

Princel Reformer - 18 OCT '61

W. M. Leonard, 90, Served as Carpenter, Missionary, Minister

MESSIAH CORNERS: William Mark Leonard will celebrate his 90th birthday Oct. 23 and in honor of the occasion his son, Wesley, will hold open house on Sunday, Oct. 22, from 1 to 5 p.m., at his home, R.R. 1, Port Rowan, on the Plank Road near Pitman's Corners.

Mr. Leonard was born at Donaghadee, near Belfast, Northern Ireland, and at the age of 13 worked in a bakery to support his widowed mother and younger brother and sister. Later, in Glasgow, he served apprenticeship as a ship's carpenter. As a youth, he heard the call of the church and, at the age of 19, became a "local preacher."

Journeying to South Africa, he followed the carpentry trade and was also active in male chorus and temperance work. He returned to Ireland, but went to Edmonton, Alta., in 1902, and brought out his mother, brother and sister. As a circuit rider preacher in the Fraser River Valley of British Columbia, he made a 200-mile trip about once a month. Returning to carpentry, he worked on building a hospital north of Edmonton in the Pakan - Wahstao - Kolakreeka area. Here he met Edith Annie Weeks, a high school teacher and WMS worker from Glencoe, Ont., whom he married Oct. 4, 1910.

The young couple were recommended for the West China mission field by the Women's Mission Society in Edmonton and, with their daughter and son, went there in 1912, serving throughout the 1914-18 war. Mr. Leonard acted as building superintendent for erection of the West China University,

which still stands as a memorial to him, although now in the hands of Communists. By the time of a furlough, their family had increased by two more daughters and a second son. They returned to the mission field in 1921 but Mr. Leonard was stricken with malaria and they were forced to return to Glencoe, Ont., in 1924.

After a year or so in Ontario, he left carpentering for good and devoted full time to the United Church ministry, serving from 1927 in Kelvin, Fairground, Lowbanks and Dunnville. Poor health forced his retirement and he moved to Delhi.

His eldest daughter, Mrs. W. E. Park (Catherine), died in Minneapolis in 1955 and his wife in Simcoe hospital in 1959. In 1960 Mr. Leonard went to live with his son, Wesley. His two remaining daughters are Mrs. E. P. Henderson (Evelyn) of Ottawa and Mrs. H. N. Cowan (Alice) of Islington; and his older son, Etherridge, at Aakbank, Man. There are 16 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.