

Assemblies of God

HERITAGE™

The
Lasting Legacy
of
Lewis and May Wilson

Ministering to the Military WORLD WAR II



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HERITAGE™

VOL. 10, NO. 2 SUMMER 1990

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Cover: Volunteers at an unidentified California servicemen's center ministering to U.S. Navy men during World War II. Assemblies of God churches and ministers operated more than 40 centers across the country during the war. Inset, Max Adams, left, and John Sitton, right, of Houston's Evangelistic Temple, distributing literature at train station, 1941. Evangelistic Temple's "Gospel Light Brigade," made up of scores of volunteers, met every troop train passing through the city. (Max Adams is now 84 but still ministers as senior chaplain in Houston's Spring Branch Medical Center.)

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HERITAGE LETTER

By Wayne Warner

What do you know about faith homes? Shouldn't all Christian homes be "faith homes?"

Well, yes, but this is different. You'll read about *the* faith home ministry in a two-part article beginning in this issue. Written by Edith Blumhofer, a product of a faith home in Queens, New York, the article will take you back to the origins of the faith home concept; you'll see their impact on Pentecostals; and you'll recognize their continuing influence today.

My own first overnight experience in a faith home came in May when I was the weekend guest of Pastor Edwin Waldvogel, Dr. Blumhofer's father, in the faith home his Ridgewood Pentecostal Church operates.

Talk about a moving experience!

It was easy to let my thoughts go back to the people who had come to minister in this place or stay for a few days on their way to and from mission fields. Just for starters I thought about Anne Eberhardt, B. T. Bard, Elder Eugene Brooks, James Salter, Gottfried Bender, Lawrence Olson, George Finnern, Nicholas Betschl, Donald Gee, and Alice Reynolds Flower.

Wouldn't you like to somehow record all of those Bible studies and prayer meetings?

If you were around during World War II, you'll not want to miss the cover story on A/G ministry to military personnel. Even if you were not around during the 1940s, you'll want to read about these great evangelistic efforts through publications, the chaplaincy, service centers, and personal witnessing.

On page three is the story of Lewis and May Wilson, two ministers who thought they never accomplished much for the Kingdom. After you read about their legacy, we'll let you be the judge of that.

Our other major feature is Glenn Gohr's look at a Bible school that never graduated even one class. Yet Midwest Bible School left its mark throughout the Pentecostal Movement.

Again, may this issue of *Heritage* educate, entertain, inspire, and bring back a few old memories.

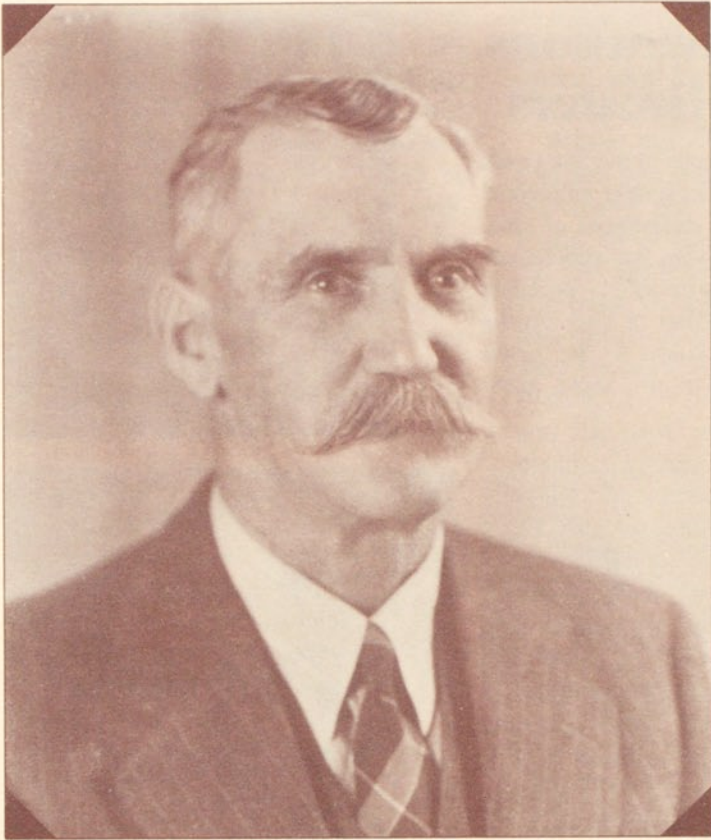
It has been my privilege to attend several District Councils this spring and meet many of our readers—some who have told me, "I am a charter subscriber to *Heritage*."

Maybe you're in this group. Then again, this might be your

Continued on page 24

These three former Alabama District superintendents are being interviewed during 75th District Council in April. From the left, J.C. Thames, Marvin L. Smith, and C.C. Hidle.





Four Generations of Ordained A/G Ministers

The Lasting Legacy of Lewis and May Wilson

By Ruben A. Wilson, Jr. and Everett A. Wilson

Baptism in the Holy Spirit in his own home soon after associating with a small group of Pentecostals in California's fertile San Joaquin Valley

Editor's Note. Heritage is indebted to Ruben A. Wilson, Jr., pastor of Westminster Assembly, Seattle, Washington, for suggesting the topic of this feature and writing the initial draft. Everett A. Wilson, academic dean at Bethany Bible College, Scott's Valley, California, and other members of the Wilson family have provided additional material and insights for the story of this remarkable legacy.

in the summer of 1923 was the climactic event of Lewis F. Wilson's spiritual life and a turning point in his career.¹ Lewis remained secluded for several days to savor the awesome sense of divine presence that enveloped him, avoiding conversation and, as he later told it, emitting stifled shouts and bursts of tongues to express his irrepressible delight.

Past fifty years of age and partially disabled by chronic rheumatism and a

series of accidents suffered throughout his adventurous early life, the dairy rancher basked in euphoria as long as possible before returning to the now flavorless routine of caring for his stock. Neither he nor his wife May, who received her baptism soon afterward, could have anticipated that they were on the threshold of the effective ministry that, despite their best efforts, had eluded them, much less that they would become the first of at least four

generations of ordained Assemblies of God ministers.

The Wilsons' exhilarating mid-life religious experience, however, was not their first. The word had gotten around quickly in the community of Yampa, Colorado, in 1901 that the prosperous young landowner who had married the headstrong schoolmarm had suddenly gotten religion! Lewis was known as a resolute, practical man, little given to sentiment and more reliant on his own "common sense" than on providence. On one occasion when he discovered May reading a New Testament, he playfully parodied the exuberant style of the frontier preachers of whom he had heard. The Testament quietly disappeared, but May, who had scarcely more religious upbringing than Lewis, would again raise the subject of their spiritual needs.²

If Lewis and May were well matched, both determined and proud, their backgrounds were different. The daughter of a college-educated civil engineer who had come west from New York State to seek his fortune, May was respectable, aspiring and responsible. Lewis's early life, in contrast, had followed a tortuous course that began in Carthage, Missouri, when his mother died when he was nine years of age. Burying deep in his feelings the memory of his mother's tenderness and his frightened promise by her death bed to meet her in heaven, he thereafter rarely spoke of either.

After working away from home for little more than meals and a place to sleep, Lewis determined at age 13 to join his older brothers in northwestern Colorado, 200 miles over rugged, scenic mountains from Denver. The ensuing years of unrelenting hard work and just getting by made him yearn for security and, as he put it, "something of his own." He learned to break horses and work cattle, and took jobs haying, hauling freight, and, briefly, herding sheep. The latter episode proved his rugged tenacity when, at the end of the seasonal cross-country drive, Lewis determined to walk the hundred miles to the railhead rather than give up most of his summer's pay for a seat in the wagon of a rancher making the trip. Scarcely 15, he and an older companion walked for 3 days and

Four Generations of A/G Ministers

Twenty-one descendants of the late Lewis F. and May Wilson have held ministerial credentials with the Assemblies of God. Including Lewis and May, four generations of Wilsons have been ordained—probably a first in the Assemblies of God. At the right are Ruben A., Ruben A., Jr., Lewis F., and William (in front), taken about 1956.



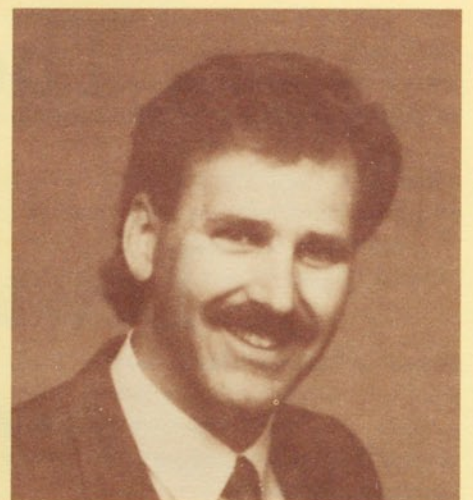
Lewis and May Wilson on their wedding day in 1897. Lewis was ordained in 1933 and May in 1936.



Ruben A. Wilson, Sr., ordained 1928



Ruben A. Wilson, Jr., ordained 1953



William E. Wilson, ordained 1975

nights across desolate country to catch a boxcar back to Denver.

A succession of jobs on cattle ranches ended when his horse stumbled and badly crushed Lewis's foot. Having previously sustained broken bones in similar mishaps, Lewis had plenty of time to reflect on the seriousness of his injury and the possibility of never fully recovering. After a year

on crutches, when he regained enough use of his foot to think of finding work, he started south and came upon the Cripple Creek district of central Colorado at the beginning of a mining boom that would eventually attract a settlement of 50,000 gold seekers. There Lewis met a relative who, in his 60s, needed a younger man to help him blast an assay hole in the granite

rock, for which he was willing to grant Lewis a share in the mine's stock. For the next year Lewis worked at drilling, blasting, and digging, all the while buying into other claims with money he earned hauling freight. When he tired of the hard, unrewarding work, Lewis left his mining interests in the care of a friend and turned to ranching. Lewis had had opportunity to get acquainted with the high plains country then still open to homesteading, and soon laid claim to 160 acres, which he began to stock with half-wild cattle and range horses.

Standing tall and self-confident, with clean-cut features, a firm gaze and laughing blue eyes, and sporting the customary handlebar mustache that identified him as a mature man, Lewis made a striking figure. Although sometimes rustic, quick-tempered and given to blunt language when he was "riled up," Lewis groomed his wavy hair and displayed a touch of vanity in the selection of his clothes. He was already becoming a favorite of the girls who attended the frequent community dances when May was pointed out to him by her brother. Lewis did not forget the petite girl with large brown eyes and curly hair, the daughter of Preston King, the civil engineer and local justice of the peace.

In the passing months the two had lengthy conversations, sometimes as they rode their favorite mounts on afternoon rides. The restrained, authoritative manner that May usually displayed broke down under Lewis's wit and good humor, as he recounted stories of the adventures he had experienced or heard of frontier life in the Rockies. If her reserve and intellectual interests were inappropriate for Lewis' rough, direct manner, his self-confidence, determination and courtesy reassured her that he was not just another cowboy. Although May had planned to join her older brother at college in Fort Collins in January 1897, she announced at Thanksgiving that she would be teaching her pupils at Yampa through the spring semester. The two were engaged by Christmas and were married in September 1897. Lewis, a strapping man of almost twenty-five, took his bride of not yet

21 home to a new log cabin with hand-planed floors on the ranch that he had named after the Cripple Creek mine, "Poverty Gulch."

While the ranch, with abundant pastures and water, held prospects for providing the family with a good living, the Wilson's future was ensured by the news that his mining stock, contested for some time in the courts, had increased in value to bring \$3,600 after attorneys' fees and commissions. Elated, Lewis bought more range stock and the next year, when a neighbor decided to retire and return to Missouri, he accepted Lewis' offer of \$3,500 for another 160 acres, complete with a well-constructed house, barns, sheds, and fencing.

Overjoyed with their good fortune, Lewis and May, with their young daughter Hazel, settled into life with enthusiasm. As the months passed they acquired some of the local symbols of material success, including matched sorrel colts that would make a handsome driving team. Lewis also traded \$1,000 worth of cattle to the horse trader Jim Norvell for an ebony Percheron stallion. Surveying his well-watered acreage, his fattening cattle and sleek horses, Lewis had finally gotten everything he had hoped for.

Lewis's contentment was short-lived, however. Tragedy struck the community when in two separate incidents within a period of 2 weeks a boy whom May had taught at school and their neighbor on the next ranch who was haying were killed by lightning. Stunned, the settlement that had had little previous success at even organizing a Sunday School invited a cowboy evangelist, Lewis's friend Jim Norvell, to conduct meetings. May pled with Lewis to take her into town for the revival services. At the close of the first night's message, when May listened to Lewis negotiate with God at the makeshift altar, she knew something profound had taken place in her husband. Lewis later explained his spiritual struggle:

All of my life I'd traded and worked and saved, trying to get something of my own. I had all kinds of set-backs—broken bones and two blank spots in my memory when I might as well have been dead. I finally got land and cattle and horses, but the longer I lived, the more I saw that the things of this world did

not satisfy. God spared me to find what I was looking for. At last I found it—something that would endure for time and eternity. I found true riches.

May knew that he meant business when she overheard him utter, "Lord, I'll give up everything I've got. If you want them, I'll give up my sorrel colts!"

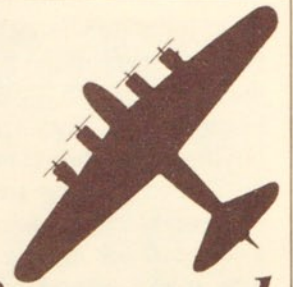
May was supportive of Lewis as he began to seek some means of making good on his promise to serve God. As a church sprang from the several score converts of the revival, Lewis met a minister connected with the training school recently opened by the evangelist Dwight L. Moody. Within a few months Lewis and May had sold their stock and leased their properties and in 1902 arrived at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. If events would prove that Lewis, with scarcely any formal education, was poorly prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that the Institute provided, the Wilsons' willingness to prepare for Christian service was amply rewarded with new perspectives.

Moody Bible Institute in 1902 was in transition. At Moody's death in 1899 leadership had passed to Reuben Archer Torrey, who replaced the founder's less formal approach to lay ministry training with a structured curriculum and a resident faculty. A Yale-educated scholar who had pursued the current theological trends in the United States as well as in several European universities before emerging as a champion of the historic Protestant faith, it was said of Torrey that he could "kneel beside a drunk in a mission or explain the gospel at an elegant dinner table." Students would typically spend the morning in Bible study and then engage in some practical ministry during the afternoons or evenings. Classes ran Tuesday through Saturday, with five Christian ministry "appointments," such as rescue mission services, open-air meetings, hospital and jail services, each week.³

The Chicago experience for Lewis was overwhelming. Scarcely literate, he would listen dutifully to the instructors and then take the written notes loaned to him by friends home to May, who would then study the lessons and tutor him. Complex life in the city

Continued on page 17

The Assemblies of God and World War II



An Exemplary Outreach to Military Personnel

Part I

A growing darkness covered the earth 50 years ago this summer. It seems that people in the world were either dodging bombs or preparing to go to war. Stories of death, dying, and fear appeared on every front page and could be heard on nightly radio news broadcasts.

By 1940 Adolph Hitler had overrun parts of Europe. Benito Mussolini flexed his muscles against helpless Ethiopia and other smaller nations. In the Far East Japan's expansion agenda threatened to throw that part of the world into war. Somehow in that pivotal 1940 the United States had managed to remain neutral, but wheels were beginning to turn, preparing the country in the event war came. President Franklin D. Roosevelt called for the building of 50,000 military planes a year. And in October the Selective Service Training and Service Act went into effect.

During this dark period prior to the United States' entry into armed conflict, Assemblies of God leaders became concerned about ministry to the men and women who would be serving in the military.

The concern prompted official action at the 19th General Council held in Minneapolis, September 5-11, 1941—only 3 months before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

General Superintendent Ernest S. Williams spoke of the tragic wars around the globe and then called for

spiritual readiness. "The world passed through a serious crisis during the first World War," he reminded ministers and delegates. "Now the world faces a crisis which gives promise of becoming more severe...God has placed us in the midst of this hour. We have a place to fill."¹

The needs of military personnel was one of the segments of society Fred Vogler singled out in his message to the Council. Much drunkenness among the soldiers tore at Vogler's heart. "My friends," he pleaded, "we must reach these boys in every way possible by God's grace."²

Others added their voices in challenging the movement to evangelize military personnel. Raymond T. Richey, who had ministered to military personnel during World War I, urged the delegates to become involved. "Surely we should take this burden upon our hearts," he said, "praying and giving that hundreds of thousands of soldiers may be brought to Christ."³

Another strong advocate of ministry to the military, Zelma Argue, encouraged the Council to get involved. She and her father A. H. Argue had seen the mission field in the military and were ministering in the vicinity of training camps.

This 1941 Council, with its timely theme, "Our Place in the Present World Crisis," resolved that it was essential for the movement to "maintain spiritual watchcare over our boys (and girls) in the armed service and to evangelize the unsaved."⁴

The motion was adopted with provision that the Home Missions Department, directed at the time by Vogler, should take the responsibility of devising a plan to carry out the ministry.

It was the start of a ministry to military personnel that would have a tremendous spiritual harvest and bring

the Assemblies of God much recognition and appreciation all the way from U.S. bases to faraway battlefields and ships at sea.

Ministry to the military sponsored and encouraged by the Home Missions Department would eventually include the Headquarters operation, publications, local churches ministering to nearby military base personnel, service centers near military bases, and personal evangelism within the military branches—one-on-one evangelism.

This two-part article will examine each of these areas of ministry.

As a result of the 1941 General Council decision, the Assemblies of God was expanding its ministry to military personnel by the time the United States entered the war on December 7, 1941.

Anyone close to the many efforts around the world could see that the spiritual welfare of military personnel became the number one priority of the ministry. And the results of the ministry are perhaps no less exemplary than any other evangelistic outreach sponsored by the denomination. Even today, nearly 50 years later, ministry to the military has a high priority through the chaplaincy.

With the headquarters staff leading the way, every district became involved in ministry to the military. Thousands of military personnel found Christ as personal Savior. Many of these later returned and joined Assemblies of God congregations; others entered Bible colleges and prepared for the ministry—some even returned as missionaries to countries where they had served with the armed forces.

Perhaps the most important tools used in reaching military personnel were *Reveille*, a small nondenomina-

Compiled from unpublished papers in the Assemblies of God Archives: "Saints Aglow: Fourth Decade, Twentieth Century," by Ruby M. Enyart, and "The History of the Organizational Development and Ministry to the Military," by Leon G. Kircher, Jr.



World War I veteran Myer Pearlman, an honored faculty member at Central Bible Institute in 1941, became the editor of *Reveille* and served until 1943, the year of his death.

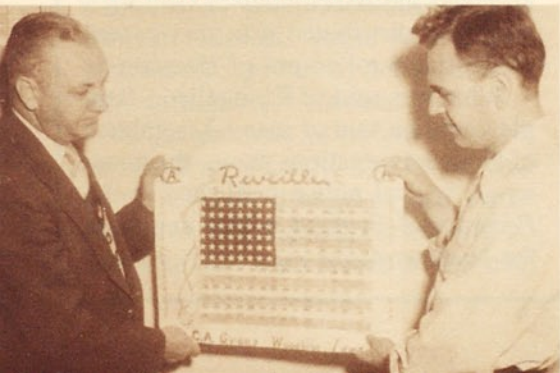


Headquarters staff stuffing envelopes for military ministry during World War II. More than 14 million copies of *Reveille* were distributed during the war.



Youth from Houston's Evangelistic Temple ("The Gospel Light Brigade") meeting a troop train during the war. Every man and woman in uniform was offered the packet of tracts and *Reveille* at left. The church also ministered to nearby bases.

Assistant General Superintendent Bert Webb and Ernest F. Kalapathy display a *Reveille* coin card from the Woodbine (Iowa) Christ's Ambassadors.



A typical service center, this one in downtown Springfield, Missouri. More than 40 were operated by Assemblies of God churches and ministers during the war.



tional periodical, and a series of colorful tracts.

Reveille, with World War I veteran Myer Pearlman as editor and Charles Ramsey as illustrator, became an instant hit with military personnel and the U.S. government. It was said that *Reveille* was so well received by the government that it became the only nongovernmental religious publication to be given free postage to any war zone in World War II.

In its 52-month ministry during the war years, 15 issues were published, averaging nearly a million copies each.⁵

Hundreds of chaplains of other denominations, recognizing that *Reveille* was meeting a need, were eager to have the periodical for distribution. And Assemblies of God churches used it for an evangelistic tool. One chaplain wrote: "This publication is the most charmingly alive religious effort I have ever seen." One copy reportedly was read by 1,000 men and women in uniform.

Not all copies of *Reveille* reached desired destinations, though it may be supposed that most of them did. Gerald Wilson, who is now a supervisor in the mailing department at the Assemblies of God headquarters, tells of one case in point.

While on his way to the 8th Army Headquarters in Yokohama, Japan, after the war, Wilson saw *Revelles* scattered on the street outside the Army post office. Evidently a bundle of the periodical accidentally had lost its binding. "I knew instantly what it was floating about," Wilson said. "I knew by the coloring that it was *Reveille*."⁶

Raymond T. Richey often said that during his ministry in World War I that there were always converts in his services to military personnel. He knew that a tremendous need existed among the military even before America became involved in World War II.

"We saw things shaping up for another World War, and I took a trip across the country," he said, "and got 120,000 people to promise they would pray at least 30 minutes a day...If the people will pray, God will do something." Not only that, but Richey asked people to sign a petition for a national



The army and navy getting together around the snack bar at the Tacoma, Washington, service center.

Day of Prayer.⁷

In 1940 a national Day of Prayer was proclaimed, indicating that early on Christians had begun praying for the nation's uniformed people.

When the war broke out, Richey felt the Lord had made it clear to him that he again was to minister to military personnel near training bases. Through the generosity of concerned people across the nation he was able to buy a large patriotic red, white, and blue tent—80'x150'.

The tent went up first near Camp Blanding, Florida, resulting in 1,612 military men and women kneeling at the altar to accept Christ as Savior. In the months that followed, the tent was pitched near scores of training centers where thousands were saved.

John Sitton is another example of an individual ministering to military personnel during World War II.

During World War I, while Sitton lay "gassed" in a military hospital in France, he promised the Lord he would yield his life fully and make Christ known if he were healed. Upon returning to the United States, Sitton was decorated with a Purple Heart. He attended Central Bible Institute (now College), Springfield, Missouri. During the 1940s this veteran and his wife were engaged in a successful military hospital ministry—gaining entrance to any hospital because of the Purple Heart he wore.

From dozens of battlefronts, wounded men were transported to

military hospitals here in the States for treatment and convalescence. In one rally the Sittons were instrumental in leading 400 men to the Savior. As this dedicated husband-wife team went from ward to ward, it was not unusual for 40 or 50 men to be saved in a day. The Sittons trained youth in nearby churches to distribute literature and minister to the spiritual needs of the wounded.⁸

Evangelistic Temple in Houston sponsored a very active youth group called the Gospel Light Brigade. Joseph L. Gerhart, son of the church's pastor and nephew of Raymond T. Richey, led the Brigade in an ambitious ministry to military personnel.

During a 10-month period in 1942 a Brigade report shows that 300,000 pieces of gospel literature—New Testaments, Gospels, *Revelles*, and tracts—were distributed.⁹ Another report, covering a shorter period, revealed that 12,000 servicemen were contacted at the Houston train depot.

A train porter, Alexander Harding, volunteered to help the Brigade in dissemination of literature. Although Harding was a Baptist, he gladly accepted the Assemblies of God literature and distributed it to servicemen as the trains rolled out of Houston.¹⁰

What was said of Evangelistic Temple could be said of many Assemblies of God congregations across the country. A typical notice published in the *Pentecostal Evangel* is this one from the Northwest:



Gospel Publishing House foreman J. Otis Harrell, second from left, and Harry Jaeger, director of the A/G Servicemen's Department, with a shipment of *Reveille* magazines headed for training bases and war zones around the world. The crates are labeled, "Essential Government Shipment. PLEASE RUSH," and were shipped at government expense. Above, a typical *Reveille* cartoon by Charles Ramsay.



"Frank Gray, Superintendent of the Northwest District Council, sends us notice of a mission for servicemen which has been opened at 1316 Pacific Ave., Tacoma, Washington, under the leadership of Brother and Sister Levi Larson. Those having relatives and friends stationed at Fort Lewis, McChord Field, Camp Murry, or other military posts near Tacoma, may write Brother Larson either at the Evangelistic Center or at his home."¹¹

Assemblies of God congregations frequently were urged to minister to servicemen: "Let us make every Assemblies of God church a real home church to servicemen," one publication reminded its readers. As a result, many servicemen were saved and nurtured spiritually; and they found a warm welcome and a home-cooked meal in the homes of church members.

A woman who had been an invalid for 10 years also shared in the joy of witnessing. Violet Tallentire of New Smyrna, Florida, wrote to the *Pentecostal Evangel* about her method of ministering to servicemen.

"I am not able to be out in active service for my Lord," she wrote, "but on the days my strength permits me to be out of bed, I get in our car and go down to the main street of the city.

While my sister...goes into the stores to shop, I beckon to the Coast Guard men as they pass by and give them a *Reveille* and a tract."¹²

Howard Bush, who became Peninsular Florida superintendent in 1942 and would become an assistant general superintendent in 1960, often was seen passing out literature to military men and women.¹³

The desire to see men saved before heading into battle zones prompted personal witnessing everywhere. Harry Jaeger, director of the Servicemen's Department, told about eating in a restaurant when some soldiers walked in. "We engaged them in conversation," he wrote for *Christ's Ambassadors Herald*, "and pointed them to Christ, and four of them were saved right in that restaurant. Within 24 hours one of these boys was on board ship bound for the war zones in the Far East."¹⁴

And in the heart of Jaeger and many others ministering among servicemen, "He was saved in the nick of time."

TO BE CONTINUED

Notes

1. E. S. Williams, "The Work Whereunto I have Appointed Them," *The Pentecostal Evangel* (September 20, 1941), 1.
2. Fred Vogler, "Home Missions in the Light

of the Present World Crisis," *The Pentecostal Evangel* (October 4, 1941), 3.

3. "The Diary of a Delegate," *The Pentecostal Evangel* (September 27, 1941), 8.

4. General Council Minutes (1941), 63.

5. Myer Pearlman edited the first eight issues of *Reveille*. After his death in 1943, other writers and editors continued the publication.

6. Personal memorandum from Gerald Wilson.

7. Raymond T. Richey, "Evangelizing at Our Army Camps," *The Pentecostal Evangel* (January 10, 1942), 3.

8. Harry A. Jaeger, "Modern Miracles," *The Pentecostal Evangel* (January 22, 1944), 8.

9. "Gospel Light Brigade of Houston," *Christ's Ambassadors Herald* (January 1943), 12. Joseph L. Gerhart entered the army during World War II as a chaplain. Later he served as superintendent of the Northern California-Nevada District of the Assemblies of God.

10. "Distributing *Reveilles*," *The Pentecostal Evangel* (August 22, 1942), 5.

11. "Service Center at Tacoma, Washington," *The Pentecostal Evangel* (December 4, 1943), 9.

12. "Servicing the Service Men," *The Pentecostal Evangel* (December 12, 1942), 7.

13. *Ibid.*, 6.

14. Harry Jaeger, "Winning Soldiers for Christ," *Christ's Ambassadors Herald* (March 1942), 12. ♦

Editor's Note. Did the Assemblies of God Servicemen's Department minister to you during World War II? If you or someone you know were saved as a result of this ministry, please write to Heritage at 1445 Boonville, Springfield. If you have copies of tracts or other material produced by the Servicemen's Department, please write with a list of materials you are willing to donate to the Archives.

By Edith L. Blumhofer

My earliest memories are of a faith home. The words "faith home" never seemed strange to me, for they described the place I lived—a large house in a residential neighborhood in Queens, New York, owned by the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church. Our family shared the premises with an array of Christian workers who served the Ridgewood Pentecostal Fellowship and were known to us children as "aunts," "uncles," "brothers" and "sisters." There were usually between 12 and 14 of us at meals, and our numbers were frequently swelled by the arrival of visiting missionaries and ministers from around the world.

When I was six, my family moved to a home of our own, but our lives continued to revolve around the faith home. When I went home from school for lunch, it was to the faith home; when we had a school holiday, we attended morning worship (conducted daily from 9-11) at the faith home; and our extended family in the faith home was an important part of every birthday, graduation and holiday celebration.

The concept of a "faith home," I soon discovered, was unfamiliar to my school friends, teachers, and virtually everyone in my life who was not part of our fellowship. I fumbled for ways to explain life in this ever-changing extended family. The life was different from what my peers knew, but it was enriching in many ways—a life that I am grateful to have experienced.

As I grew older and learned more about faith homes, I realized that they were once fairly common in the religious subculture with which Pentecostals identified. It seems now that I always knew about several—four in Zion City, Illinois; one—long gone—in Rochester, New York; one near Oakland, California. These were highly regarded in our circles in part because of the indomitable men and women who made them centers of spiritual vitality: Eugene and Sara Brooks, Martha Wing Robinson, Susan Duncan, Elizabeth Baker, and Carrie Judd Montgomery.

In the first decades of American Pentecostal history, faith homes were frequently hubs which provided hospitality to itinerant workers and training for would-be ministers, offered a regular schedule of



The Duncan sisters operated this faith home in Rochester, New York. From the left, Hattie Duncan, Susan A. Duncan, and Elizabeth Duncan Baker. A fourth sister, Nellie Duncan Fell, is not pictured.



Life on Faith Lines

Faith Homes and Early Pentecostal Values

"In the first decades of American Pentecostal history, faith homes were frequently hubs which provided hospitality to itinerant workers and training for would-be ministers, offered a regular schedule of services, and sometimes commissioned missionaries and published tracts and other religious literature."

services, and sometimes commissioned missionaries and published tracts and other religious literature.

As the term "faith" implies, residents of faith homes lived lives of simple trust in God for their temporal needs. The homes had no guaranteed income, no endowments, nor did they charge for hospitality. Strictly speaking, of course, countless Pentecostal ministers' homes were "faith homes." But by the time Pentecostalism emerged, the term also had a more public aspect, describing facilities in which groups of Christian workers under the supervision of acknowledged leaders lived and ministered.

Faith homes, then, predate Pentecostalism. Late in the 19th century, several were operated in various parts of the country by those who taught divine healing. John Alexander Dowie, for one, opened several healing homes in Chicago in the 1890s. He welcomed those who desired prayer for physical needs, providing communal meals, regular Bible study sessions, and prayer services. It is not surprising that four early Pentecostal faith homes later were located in Zion, Illinois, the utopia Dowie founded. Run by several of his former associates who had forsaken Dowie's Christian Catholic Apostolic Church for Pentecostalism, they perpetuated a model Dowie had found useful.

A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, supervised a similar facility in New York. Charles Parham (the self-proclaimed "progenitor" of American Pentecostalism after 1901) operated a healing and rest home in Topeka from 1898 to 1900. Frank Sandford carried the concept further in his grandiose



Dr. Edith Blumhofer is the project director of the Institute for the Study of Evangelicalism and assistant professor of history at Wheaton College. She is the author of the new two-volume history Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism and Pentecost in My Soul.



Hans R. Waldvogel, founder of this faith home and the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church in Queens, New York, is shown with his sister Rose. Author of this article, Edith Waldvogel Blumhofer, was reared here. Courtesy of Edwin Waldvogel.

attempt to construct a hub for God's Kingdom in his community at Shiloh, Maine. Most faith homes were far more modest in both pretensions and expectations. Pentecostals appropriated the faith home model because it aptly suited their sense of appropriate lifestyle and it facilitated their passion for spiritual renewal.

Faith homes mirrored several basic features of early Pentecostalism. First, early Pentecostals, fiercely committed to restoring New Testament practice, often eschewed formal training for ministry and opted instead for congregational polity and "hands on" training of aspiring workers under the oversight of experienced ministers. Faith homes were independently operated (sometimes owned by congregations; sometimes spawning them) and thus nurtured the highly coveted "freedom in the Spirit" that early Pentecostals believed would be "quenched" by organizing themselves into denominations. Faith homes offered the opportunity for training under more experienced men and women; for frequent sessions of prayer, worship and study; and for accountability in daily living. Since they brought together a relatively small number of people, their structures and schedules were flexible and adaptable, allowing participants to adjust their lives to—as one early Pentecostal put it—"the Holy Ghost's latest." In short, theoretically, at least, they did not "quench" the Spirit.

Second, the early Pentecostal emphasis on "faith" often included the insistence that the "highest" Christian life was one

of utter dependence on God for spiritual, physical, and temporal needs. Those who sensed a "call" to ministry frequently embarked on lives of financial uncertainty. Ministers received no salaries or benefits; missionaries were assured no support; itinerant workers did not know where they would sleep or what they might find to eat. To be sure, this lifestyle was not exclusively Pentecostal. Faith missions and ministries had begun to proliferate in the United States several decades before

Many Pentecostals identified with faith homes in places like Zion, Illinois; Rochester, New York; and Oakland, California.

the Pentecostal movement emerged. Many Americans revered George Mueller, the well-known Plymouth Brother whose faith orphanages in Bristol, England, generated a steady supply of stories of miraculous provision of food and fuel. In this milieu, for Pentecostals as for other evangelicals, faith homes served at least two purposes: they were testimonies to God's provision of life's basic necessities in response to prayer; and they were schools of faith for people who anticipated the uncertainties of independent Pentecostal ministries around the world.

Third, faith homes offered hospitality. Itinerant workers, missionaries, and visitors from abroad were assured accommodations, food, and spiritual nurture in the

friendly environs of such homes. In an era when church budgets were at best minimal and freewill offerings were uncertain, faith homes filled a vital function. The opportunity for rest and spiritual refreshing among likeminded people that the daily morning worship times and frequent evening prayers provided made a visit to a faith home the closest experience to a vacation that some early Pentecostal workers could anticipate. In their world, spiritual realities were at least as vivid as the sensual world; carnality posed an ominous threat. A week at a faith home—offering inspiration and renewal—was far more attractive than a traditional vacation, for it tendered spiritual succor as well as physical rest.

Fourth, while their place in traditional pulpits was hotly debated in evangelical circles, women found in faith homes extensive opportunities to exercise their gifts. Several faith homes were founded by women—sometimes by women who themselves opposed the ordination of women to traditional ministry. Faith homes, then, had both spiritual and social significance. If primarily they were structures through which individuals expressed their commitment to the Pentecostal version of the restoration message, they also filled vital social and educational functions. Training included learning to live in the community harmoniously.

For Pentecostals, faith homes were alternatives to Bible institutes, biblically modeled “schools of the prophets.” Sometimes they were places of refuge as well where Pentecostals whose families or peers rejected them found new faith families that provided emotional support and encouragement. They offered structure and training to faith workers whose lives—dedicated to responding to “leadings” of the Holy Spirit—would otherwise have lacked accountability. Faith homes were communities of likeminded people, and within the community, they imposed a degree of order on everyday living. They differed in emphasis and outreach from place to place, taking on characteristics of their leaders.

Usually, over time, they spawned networks of men and women who had shared periods of training or ministry under their auspices. Some had primarily local significance. Others influenced large segments of American Pentecostalism. Most were independent of denominational affiliation. Many spawned, a variety of ministries.

Together they illumine a chapter in the Pentecostal past that offers instructive insights into early Pentecostal identity. Forsaking this-worldly aspirations, men and women embraced the faith life: faith homes facilitated that step, combining the talents of various people to forge influential centers of Pentecostal teaching and piety.

Several faith homes influenced significant numbers of people who identified with the Assemblies of God. Some—like that run by “Mother” Mary Moise in St. Louis—lack written records, and their stories have been virtually lost. Others have recoverable pasts that help illumine the world of early Pentecostalism. Three of these are the Elim Faith Home in Rochester, New York; the Zion Faith Homes in Zion, Illinois; and The Home of Peace near Oakland, California. Each demonstrates the roles charismatic people played in organizing faith homes; the relationship between faith homes and perceptions of the New Testament model; the roles of women in faith home ministries; and the social, educational, and religious contributions faith homes made to early Pentecostalism.

Elim Faith Home Rochester, New York

On April 1, 1895, Elizabeth Baker and her four sisters (all of whom had enthusiastically identified with “higher life” spirituality) opened a rented house in Rochester, New York, as a faith home. Daughters of a retired Methodist minister, James Duncan, the sisters had conducted house meetings during the early 1890s. The oldest, Elizabeth Baker, had moved to Chicago where she had become involved in extra-denominational higher Christian life gatherings. In January 1895, she felt impressed to return to Rochester, where, with her sisters, she rented a mission on Main Street and began conducting nightly evangelistic services. The mission was a faith venture, opened when Baker became convinced that God had instructed her to “open a nightly mission...and trust Me for the finances.”¹ The mission became the first of a series of faith enterprises, each the result of the sisters’ conviction that God had called them to expand their work.

The Elim Faith Home was their second faith venture. Baker’s sister, Hattie Dun-

can, described its origin and purpose: “Soon the Spirit began to press us to open a Home where those seeking healing of body could come and learn the way to trust, and be surrounded with an atmosphere of faith, where tired missionaries and Christian workers could for a time find rest for soul and body.”² The sisters’ perception of the home and its function is summarized in a poem Hattie Duncan quoted:

*This rest-home by the way,
I need not call it ‘home,’
’Tis but Thy guest-house, night and day,
Where pilgrims go and come.*

*For it is Thine, not mine,
And therefore is no care.
Yet I must do my best with Thine
To make it bright and fair.*

*To make it bright and sweet
For Thee and Thine always,
A resting-place for weary feet,
To speed them on Thy way.³*

While in theory the home was not “a care,” in practice the sisters struggled to make ends meet. Six months of prayer and periodic fasting failed to yield rent money. Prolonged self-questioning issued in the conviction that they had so desperately wanted to honor God that they had tried “to **make** God keep His Word, and work on lines already fixed in our mind, called faith, thus putting Him in a wrong light altogether.”⁴ God, they decided, wanted them rather not to “pray so hard, or think so hard, or tug so hard at trusting. Just let [Him] have it all.”⁵

Like others intrigued by faith living during the 1890s, the sisters reinterpreted difficulties as tests of faith. Every detail had spiritual significance as they participated in the cosmic struggle of God with Satan. Assured that “trials” yielded “conquests,” they resolved to press on in spite of embarrassing shortages of fuel and insufficient funds. Within a year, the tide had turned, and they soon acquired their own property with adequate buildings for the home, a school, and a small publishing operation. They moved the Elim Faith Home into these quarters in 1898.

By then they had learned much about faith home life, with its lack of privacy and emphasis on serving others. After opening the home, the resident members of the Duncan family never again ate a family meal; using a term familiar to early

Continued on page 22

The Midwest Bible School Remembered on Its 70th Anniversary

By Glenn Gohr

Anticipation ran high in 1920 when groundwork was laid for the establishment of the first General Council operated Bible school at Auburn, Nebraska. That was 70 years ago. The Assemblies of God fellowship was 6 years old at that time and well on its way toward impacting the world for Christ.

Many of the founding fathers were anxious to see this school started since education was one of the five purposes for organizing the Assemblies of God in 1914. When "the call" had been issued for meeting at Hot Springs, it was announced: "We may also have a proposition to lay before the body for a general Bible Training School with a literary department for our people."¹

A school was not established in 1914, but two already existing schools were promoted there—T. K. Leonard's Gospel School and R. B. Chisolm's Neshoba Holiness School in Mississippi. Other independent or church sponsored schools were in operation between 1914 and 1920, but there was no General Council school.

By the providence of God, the first General Council school became a reality in 1920. A few years earlier, a Methodist minister in the little Midwest town of Auburn, Nebraska, had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. He decided to become affiliated with the Assemblies of God in 1919. This man, George W. Hawley, had been ordained by the Methodist Church in 1887 and had been a pastor



President S. A. Jamieson, center, and students and faculty at Midwest Bible School, 1920-21.

for over 30 years. Now, at age 67, he could have easily retired from the ministry, but instead he decided to launch out on one of the biggest ventures of his life!

Having a seminary education himself, Hawley felt a need to promote Bible education in the Assemblies of God. Almost immediately after he

Although operating only a year in a converted hotel in Auburn, Nebraska, you'll probably recognize names of some students and their descendants.

received credentials with the A/G in September 1919, he was able to secure the Avenue Hotel in downtown Auburn. This seemed to be a suitable building for a Bible school, so he contacted the officials in Springfield.

After a season of prayer, the officials agreed to Hawley's offer to convert the building into a Bible school. Plans were made to purchase it from Hawley for \$5,000, the amount he had originally paid for it. The Avenue was a 3-story brick building, 70 x 80 feet in dimensions, with a basement, and was constructed in 1903 at a cost of

\$20,000.² It contained 57 rooms with steam heat and electricity and was likely worth at least \$10,000 in 1919 when Hawley purchased it and offered it to the Assemblies of God.

By November 1919, a board of directors had been established and an announcement was made in the *Evangel* concerning the opening of what was called the Midwest Bible School to begin January 1, 1920.³ Twice during the winter of 1919-20 plans were made to open the school, but the official opening did not come until much later.

The temporary board of directors in 1919 was composed of representatives from Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa, and Kansas. By January this board consisted of: J. C. Rediger, Milford, Nebraska, chairman; George W. Hawley, Auburn, Nebraska, treasurer; E. N. Bell, Springfield, Missouri, secretary; John Goben, Lucas, Iowa; J. Kelly Campbell, Mt. Ayr, Iowa; Howard D. Stanley, Topeka, Kansas; J. W. Welch, Springfield, Missouri; John Holman of Nebraska; and J. E. Shaw of Kansas.⁴

Because of a cracked furnace in the school building and a strike which prevented buying coal, the school first



Glenn Gohr is a staff member of the A/G Archives.

had to postpone its opening until March.⁵ The trustees and board of directors agreed to hold a convention at the school from February 13-22 to earnestly seek God in behalf of the school and for personal needs. The last week of February was set aside as an adjustment time for new students arriving at the school.⁶ S. A. Jamieson, Oklahoma District Chairman, and pastor of the famed "Fifth and Peoria" Assembly of God at Tulsa, Oklahoma, had been secured as principal, and plans were in order for the spring opening of the school.

But then another unforeseen circumstance came along.

In early February a flu epidemic spread through southeast Nebraska and closed in on the town of Auburn. The mayor of the city declared all churches and schools closed because of the epidemic and requested the convention be delayed.⁷

Final plans for the upcoming semester were to be discussed at the convention, so it was impossible to proceed with the March opening date. Once again, the school opening had to be postponed.

It seems that the earlier scheduled openings for the school were not in God's time plan. With the extra months of preparation and time to raise funds for the school property, repairs, etc., the school was able to launch out on better footing for the coming year of study.

After urgent appeals to readers of the *Evangel* and district officials in the



Midwest Bible School faculty, front row, from left, Eva Groomes, S. A. Jamieson, Mrs. Jamieson, and Mrs. Dront; back row, Louise Albach, Eugene McCleary, Mrs. McCleary, and Johanna Zou.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NINA RENICK, ADELE CARMICHAEL, MALINDA SHOTTS, NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Midwestern States, the \$5,000 needed to purchase the building was raised. The Assemblies of God purchased the Avenue Hotel from George W. Hawley on April 12, 1920.⁸

The promised Midwest Convention which was to precede the opening of the school was held June 10-20, 1920. S. A. Jamieson gave Bible lectures during morning sessions of the convention, other services were held in the afternoon, and evangelistic meetings were conducted in the evenings. The meetings were held in the school building, and overnight accommodations were provided on a freewill offering basis inside the school. The board and interested supporters of the school made plans for the school to

open on October 4, and more than \$4,000 in cash and pledges were raised to help pay for repairs and provide a fund for support of students and teachers.⁹

Like other early Bible schools, Midwest was operated on a "faith" basis, with faculty remunerations and other expenses paid from freewill offerings. Still other monies were requested to help pay necessary expenses, including a \$1,600 paving tax.

An interesting suggestion appeared in the July 10, 1920, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel*. As a way for students to raise their own support to attend Bible school, they were encouraged to work in the wheat harvest during the months of July and August to earn between \$5 and \$7 per day to apply toward their school expenses.¹⁰ Whether anyone took advantage of the opportunity is not known, but likely some of the students did. Others were evangelizing during that summer and raised support from gospel campaigns. Still others likely traveled to Auburn with faith that God would provide for their needs.

One student, Nina (England) Renick, recalls that she had written to Bethel Bible Institute in Newark, New Jersey. The letter the school sent her told of all the things the students could not do. The school sounded overly strict and oppressive. Nina's father said, "I'm not going to send my daughter to a prison." When Midwest opened, her parents sent her there and

"Holy Rollers" Open Bible School in Auburn Hotel

Auburn, Neb. Oct. 5—(Special)

The Midwest Pentecostal Bible School opened here Monday with a complete faculty and 80 students from all parts of the country.

The Pentecostal body has purchased the three-story brick building formerly known as the Avenue Hotel and converted it into a college. It is proposed by the sect to make it one of the largest Bibles schools of the kind in the country. It serves the states of Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas as an educational adjunct of the religious body which is popularly known as "the Holy Rollers."

The above news story appeared in the *Omaha Bee*, October 6, 1920, p. 5. The number of students was probably closer to 40 than 80, according to information now available.



Nebraska State Historical Society



Midwest musicians, from the left, Pat King, Edith Stuber, Mrs. Eva Groomes (teacher), Richard Carmichael, Nina Englund, Opal Pennock, Hazel Merner, Winnie Smith, Daisy Renick, Florence Pankow, and Eunice McCleary.

paid her way so that she did not have to find outside work.¹¹

When the 1920 General Council met September 21-27, plans were finalized for the opening of the Auburn school. It was considered "a direct answer to prayer to meet a crying need."¹² The school was intended to be a training center for young people called into the ministry, to promote the fundamentals of the gospel as taught by the apostles and endorsed by the Assemblies of God. It was recommended that students study the Word 3½ years, following the example set by Christ in instructing the disciples.¹³

Within the next week the students and teachers began arriving at the new school. The ground floor of the school was made up of a prayer room, classrooms, bathroom facilities, dining room, and kitchen. The Jamiesons had an apartment on the first floor. The second floor was used for the girls dorm, and the third floor was the boys dorm.¹⁴ The walk-out basement included a pump house with washing and recreation facilities.

Each day started about 7:00 a.m. with chapel services conducted by the instructors and staff. Then the students separated to attend their respective classes.

Faculty and staff included S. A. Jamieson, principal, as Bible and advanced doctrine instructor; Mrs. Jamieson; O. E. McCleary, Bible and homiletics instructor; Louise Albach, English and penmanship teacher; Eva

Groomes, piano and orchestra teacher; Mr. and Mrs. Dront as dormitory supervisors; and Johanna Zou, cook. Calisthenics was also taught at the school.

The teachers were very strict. The students were instructed to call the staff members by "Mr." and "Mrs." or by their respective title. The principal was given the respected title of "Dr." Jamieson. He did have a seminary degree, but technically he did not hold a doctor's degree. The students themselves were charged to only refer to each other by last names to be prefaced by "Brother" or "Sister." They could not use first names. When going to church and other activities, the boys would walk ahead, and the girls would follow behind. There was no dating.

Eva Groomes, the music instructor, was not very Pentecostal, in the opinion of former students, but she was a committed Christian. Although very strict and thorough in her training, she was a good teacher. The matron was also very exacting. Jamieson, on the other hand, was a gentle and pleasant man who almost always had a smile on his face. According to Nina Renick, "You'd have to go a long ways to find a greater leader than S. A. Jamieson"¹⁵ He was highly respected by all the students.

Mrs. Jamieson did not teach, but she helped her husband. She was considered strict and made sure the girls abided by the dress code. She would often pray for the students and wait up at night for any of the girls

who were working. One night, while waiting up for Adele Carmichael, she scalded her arm on the tea kettle and was badly burned. She just walked the

A Pentecostal Evangel plea requested help for the teachers who were being paid \$10 a month: "None of them can continue long at the present rate."

floor and praised the Lord. By morning she was completely healed. This left a deep impression on Adele.

On Sundays the students attended the local Assembly of God which, undoubtedly due to Jamieson's influence, was meeting in the First Presbyterian Church of Auburn, located across the street from the school. Jamieson had been a Presbyterian minister and district official for many years before he received the Holy Spirit baptism and joined the Assemblies of God. The school's orchestra played for the Sunday services, and the students were a great encouragement to the local congregation at Auburn.

Even though almost a year of planning and promotion had been made for the school, funds were still needed to get through the first year. A plea in a November *Evangel* asked for \$1,600 to pay for repairs, necessary purchases, coal, and state ordered fire escapes for the building. Readers were also requested to help supply the following: 75 folding chairs, bedding, bedspreads, dishes, table cutlery, rugs, a bathtub, and a piano.¹⁶ Lastly readers were again exhorted to send support for the teachers whose only support was from freewill offerings. Some of the students also needed support to be able to attend school.

As the school year progressed, the young people gained practical experience through student-conducted meetings held twice each week. Tarrying meetings were held on Sunday afternoons, and several of the students received the baptism in the Holy Spirit at these services.

Adele Carmichael, one of the students at Auburn, remembers: "There was one solid week when all classes

were dismissed. During this time the students prayed night and day, and many of them received their calling to service."¹⁷ The students also held street meetings in downtown Auburn, making quite an impression on the townspeople.

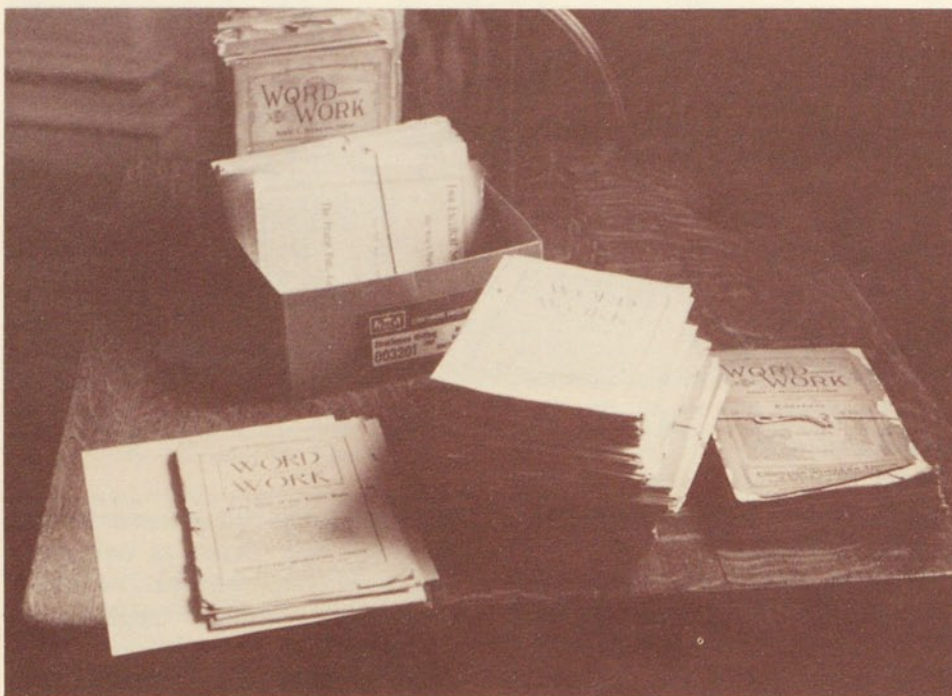
All of the students were required to work at the school on Saturdays. Mrs. Jamieson usually asked Nina Renick to help clean and straighten up their apartment. The students also took turns helping out in the kitchen. Some of the students were able to find outside work in the evenings and on weekends. Adele Carmichael worked evenings in the telephone office. Malinda (Yost) Shotts did housework for a Pentecostal minister, Leroy Kopp, and later worked for a high school teacher in Auburn.

TO BE CONTINUED

Notes

1. "General Convention of Pentecostal Saints and Churches of God in Christ," *Word and Witness*, December 20, 1913, p. 1. An enlarged statement concerning education was printed in the February 20, 1914, issue of *Word and Witness* and in the *General Council Minutes*, April 1914, p. 4: "As Jesus commanded in the great commission, that the Gospel should be taught, preached and published in all the world before His return, we should consider the Ministerial, School and Publishing interests, to the glory of God, that Jesus may be with us even unto the end of the world."
2. "Successful Opening," *Nemaha County Herald*, October 23, 1903.
3. "Bible School at Auburn, Neb.," *Pentecostal Evangel*, November 15, 1919, p. 8. Spelling in print was Midwest and Mid-West. Unless quoted, this article will use Midwest.
4. "The Midwest Bible School of the Assemblies of God," *Pentecostal Evangel*, January 10, 1920, p. 8.
5. "Auburn School," *Pentecostal Evangel*, December 27, 1919, p. 6.
6. "The Midwest Bible School of the Assemblies of God," *Pentecostal Evangel*, January 10, 1920, p. 8.
7. "Flu Stopped Bible School," *Pentecostal Evangel*, February 21, 1920, p. 10.
8. Nemaha County, Nebraska, Deed Book 53, p. 73.
9. "Bible School Assured," *Pentecostal Evangel*, July 10, 1920, p. 2.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Nina Renick, telephone conversation with Wayne Warner, May 5, 1990.
12. *General Council Minutes*, 1920, p. 43.
13. "Mid-West Bible School," *Latter Rain Evangel*, October 1920, p. 9.
14. Adele Carmichael, telephone conversation with Wayne Warner, May 23, 1989.
15. Nina Renick, telephone conversation with Wayne Warner, May 5, 1990.
16. "Mid-West Bible School," *Pentecostal Evangel*, November 27, 1920, p. 1.
17. Adele Carmichael, telephone interview, April 12, 1990.

ARCHIVES ACTIVITIES



Turn-of-the-century issues of *Word and Work* magazine which the editor examined in Boston recently. The owner of the periodicals, which were published by S.G. Otis in Massachusetts, is cooperating with the Assemblies of God Archives in a microfilm project. See "Pentecost Comes to the Northeast," by A. Reuben Hartwick, and "Heritage Letter" (*Heritage*, Spring 1990) for more information on this early Pentecostal periodical. Another current filming project involves the *Bridegroom's Messenger*, a paper which began in 1907.

During the past few months, the Archives either purchased or received through donations the material listed below. Readers interested in donating historical materials are urged to write to the Archives or call (417) 862-2781, ext. 4400.

Denver Crandall: books, *Adventuring with Christ*, by Lester Sumrall; *Miracles in Black: Missionary Experiences in the Wilds of Africa*, by John C. Wengatz. **Gary B. McGee:** paper, "Pentecostal Scholarship—Perils and Prospects"; photocopy of *The Pentecostal Apostolic Church of God of Romania*; materials from The Evangelical Church Alliance; book, *The Elder* (O.L. Jagers). **Adele Dalton:** homiletic notebooks and periodicals. **Hart R. Armstrong:** books and pamphlets. **Raymond L. Gannon:** *Temple Beth Emanuel: The 1st Messianic Synagogue of the A/G*. **Kevin Akins:** 1989 Corum Scholarship paper. **John Carver:** A.A. Allen videos, periodicals. **Cecil M. Robeck, Jr.:** 1906-07 newspaper clippings of Pentecostal outpouring in Los Angeles; copy of *L'Osservatore Romano*. **Mrs. A.E. Hokanson:** periodicals, CBI class notes and catalog, and district minutes. **Edith Blumhofer:** copies of Elder Eugene Brooks correspondence file; materials on 1937 General Council. **Vicky Price:** paper, "Wonders, Wimber, and the Assem-

blies of God." **Louise Walker:** periodicals, books, pamphlets, and tapes. **Hattie Hammond:** *Glad Tidings* (NY) *Herald*, *Gospel Call*, and 1928 revival poster. **Lois Hodges:** 1916 copy of "Statement of Fundamental Truths," list of books and articles written by Melvin L. Hodges. **Jim Rossi:** sermons of John G. Lake. **W.J. Franklin:** songbook, "Buffum's Special #2" (2nd ed.). **Gary Hensley:** paper "A Study of the Historical Development and Current Growth Patterns of Christianity in Puerto Rico." **Wayne Warner:** books and Radio Department recordings. **Mildred Keener:** 1927-34 *Pentecostal Evangel*s. **North Central Bible College:** cassette tapes of Frank Lindquist funeral. **Andrew S. Teuber:** periodicals relating to salvation-healing movement. **Gerald W. Hardy:** 1936 census of religious bodies. **Voice of God:** William Branham tapes and books. **Paul Mitchell:** video tapes relating to PTL. **Nina Renick:** photos of Midwest Bible School. **Fred Smolchuck:** photos of Eastern European ministers. **Helen Wight:** *Word and Work* periodical, booklet, *The Pentecostal Quarterly* (1927), and correspondence. **Marvin Smith:** photograph of general presbyters in 1941. **Edna M. Bachle:** newspaper articles and information on Midwest Bible School. **Presbyterian Church Archives:** information on S. A. Jamieson.

Lewis and May Wilson/ from page 5

made him feel awkward and uncomfortable. He would nervously pace the tiny cottage as he tried to memorize the material presented in his classes. His only escape was to Lake Michigan for a picnic or fishing on the Monday rest days. When May was ready to give birth to their second child, Hartzel, Lewis hurried about frantically to find a doctor, only to find out later that he needed only to have placed a telephone call to summon a physician.

The redeeming feature of his 3 years of training was his association with teachers that emerged in later years as contemporary giants of biblical faith. James M. Gray, who succeeded Torrey as the Institute's president, wrote numerous widely read works on biblical exposition, as did another professor, William R. Newell. Still another teacher, William Evans, the converted newspaperman, wrote a book on personal evangelism that remained a standard textbook on the subject for a half century. Composers D. B. Towner (*"My Anchor Holds," "Grace Greater Than Our Sin,"* and *"Saved by the Blood of the Crucified One"*) and George Schuler (*"Make Me a Blessing"* and *"In the Hollow of His Hand"*) were among the Wilsons' acquaintances. Among their treasured recollections was meeting Dr. C. I. Scofield when he came to Chicago to lecture. After attending Moody Bible Institute Lewis never doubted the adequacy of his salvation, having gained from his mentor the firm confidence frequently emphasized in the marginal notes of the Scofield Reference Bible.

With the passing months it was increasingly difficult for Lewis to sustain his aspirations to become an effective minister. The birth of their third child, Newell, named after their teacher, and their failure to receive anticipated rents made them reconsider their remaining in Chicago. Without having finished his course of study, Lewis decided to return to the ranch in Yampa. Prior to his leaving, however, he experienced yet another blow to his manly pride when R. A. Torrey returned from Europe with Charles Alexander, his song leader,

having shaved his mustache. Lewis and a friend determined that they would resist the modernizing influences that stripped men of their masculinity in imitation of the European dandies. The two classmates pledged that they would never shave their handlebars, a vow that Lewis kept throughout his lifetime.⁴

In Yampa May gave birth to another son, Ruben Archer, named after Moody president R. A. Torrey, and a daughter Ruth. Having received recognition from the local church that they had helped organize, Lewis attempted to pastor, then, his oratorical skills obviously deficient for public ministry, he became the leader of the Sunday School. The years 1905 to 1912 saw the decline of the Congregational church they attended, as increasingly the doctrines that the Wilsons held dear were challenged by the new teachings that were introduced by the seminary-trained ministers.

With the birth of May's third child in 3 years and her health delicate, Lewis determined to take the family to a less severe climate. The ranch (now the town of Phippsburg) was sold to the Moffat Railroad then under construction and in need of a right-of-way, and the family goods were put on board a boxcar to accompany the family in the coach en route to Sawtelle, near Santa Monica, California. May recovered, and Lewis, hearing of the availability of cheap, fertile land in the San Joaquin Valley to the north, soon moved his family to a ranch he purchased in Tulare. After the family spent a hard first year scratching to make a living, their 10-year-old second son Newell, born while they were in Chicago, died of diphtheria.

Although the family prospered as Lewis, with the help of his sons, kept dairy cattle and leased additional land for haying, the unsatisfied hunger to accomplish more for God's work and concern about the encroaching modernism in the churches afflicted their spirits. At first Lewis and May attended the Methodist church; then, as their children grew older and iden-

tified with the Methodist families of the community, they moved increasingly toward the more fundamental Baptists. Here, in the early 1920s, their encounter with the Pentecostals brought unimagined joy and opened for them an entirely new future.

After their third son Ruben—who had indicated an interest in operating the family ranch—was converted at a revival service conducted by students from Glad Tidings Bible Institute in San Francisco (now Bethany Bible College, Scotts Valley) in 1924, he told his parents of his intention to prepare, as they had, for ministry. He was later followed by his younger sister Ruth and his brother Ben.

At Glad Tidings Ruben met Harriet Porter, a student from Spokane, Washington, whom he married in 1927 after they both had completed the 2-year institute program and Ruben had briefly co-pastored a church in Willits, California. The young couple's ministry took them to Washington State and Southern California before they returned to northern California to accept the pastorate at Weed, on the Oregon border. In the meantime, Ben Wilson married another GTBI student, Ruby Crismon, and began ministry in Oregon, Idaho and Washington. Second daughter Ruth, upon finishing Glad Tidings, traveled in evangelistic work until she met and married William Crandall. Ruben Wilson received his license from the Northern California and Nevada District of the Assemblies of God in 1926, just 8 years after the district's founding. Ben and Ruth were licensed in 1929 and Ben was ordained in 1931.⁵

Financially self-sufficient, and with his children entering the ministry, Lewis determined to leave the ranch and move to a community that needed a Pentecostal church. In 1932 he was granted a license to preach by the Assemblies of God and became the pastor at the Sierra foothills town of Tuolumne. The next year he was ordained, and in 1935 the couple took the church at Los Banos. May Wilson was granted a license to preach in 1935 and her ordination in 1936. In 1939 the Wilsons took the church at Lakeport, and in 1942 the pastorate at Willits. Intense and persuasive, May

preached with conviction and genuine concern for the lost. Lewis, who could deliver a presentable if simple Bible study, recognized the limits of his pulpit ability, acknowledging with good humor that "She's the preacher, I'm the pastor." Lewis served as presbyter of the Lake-Mendocino section in the 1940s.⁶

The couple never lost their sense of purpose even as they advanced in years. In their 60s, the Wilsons purchased a home in the northern California coastal logging community of Fort Bragg to provide a residence for a young pastor and his wife while, in turn, the Wilsons lived in modest quarters nearby and provided ministerial and financial support for the still struggling work. They proudly displayed the shelf of text books they had conscientiously studied since leaving Moody. They also avidly read recent publications, especially the new evangelical periodical, *Christianity Today*, when it appeared in the 1950s. Finding in editor Carl F. H. Henry's editorial policies the Reformed theology that he had learned at Moody, Lewis carefully reflected on the intellectually stimulating articles.

When in their 80s they grew feeble, they went to live with their three daughters in Stockton, California. Lewis died in 1960 at the age of 88 and May died nine years later at age 93.

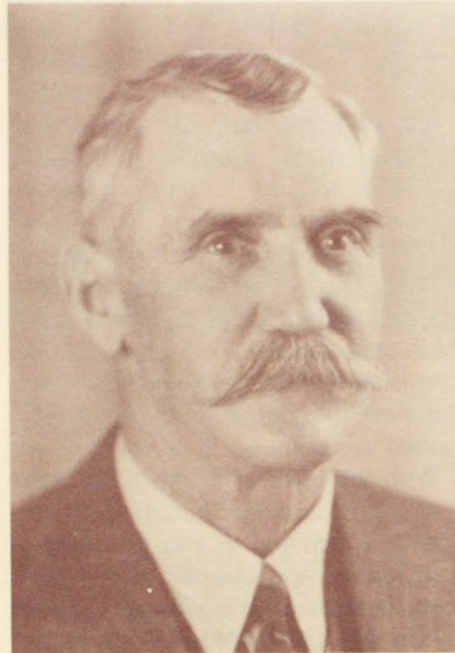
The Wilsons lived to see their fourth son Ben enjoy an extended ministry in Coulee City, Washington, and in Fairbanks, Alaska. With his own plane and a love for the hardy, pioneering ministry required in the 49th state, Ben was appointed the first superintendent when Alaska was organized as a district within the Assemblies of God.⁷ A highlight of Lewis's final years was a visit to Alaska, where he accompanied his son on flights to minister in villages.

Their third son Ruben served churches in Weed, Alameda, and Roseville, California, for 25 years before he began a 14-year tenure as district assistant superintendent.⁸ He served first with his father and later with his son Ruben, Jr., on the district presbytery. The Wilsons' second

daughter Ruth remained a pillar in the Calvary Assembly, Stockton, California, until her death in 1978.

Defying commonly held assumptions about spiritual decline of revival movements in the third generation, the Wilsons' grandchildren, in part because of Lewis and May's example and encouragement, remained committed to their grandparents' vision.

The two children of the couple's eldest son Hartzel both found places



When Grandpa Gets to Heaven

"Howdy!" cried Saint Peter,
A' shoutin' from afar.
"I knew 'twas you a' comin',
I seen your handlebar!"

The final stanza of a poem written by grandson Everett A. Wilson in the colloquial style of the unlettered Colorado rancher, Lewis Wilson, on his 80th birthday.

of ministry: Dr. Dwight Wilson has served on the faculty of Bethany Bible College for 29 years, and his sister, Roberta Boring, has been a pastor's wife. Each of their son Ruben's four sons, a stepson and a son-in-law also became ordained Assemblies of God ministers.⁹ Several of their daughter

Ruth's children, near whom the Wilsons lived in their retirement, have played active lay roles in their local Assemblies.

The fourth generation of Wilson family ministers was inaugurated in 1976 when William "Bill" Wilson, son of Ruben Wilson, Jr., pastor at the time at Westminster Assembly, Seattle, Washington, received ordination through the Southern California District. Bill Wilson is presently the pastor of Portland Christian Center, and his brother Rick has recently been granted ministerial license by the Oregon District.

Other great-grandchildren or their spouses who have become ministers are David Alford, son of David and Alice Wilson Alford, who is on the staff of the North Hollywood First Assembly of God; Greg Austring, A/G missionary in Guatemala and son-in-law of Southern California College Academic Dean Lewis Wilson; and Jason Garcia, an associate pastor at Newport Christian Center, Costa Mesa, California, whose father-in-law is Everett Wilson, academic dean of Bethany Bible College. Loren Wilson, son of Dwight and Kathryn Wilson, is minister of music at the First Assembly of God, Woodland, California, and Ben Wilson, his grandfather's namesake, holds Christian worker credentials with the Northern California and Nevada District.

In all, 21 of the Wilsons' progeny in three generations have held credentials with the Assemblies of God, of whom 13 have been ordained ministers. Two of their sons were district executive officers and served as general presbyters, a grandson was a district youth leader, five other grandchildren or their spouses have held teaching positions in endorsed A/G colleges, and three grandchildren or great-grandchildren and their spouses have been appointed Assemblies of God foreign missionaries. Several pastored congregations for periods of 10 or more years. Numerous other family members, of whom eight have been public or private school teachers, have been active in local Assemblies.

Although they shared the satisfaction of the achievements of their

large and devoted family, Lewis and May were never content with the results of their own efforts. Well aware of the contribution of their Moody professors and other leaders of the evangelical and Pentecostal movements, and despite their having come belatedly to the Pentecostal experience, they looked back wistfully on their own years of ministry and lamented that they had not been able to accomplish more.

NOTES

1. The events of Lewis and May Wilson's early life and marriage have been compiled in several documents by their eldest daughter, Hazel Henson, who, though she left home prior to the Wilson's Pentecostal experience, lovingly reconstructed the events of their early years and sensitively documented their spiritual odyssey. Our thanks also to her daughter, Idamay Altwater, of Fort Bragg, California, for providing numerous photos, documents and manuscripts in her possession as reference for this biographical article. Among the manuscripts referred to were: "Life in Chicago at the Beginning of the Century," (unpublished manuscript, n.d.); "Lewis F. Wilson, Converted Cowboy and Former Student of Moody Bible Institute" (unpublished manuscript, n.d.); *Mother Remembers* (Steamboat Springs, 1973); *Something of His Own* (Steamboat Springs, 1974). These were all written and/or edited by Hazel Wilson Henson who is now 91. Mrs. Wilson's name was Mary but her friends and family knew her as May; this story uses the name May throughout.

2. May's mother had attended the Methodist Church in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, so May likely did receive Sunday school training, although her father's family had been involved in spiritualism.

3. Robert G. Flood and Jerry B. Jenkins, *Teaching the Word, Reaching the World* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 47-55. [Published in celebration of the Moody Bible Institute centennial]

4. On the occasion of Lewis's 80th birthday, a grandson composed a poem about his grandfather's mustache. Lewis thereafter proudly displayed his photograph with the verses, the last stanza of which was entitled, "When Grandpa Gets to Heaven."

5. Archives of the Northern California and Nevada District of the Assemblies of God, Scotts Valley, California.

6. "Introducing the Presbyterian of the Lake-Mendocino Section," *Glad Tidings* (October 1944), 12. [GT is the official organ of the Northern California and Nevada District.]

7. Benjamin P. Wilson, *The Assemblies of God of Alaska* (Fairbanks, AK: Privately published, 1980).

8. "We Honor Our Friend and Associate," *Glad Tidings* (May 1970), p. 3.

9. After the death of Harriet Porter Wilson in 1967, Ruben Wilson, Sr., married Cora Flessing. Cora Flessing Wilson's son, Roger Flessing, producer and director of the Billy Graham television productions, is also an ordained Assemblies of God minister. Ruben's daughter Priscilla Taylor is the food service director at Bethany Bible College. ❖

Questions & Answers

Dr. Gary B. McGee is following an early precedent in the *Pentecostal Evangel* with the introduction of this new *Heritage* feature. First it was a Q & A column by E.N. Bell in 1916. Then beginning in 1956 former general superintendent Ernest S. Williams conducted the "Your Questions Answered" column. Readers are invited to send history questions, to Dr. Gary B. McGee, c/o Assemblies of God Archives, 1445 Boonville, Springfield, MO 65802.

By Gary B. McGee

1. In your estimation, what has been the most unusual item published in the *Pentecostal Evangel*?

Although the pages of the *Evangel* carried some curious prophetic speculations in its earlier years, the announcements of forthcoming weather predictions in the first three issues of January 1916, top the list. Elated by the testimony of respected Texas A/G preacher Warren F. Carothers (1872-1953) that he had received weather forecasts from the Lord, editor John W. Welch printed a "Special Notice to Country Subscrib-

ers," announcing that the divine weather data might become a regular feature. Carothers, however, displayed some caution by writing in his "Grapes and Pomegranates" column in the *Evangel* (January 15, 1916) that "he would not think of launching a new doctrine or new 'movement' without consulting the brethren" (p. 9). In keeping with this concern, the announcements asked subscribers to write the editor and acknowledge their interest. Interestingly, Carothers said he could predict the weather several weeks in advance, thus making it current when the magazine went to press (the lead time for preparing and printing each issue was probably two weeks). Nothing further, however, was ever mentioned about Carothers' new gift and his predictions, implying that it had precipitated a storm of criticism. One can only conclude that even with the best of intentions, the weather is hard to predict.

An unusual announcement in issues of 1916 Weekly *Evangel* (now *Pentecostal Evangel*).

SPECIAL NOTICE TO COUNTRY SUBSCRIBERS

God has given our precious brother, W. F. Carothers, a most wonderful discovery by which it is possible to predict weather conditions two weeks or more in advance. This discovery is bound to change the whole system of weather prediction now in use, and it is only a matter of time until it is adopted by the Government Weather Bureau. As a large number of our readers are farmers, or else reside in country districts, Brother Carothers has consented to furnish us with these weather predictions if our readers desire it. Such a department has never appeared in a Pentecostal paper before, and before commencing it we must hear from our readers. If one hundred or more of our subscribers will send us a card asking us to publish this Weather Department, we will do so. If you are interested in this, sit down and write us a card, telling us so, right now. The Gospel Pub. House, 2838 Easton Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

2. Did Lillian Trasher initially go to Egypt as an Assemblies of God missionary?

"Mama" Lillian probably went to Egypt as an independent missionary in 1910, but retained connections to the Church of God (Cleveland, Tenn.). Upon returning to America in 1912, she was ordained by A. J. Tomlinson, first general overseer of the Church of God, in Durant, Florida. She eventually became aware of the formation of the General Council of the Assemblies

of God (1914) whose members eagerly began to support her ministry with their prayers and generous financial support. Trasher later joined the Council in 1919. [For further information on her early association with the Church of God, see Charles W. Conn, *Where the Saints Have Trod* (1959), pp. 15-16; the most recently published book on the life of Lillian Trasher is an edited collection of her letters, titled *Letters from Lillian*, printed in 1983 by the Communications Department of

the Assemblies of God Division of Foreign Missions, Springfield, Missouri.]

3. Who was the first president of Central Bible College?

In the earlier years of the school, the chief administrators were known as "principals" (Daniel W. Kerr, Frank M. Boyd, and William I. Evans). Executive presbytery minutes from the early 1920s cite this term exclusively. Beginning with W. T. Gaston in 1926, the General Superintendents received the title of president (a part-time position). This was a logical arrange-

ment since CBC was the only Bible school owned by the General Council. In 1948, Bartlett Peterson became the first full-time president. Curiously, however, the first catalog of CBC (1922-23) listed Daniel W. Kerr as president. Reference to this can also be observed on a sign in the picture of the class of 1922-23 taken in front of Central Assembly of God in Springfield, the first home of the institution. With little interest in academic or professional nomenclature, the words principal and president may have been used interchangeably.

By 1926, however, the need for additional administrative structure evidently necessitated a reappraisal of the terms.

Dr. Gary B. McGee is professor of church history at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri. He holds masters degrees in religion and history and a Ph.D. from Saint Louis University. He is the author of the two-volume *This Gospel... Shall Be Preached* (Gospel Publishing House) and is an editor for the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Zondervan).



FROM OUR READERS

Would Like to Start Again

I have been with the Assemblies of God for over 65 years, was ordained in 1932. I have had wonderful fellowship. I am 85 years old and, I wish I



could start all over. There is so much to do and time running out.

Samuel A. Merrill
Atwater, California

Still Pastoring at 86

I enjoy reading *Heritage* and read it from cover to cover. Some of these stories remind me of my own pioneer work in Oregon. I am now 86 years young, have been saved 65 years, and in the ministry 64 years. I am still pastoring a church.

Floyd Huntley
Coquille, Oregon

Magazine Tops

The enclosed gift subscription is for my sister Valencia Fife who lives in Seattle. We go back 68 years in

Information Needed on Simultaneous Water and Holy Spirit Baptism

Have you seen someone baptized in the Spirit while being baptized in water? Has it happened to you?

Catholic charismatic Kilian P. McDonnell, OSB, believes there is a correlation and is interested in hearing from anyone who could add to his research of the subject.

If you have information on the subject, you may write to McDonnell at the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, Collegeville, Minnesota 56321.

Pentecost.

Your magazine is tops. Sorry I did not learn about it years ago.

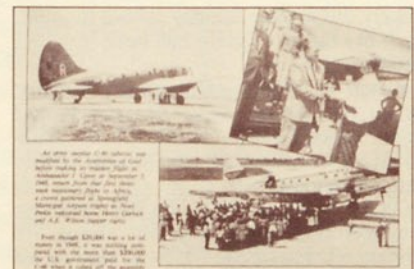
Mrs. Margaret L. Heiland
Mountville, Pennsylvania

Springfield! Features Ambassador Planes

Beginning with the June issue, Wayne Warner's three-part feature on the *Ambassador* airplanes is appearing in *Springfield!* magazine.

The planes, a converted army C-46 and a B-17—*Ambassador I* and *II*—were used in transporting Assemblies of God missionaries to and from their fields between 1948-51. The B-17 is now on display in the Imperial War Museum at Duxford Airfield, Cambridge, England.

Springfield! is a monthly city magazine published by Springfield Communications, Inc. Editor and publisher is Robert C. Glazier.



From the June issue of *Springfield!* magazine, a photo of the Ambassador airplane at the Imperial War Museum at Duxford Airfield, Cambridge, England. The plane was used by the Assemblies of God for missionary work between 1948 and 1951.



Springfield's Flying Ambassadors. America's first international mission flight.

of Philadelphia Airlines. The main objective of the mission was to provide a means of transport for missionaries to and from their fields between 1948 and 1951. The B-17 is now on display in the Imperial War Museum at Duxford Airfield, Cambridge, England. The plane was used by the Assemblies of God for missionary work between 1948 and 1951.

National and World Events

1965 • The first U.S. combat ground troops, 3,500 marines, land in Vietnam, March 8 • A sheriff's posse and state troopers beat Civil Rights marchers in Selma, Alabama.

1940 • As Axis powers continue aggression in Europe and the Far East, isolationists here call for the United States to remain neutral.

1915 • The British liner *Lusitania* is hit by a German torpedo and sinks within 10 minutes, with a loss of nearly 1,200 lives, including more than a hundred Americans.

1965—25 Years Ago

J. Robert Ashcroft, president of Evangel College, and his son John are visiting 14 countries on a tour of Assemblies of God mission fields. President Ashcroft wrote, "From Cairo to Calcutta, from Djakarta to Tokyo, I have seen Assemblies of God missions and missionaries, and I love them!"

First Church, Assembly of God, Oakland, California, hosted the 600th consecutive release of Revivaltime over the ABC radio network on June 13. Long before the Sunday afternoon broadcast began, the auditorium was filled to capacity. C. M. Ward's message was titled "Stragglers." The *Revivaltime* Choir, under the direction of Cyril McLellan and which is on a summer tour, ministered during the broadcast. Host pastor is Paul C. Schoch.

1940—50 Years Ago

Missionary reports in several countries indicate the Holy Spirit mightily at work in the lives of nationals. In **Ceylon**, Carl Graves wrote about a revival in which 12 were filled with the Spirit and 13 followed the Lord in water baptism. In **Argentina**, Alice Wood writes, "Praise God for revival which is stirring all over this field." A new outstation in Liao Yang, **Manchuria**, is having results, according to A. J. Ahlberg; 18 were baptized in water, and five in the Holy Spirit. B. T. Bard opens his **Peking** report with, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" One hundred Truth Bible Institute students were baptized in the Spirit. "Never before have I witnessed such a mighty manifestation of the power of God," Bard wrote. W. L. Perrault, writing from **Cuba**, says new assem-

blies are being opened, a gospel paper is being published, and the gospel is being broadcast on a Cuban radio station. Mr. and Mrs. Louie W. Stokes, who have been on the staff at Central Bible Institute, Springfield, for the past 2 years, have been approved for missionary service in Cuba and will sail in the fall.

Two districts have been divided to form new districts in the Southwest.

New Mexico ministers have received permission to withdraw from the Texico District and form the New Mexico District. H. M. Fulfer has been elected superintendent. The Texas portion of the Texico District will now be known as the West Texas District.

A similar procedure separated Arizona from the Southern California and Arizona District. N. D. Davidson

is the superintendent of the newly created Arizona District Council.

1915—75 Years Ago

Alexander A. Boddy, Anglican pastor and editor of *Confidence* magazine, returned to his Sunderland, England, congregation after ministering to Allied soldiers fighting in France. A photo on the cover of the August issue of *Confidence* shows a French church in ruin, a victim of German shelling. Boddy called for his British readers to continue praying for God's intervention. "How wonderfully God has helped us during this year of warfare," he wrote. "How little we have suffered in England compared with the sufferings in Northern France."

The "New Issue"—which teaches that believers must be rebaptized in Jesus' name to have a Scriptural baptism—has two more Assemblies of God leaders in their camp. *Pentecostal Evangel* editor E. N. Bell and a presbyter, H. G. Rodgers, were rebaptized by L. V. Roberts during a big camp meeting at Jackson, Tennessee. [Both later restated their Trinitarian views.]



Missionary B. T. Bard teaching a class at Peking's Truth Bible Institute. His 1940 report tells of 100 students baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The editor selects items of interest for this column from the *Pentecostal Evangel*, *Apostolic Faith*, *Word and Witness*, and other publications. Comments and suggestions from readers are invited.

Life on Faith Lines/ from page 12

Pentecostals, Baker observed that "nothing but a laid-down life which seeks not its own comfort or pleasure" could be of use in a faith home.⁶ The sisters welcomed guests for as long "as the Spirit directed" them to stay. All ate together and shared equally whatever comforts the home offered.

Daily morning Bible studies (these occasionally extended until lunch when "the Spirit [fell] and [held] us") were supplemented by prayer and counseling with individual guests. Nightly mission services continued; and by the turn of the century, the sisters presided over a small but thriving and expanding network of ministries. And, like other residents of faith homes before and after, they cherished memories of mingling with and ministering to ministers and missionaries from around the world—"some of the choicest spirits on earth!" Their faith home extended their influence around the world.

In 1907, the sisters identified their efforts (they had constructed Elim Tabernacle by 1904 and opened a Bible training school in 1906) with the fledgling Pentecostal movement. Their facilities offered hospitality and training to an impressive list of early Assemblies of God ministers and missionaries. For their students and guests, they faithfully modeled the life of faith, "given to hospitality," that they had embraced in 1895. They rejected affiliation with emerging Pentecostal fellowships and denominations, opting rather for the intimacy and independence of their small but influential work.

The Duncan sisters regarded faith living as something more than a spiritual exercise that tested and strengthened their confidence in God. They believed that some—not all—were "called" to live in faith homes and to operate faith ministries and that those so called challenged the church at large:

It is...perfectly clear that God through these faith works is not only dealing with those who are the called out ones, but He is testing and proving and educating His children the world over. He is putting His work with great needs in your midst, and every such work—if founded by God—is a challenge from Him to his people as stewards of His grace...We as children of faith

[look] directly to Him for every need; others as His stewards [look] to Him for guidance in dispensing the means entrusted to them; and thus God's thought is that all His children shall compose one great household of faith, all working in beautiful harmony to fulfill His design for each.⁸

Faith homes and related faith ministries, presupposed that believers lived with sensitivity to the Holy Spirit. They challenged the church to give in response to immediate promptings or "leadings"; to responsible stewardship; and to constant reliance on God. From this perspective, the spirituality that nurtured the faith life made salaries, budgets, and financial planning seem both unappealing and dangerously carnal.

Elizabeth Baker, who had been the undisputed leader of the Elim Faith Home, died in January 1915. A few years later, Susan Duncan, elderly and unhappy with the direction of the Pentecostal movement seemed to be taking, decided to close the faith home and Bible training school. Elim Tabernacle continued to flourish, though without the participation of members of the founding family. It seemed to Susan Duncan that organization, with the dreaded tendency to "man-made pro-

grams" jeopardized Pentecostalism's future and threatened the individual sensitivity to the Holy Spirit on which their work was predicated.

For just over 20 years, the Elim Faith Home had sheltered seekers and workers. It had vastly extended the sisters' influence and absorbed much of their energies. But they had no successor—no one they believed would continue their work with their emphases.

Just as they had felt impelled in 1895 to open a faith home, so Susan Duncan yielded to the conviction early in the 1920s that she should conclude its ministry. The end of the Duncan sisters' active efforts marked the closing of a chapter in the story of Pentecostalism in the northeast.

Notes

1. Elizabeth V. Baker, *Chronicles of a Faith Life* (N.p.: n.p., 1910?), 37.
2. *Chronicles*, 51.
3. *Chronicles*, 51.
4. *Chronicles*, 53.
5. *Chronicles*, 53.
6. *Chronicles*, 63.
7. *Chronicles*, 64.
8. *Chronicles*, 82.

TO BE CONTINUED
Heritage will continue this series in the fall issue. Dr. Blumhofer will examine the faith homes which operated in Zion, Illinois, and Oakland, California. ♦

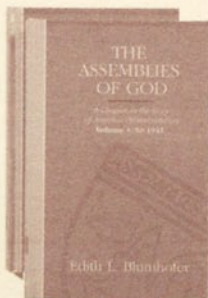
Drawing Room of Elim Home, Rochester, New York



You Can Judge a Good Book by its Card



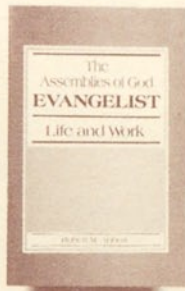
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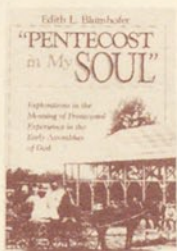


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□ Heritage Letter/ from page 2

first issue of *Heritage*. Whatever the case, we appreciate you as a *Heritage* reader and Assemblies of God Archives supporter.

My travels this past spring have taken me to councils in Wisconsin, Kansas, Alabama, Southern New England, and New Jersey. And by the time you receive this issue I should be back in Springfield after attending the 75th Anniversary Council for the North Texas District.

I usually meet people who have historical materials which should be preserved; and I interview some of our pioneers on tape. Since many people are yet unfamiliar with our Archives ministry, attending councils gives me an opportunity to talk about our department's role for the Assemblies of God and how we can assist districts and churches.

One of the highlights of my visit to Birmingham was to interview three former district superintendents, C. C. Hidle, Marvin Smith, and J. C. Thames. (We plan to interview the fourth former superintendent of this great district, T. H. Spence, the next time he visits Springfield.)

The four men above are representative of men and women who were young adults when the Great Depression hit America. Now in their 80s and 90s, their touching stories tell us about being called to preach, giving up jobs and homes, and launching into the ministry—usually with little or no formal ministerial training.

Many times they had no promise of income or a place to live. Instead of resting in a comfortable home while evangelizing new areas, often times they shared rooms with others or slept in their cars. Other nights were spent in their gospel tents to keep mobs from

setting them on fire or tearing them down.

Marvin Smith knows what that's all about. In one city he put up a tent near the railroad siding—his first mistake. Mischievous boys tied one end of a rope to the tent and the other end to a boxcar on the siding. Late that night the rail crew hooked on to the boxcar and scattered canvas, tent stakes, and songbooks down the tracks. You'd have thought a tornado had gone through. Providentially, nobody was in the tent that night.

G. Frank and Genevieve DiBella are just two other pioneer ministers I met this spring. Reared in the East, Frank gave up a promising banking career to preach the gospel. Now 80 and 79, they remain active in a hospital ministry in Nutley, New Jersey.

Our records show that more than 900 living ministers have been

ordained more than 50 years. We can find these dedicated people—just like the six above—in every corner of America. Many are still active (“There's no discharge in this ministry,” one told me).

Some of them are homebound or living out their last years in nursing homes.

You can show your appreciation and love to these pioneers with an occasional visit and offering to help wherever possible. (Some who never earned very much money and are on fixed incomes, would deeply appreciate a financial gift now and then—although they would never ask for help.)

If you want a blessing—and a challenge—sit down with our pioneers and talk to them about their ministry. (Put it on tape and send us a copy.) You'll come away with a greater appreciation for these men and women who laid foundations for Assemblies of God congregations, schools, and other ministries around the world. ♦

If you have ever driven through Auburn, Nebraska, you could have driven by the Avenue Apartments, which 70 years ago housed the first General Council Bible school. See page 13 for Glenn Gohr's feature on the old Midwest Bible School. Courtesy of Sammy R. McKay.

