



**BILL  
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*Staff  
Writer*

## Shepherd takes leave from flock

**T**he Rev. Clyde McCants, the minister of my home church in Winnsboro, preached his last sermon this past Sunday as the church's pastor.

He is officially retiring from the pulpit. And I did not want to let his leave-taking slip by without a few words of appreciation here.

An Anderson native, McCants is one of those older, second-career men who brought special gifts and talents to the ministry. He was always rich in perspective, marked by a few bruises that he occasionally alluded to from the pulpit.

The small congregation of Associate Reformed Presbyterians he served for five years truly loved his preaching — and his pastoring.

**Prays for flock.** A graduate of the Erskine College seminary in tiny Due West — (a seminary Columbia Police Chief Charles Austin now attends) — McCants prayed daily for his flock. That is to say, he prayed daily for each member.

Which is no small feat, considering all the sins — venal and otherwise — a predominantly Scotch-Irish congregation can acquire from week to week.

McCants' sermons were filled with rich, personal anecdotes, as well as quotes from Shakespeare and John Milton. McCants had been an English professor at Erskine College, his undergraduate alma mater.

With his considerable intellect, McCants also was able to articulate for the congregation meanings in the Holy Writ and help them discern the presence of God in their ordinary experiences.

I, for one, never heard him preach a bad sermon.

**Tickling the ivory.** Away from the pulpit, McCants is a Renaissance man.

He's an accomplished organist and pianist, an opera buff, a lover of (and walking textbook about) the circus, a world traveler, and last but not least, an authority on country music.

He loves to visit Nashville. And nothing gives him more pleasure than to be invited to sit down at a studio piano to tickle the keys.

Some weekends, McCants also played the piano at a local landmark eatery — The Tavern — located behind the historic town clock in Winnsboro.

His lush, romantic renderings would waft about the rustic room — a former newspaper print shop — where diners enjoyed their continental-style comestibles.

A voracious reader and library patron, McCants is also a former chairman of the Fairfield County Library Board. During the week, he's also a lunchroom "buddy" to a youngster at the local public school.

**Pastor and preacher.** The upside to his retirement is that he is retiring in Winnsboro — a town he's grown to love.

The community will gain a full-time civic leader, the ARP church, a golden voice for its choir.

Pastor. Preacher. A man who makes people feel important and loved. Clyde McCants has been all that and more.

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*Bill McDonald's column appears in The State every Thursday and Sunday. Call him at 771-8386 to tell him about interesting local people.*