

OBITUARY

ALEXANDER W. McBLAIN

H-R 14-9-57

Alexander William McBlain was born in Kirkmichael, Ayrshire, Scotland, Nov. 21, 1868, and passed away in Community hospital, Grinnell, Iowa, Dec. 6, 1957, at the age of 89 years, 15 days. He was the fifth of a family of eleven children born to Alexander and Elizabeth Murphy McBlain in Scotland. In 1881 the parents and eight children came to America. They reached Grinnell, Iowa, on May 30, 1881, where they located and where Alexander William grew up.

In young manhood he was a molder by trade. After his conversion, he felt called to preach the Gospel. For a time he worked with the Salvation Army. Then he felt that the Lord wanted him to enter the Methodist church and later the Methodist ministry.

It was the Official Board of the Grinnell Methodist church that recommended him for admission into the Iowa Conference of the Methodist Church, where he was admitted on trial in 1896. With the exception of one year, he continued in active service until 1940. In September, 1919, health conditions caused him to take a year's leave of absence, during which time he lived in Davenport and again worked at his old trade as a molder until September, 1919, when he again returned to the active ministry.

From 1923-1925 he served as chaplain of the Iowa State Penitentiary at Ft. Madison. He with his wife had previously taught in the prison night school while serving as pastor of the Santa Fe Avenue Methodist church.

In 1925 he returned to the pastoral ministry in which he continued until he reached the retirement age of 72. He then continued to serve for two more years until the rules of the church forced him to locate. In 1942 at the age of 74 years, he returned to Grinnell, where they had previously purchased property at 1608 West Street.

But idleness was not for him. Many Sundays during the next year he filled pulpits in various churches. Before the next conference he was serving regularly the Searsboro Circuit consisting of three churches. One of these was Bethel church in Jasper County, which he continued to serve for the succeeding ten years, until 1953.

On Feb. 10, 1897, W. G. Wilson, District Superintendent, united him in marriage to Alice Rhine of Taintor, Iowa. The service was performed in the Grandville Methodist church, one of the three he was then serving as pastor and where she was then the Sunday school superintendent.

They started housekeeping in the Grandville parsonage. In later years they were blessed with two sons and one daughter: Wallace Rhine, who died in 1930; Alice Elizabeth, now Mrs. Myron S. Kirkpatrick of Grand Rapids, Michigan, at whose summer house at Bay View, Michigan, he and Mrs. McBlain spent many happy summer vacations; and Robert Alexander, now pastor of the Adel, Iowa, Methodist church. It gave him great pleasure when his son entered the ministry.

Rev. and Mrs. McBlain observed their 60th wedding anniversary in February, 1957, at the Grinnell Methodist church when more than 200 people were present.

He is survived by his wife, daughter, and son; by 6 grandchildren; several nieces and nephews, and a host of friends.

He was evangelistic in his preaching and believed that a preacher should cry aloud and spare not and show people their sins and the "house of Israel their transgression."

Rev. McBlain never engaged a professional evangelist to conduct special services but did his own preaching and saw many souls accept the Saviour during his ministry.

He never lost his zeal for the ministry and used every opportunity to tell folks that Christ alone could save from sin.

Funeral services were held Dec. 9 at the Methodist church with Dr. G. S. Bruland and Dr. Eyegrett H. Staats officiating.

Funeral Rites Conducted Today For Rev. McBlain, Noted Minister

H-R 14-9-57

Last rites were conducted this afternoon at the Grinnell Methodist church for the Rev. Alexander William McBlain, 89, who died suddenly Friday. Smith Funeral home was in charge of arrangements.

Rev. McBlain had been a pastor in the Methodist church since 1898. He had served pastorates in Oskaloosa circuit in Taintor, Rose Hill, Thornburg, the Newton circuit in Sonora,

Birmingham, Columbus Junction, Wapello, Eldon, Ainsworth, the Santa Fe church in Fort Madison, chaplain in the Fort Madison penitentiary for two years, Wilton Junction, Danville, West Chester, and Russell.

In 1940 he retired and Rev. and Mrs. McBlain moved to Grinnell to make their home. He also served as a supply pastor in local area churches the last few years in addition to 10 years at Bethel.