpit goes on the left.' He came back later and admitted I was right, which is the first time he ever admitted I was right."

The coffee hour was held in the church-under-construction on October 27. The building had progressed to the point of allowing the spectator to see where the various parts of the church would be.

Meanwhile, the Finance Committee was busy raising the \$109,135 budget for 1975. It was 50% higher than the 1974 budget and was necessary because the church mortgage payments had increased from \$12,000 to \$40,000. Because of inflation, salaries were raised, and the cost of utilities, maintenance, etc., of the new building had to be anticipated.

The pipe organ arrived in early February and was stored in various rooms.

"The library is packed to the ceiling with pipes, blowers, and all kinds of mechanical equipment. The console is sitting in Westwood Hall. Two large wooden crates are stored in the Schweitzer Room."

The Window, 2/9/75

After weeks of waiting, the opening of the new church was announced as April 13. The Window, (3/23/75) gave thanks to P. G. Bell and all the workers who "have made the construction a joy. Much of the credit goes to Rick Fogle, who has always been at the other end of the phone for help and has never turned aside a request for a meeting ..."

In the March 30th Window Dr. Schulman tells how the dedication will be handled:

"Now, almost a year later (ground was broken the end of last May) we are ready for our new building. It is a magnificent structure. Architecturally it is a strong statement of what Emerson Church stands for. The extravagant use of soft colors; the many stained glass windows; the large chancel; the pipe organ; the comfortable pews; all these await our entry on April 13.

"On that Sunday we will gather in Westwood Hall, as we have for 14½ years. We will open with a call to worship, a prayer of gratitude, and a unison prayer. Then, singing Emerson's great hymn, we will process to our new church. His hymn begins, 'We love the venerable house our fathers built to God' -- how appropriate! Emerson wrote that hymn in loving gratitude for his own church (Second Church Unitarian in Boston) just after he left its ministry ..."

Dr. Schulman, approached the final service in Westwood Hall with conflicting emotions, which no doubt were shared by many in his congregation.

"Here in Westwood Hall," he says, "we have sung our great hymns together. We have prayed, wept, and laughed. The great crises of life have been shared. When President Kennedy was assassinated; when Albert Schweitzer died; when Martin Luther King was shot -- during all those times we have met to console each other.

"Now it is over. April 13 will, for me at least, be a day of nostalgia! 'Our sincerest laughter will with some pain be fraught ...'"

The Window, 4/6/75

And so it was on April 13 when some 550 people came to Emerson Church for the opening of the new church building -- and all were seated.

May 25th was Dedication Sunday. It was also the 150th anniversary of the Unitarian Universalist Association and, appropriately, Emerson's birthday. The dedication service was in the evening, and a reception followed. The dedication speaker

was Dr. Malcolm Sutherland, president of Meadville Theological School. Horace Westwood came from Vermont to lead the morning service and attend the dedication. Other Unitarian ministers present were the Reverend George Briggs of Beaumont; the Reverend Russell Lockwood, District Director of the Southwest Conference; the Reverend Webster Kitchell of the First Unitarian Church of Houston, the Reverend Matthew McNaught of New Orleans; and, of course, our own Dr. Schulman. The Reverend Philip Libby, Director of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, was present, as well as Mr. Jonathan Day, City Attorney for Houston. The City of Houston proclaimed May 25 "Emerson Unitarian Church Day." George Binder led the congregation. A prayer written by Emerson and sent by his grandson's wife to Dr. Schulman was read.

Many gifts were given to the new Emerson Church, a list of which is attached.

GIFTS TO THE EMERSON CHURCH SANCTUARY BUILDING

In its twenty-year history Emerson Church has received many gifts. Whenever a need arises, a member or a friend of the congregation seems always ready to do or give what is needed. There have been many gifts of money and countless gifts of service. The new list that follows is, we hope, a fairly complete record of gifts given to the new sanctuary building around the time it opened in 1975. Many of the gifts have been marked by plaques:

On the northwest side in the rear of the church there is a plaque which acknowledges the generous gift of Henry P. and Alma Kemp, whose donation was the beginning of the permanent endowment fund.

The pipe organ was made possible through gifts from the Kilgore family and memorial gifts from the friends of Tom Olson, Dr. Kilgore's son-in-law. The plaque says the pipe organ was dedicated in honor of F. Hartman Kilgore and in memory of Thomas Olson. After the pipe organ was installed, Mrs. Titus Podea, Dr. Kilgore's niece, gave the money to complete the organ with its 18th rank. The story of the organ is told on page 62.

Pews endowed by members and friends of the congregation are:

A pew given by Frances and William Roberts to commemorate the fiftieth wedding anniversary of her parents, Dr. and Mrs. F. Hartman Kilgore, June 14, 1974;

A pew honoring the marriage of Catherine Montgomery to Tom Tinsley, July 1, 1975, given by her parents, Jeff and Leonora Montgomery;

A pew given by Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Hinds to honor their son, David Leslie Hinds, an active Eagle Scout, who had been awarded the Order of the Arrow, highest award in Explorer Scouting. David died in a canoe accident. The pew was dedicated December 14, 1975.

A pew given in memory of Thomas W. Pew, a benefactor of both First Unitarian Church and Emerson Church, given by Mr. and Mrs. Wallace C. Thompson;

A pew given in loving memory of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert F. Schwarz, parents of Mrs. Gerald D. Hines by Mr. and Mrs. Gerald D. Hines.

The chancel was dedicated to Dr. J. Frank Schulman on October 5, 1975, "honoring his years in the ministry of Emerson Unitarian

Church." The pulpit was dedicated to him during the celebration of his 25th anniversary in the ministry.

The two large pulpit chairs in the chancel were the gift of Mr. and Mrs. David Hedley, honoring Dr. Schulman's ministry. The chairs are made of Philippine mahogany and were designed by architect Karl Kamrath.

The pulpit scarf was designed by Virginia Maxwell, following suggestions of Dr. Schulman. It was executed by Ruth Fogle and embodies symbols of six of the world religions surrounding the flaming chalice of Unitarianism.

The kneeling bench was purchased by the church in honor of John David Todd in 1975. The needlepoint cover was made by Ruth Fogle and contains over 200,000 stitches, involving 500 hours of work.

Dr. and Mrs. Bromley Freeman gave the stained glass window on the south side of the church near the organ in memory of their parents, Alex and Kate Freeman and Emil and Kirsten Jarl. They also gave the large brass candlesticks on the altar.

The large painting near the pulpit is an oil by Henri Martin (1860-1945), French impressionist, portraying a cathedral in Toulouse. It was given by Mr. and Mrs. Turhan Taner, who also gave several oils and watercolors hanging in the vestry and sacristy.

A large Bible, called a "Baskett Bible" (Baskett was the name of the printer for Oxford University in 1762) was given by Polly and Mac Edwards. It was acquired by them when they lived in Ireland, and given to Emerson Church in 1967. It was restored by Mrs. Marian Orgain, Curator of Special Collections at the University of Houston.

A pulpit Bible was given by David Snell to honor his mother, Ada Jack Carver Snell. Mrs. Snell was a writer, mostly of short stories about her native Natchitoches, Louisiana.

The Lester grand piano was given in 1965 by Tom and Frances Olson and had been used in Westwood Hall.

The organ chimes were the gift of Whit Matteson, our former organist and later choir director, and his parents.

The Church School gave a silver tray to be used with the christening bowl.

Mrs. Betty Morris gave a silver punch bowl and tray.

Mr. and Mrs. David Snell gave some silver candelabra.

In the narthex of the church there is a guest register given by the Women's Alliance. Over it hangs a quotation from Ralph Waldo Emerson done in needlepoint, "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." Many members of the Alliance took

turns in contributing stitches. The pamphlet rack was also donated by the Women's Alliance.

The Alliance gave the money for the wooden curtain used to cover the choir robes in the vestry. The full-length plate glass mirrors in the vestry were a gift of the Women's Alliance in 1981.

The mirror in the small room just outside the vestry was given by Mrs. Kit Fournier.

Many plants were contributed by Mrs. Ruth Fogle. Mrs. Diane Tate, who is now caring for the sanctuary plants, has also contributed others.

CHAPTER 9

THE LATE SEVENTIES AND 1980-1981

"Integrity is the keystone of our religion. You ought never violate your own integrity, nor should you do anything that would cause another to compromise his ... You keep your integrity by being honest in your dealings; by giving your word carefully; by testifying for ideals in which you believe ..."

"Your Duties as a Unitarian,"
a sermon preached by
Dr. Schulman June 14, 1981

Emerson Unitarians view with pride the beautiful sanctuary, which today looks as bright and new as it did in 1975, thanks to the efforts of the Housekeeping Committee and other devoted workers. The light mahogany of the pews and the gold carpet are complemented by the various shades of peach in the painted wall panels and ceiling. These contrast with the bright aqua panels on either side of the chancel and the turquoise pew cushions, repeated in the seat cushions of the two formal chancel chairs. The skillful use of color makes for a striking and unusual interior. The soft light through the windows, fresh flowers on the altar, the beautiful chancel, sacred music from the pipe organ -- all lead to a feeling of peace and a religious uplifting of the spirit.

As if in recognition and thanksgiving, Frank Schulman introduced the first communion service on Christmas eve 1975. There is a long tradition of communion in the Unitarian church, he said, and quoted from Emerson:

"I believe the whole end and aim of this ordinance is nothing but this, to make those who partake of it better ..."

"Why have a communion?" Dr. Schulman wrote. "Forms and observances help us express the deep movings of the spirit. Feelings thrive by having an opportunity to share their observance in fellowship with others." Communions are now held on Easter morning and on Christmas eve.

A flower communion was begun in May 1977. In this service each person brings a flower to put into a basket held by a child at the church entrance. During the

communion the congregation comes one by one to the front of the church and receives a different flower from a child's basket. "In this way we symbolize our sharing of beauty and love for each other," Dr. Schulman says.

Dr. Herbert Capek, who helped found the Unitarian movement in Czechoslovakia, began the communion in his country. During the early World War II years he was persecuted by the Gestapo, and died in Dachau in 1942. He used the flower festival in his home church, and it became popular with Unitarians because it shows that amid the cruelty and barbarity of war there is beauty and joy to be shared.

In April 1976 Emerson Church was given a beautiful communion silver service which had belonged first to the Third Unitarian Church of Dorchester, Massachusetts, and later to the First Unitarian Church of Dallas. It may be kept as long as we wish to use it.

An Activities Committee, chaired by Anna Louise Bruner, to plan social programs and events, was set up by the Board in early 1975. Its first task was to plan the dedication of the new sanctuary building. The board also drew up guidelines for the use of the building.

Soup and sandwich luncheons on the first Sunday of the month began in March 1976. They have proved to be an effective means of promoting friendship.

In April 1976 the first "slave auction" was held. Individuals offered specific services for sale at a minimum price, the money to go to the church. Then at a dinner meeting the congregation was given a chance to bid on the services. The auctioneer usually succeeded in getting prices bid up well above the minimum asked. The first auction made \$2,238; last year over \$4,000 was cleared -- half to go to outside lighting and the other half for the kitchen renovation fund.

Emerson Church has had two intern ministers -- young women studying for the Unitarian ministry who came to us for four months of practical training. Mrs. Alice Wesley from Beaumont, a student at Meadville Theological School, came in February

1976. She preached two sermons and conducted a "small group," which was devoted to developing "friendship and community" among church members. Mrs. Wesley was given a copy of The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible when she left, and the board voted also to give the electronic organ originally used in Westwood Hall to the Spindletop Church of Beaumont in her honor.

In the fall of 1979 Mrs. Diana Heath from Dallas, a student at the Perkins School of Theology of SMU, became our second intern minister. Diana taught a class in parenting, as did Alice Schulman. Diana was especially active in the Singles group, which she praised as treating each person as an individual rather than as one of a pair. She and Dr. Schulman had a lively and interesting dialogue sermon, "Women and the Ministry," one December morning. The board presented her with a ministerial robe, and Dr. Schulman preached her ordination sermon in Dallas, which was attended by several friends from Emerson Church.

Both these women enriched the church program and had a worthwhile working experience as well.

Herman Naeseth was choir director at Emerson Church for nine years. He was a talented composer who had one of his compositions, "Die Beiden," performed at the Houston Museum of Fine Arts. Mr. Naeseth once preached a sermon entitled "Palestrina, We Love You -- a look and a listen at the golden age of church music." He had founded the fellowship in Douglas, Arizona.

When Mr. Naeseth resigned in September 1976, Whit Matteson, who was then the organist, served in a dual capacity of music director and organist until Susan Soderstrom became the new organist in May 1977. There were often guest soloists, as when Norma Newton, a church member who has sung in grand opera, generously contributed her voice. The choir from First Church sometimes made a guest appearance to repeat some special music from their repertoire.

Walter Kaye became board President in 1979 and was instrumental in strengthening the choir by hiring a soprano and a tenor voice. In the fall of 1980 Gwyn Richards, who teaches choir directing and is Assistant Dean of the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, became the Emerson choir director. His wife Barbara, a soprano, is an important addition to the choir. Singers and instrumentalists from the Shepherd School sometimes augment the choir. On April 26, 1981, the Bach Cantata #144 was sung and well received. Mr. Richards has been able to give the choir more incentive to sing a wider variety of music at the Sunday morning service. The choir of First Church has joined that of Emerson in a joint concert, later given at First Church.

Just as the five-year warranty on the Moeller organ ran out, it was found necessary to replace the plastic used in the pipe "puffs" of recently built organs with a leather traditionally used before 1971. The Moeller Company said that plastic had been used so extensively by the industry that it would be bankrupted by making repairs to all organs at company expense. Consequently, the church employed Jim Peterson to replace the plastic in the swell-door mechanism of the organ and in over one thousand pipe puffs at a cost of over \$6,000. Other long-standing problems were corrected by expert revoicing that has noticeably improved the organ. Gary Smith, our present organist, has created a renewed appreciation of the organ and its importance in the improved musical program.

Through the generosity of Rick and Ruth Fogle the church grounds have been beautified by the religious gardens between Westwood Hall and the church sanctuary building. This garden contains azaleas, hawthorne, nandina, and crepe myrtle, and trees, including a live oak, which will add shade for the shrubbery in a few years. Ruth Fogle, who contributed so much to the new sanctuary, died in September 1978 before the garden was completed, and the memorials given for her were used for a separate part of the garden known as the "Ruth Fogle Memorial Garden." The other part of the

garden is the "Religious Garden."

The statue in the Memorial Garden is of St. Fiacre, seventh century monk and patron saint of gardens. The L.R.Y. contributed the granite monument with the inscription from Emerson, "I call upon you, the young, to obey your hearts and be the nobility of this land."

After the new building was opened, the board found that the debt to the M. D. Anderson Foundation was an intolerable burden. Jeff Montgomery, chairman of the Finance Committee in 1976, succeeded in raising \$88,500 (part of which was the \$28,000 paid for the manse by the Schulmans). This large payment on the principal of the loan reduced payments by \$9,500 a year. Recent figures showed that the Anderson note stood at \$304,458.

There have been two women board presidents: Glenda Matney, 1976-77, and Leonora Montgomery, 1977-78. Both have served with distinction.

In 1977, when Mrs. Montgomery was board president, the Women's Alliance made a study of what members felt should be added to the church program and reported to the board on the many suggestions made. Among them were better music, a varied program in adult education, ways to help those wanting counseling, but most of all a warmer fellowship. As a result a Worship Committee, chaired by Barbara Butler, was appointed to study the church program. Increased efforts were made by the Ushering and Worship Committees to welcome visitors. The coffee hour after the Sunday morning service, the luncheon on the first Sunday of the month, and the Friday-night neighborhood suppers have all helped to make Emerson a friendly church.

An effort to familiarize the congregation with U.U.A. affairs led to a monthly article in The Emersonian by Walter Kaye, who was then chairman of the Denominational Affairs Committee.

Adult education courses have become an attractive part of the church

program. Four courses were offered in the fall of 1978: Aerobics with Dr. George Binder; New Testament with Leonora Montgomery; Interpersonal Communications taught by Margaret Keeler; Contemporary Issues with Al Richardson. In 1981 65 persons registered for five fall courses: First Course in Theology, taught by Dr. Schulman; Amazing Art, given by Mrs. Shirley Coster; Trinitarian Debates of the First Four Centuries, conducted by David Beckworth; Ethical Issues and Current Events, conducted by Larry Huelbig, chairman of the Adult Education Committee; Prospective on Parenting, with Mrs. Nancy Bowden.

Dr. George Binder, who handled insurance matters for the church in the early seventies, advised the board that insurance should cover 90% of the replacement costs of church property. In 1973 a policy for \$550,000 (90% of property valued at \$609,000) was carried at a cost of \$1,900. After the completion of the new sanctuary, the buildings were appraised at \$794,775, and the insurance cost was \$3,000. In December 1980 the value of the buildings was listed at the same amount and the insurance cost was \$4,724. The board authorized the Insurance Sub-Committee, chaired by George Furber, to increase liability insurance to \$1,000,000 at a cost of \$350. In December 1980 Holcomb Properties estimated the worth of the property at \$2,787,000 and offered to buy it at that price. The offer was rejected by the board.

The board has recently passed a directive that will affect all funds, except the Kilgore Lecture and the Permanent Endowment funds. All memorial and other funds are to be spent when they are received and not banked for interest.

In 1977 after consultation with the R.E. Director the board signed a contract with Woodland Hall School, a private elementary school, to rent the Schweitzer Room, twelve classrooms, the library, kitchen, and three restrooms (but not the R. E. Director's office or the nursery). Westwood Hall and the nursery were rented later, at an added charge. While the fee paid by the school is of considerable help to Emerson's budget, the situation is not entirely satisfactory for the church school staff, which

must see that the rooms are ready for Woodland Hall to use on Monday morning. Meanwhile Woodland Hall is pressing the board to add another module so that the school can expand. Serious discussion of the proposal has been going on, but at this time no decision has been made. Dr. Schulman has suggested that a children's chapel might also be built.

Church attendance in January 1976 was up 38% over the previous year and in the church school was up 18%. Present membership is 435, a figure that has stayed more or less constant, although church-going in the last few years has decreased throughout the country, Dr. Schulman says. Emerson Church is now the 65th largest in the denomination and our church school is 13th in size.

The concept of Summerhouse was introduced in 1978 by the church school. A week of vacation fun and creative activity took place as a substitute for the orthodox Bible school. Zanada Maleki had charge of this summer activity during its first trial, and Summerhouse is so popular that it is repeated each year.

Another interesting undertaking of the church school was participating in "Heifer Project International." This was an organization based in Arkansas which shipped animals, either a pregnant female or in pairs, to third-world countries to supplement their food supply. Our church school children raised over \$100 to send a pregnant goat and a pair of rabbits.

In the last few years the upper classes of the church school have used part of their year as a period of service to the church. They have served in many ways, including waiting on table at church suppers, helping with the Sunday coffee hour, and building a flagstone walk.

Dr. Schulman was appointed the Ministerial Settlement Representative for the Southwest in September 1975. The work involved helping a church without a minister to find a new one, and the experience of a "seasoned" minister is important.

May 1979 marked Dr. Schulman's 25th anniversary in the ministry. On May

With the Women's Alliance prepared and served dinner to 150 persons in honor of Frank and Alice Schulman. The affair was a complete surprise to the Schulmans -- at least, that is what Frank Schulman claimed in his thank-you letter to the congregation. The Schulmans, who were also celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary, were presented with a silver service and a check for \$7200, a gift of the congregation. A plaque honoring Dr. Schulman's ministry was placed on the pulpit. A high point of the weekend was the presence of Dr. Dana Greeley, past president of the U.U.A., in the pulpit the following Sunday morning. While studying at Harvard, Dr. Schulman had served as Dr. Greeley's assistant at the Arlington Street Church in Boston.

In June 1979 Frank Schulman gave the Berry Street Essay at the General Assembly in East Lansing, Michigan. His address was entitled "The New Pietism." The Berry Street Essay is given by a different minister each year. The tradition dates from 1820 when William Ellery Channing gathered liberal ministers in his study on Berry Street in Boston for papers and discussion. In the fall of 1981 Dr. Schulman gave the Minns Lectures on Ralph Waldo Emerson at Concord, Mass.

Because of his great interest in and knowledge of Emerson, Dr. Schulman has been appointed vice-chairman of a national committee to plan world-wide commemorating events in 1982 on the centennial of Emerson's death.

Our minister became a member of the Greater Houston Clergy Association in 1978 and in 1979 received the recognition of the community when he became the group's president. He was honored by having member ministers meet at Emerson Church to hear him speak on the Nag Hammadi Library. The text of these ancient Coptic manuscripts, discovered in 1945, had just been printed in English. They date to the 4th century and contain important material about Jesus and early Christianity. Dr. Schulman gave three sermons on the Nag Hammadi Library in 1978.

Dr. Schulman received the recognition of the community by being elected President of the Greater Houston Clergy Association in 1979.

Since the opening of the new sanctuary building a number of noted Unitarian ministers have spoken from the Emerson pulpit in addition to Dr. Dana Greeley. The Reverend Carl Scovel, minister of Kings Chapel, spoke in January 1978. Dr. Paul Carnes, U.U.A. president, came in January 1979. (Dr. Carnes was ill with cancer at the time and died three months later.) The Reverend Eugene Pickett, who succeeded Dr. Carnes as U.U.A. president, occupied the pulpit in October 1980.

A delightful affair on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Emerson Church was arranged by Walter Kaye, then Board President, and his Anniversary Committee. An unusual banquet was prepared by church members Pam and chef Owen Torres. (Whoever heard of cold avocado soup, Beef Wellington, and Black Forest cake at a church supper!) Horace and Virginia Westwood and Dr. Pickett were guests. Dr. Westwood gave a short address, and then Virginia Westwood talked about "The Wife's View of It All" and almost stole the show in her quiet way. Saturday afternoon there was a reception in Westwood Hall, and Sunday morning Dr. Pickett gave a sermon on "Our Unfinished Agenda" with the other two ministers having a part in the program. Norma Newton sang the Alleluia from Mozart's Exultate Jubilate. It was a weekend to remember.

A lectureship endowment fund was set up in 1978 by Emerson's several-times-over benefactors, Dr. Hartman and Mrs. Fay Kilgore. The interest on the fund is to be used to provide lectures from time to time, as the income permits. The lectures will deal with such subjects as comparative religion, religion and the arts, religion and science, and appropriate religious classical music.

The first lecturer on April 16, 1980, was Dr. James Luther Adams who is a professor emeritus at Meadville and on the Harvard faculty. His subject was "Great Metaphors in Christian Thought." Dr. Adams was introduced by Dr. Niels Nielsen of Rice University, where Dr. Adams also spoke. The lecture was followed by a reception

in Westwood Hall prepared by the Women's Alliance.

Dr. Walter Kring came in March 1981 as the second Kilgore lecturer. Formerly minister of the First Unitarian Church of Worcester and of All Souls Church in New York City, he has served in several denominational positions. A man of many parts, Dr. Kring is a specialist on Herman Melville, an author, and a nationally known ceramist. His lecture topic was "How Religion Could Bind the World Together." On Sunday Dr. Kring's sermon was on "The Significance of Moby Dick."

The pages of this history reflect the great devotion, labor, and integrity of individual members of Emerson Church and of their minister. The names of the congregation will change, but with this solid foundation Emerson Church takes its place with the respected churches of the Unitarian Universalist denomination and the community.

EMERSON UNITARIAN CHURCH
HOUSTON, TEXAS

BOARD PRESIDENTS

Oct. 1960 to Jan. 1962:	David P. Hull
Jan. 1962 to Jan. 1963:	Bramlette McClelland
Jan. 1963 to Jan. 1964:	Benjamin T. Simmons
Jan. 1964 to Jan. 1965:	Dr. F. Hartman Kilgore
Jan. 1965 to Jan. 1966:	Roger D. Stanwood
Jan. 1966 to Jan. 1967:	Andrew Delaney
Jan. 1967 to Jan. 1968:	Redrick B. Fogle
Jan. 1968 to Jan. 1969:	Dan T. Neale
Jan. 1969 to Jan. 1970	Stayton Nunn through March, followed by William J. Cameron
Jan. 1970 to Jan. 1971	Dr. Thomas S. Matney
Jan. 1971 to Jan. 1972	James G. Joyce
Jan. 1972 to Jan. 1973	James G. Joyce
Jan. 1973 to Jan. 1974	William H. Roberts, III
Jan. 1974 to Jan. 1975	Eric McMaster
Jan. 1975 to Jan. 1976	Dr. George Binder
Jan. 1976 to Jan. 1977	Mrs. Glenda Matney
Jan. 1977 to Jan. 1978	Mrs. Leonora Montgomery
Jan. 1978 to Jan. 1979	Rudolph Weichert
Jan. 1979 to Jan. 1980	Rudolph Weichert
Jan. 1980 to Jan. 1981	Walter R. Kaye
Jan. 1981 to Jan. 1982	Walter R. Kaye

BOARD MEMBERS

Oct. 1960 to Jan. 1962: William V. Ballew, Jr.
David P. Hull
John J. Moran

Oct. 1960 to Jan. 1963: Mrs. Andrew Delaney
Bramlette McClelland
Cornelius J. Starr

Oct. 1960 to Jan. 1964: Robert Henry
(replaced by Benjamin T. Simmons)
Leonard Meltzer
Millard K. Neptune

Jan. 1962 to Jan. 1965: Dr. F. Hartman Kilgore
Mrs. H. Blandin Jones
Barrett B. Russell
(replaced by James Ryan Wright)

Jan. 1963 to Jan. 1966: Rex G. Parks
Dr. Alex D. Pokorny
Roger D. Stanwood

Jan. 1964 to Jan. 1967: Mrs. Orissa Eckhardt
(replaced by Mrs. Thomas D. Nickerson)
Andrew Delaney
John M. Vetter

Jan. 1965 to Jan. 1968: Redrick B. Fogle
Mrs. Thomas D. Olson
William H. Sheffick

Jan. 1966 to Jan. 1969: J. T. Kelly
Donald M. Nevins
(replaced by Dr. George Binder,
Edward Stroud)
Mrs. Lane Christley

Jan. 1967 to Jan. 1970: Stayton Nunn
(replaced by William Tell)
Dan T. Neale
Mrs. William Edwards

Jan. 1968 to Jan. 1971: William J. Cameron
Dr. Thomas S. Matney
William K. Tell

Jan. 1969 to Jan. 1972: Mrs. Richard J. Newman
John M. Vetter
Dr. Robert L. Vick

Jan. 1970 to Jan. 1973:	Dr. H. Robert Hopkins J. G. Joyce Mrs. Gungor Turung
Jan. 1971 to Jan. 1974:	Charles J. Crosson Albert T. Richardson William H. Roberts, III
Jan. 1972 to Jan. 1975:	Miss Anna Louise Bruner Charles E. Casteel Eric McMaster
Jan. 1973 to Jan. 1976	Mrs. John Babcock Dr. George Binder Mrs. Gerald D. Hines (replaced by Mrs. Thomas Matney)
Jan. 1974 to Jan. 1977	William J. Cameron (replacing Richard J. V. Johnson) Mrs. Thomas S. Matney (replacing Donald Loggins) Rudolph Weichert (replacing Richard F. Schmidt)
Jan. 1975 to Jan. 1978	Redrick Fogle Albert A. Goodson Mrs. Jeff Montgomery
Jan. 1976 to Jan. 1979	Mrs. John R. Bush Stephen E. Baker Mrs. Brad LaBour
Jan. 1977 to Jan. 1980:	Judson Bryant Thomas Nickerson Rudolph Weichert
Jan. 1978 to Jan. 1981:	Harry Campbell Otto Glaser Max Nelson
Jan. 1979 to Jan. 1982:	Mrs. Robert H. Hopkins Walter R. Kaye George Owens
Jan. 1980 to Jan. 1983:	Mrs. Sandford Brown Mrs. William Fogle Dr. Richard Mullineaux
Jan. 1981 to Jan. 1984:	Wallace Bond Dr. John Condit Mrs. Jack Essinger