

Testimony received from Dr. Charles Gailey



Dover Street was known as one of the worst streets in the city of Boston. It was Boston's "skid row". The streets were strewn with rubbish; men urinated openly on the street; there was a liquor store on every block. Drunks lay on the sidewalk. There was a lot of hopelessness. ENC students caught a vision of starting a church right on skid row to communicate the love of Jesus. When ENC students raised money to buy the old three story building at 26 Dover Street to begin services, they found that the small "backyard" was filled with garbage to the height of six feet! I recall the stories of what a difficult, disagreeable job it was for the students to shovel and pitchfork all of that refuse out. I remember going up to the third floor bathroom, and finding that the floors were so rotted that I could see through the floor a clear view of the second floor bathroom. So much for privacy!!

Doris (Biggs) Gailey had begun picking up children for Sunday School at Boston Chapel, probably sometime during late 1954. She especially ministered to the Blakely family, who lived right on Dover Street. They sent six children to the Sunday School, the youngest one being Mikey. Mrs. Blakely was trying to get out of the slum, so she applied to a housing project in Jamaica Plain, and was accepted. She still continued to send the children to S.S. on Dover St., however, and Doris continued to pick them up. Sometime in 1956 or 57 I joined Doris in this endeavor. The first attached picture shows Doris with the six Blakely children. We then would continue on toward the Chapel, picking up more children (and more and more...) along the way; sometimes reaching 22 children in the back of my Ford station wagon! The second picture shows the crowd upon "emptying out" at 26 Dover Street. As best we can count, there were 20 or 21 children in back on this particular day in the spring of 1958 (note that two are still inside the car). Of course, this was in addition to Doris and me! Yes, it was crowded! The third picture shows the outside of the first floor of 26 Dover St., where the Chapel was located (Sunday School rooms were upstairs), next to Gene's Floorcovering...

The fourth pic shows faithful Pastor Nevin Crouse. I recall him standing outside the Chapel, on the corner of Dover and Village Streets, saying to me, "Chuck, I plan to stay here as pastor for as long as it takes..." Note especially the extensive services listed on the sign: Prayer Meeting, Wed. at 7:30pm; Boys and Girls Caravan, Saturday at 2pm; Sunday School, 2:30pm; Sunday evening service, 7:30pm. These students were workers! Some were working to put themselves through college, and yet came to Dover Street on Saturdays and Sundays to tell children and adults the Good News. Only in eternity may we know all of the results. Note also that the Pastor's phone number was actually the ENC switchboard.

When Doris and I both enrolled in graduate school in 1959, we moved to Boston and attended Boston Chapel every Sunday evening. Rev. Jim Tasker was pastor and our friend. One of our most pleasant memories is of the Harlow family. Bill and Jenny Harlow had ended up on skid row--they were very, very poor. Jenny had no teeth and desperately needed dentures, but they could not afford them. Bill could play the piano and I think played at every service, and we became friends. The thing that touched us the most was that, before our first child, Carol, was born in July, 1960, Bill and Jenny insisted on giving us a baby shower! We knew that they could not really afford it, so we tried to demur, but they really wanted to do it. We well recall going to their nearby apartment--the wallpaper was peeling off the walls, but Bill

had prepared delicious food and we had a great time. This story has a beautiful ending, because years later, when we came back from Africa in 1974, we went down to meet the cruise ship Mt. Washington at Alton Bay, NH. We were shocked to see Bill and Jenny and their children getting off the ship. What a joyous reunion we had, with hugs all around! They were as surprised as we were. I remember Bill stepping back and taking a picture of us with his Polaroid camera--and then getting into a big Ford Galaxie and driving away. They obviously had been emancipated from poverty! Later that summer, I saw Tom Hollett, who had pastored at the Chapel from 1962 to 65. He told me that Bill had moved to Maine where the Holletts were pastoring, and he said that Bill Harlow was a Trustee of his Church! What a great example of Wesleyan "lift"!

Another memory is of "Dallas". She was a troubled adolescent, and often very threatening. How the ENC students loved her and cared for her. I remember the time that several students wanted to give her a treat, so they took her for a picnic on the Boston Commons. Their reward was a kick in the shins! Hopefully the kindness shown to her birthed some good things later in her life. We remember Mrs. Diaz's faithfulness, and Katie Lashley.

It was an honor and a privilege to be associated with the ministry of Boston Chapel. It enriched our lives and was a very good experience of cross-cultural ministry prior to our years in Africa. We were blessed and helped by being there.

