

HISTORY and HERITAGE
of the
**WALDENSIAN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH**



Valdese, North Carolina

1893-1993







THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED YEARS
1893-1993



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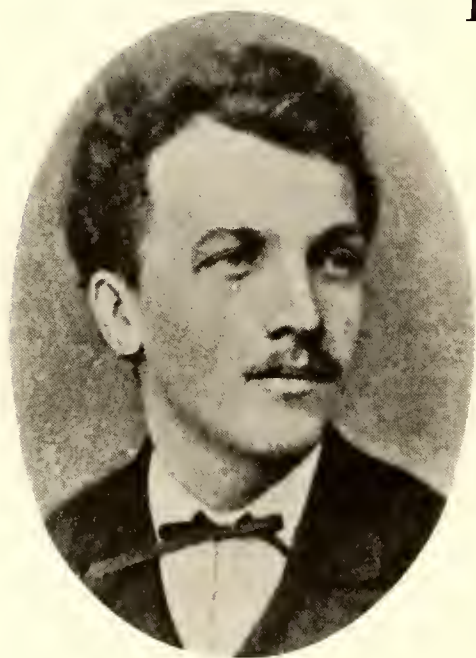
Tron Hall in his honor.

In 1920, Dr. Tron retired after holding pastorates in San Germano, Florence and Torre Pellice, Italy. In addition to his pastoral duties, he had been a leader in many of the activities of the Waldensian Church. He served as its delegate abroad on twenty-five occasions. He was for many years Vice-Moderator of the Venerable Table. For eight years, he was the Director of *L'Écho des Vallées*. He founded many schools and institutions. His greatest monument is the Old People's Home of San Germano, Italy, which he founded in 1894.

In 1930, in memory of their son Stanley (1883-1913), Dr. and Mrs. Tron gave a new wing of the hospital in Torre Pellice, which was dedicated in 1932.

Dr. Tron's last years were spent at the Home in San Germano, Italy, where he contributed his labors and interest in the work of the home until his death on June 18, 1934.

Pastor Enrico Vinay **1893-1894**



Pastor Vinay arrived in July 1893 to become the first regular pastor of the Waldensian colony. He was born in 1856 in the Waldensian Valleys. Vinay was a man of talent and leadership. The Waldensian Church of Italy sent him to Sicily on missionary work for a short time; then the Venerable Table decided to send him to North Carolina to assist the colonists.

Pastor Vinay remained in North Carolina for one year, and during that time, he assumed full responsi-

bility for supervising the clearing of fields and building of homes for the colonists. Many early settlers recalled the pastor, armed with a revolver to keep off wild animals and marauders, directing the labors of the immigrants as if they were a gang of contract laborers.

In October 1893, Pastor Vinay, in addition to his pastoral work and other activities, attended the meeting of the Synod of North Carolina of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and wrote a long article for the *Morganton Herald*. At the Synod meeting held in

Tarboro, he was introduced as a member of the Waldensian Synod, and he gave an address in French.

Pastor Vinay left Valdese for California in the spring of 1894. He was employed by the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America as missionary in the Italian Mission, San Francisco. For the church year 1894-1895, he served nine months there as stated supply and continued in this post until his death during the summer of 1896.

Pastor Barthélemy Soulier 1894-1900

Pastor Soulier was born on April 20, 1865, in Pramollo, Italy. He studied at the Waldensian Seminary and did post-graduate work in Edinburgh, Scotland. He and his bride Amélie Vinçon (1878-1947) arrived in Valdese in June 1894.

Pastor Soulier was a practical man of affairs and intensely in love with his mission. He served as a public secretary, interpreter and justice of the peace. During his years as pastor, he contributed his time and talents to developing the community and to disentangling the financial affairs of the colony. He and his wife taught the children and adults to speak English, and he made changes in the organization of the colony. Pastor Soulier led the colonists in building the church. When he left the colony in 1900, no debt remained on the church.

While in Valdese, Pastor and Mrs. Soulier had two sons to die in infancy. Both children were buried in the Waldensian Cemetery. These deaths and the impaired health of Mrs. Soulier caused the pastor to resign his pastorate and return to Italy on September 20, 1900.

On his return to Italy, he became pastor at Rio Marina, Island of Elba (1900-1901), Revere, Mantua (1901-1903), Massello (1903-1904), Villa Secca (1904-1916), and Villar Pellice (1916-1930). After retiring, he lived in Turin from 1930 to 1932 and then became director of Asilo Valdese per Vecchi (Home for the Aged) in San Germano Chisone from 1935 to 1942. He died in Turin

