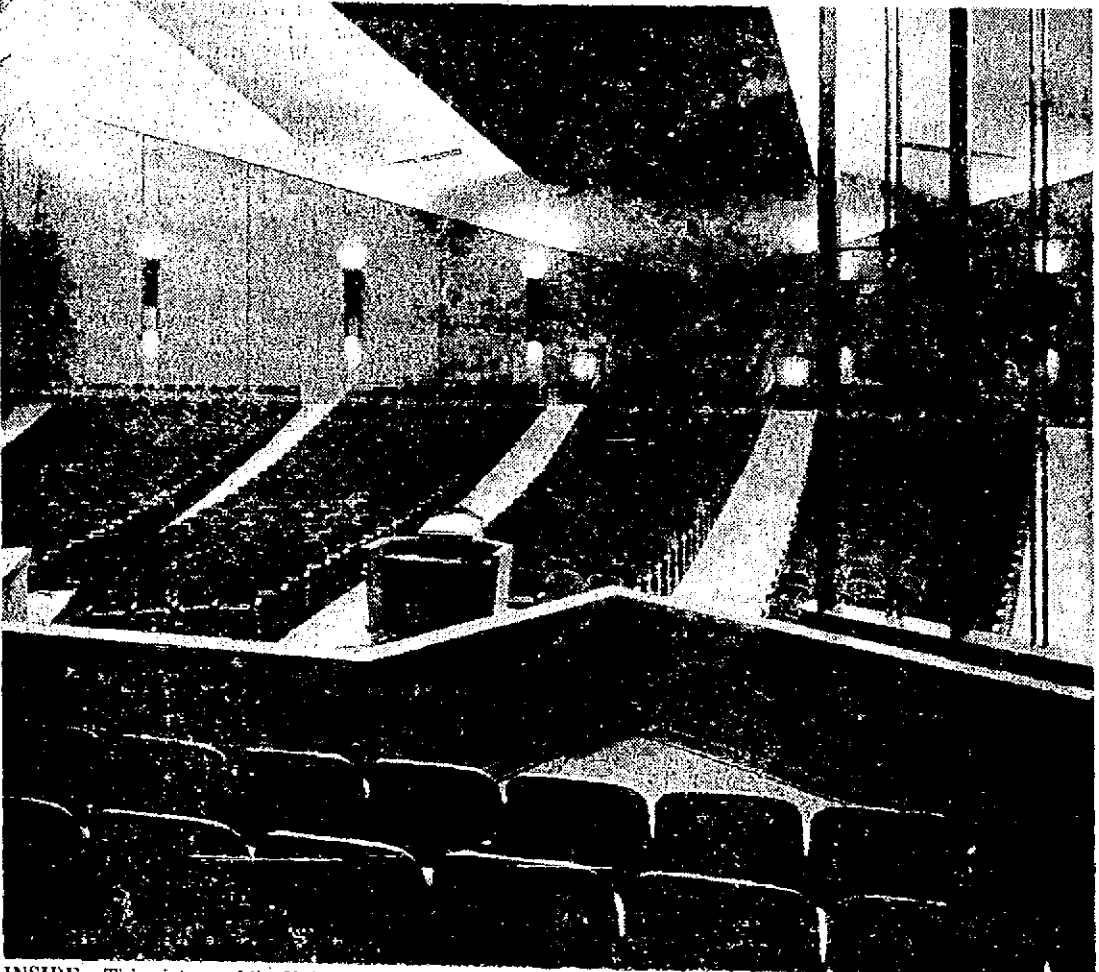


HERE IT IS — This aerial view by Lloyd Jones shows the new University Baptist Church auditorium as well as the older portion of the church plant. The new building faces west on Grape. Note drive-in entrance

on south side of building (center right in picture). The small chapel is the triangular extension at the right rear. The former auditorium located in the old building will be used for education space.



INSIDE—This picture of the University Baptist Church auditorium is taken from the choir loft, looking over the Sunday school class which met in the old Merchant school "way out there in the sand" at the corner of Anson Ave. and Grape Sts.

of seats are seen here; just out of the picture to the right is the other section. Width of the auditorium at the back is 150 feet. Note the ceiling and lighting. (Staff photo by Don Hutcheson)

ORGANIZED 55 YEARS AGO

**Church Started as Just Sunday School Class**

Slightly more than 55 years ago the North Park Baptist Church, which has since become University Baptist Church, was formally organized in Abilene. Actually the church history goes back for some time beyond that, however. Originally it was a Sunday school class which met in the old Merchant school "way out there in the sand" at the corner of Anson Ave. and Grape Sts. When the school house was moved, the Sunday school class moved too, and on March 26, 1902 was formally organized as the North Park Baptist Church with the Rev. M. C. Bishop serving as moderator for the meeting. He also preached the organization sermon, and became the first pastor of the new church, which had 12 charter members. The minutes of that meeting begin, "Under the exalted leadership and providence of God a number of brethren and sisters met at the North Park School House March 26, 1905 to organize a Missionary

Baptist Church. . . . "The fourth Saturday night and Sunday in each month were selected as the time of regular meeting. The Rev. Bishop was invited to preach at the next regular meeting at which time it was agreed to call a pastor." At a called conference on April 5, 1908, by which time the Rev. Bishop was called as the pastor of North Park Baptist Church, which continued under that name until 1914, when it became College Heights Baptist Church. Erecting Building The Rev. Bishop served until April 5, 1908, by which time the church was erecting a frame building at Hickory and Lower Sts. In November, 1912, just after Dr. J. C. Burkett became pastor, building was moved to the location on Ambler Ave. Excavation for a new building was begun in March, 1917, and the building was put to use in January, 1918.

Pastors who had preceded Dr. Burkett at the church had included the Rev. E. E. Dawson (Oct. 1908-Oct. 1909), the Rev. W. E. Deer (Nov. 1909-Aug. 1910), and the Rev. F. C. Vick (Sept. 1910-July 1912). The Ladies Missions and Aid Society had been organized on Feb. 8, 1907, with Mrs. George L. Paxton of First Baptist Church assisting. By comparison, the Baptist Brotherhood at University Baptist was not organized until 1920, with John H. Hutto as president. When Dr. Burkett left, the church called the Rev. W. H. Sims, who was pastor from November, 1920 to April, 1923. By that time the church membership had climbed to 788 and the pastor, Powell of Rule became pastor. He held the post for 17 years, resigning Nov. 1, 1940. Other changes were taking place, however. Simmons College had become Simmons University,

so on Dec. 11, 1927, College Heights Baptist Church became University Baptist Church. The Rev. Powell stressed training of the church membership, and the Brotherhood was reorganized and began to sponsor mission work. The educational unit was added to the building in 1928-29, and a new organ was installed in the sanctuary. Chapel Built One of the last big things to take place during the Rev. Powell's pastorate was the building of the Graham St. Chapel in January, 1940. The Rev. E. Douglas Carver became pastor April 1, 1941. He resigned in July, 1942, and was succeeded by the Rev. W. O. Vaughn, Jr., who served from November, 1942 until April, 1945. "This period saw a rise in young people's work and the work of the W.M.U. and work was begun on remodeling the church plant. The Rev. W. E. (Bill) King was

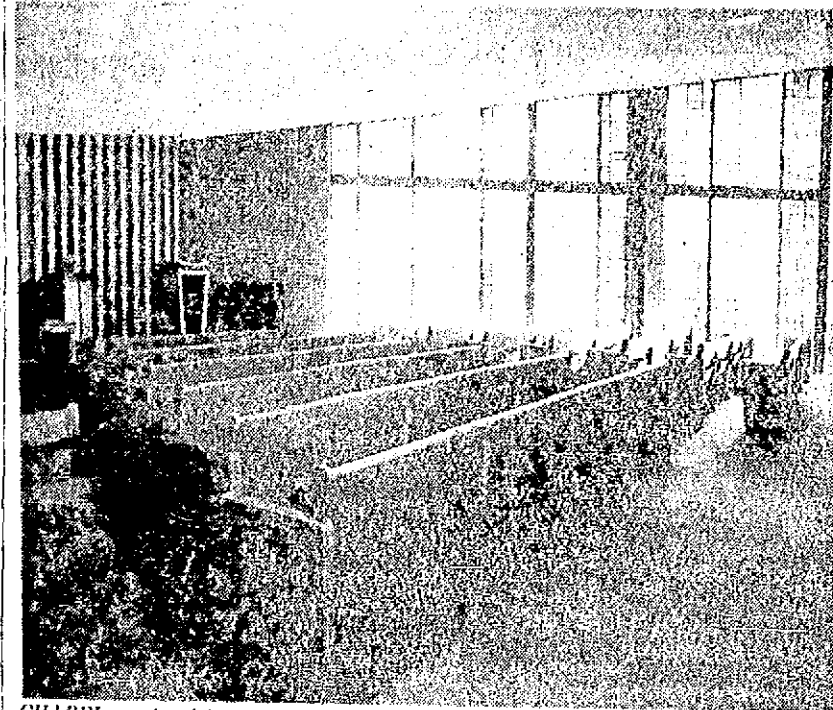
University Baptist Church to-day climaxes the dedication of its new auditorium with two worship services and open house. The Rev. Maple L. Avery, pastor, will lead a formal dedicatory service this morning at which former pastor, Dr. Sterling L. Price, will preach. The Rev. Avery preaches tonight in the last of a series of services which began Thursday night. The public is invited to visit the building during open house (this afternoon from 3 to 5:30 p.m.). Deacons of the church and their wives will be hosts at open house and will contact tours. Ollie McMinin is chairman of the deacons. The two pastors who served the church the longest will have parts in the morning service at 10:55 a.m. The Rev. C. A. Powell, now of Rule, pastor from 1923 to 1940, will lead in dedicatory prayer. Price to Preach Dr. Price, who served 10 and a half years from 1948 through December, 1958, will preach the sermon. His subject will be "Wholly Dedicated to the Glory of God." He is now pastor of Third Baptist Church, St. Louis. He was pastor when ground was broken for the new University sanctuary in August, 1953. Tonight, the Rev. Avery preaches on the subject "A Church Committed to the Glory of God." Visitors to the new building will see one of the most unusual church structures in Texas, an ultra-modern house of worship. Even with the completion of a building which is expected to serve the University Baptist Church congregation for many years, the church building committee, headed by Dean W. A. Stephenson, is looking forward. "If need be, we can remove the wall between the foyer and the auditorium and add additional seats, or the entire front wall could be removed and the auditorium expanded," Dean Stephenson said. This may not be needed soon, however, as the new auditorium has theater-type seats for 1,534, and folding chairs can be placed to seat an estimated 300 more. Last Sunday, the first time the new sanctuary was used, the church discontinued its 8:30 a.m. worship service, which had been held for several years because the former auditorium could not accommodate the congregation at a single morning worship service. The new sanctuary is done in pink-colored brick inside and out with copper trim, and is designed to be functional while still meeting the spiritual needs of the congregation. Stained Glass Approaching the main entrance to the church, visitors will note the stained glass windows, which accentuate the height of the roof line by their design. Colors in the glass were selected to match approximately the colors of glass in the temple in Jerusalem. At night lights inside the church pick out the long strips of light blue which are in the center of each section, and are flanked by the smaller oblongs of other colors. The two front entrances to the building lead into the foyer, directly behind the stained glass windows. Temperature controls for the foyer allow it to be kept either much warmer or much cooler than the sanctuary, when occasion demands. "By having it extra warm in very cold weather, or colder than normal on a hot day, persons will find the sanctuary comfortable as soon as they enter it, rather than having to wait for some time before the change in temperature affects them," Dean Stephenson said. Across the rear of the auditorium is a six-foot wide aisle, carpeted in pastel green, and leading into five aisles which go all the way to the front of the sanctuary. All the aisles are carpeted over lifetime foam rubber cushion, while the area under the seats is covered with cork tile to deaden the sound of scraping feet and give a cushioned walking surface. View Accentuated Theater-type seats were designed both by rows and overall to give the best possible viewing to all those seated in the saucer-shaped area. The seats range from 20 to 24 inches in width, with the wider seats placed to break up the straightness of the rows. Between the rows there is a full 34 inches, so that even basketball stars should be able to sit comfortably. Because of the shape of the auditorium, the seating had to be specially designed by the American Seating Co. Upholstery and finish on the seats is in soft grey-green, which blends with the 780 square yards of carpeting used. Aisles narrow as they go from the back to the front, while overhead the ceiling, built in a series of sloping planes also helps to give a positive emphasis to the pulpit area. The pulpit furniture, including the table in front of the altar, was specially designed to carry out

to the general motif of the structure. To the north of the pulpit area there is a small area for a piano. South of the pulpit is the baptistry, which has a planter box in front of it. An open framework has been erected behind the baptistry and the piano stage. This tends to enclose the choir loft, while still just cutting off the congregation's view of the singers. Lighting in the sanctuary includes wall lights built into specially made copper fixtures, and a combination of direct and indirect lighting which is recessed into the ceiling. Rheostats control the main lights so that the intensity can be modified as needed. From a panel in front of the choir loft, all the auditorium lights can be controlled so that emphasis can be placed wherever it is desired, including on the baptistry. Room for 65 Sixty-five choir members can be seated in the choir loft, with the sound from the Baldwin electric organ coming through behind them from the sound room, which has Baldwin organ representatives say, the only perfect insulation for an organ room in the Southwest. The room was designed for a pipe organ, but reproduction from the electric organ is so good that the church may be thoroughly satisfied with that. Chimes are to be tied in with the organ when proper wiring is secured. Entrance to the baptistry is made down a short flight of stairs which is hidden by a curtain which hangs from the ceiling. Ladies' and men's rest rooms, can be placed wherever it is

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DR. STERLING PRICE . . . morning speaker



CHAPEL — A spirit of reverence and intimacy marks the chapel of University Baptist Church, above. Its seating capacity is 125. The colored glass forms the east wall. (Staff photo by Don Hutcheson)

REV. MAPLE L. AVERY

**Slim, Youthful Pastor Is Power for the Lord**

By BOB PHILLIPS Reporter-News Staff Writer Slim, dark-haired and dark-complexioned, the Rev. Maple L. Avery, pastor of University Baptist Church, has a look of intensity in his dark eyes that marks him as a strong worker for the Lord. Now only 29 years old, the Rev. Avery has been preaching for 15 years. He surrendered for the ministry at Brady when he was 14 years old, and preached twice that year. When he was 15, he went to Fort Stockton for a youth revival, and there were 11 professions of faith and 30 admissions to the church. The type of belief which he has, and which he can communicate to his audience, seems to be a part of the motivating force behind his every action, though there is a great vitality in the preacher's slim body. Last October when the Rev. Avery came to Abilene all the outside work had been done on the new sanctuary, but there was still



REV. MAPLE AVERY . . . pastor

ished pulling a second floor on its structural building was some help, he says, for he at least knew about problems which are involved in building programs, though the work here was on a much larger scale. Dean W. A. Stephenson and other members of the church building committee carried the major part of the load on the new sanctuary, but the Rev. Avery still found himself deeply involved at times. A study for the pastor is included in the new sanctuary, and he is hoping to keep it for "serious study" while still maintaining his quarters in the older building as his main office. A Busy Fellow Pastors find themselves with many jobs in large churches, and the Rev. Avery, as a new pastor who has already made something of a name for himself, is kept busy. Generally, he tries to use his mornings for work in his office. See AVERY, Pg. 7-B, Col. 4

**Building Committee Has Been on Job for Six Years**

Members of the building committee which brought into being the new auditorium at University Baptist Church have been serving more than six years, having been named on Dec. 13, 1953. W. A. Stephenson was named chairman and Roy Skaggs vice chairman. Serving with them were Bill Tippen, Carroll Goldsmith, Ollie McMinin, Mrs. Alton Willingham, H. C. McDermott, Dr. A. G. Arrant, Mrs. Homer Hutto and Mrs. Odus Waldrum. Mrs. Hutto has since moved from Abilene. H. V. Richards, church financial secretary, and W. C. Bible, chairman of the board of deacons, were ex-officio members of the committee. Bible, too, has moved. During the latter stages of construction, Stephenson, assistant dean at Hardin - Simmons, was at the building site daily, and spent considerable time in working out problems which went with the arrangements for work done by building, but it was Aug. 3, 1958 the various contractors in proper before bids were accepted for the construction. For several years, Dean Stephenson did double duty as rector of the building fund campaign of the board of deacons, working with him on that headed the hospitality committee. Mrs. Alton Willingham, Mrs. Ed Dick Merchant and Mrs. Howard McCleshey had charge of decorations.



W. A. STEPHENSON . . . heads building committee

Mr. and Mrs. J. M. McClarty, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Carville and Mr. and Mrs. Leiland Taylor were on the planting and landscape committee. Serving with Dr. Herbert Preston on the music advisory committee concerning organ, pianos and robes were Dr. William Mathis, Mrs. R. E. Kuykendall, Mrs. Billy Smith, Mrs. Horace Below, Dale Bunch, Linda Bowers and Norma Werdeltner. Dedication Committee Members of the general dedication committee include the pastor, the Rev. Maple L. Avery, and deacons Ollie McMinin, Stephenson, B. F. Andrews, Clyde Jetton, Mrs. E. L. Gentry, W. L. Kincaid, Herbert Preston and Mrs. J. P. Callins. With Mrs. Kincaid on the brochure committee were R. Don Bowers, Cleveland, and R. E. Lawrence. Working on advertising were B. P. Andrews, Gene Galbraith, Wischamper and W. L. Kincaid. With McMinin on finance were Joe Casin, Clyde Jetton, W. Fry Fox and Mrs. Callins. Mrs. E. L. Gentry, Mrs. John Hughes and Mrs. Murray Evans headed the hospitality committee. Mrs. Alton Willingham, Mrs. Ed Dick Merchant and Mrs. Howard McCleshey had charge of decorations.