

# Ex-state 8 4-15-85 legislator, 86, still waging campaign

By Diane Mundt  
Staff Writer

At age 86, John Livermore is campaigning again.

The former state representative from Fairmont, Minn., has bought an ad in the Fairmont Sentinel to publicize a proposal for the 87-year-old stone Christian Church of Fairmont, which is for sale.

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He offered \$100 to start a fund drive among local churches to turn the old church into a place where each local church would have a wall plaque, a photo and history of the church and information about church activities. Livermore, a Methodist, also sees the church as a place for churches to meet in a united effort to help young people.

He signed the ad, "Respectfully submitted as a suggestion by John Livermore."

That's a switch, because Livermore's earlier ads have not always been so respectful.

In 1971, for instance, he wanted the town to know his opinion in the Great Fairmont Slough Debate, a controversy over whether a marsh in the middle of town would be saved for a wildlife area or filled.

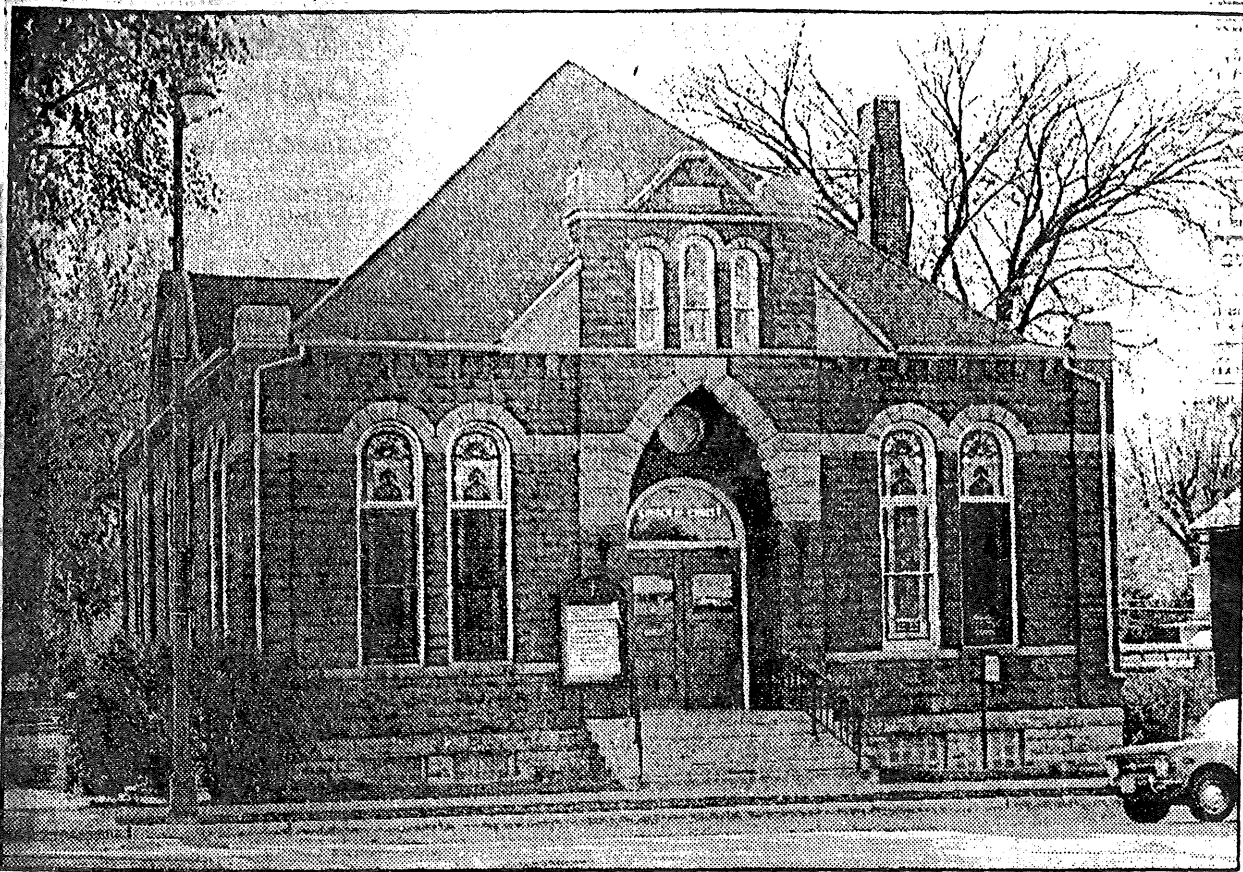
"Snakes Alive!" his ad read. "Now they are spending our tax dollars to tell us we need a stinking, mushy, smelly pollywog slough in Fairmont."

While in the Legislature in the 1950s Livermore promoted a plan for a statewide system of free community junior colleges. "I've had a lot to do with schools, not much with the city. They've been pretty good," he said.

The church is really a side issue with him, Livermore said. What he's really steamed about these days is a proposal to burn garbage in the Fairmont power plant, which he says would make Fairmont "a garbage city."

"The City Council wants to bring in garbage from four counties. It can't be unloaded without smelling. I know. I'm not going to see Fairmont go into a \$7 million garbage business."

Livermore, who said he still supervises a 160-acre farm, said he hasn't had much response to his church ad and he may have to find a few



**Former State Rep. John Livermore hopes to preserve the 87-year-old Christian Church of Fairmont, Minn.**

"spark plugs" — key people — in Fairmont to talk to about his plan. He said he would like to see the old church bought by the Martin County Historical Society, located across the street.

"I've talked to people from the church and of course they won't sell it for a liquor store, but my plan is better than having it turn into a secondhand store or something."

The Rev. Allen Burnham, the church's minister, said the 100-member congregation has outgrown the building and is planning a new church. Several people have expressed an interest in it, he said. One person is considering remodeling it for a house and another for a business, Burnham said.

The Historical Society has been considering an addition to its building and some people think the society

should buy the church and use it for extra space, he said.

The congregation is asking \$49,500 for the 45- by 65-foot church, which is built of red native Minnesota stone and has stained glass windows. Burnham said it was built in 1898 by Christian Scientists.

Marvin Zenk, president of the Martin County Historical Society, said the congregation approached the society about buying the old building, but the society has taken no action.

"We are very crowded and need space for larger objects such as farm machinery," Zenk said. "But right now it looks like the church would not be an appropriate building for that."

Zenk will probably be hearing from Livermore.