

Religious Periodicals

Probably at least 150 religious journals have been published in Iowa. The majority of them were short-lived, but there was no year in the neighborhood of the turn of the century that did not have at least a score in course of publication. These statistics, based on the directories, do not include the temperance papers, which were usually published under religious auspices.

It appears that the first religious paper in Iowa was the *Christian Evangelist* (1850-1862?), of Fort Madison. It was a monthly devoted to missionary work in the West, as was the *Western Evangelist*, of Mt. Pleasant, listed in the Kennedy catalogue of 1852 as having 650 circulation. The *Friend*, apparently a Quaker paper, is listed in Coggeshall in 1856 as published at Lancaster, then county seat of Keokuk County. Though no files are known, there is evidence of an *Iowa Christian Witness*, called *Christ's Witness* in its last year or two, published in Dubuque in 1858-1861.

Oskaloosa was a center of early religious journalism. The *Christian Monitor* (1862-1879) was a substantial monthly of 52 octavo pages edited and published by Mrs. M. M. B. Gordiner in the

interest of the Evangelical faith. The *Evangelist*, serving the Church of Christ, was begun in newspaper form in 1865 by Allen Hickey; in 1875, when B. W. Johnson was editor, it was consolidated with the *Christian Record*, of Bedford, Indiana, a journal that had begun in 1843. The *Record and Evangelist* continued its unflinching publication in both Oskaloosa and Bedford until 1879. A later Oskaloosa religious journal was *Western Work* (1897-1912), a monthly issued by the Society of Friends at 50 cents a year and edited by D. M. Edwards.

An Adventist semimonthly was published in Marion by the Christian Publishing Company 1866-1889. This comparatively long-lived journal began as *Hope of Israel*, but after 1873 the title identified it better — *Advent and Sabbath Advocate*. It carried eight newspaper-size pages.

The leading Episcopal journal in Iowa was the *Iowa Churchman*. Founded in Davenport in 1877, this modest monthly was edited by Bishop William Stevens Perry in the 1880's. It was moved to Dubuque in 1902 and to Keokuk in 1914. It appears to have been suspended 1923-1936, to have been revived in Fort Dodge, and to have resumed its migrating habit in 1940, moving to Muscatine, where it ended in 1948.

Three interesting and well edited periodicals were published by the Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints at Lamoni. In 1881, Joseph

Smith, son of the prophet and head of the group that had seceded from the main body before Brigham Young had led the Mormon migration to Salt Lake City, removed the *Saints' Herald* from the village of Plano, Illinois, to Lamoni. The Iowa town thus chosen as headquarters for the Reorganized Church was itself a village of only a few hundred population, but a good building was soon erected for the *Herald* and the next year it was changed from monthly to weekly publication. The paper had 16 newspaper-size pages and carried general news as well as that of the church. It had an associate publication, also edited by Smith, entitled *Zion's Hope*, a four-page semimonthly for use in the Church's schools. This paper was suspended in 1915, after Frederick M. Smith, son of the second Joseph, became Church President. A third L.D.S. journal appeared in 1888, when Mrs. Marietta Walker founded *Autumn Leaves*, a 48-page octavo monthly designed for the young people of the Church. In the same year Mrs. Walker became editor of the school paper, *Zion's Hope*. *Autumn Leaves*, though pious and doctrinal in general, had a strong literary trend, and published some short stories and articles borrowed from writers outside the Church.

The Mormons, in all their branches, were great publishers. Three papers were published briefly and successively at the village of Preparation, Iowa, by Charles B. Thompson back in the 1850's

in support of the editor's claims upon the leadership of the Church; the series ended in 1858, when a mob drove Thompson out of town. At Lamoni in 1902-1917, *Religio Quarterly* was the organ of Zion's Religio-Literary Society. *Journal of History* (1908-1925) was first issued there, by the Herald Publishing House.

In 1921, the headquarters of the Reformed Church, L.D.S., were removed to Independence, Missouri, together with their printing house. *Saints' Herald* still flourishes at Independence.

The *Iowa Methodist* (1882-1920) was a small monthly at 75 cents a year long edited by H. H. Fairall in Iowa City: it was moved to Mt. Vernon in 1912. The *Inland Christian Advocate* was a short-lived monthly in Council Bluffs 1874-1875; the name was revived for a more prosperous weekly edited in Des Moines by M. D. Collins 1886-1894.

Most important of the earlier journals of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Iowa was the *Christian Oracle*, founded at Des Moines in 1884 by F. M. Kirkham and General (later Governor) Francis M. Drake. A weekly designed to serve the Iowa churches of its denomination, it moved to Chicago in 1891 in order to reach a larger midwestern audience. At the beginning of 1900 it became the *Christian Century* and under that name achieved the high position in American religious journalism that it holds today.

Two monthlies, both published at Des Moines, have been a credit to the Christian denomination in Iowa — the *Christian Worker*, of 1887-1943; and the *Christian News*, begun in 1922 and still published by the Society of Christian Churches of Iowa, with Loren E. Lair as editor.

A Unitarian monthly called *Old and New* was issued in Des Moines and Chicago 1892-1910. The *Reformed Church Herald* (1895-1923) was begun at Columbus Junction, moved to Tipton in 1900, and ended its life at Lisbon. The *Christian Union Witness* has been faithfully edited at Indianola by Winifred Macumber since 1918. It is really a continuation, however, of the *Christian Witness*, a magazine begun at Columbus, Ohio, by J. F. Given, founder of the Christian Union denomination, in 1864. It is now published by the Church's Publication Board.

The *Baptist Record* was begun at Pella in 1899 and published there for over half a century before being moved to Des Moines.

Congregational Iowa, a Grinnell monthly begun in 1882, closed its long career with its number for June, 1963, and is to be succeeded by the *United Church Reporter* this fall. The change signalizes the recent consolidations and mergers in which Congregationalists have participated.

The *Iowa Messenger* was founded in Davenport in 1882 by T. L. Sharon as a Catholic weekly of eight large folio pages at \$2 a year. Through

the years it has published much interesting material in addition to its news of the Church's activities in the state. John F. Kempker contributed a "History of the Catholic Church in Iowa" as a serial in 1894. Now called *Catholic Messenger*, it has a circulation of 24,000.

The *Catholic Tribune* was begun as a Dubuque weekly in 1899; it became a daily about 1927 and ended ten years later. The weekly *Witness*, of that city, begun in 1921, continues, with about 130,000 circulation, to serve a wide audience.

It should be noted that many Iowa churches of various faiths, especially those with large congregations, have often published their own weekly news and announcement sheets.

Longest lived of the several missionary magazines published in Iowa was the *Missionary World*, of Shenandoah, begun in 1887 as a monthly, changing to quarterly publication in 1920, ending 1925.

Y-Men's World is a Washington monthly, begun in 1936 as the organ of adult Young Men's Christian Association members.

What a spate of temperance papers Iowa produced in the latter decades of the 19th century! Probably the first was Davenport's *Temperance Organ*, listed by Coggeshall in 1856. Davenport was also the home of Iowa's largest temperance paper, the *Northwestern News*. Begun in 1878, it claimed five years later to be "the leading tem-

perance weekly of the country. Having absorbed the *Blue Ribbon News*, Davenport; *Investigator*, Ottumwa [founded in Iowa City in 1878 by David Brant, moved to Ottumwa in 1879]; and *State Prohibitionist*, Des Moines, it has now a circulation of 6,000." In 1888 it called itself "the only Prohibition Party paper in Iowa" and claimed 10,000 circulation. It ended in 1899. The *Iowa W.C.T.U. Messenger* (1886-1891), Des Moines, was edited by Florence Miller, with J. Ellen Foster a prominent contributor. Later journals in this field were the *Catholic Apostolate* (1903-1922), of Dubuque, and C. Durant Jones's *Prohibition Journal* (1908-1914), of Perry.