

Ordained Preachers

The ordained preachers chosen in connection with the theme “**Where He Leads Me I Will Follow**” come from families with ministerial traditions covering several generations – coincidentally beginning in the Methodist Episcopal Church and finding their way into the Susquehanna Conference archives through the United Brethren Church. The two stories diverge, however, in that one of them starts with a family of preachers and ends on a less than positive note with a single individual, while the other begins with a single individual and ends with a family of significant and effective preachers.

Thomas B. Miller descended from two Methodist Episcopal grandfathers and a father who were effective preachers in the Philadelphia Conference. Following the perceived leading of God, Miller expanded his ministry in the Philadelphia Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to include the practice of medicine – which caused complications that led him to be removed from the denomination. Continuing to follow what he perceived to be God’s leading, Miller pastored Philadelphia area congregations in the United Brethren Church and the Independent Methodist Church, rising to the office of superintendent in the latter relationship. Unfortunately, however, issues regarding his practice of medicine eventually led to his removal from all ministerial duties – and ultimately to prison.

God led T.B. Miller to build churches – and despite his faults, that was a leading that he followed with success. As a noted Philadelphia architect, his son Thomas Francis Miller proved to be a church builder in a different sense and “designed the Westhope Presbyterian Church, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, banks in Bangor and Sunbury, the Willow Grove High School and other structures.”¹

John Wesley Kiracofe followed the lead of his noted namesake and the leading of God in spreading the Gospel – not necessarily from the pulpit, but as a faithful layperson who gave six sons to the ministry, six sons who lived out the theme “**Where He Leads Me I Will Follow**” through denominational splits, across geographical boundaries, and into challenging positions of ministry and responsibility.

As J.W. Kiracofe and his sons followed the leading of God through a variety of open doors, so did succeeding generations of the family.

¹ *New York Times*, 2/14/1939, page 24. Other references abound both on-line and in print.