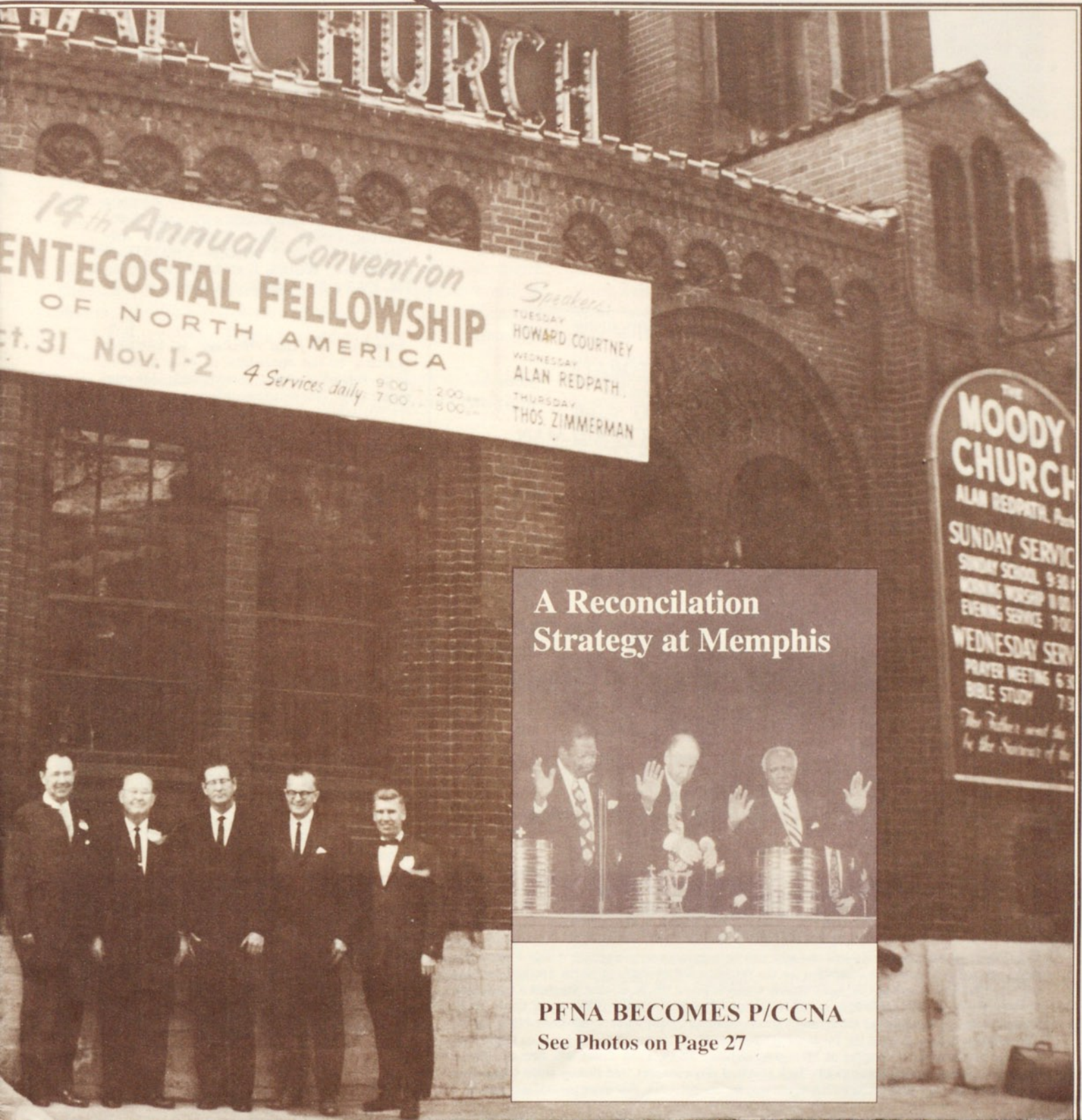



Assemblies of God

HERITAGE

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A Reconciliation Strategy at Memphis



PFNA BECOMES P/CCNA
See Photos on Page 27



HERITAGE™

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COVER: A glimpse of the old and the new can be seen in these two photos. Large Photo: The newly elected Board of Administration for the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America (PFNA) at their 1961 convention in Chicago's Moody Church. From left, R. Bryant Mitchell (Open Bible Standard), J. A. Synan (Pentecostal Holiness), James A. Cross (Church of God), T. F. Zimmerman, (Assemblies of God), and Carlton Spencer (Elim Pentecostal Assemblies). Inset: Communion being served at the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America (P/CCNA) in their organizational meeting at Memphis, October 17-19, 1994. From left, Bishop Gilbert Patterson (Church of God in Christ), Jack Hayford (Foursquare), and Bishop Ithiel Clemmons (Church of God in Christ). The PFNA made way for the P/CCNA. For more photos, see page 27.

AN APPRECIATION
FOR OUR
CHRISTIAN HERITAGE

By Wayne Warner

Someone has said that you'll uncover a prince in your family tree if you search far enough. Likewise you'll uncover a scoundrel or two. Keep in mind, though, nobody can hold you accountable for the scoundrels. Neither can you claim credit for the princes.

Let's think for a moment about the good people in your past who helped shape your life—and perhaps who are still active role models. Your parents? Or maybe it was someone other than your parents who took an interest in you and your future. Maybe a brother or a sister. Maybe a Sunday school teacher. Maybe a pastor. Or maybe a believer who simply radiated a Christlike life. My wife Pat lost her mother and father when she was young, so it was up to her grandparents, Artie and Zelma Munson, converted dance band players, to provide guidance and a humble home in Peoria, Illinois—which also included regular attendance at Glad Tidings A/G. Those memories come with a thankful heart.

In your memory you can no doubt go back to the intersection where your life took a turn toward God and righteousness.

And the other side of the coin is the influence you have on others. If we could, we would have our good examples followed and our poor examples erased. But you know that too often the opposite is true. I am deeply grateful that I was blessed with ancestors who set good examples for me—especially my godly mother Ethel Bowers Warner. Mom was born a hundred years ago and went to be with her Lord at the age of 88 in 1982.

Dad was a good man, but, like so many men, left the spiritual training of the family to his wife. If it had been up

to him, we would have gone to church when we felt like it—or whenever he went, which didn't win for him any attendance awards.

I don't remember that Mom ever had anything published. But her sound advice and spiritual principles were indelibly printed on the minds and hearts of her nine children and those of the Sunday school pupils she taught at a now nearly deserted Oregon lumber community. She knew how to discipline with a maple "switch" but could also do very well with a certain look and a few choice words. I'll never forget the time as young teens my younger brother and I got into a fight. Mother brought us together and reminded me that fighting was wrong and not Christlike. Moreover, I was bigger and had an unfair advantage over Lester. "You can hurt him severely," she told me with pain in her voice. Her Golden Rule plea convinced me that I not only hurt my brother, but also that she suffered even a greater pain when her siblings fought.

It was our last fight.

One of my fond memories of Mom was in the Bible Standard Church at Wendling, Oregon. During times set aside for the recitation of a favorite Scripture passage, Mom would often stand and recite John 14:1-4. That passage will always give hope to believers everywhere just like it did for my mother: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."

What I am and what I do for the Kingdom, in a certain measure, can be traced to her wonderful example. That contagious love she quietly demonstrated for her Lord persuaded others to seek Him.

Then a woman on the Warner side of the family remains special to me and other descendants.

Although I never met her, my great-grandmother Agnes Stewart Warner was another godly woman. She was one of the thousands who traveled overland to the west on the Oregon Trail, and she became the first school teacher in Springfield, Oregon.

Like so many of the women who made the journey, Grandmother Agnes kept a small diary of the westward trek. I have a transcribed edition of the diary and have held the original (along with a diary written by her 18-year-old sister Helen) at the University of Oregon Library's special collections.

Agnes' descriptive entries cover the strenuous travel over plains and mountains, and across deserts and rivers; short tempers and strained relationships; shortages of provisions, water, and wood for the camp fires; sicknesses and deaths of people and animals; stifling dust and spooked cattle in thunderstorms; and hope for a quick and safe arrival to their new homestead. The diary chronicles the nearly



The editor's parents, Ethel Bowers Warner (1894-1982) and Harry Warner (1885-1976). Mrs. Warner saw to it that Wayne and his eight siblings were in church and Sunday school in the now nearly deserted company town of Wendling, Oregon.



Agnes Stewart Warner, her husband Tom, and their three sons, Mason, Clyde, and George. Agnes wrote to Mason in 1888 concerning success in life: "Above all, get spiritual wealth that fadeth not away."

3,000-mile trip by boat and wagon from the Pittsburgh area to the Willamette Valley from March until October 1853. I have been pleased to note in Grandmother Agnes' diary—and later letters and oral history—the references to spiritual matters and a value system which rubbed off on her children and others. Just recently I saw a magazine article which quoted her diary twice—in her concern for the Native Americans and the Spanish women along the Oregon Trail.*

That heritage on the Warner side came alive last August when my wife and I returned to the Northwest along sections of the famous wagon trail. One of the stops which we had anticipated was the excellent Oregon Trail Interpretive Center at Baker City, Oregon—built and operated by the U.S. Interior Department. We had learned earlier that exhibit designers had selected quotations from overland diaries—including some from Agnes and Helen's writings. These had been set in large type and placed throughout the center. You can imagine my pride when words from my great-grandmother's 141-year-old Oregon Trail diary leaped off of the museum's wall at me. At least four times her reporting of the hardships are used.

A greater thrill comes though when I read what the 21-year-old Agnes expressed on Christian conduct and her devotion to the Lord. Shortly after the wagon train left St. Joseph, Missouri, she regretted the earthy and profane language men used in trying to manage stubborn oxen. "I think they might do without that, sinning their souls away for nothing. How plain we are told, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord, thy God, in vain.' And yet one would think there was no hereafter, or no God to serve."

Later, when the family's oxen were dying from overwork and starvation, she looked at the bright side. "We often hear of people losing all of their cattle, and we ought to feel grateful to the Lord for all his kindness to us."

Two years ago I learned of a collection at the University of Oregon library which contains 1888 letters from Agnes to her 17-year-old son Mason who was logging in Washington and separated from his family.

*Glenda Riley, "Oregon Trail Women & Native Americans," Oregon Humanities, Winter 1992, 33, 35.

Agnes' concern for both his physical and spiritual life comes through: "Before I leave this world, I would like to see you all settled in life, that is doing well for yourselves, but above all, get spiritual wealth that fadeth not away."

And in responding to young Mason's remarks concerning the rough crowd with whom he worked, Agnes wrote, "We must be in the world but not of it, as Paul says in the 5th chapter of 1st Cor. We would have to go out of the world to get away from them but we must not make bosom friends of them." She continued to encourage her son to keep his eyes and ears open so that he could help "some poor fellow that only wants a few words to change the whole current of their lives."

I became the proud curator of the Stewart family Bible 2 years ago when my cousin Gertrude Neet Johnson—who is now in her 80s and living in Tacoma, Washington—entrusted the two-volume treasure to me. Published in Scotland in the early 1800s, the Bible came with the family to Pennsylvania and on to Oregon aboard the wagon train. (Ask to see it when you are in the Archives.)

Let's be thankful for our spiritual heritage and not take lightly that impact on our lives and on those who follow us. Our children and succeeding generations need to know about their spiritual heritage through word of mouth, tape recorder, the printed page, computer disk, or whatever technology will keep it alive.

As you do pass on that knowledge to others, along with inspiration and instructions, you'll continue the precedent

Three octogenarian friends—Ralph Harris, William E. Pickthorn, and Bert Webb—are among many who are leaving their memoirs, thus following God's instructions to Joshua.

that God established with Joshua 3,500 years ago following the crossing of the Jordan River:

"When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever" (Joshua 4:21-24).

Right now I know of three octogenarian friends who are busy writing about the Red Seas in their lives—Ralph Harris, William E. Pickthorn, and Bert Webb—all of whom served in various leadership positions in the Assemblies of God.

Their efforts are in sharp contrast to the woman I met while researching for my biography of Kathryn Kuhlman. She offered little help, explaining, "I'm not interested in what happened in the past; I'm interested in what God is doing today."

Ralph, Bert, and William are interested in what God is doing today. But they also know the value of recording the

Continued on page 30



Wilfred A. Brown's *Wit and Wisdom*

These quotations were gleaned from sermons General Treasurer Wilfred A. Brown preached at the 1950 Southern Idaho District Council at Gooding, Idaho. The quotes were published in the *District Beacon* under the title, "Brown Spots," in March 1950.

Brown, a pastor and evangelist, was elected as the first full-time general treasurer in 1947. His responsibilities included directing *Revivaltime* and filling in as speaker following the death of General Superintendent Wesley R. Steelberg. Brown died a few days after being reelected to the treasurer's office in 1955.

We need a little less *talking* about what we have and a little more *demonstration* of what we have.

You say your church is too dry? I consign you to go back where you came from for 31 days. When you come back, you will come back panting for the Water of Life.

God never intended there should be

a difference between the clergy and the laity—and I hate both names.

I don't believe in a double standard, one for the ministry and one for the church.

When you buy a car, don't get a coupe. That's a selfish car, not a Pentecostal car.

Say "Amen" during the middle of a solo, and that person will sing like a cherub.

I want to be delivered from mechanics and have the dynamics.

Work is good for a person, and none of you look quite good enough to quit yet.

You will never build up a Sunday school without regular visitation. I like to get a call when I am well as much as when I am sick.

[The Bible] doesn't say that the preacher shall live by faith. It says

the just. Don't ask your preacher to do it unless you are willing to try it yourself.

After a good Sunday, preachers will go to a fellowship meeting that week; [they'll] give God all the glory and take all the credit.

You wouldn't go on the other side of the tracks after Sunday school children? Why, that is where most of us came from.

Too many Sunday schools are like an appendix. Everyone has one, but you don't know why.

My children attended church until about 5 hours before they were born and 2 weeks afterwards.

We have a younger generation of Pentecost, some say. Then hurry up and get old.



“Prayer and the Word of God were the primary emphases of Pastor Mahan in the ministry. He was so careful to honor God’s presence at church.”

—Lloyd Christiansen

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REV. B. E. MAHAN, Minister

DEPARTMENTAL SUNDAY SCHOOL	9:30 A.M.
CHILDREN'S CHURCH - SUNDAY	11:00 A.M.
PREACHING	11:00 A.M.
YOUNG CRUSADERS	6:30 P.M.
POPULAR EVANGELISTIC	7:30 P.M.
PRAYER	TUESDAY 1:00 P.M.
PENTECOSTAL HEALING	WEDNESDAY 7:45 P.M.
BIBLE STUDY	THURSDAY 8:00 P.M.
PRAYER	FRIDAY 7:45 P.M.

*Preaching Jesus - Savior - Healer
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WELCOME

The Ministry of Ben Mahan

A Man of Prayer and Conviction

By Glenn Gohr

One of the best-loved ministers in the formative years of the Assemblies of God was Benjamin E. Mahan. He pastored two influential congregations in the East—serving 19 years at Jeannette, Pennsylvania, and 17 years at the Full Gospel Tabernacle in Washington, D.C. He also was a popular camp meeting speaker, had a radio program, and contributed articles to the *Pentecostal Evangel*.

Carl Brumback enumerates Ben Mahan as one of four well-known pioneer preachers in the Assemblies of God who were all converted in 1914 at McKeesport, Pennsylvania. The other three notable pastors are Frank Lindquist, James Menzie, and Ben Hardin. Brumback describes Mahan as “a man with rugged convictions, a preacher of solid Bible messages.”¹

Mahan’s daughter Ruth remembers her father as a strong person—in the best sense of the word. “Never in my life,” she wrote, “did I hear him say anything against anyone unless it was some public figure like Hitler.”²

She also shares that he was very strong on church membership. First of all he emphasized salvation, but he also taught that it was important to be identified with a body of believers. He would tell people that a Christian without church membership is like a ship from a couple of hundred years ago which did not carry a flag. A ship without a flag was always considered a pirate ship. He felt it was much better to fly the flag of church membership for identification.³

Mahan not only had strong convictions, but he was humble. Once a friend remarked that he should receive a great reward in heaven because of his many labors in the ministry. Mahan answered that he tried to do what God wanted him to do and agreed that he would receive a reward as the Lord had promised. But he added, “I am sure that there will be just as big a reward for the man who, in the will of God, spent his life digging ditches!”⁴

Benjamin E. Mahan was born on a small farm near Ebensburg, Cambria County, Pennsylvania, in 1889. He was the youngest son of Thomas and Elizabeth J. (Reese) Mahan. His father was a veteran of the Civil War, having served in Company E, 171st Pennsylvania Regiment. During a conflict at Washington, North Carolina, in June 1863, Thomas Mahan was wounded so badly that his company had to leave him behind after the battle.⁵ He had to lie alongside the road for a day or two until scouts came along and carried him to the regimental surgeon for help. He never fully recovered from these wounds.

Thomas Mahan died just a few months after Ben was born. Ben’s mother brought him up in the Methodist church at McKeesport, Pennsylvania, where the family lived. Ben also attended the First Presbyterian Church there for a time in his youth.

Because Ben’s father was a veteran and had died when Ben was small, Ben Mahan was entitled to attend a military school with the state paying his tuition.⁶ He did well in his training and studies, and after graduating, Ben looked for a job in the Pittsburgh area. He found employment at

the United States Steel Company.⁷ The training and discipline he had received at the military school helped him to be a diligent office worker, and his supervisors were very pleased with his work. Although everything looked good for Mahan’s future, something was lacking in his life.

About this time Mahan was invited to a tent revival in a nearby town. The services were being held by the Free Gospel Society, headed by Frank and Will Casley.⁸ These services were marked by a great deal of fervor, but it was the preaching of the Word that gripped Mahan’s heart. That night he made a commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. Soon afterwards he received the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

The next day in the office, he told his friend and coworker, Ben Hardin, about the meetings and of his commitment to the Lord. He invited Hardin to attend the services with him, so the next night they went together to the Casley meeting, and Ben Hardin gave his heart and life to the Lord.⁹

Not long after this, Ben Hardin invited Mahan home for dinner and introduced him to his sister, Nelle, a registered nurse. At the time, she was engaged to a Methodist minis-

The day after his conversion in a tent meeting, Mahan invited his friend Ben Hardin to attend. He too was saved, and both became well-known A/G ministers.



Ben Hardin

ter. But she broke off the engagement soon after this meeting. Nelle Hardin was to become the future Mrs. Ben Mahan. And the two Bens remained good friends as long as they lived.

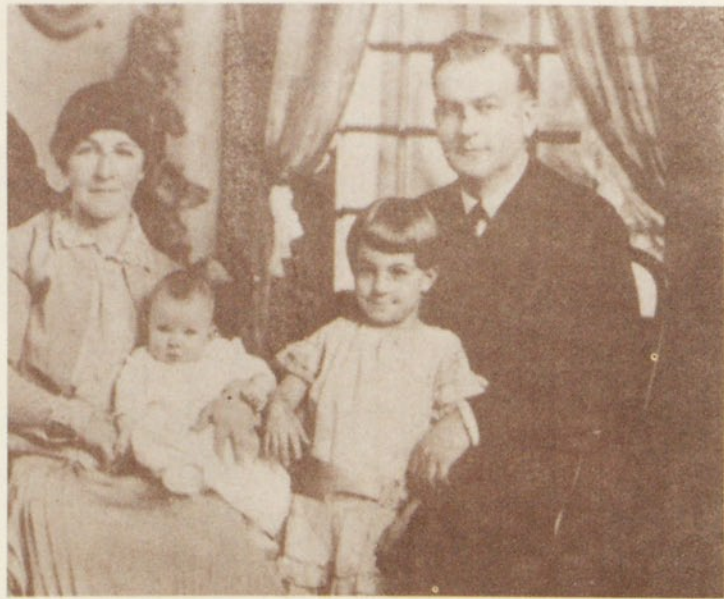
As time went on, Ben Mahan felt the Lord was calling him into ministry. After praying earnestly, he surveyed the area and felt the Lord was leading him to Jeannette, Pennsylvania, since there was no Pentecostal work there. He didn’t know anyone in Jeannette. It was a town of about 20,000 persons and had several thriving industries, including six glass factories and the Pennsylvania Rubber Company.¹⁰

So in 1914 Ben Mahan started preaching on a street corner on Saturday nights. To his knowledge no one had ever done such a thing in Jeannette. Since Saturday night was when most of the residents went to the stores to shop, he was bound to draw a crowd. He did encounter hecklers and drunks who made trouble, but this zealous young man was sure he was doing exactly what God wanted him to do.

Each week people responded, and after a few months, these believers were talking about how they could meet to worship together. The only place available that they could afford was the second floor above a butcher shop on Clay Avenue. So they established a mission in that place. With evangelism always on his mind, Pastor Mahan suggested

they meet on Sunday afternoons. In this way perhaps they would attract the attention of people who might otherwise be busy during the morning or evening.

The church at Jeannette continued to grow through the hard work of the pastor and its members. But the church was not without problems. Its growth had surprised (and displeased) some of the other local ministers. Around 1918 some local pastors became angry with Mahan, because they felt he was proselytizing their members. In reality, the



The Benjamin E. Mahan family while in the Jeannette (Pennsylvania) pastorate, 1927.

members were leaving of their own accord because they had a hunger for spiritual food which they were not receiving in their own churches.

These ministers had a plan to get rid of Mahan. Since the United States had been brought into the first World War, they conspired to make Mahan look like a draft dodger.¹¹ However, he hadn't been a draft dodger at all. Mahan had reported as required by law and taken a physical exam. He had been turned down because of an eye injury which he had received while in training at the military school. It never was much of a handicap to him, and he was surprised that the military doctor emphasized the eye injury when he reported for the draft.

When the rumor started about Mahan being a draft dodger, he simply kept quiet unless asked. He felt that God was his defense. Eventually a reporter came to inquire about the rumor. Being an honest man, the reporter sensed that he could straighten out the story by writing a brief, personal history of Mahan's life and the story of the church he had founded. This settled the matter for good.

In the beginning years, Mahan held credentials with the United Free Gospel and Missionary Society of Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania, headed by Frank and Will Casley. Assemblies of God credentials were granted on April 29, 1919.¹² And after a 3-year courtship, on July 31, 1919, Ben Mahan and Nelle Diana Hardin were married at McKeesport.

It wasn't long before the Jeannette congregation outgrew the upstairs mission. The United Presbyterian Church was offered for sale, and Mahan and his congregation took a daring step of faith. In 1919 they purchased this choice building right on the main street of town. That same year the church received a charter from the State of Pennsylvania and was incorporated as the "Pentecostal Church of Jeannette."¹³ On September 28, 1923, they became affiliated with the General Council of the Assemblies of God.¹⁴

As the church at Jeannette grew, an extensive remodeling and enlarging of the building became necessary and was completed in 1925. About 5 years later a large addition and prayer room were added to the building. The growth and ministry of the Jeannette assembly continued strong even through the Depression years.

Mahan always spent early mornings in prayer and Bible study. Mondays were mostly set aside to visit anyone who wasn't able to get to church on Sunday. Wilbur Hoak, a retired minister now living at Jeannette, came into the church at age 16 and was greatly influenced by Mahan. Hoak remembers that any time someone missed a church service, that Mahan would either call or visit them immediately.¹⁵

George R. Wood, missionary to China and father of General Secretary George O. Wood, was converted under Mahan's ministry in Jeannette. (See Wood feature in this issue.) Ben Mahan also shepherded the Koch family. William Koch served as treasurer of the church from the time he first began attending until he died. Currently his youngest son, Paul Koch, is the church treasurer. And

As a result of his street preaching, Ben Mahan started a thriving church in Jeannette, Pennsylvania.

William Koch's daughter, Gladys, attended Beulah Heights Bible Training School in New Jersey and went to India in 1927 as a missionary from the Jeannette Church.¹⁶ The next year she married a teacher from the Beulah Heights school, Maynard Ketcham. The church women at Jeannette made all of Gladys Ketcham's clothes for India and supplied her fare and support.

Gladys Ketcham was saved in 1918 under Mahan's ministry. "Those early days [at the Jeannette Church] were heaven on earth," she recalls. "My mother and her two sisters (Mrs. Smail and Mrs. Horning) never missed a meeting. We stayed at the church all hours of the night." She further declares, "Sometimes I went home from church at 2:00 a.m., got up at 4:00 a.m., and walked down to the railroad station and got a train at 5:00 a.m. to go to work at Westinghouse Electric Co. in East Pittsburgh."¹⁷

Ruth Spence, who is Mahan's daughter, fondly remembers the Jeannette church during her father's ministry. "The crowds were large, attendance grew steadily, and revival meetings were just that—true revivals with a great ingathering of new converts." She was saved at age seven in one

Remembering Ben Mahan at Jeannette, Pennsylvania

Pastor Ben Mahan built a very large church for that day. There was good music with an orchestra and violinists. The church had carpet from wall to wall. And behind the baptistry there was a painting of Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.* This probably reflected the kind of person that Ben Mahan was. He felt prayer was the center of things. It was right to get down on your knees and pray.

My impressions as a child were that he was the kind of person that you had the feeling he was very godly. You just felt like when he walked into the church, that he was of such good character that he always gave you confidence that God was in charge of this world. He went right to the front and knelt at the altar for the next 30 to

45 minutes to pray. He prayed in a steady way, not vociferous. The people would follow his example and also kneel in prayer.

Anybody who knew Ben Mahan had a sense of his genuineness. He radiated a very credible Christian life. He was not a foolish kind of person. He was very consistent. Even if others did not live up to the gospel, you always KNEW that Pastor Mahan had been a genuine Christian.

—Dr. Calvin Holsinger

*Mahan used this same pose of Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane for the baptistry of the Full Gospel Tabernacle in Washington, D.C. The baptistry in Washington, D.C. was inscribed with these words: "Men Ought Always to Pray, And Not to Faint" (Luke 18:1).



Dr. Calvin Holsinger, history professor at Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri, grew up in the Jeannette, Pennsylvania, church which Ben Mahan founded in 1914. He has fond memories of the church building, its first pastor, and the examples he set for his congregation.

of these great revival meetings. "The Holy Spirit during the preaching of God's Word," she recalls, "had convicted me so that I felt like a great sinner and felt my need of Jesus Christ as Savior. My precious Sunday school teacher, Mrs. Eva Norling, prayed with me for salvation."¹⁸

And Mahan felt the ministry of the church should reach out to surrounding areas. In addition to serving his own congregation, he began driving to mining camps and towns within a day's journey to assess the needs for evangelism. He preached everywhere he found an opportunity. Under his leadership a number of Assemblies of God churches were organized in western Pennsylvania.¹⁹

After nearly 19 years in Jeannette, Ben Mahan felt the Lord had a move in store for him. At the time he left Jeannette in 1933, the church had a Sunday school averag-

Ben Mahan, seated on right, is here with friends. Standing on left is Mahan's brother-in-law, Ben Hardin, a pastor and evangelist; on the right is Harry Wright, a missionary to Africa. Man seated on the left is unidentified.



ing over 400 members.²⁰ And there were between 12 and 16 missionaries on the field supported all or in part by the Jeannette church. Recently the church celebrated its 80th anniversary, and it was noted that 61 men and women have responded to the call of the ministry.²¹ Many of these attended the church while Mahan was pastor.

From Jeannette, he went to Cleveland, Ohio, to pastor. He was there only 2 years when the Full Gospel Tabernacle of Washington, D.C. called him to be their pastor in 1934. The Full Gospel Tabernacle was a thriving congregation at North Capitol and K Streets. Harry L. Collier, its founder, had recently passed away, so they were in need of a pastor.

Ben Mahan did feel the leading of God to go to Washington, D.C., but several months transpired before he arrived. One of the church members, Leland Despain, now living in Springfield, Missouri, remembers Mahan's election and arrival at the Full Gospel Tabernacle. "My wife and I were married on June 14, 1934, and went to Miami for our honeymoon. Within the two weeks that we were gone," he recalls, "the church had a business meeting and elected Ben Mahan pastor, but he didn't come until November."

The day that Ben Mahan preached his first sermon as pastor of Full Gospel Tabernacle was important to Leland Despain, for he recorded the text and the date in his Bible. The date was November 18, 1934, and his text was Matthew 26:39: "And he went a little farther and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."²²

On February 4, 1935, Mahan brought Full Gospel Tabernacle into the General Council of the Assemblies of

Continued on page 34



“I was saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit during the revival at Wiser Chapel, about 3 months before I was 9 years old.”

—Cecil R. Corbin

The author stands at the old Wiser Chapel site near the Missouri-Arkansas border.

An Eye-witness Recalls the 1919 Missouri Outpouring

The Revival in Wiser Chapel

By Cecil R. Corbin

Farmers in the rural area along the Arkansas-Missouri border in the late summer of 1919 had harvested their wheat and oats and now were waiting and praying for rain so their thirsty corn and sorghum would mature.

What they were not expecting was a Pentecostal revival to strike the local community church in a farming area about 4 miles east of the Oregon County seat of Alton, Missouri, along what is now U.S. 160.

A few old-timers can still recall that mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Wiser Chapel.

Revival was nothing new to Oregon County residents; first a remarkable revival shook Thayer in 1909 and then Couch in 1913. (See “The Great Ozark Mountain Revival” by Harry E. Bowley, summer 1982; and “Ozarks Revival Roots,” by Betty Jo Kenney, summer 1991.)

The Pentecostal blessing that came to Thayer in 1909 and then spread to Couch in 1913 had stirred hearts and touched lives in an exceptional way. The Pentecostal torch which blazed so brightly in those areas was destined to be carried to other locations. Meetings had been conducted in the

Nebo community, not far from Wiser Chapel for a year or so. Old-timers recall that services were held on Ed Johnson's farm—they say the meeting place was dubbed "Ed Johnson's Shed". There was a need for a permanent meeting place so a frame building had been constructed on land which the Babe Wiser family owned. It was not a large building, but it was outfitted with wooden benches and a rostrum, and it was a comfortable place for worship in those days. This new place of worship took on the name of Wiser Chapel immediately—in fact the Wiser family lived only short distance away.

Three individuals, who had been saved and baptized in the Holy Ghost during the Couch Revival, were led of the Lord to begin nightly revival services at Wiser Chapel in 1919. They were Marvin Biffle, Clyde Risner, and Tom Corbin. These men left farm work with their families and began to pray and to preach. They days and nights were hot, but people came from everywhere it seemed to attend the meetings. There were very

When John Corbin witnessed to a backslider under conviction at the close of a service, the man angrily began to choke him. He later repented and renewed his faith in the Lord.

few cars in those days so people came on horseback, in buggies, in wagons, and on foot.

Marvin Biffle and Clyde Risner did the preaching in those meetings and Tom Corbin came along to intercede in prayer and to serve as the interpreter of messages in tongues. The three preachers stayed in the homes of the people in the community as was done in early Bible times. They accepted the hospitality of those good farm folk with only one stipulation—that the three of them be allowed to spend the day in reading the Bible and in prayer and supplication before the Lord.

I recall one instance when the preachers came to our house to spend the night and the next day. A man by the name of Fletcher Cox was seek-

ing the baptism in the Holy Ghost, so he would go along with the ministers and stay all night too. He came to our house that night. After a night of rest and a good country breakfast, my father, John Corbin, said, "Well, Fletcher, while the preachers are praying, you can go with me and cut sawmill timber." Cox was dressed in his blue shirt and bib overalls so my father thought it would be all right for him to help him in the timber. Father worked Cox all day long in the steaming hot woods, and as would be assumed, he did not return to our house.

God began from the very start to bless the meetings and many people were saved and baptized in the Holy Ghost. Certainly there was opposition, for Satan always opposes when God begins to pour out his Spirit. I remember one Sunday morning after an exceptionally blessed service there was a man who was backslidden but had attended the service that morning. My father felt impressed to talk to him about his soul. The building was still full of people and the center aisle was crowded, so my father began walking from one bench to the other until he reached the back of the building. He began to talk to the man, but he refused to listen, instead he grabbed my father by the throat and began to choke him. God came on the scene, however, as my dad began to rebuke Satan and to pray, and the man turned him loose. He apologized for what he had done, and I understand that he did repent and came back to the Lord before he died.

My mother and the four children could not attend many of the week-night services since the only means of transportation we had was the farm wagon; the horses had to rest and feed at night so they could work in the fields the next day. My father would walk to the church, which was about 4 miles from our home, after he had worked on the farm all day. One man recalled that my father would run down most of the hills so that he could get to the church on time.

I remember hearing my parents tell



of the time that some rough-neck young men tried to take over the meetings when services were being held on Johnson's farm. They were drinking and came up on the platform and tried to preach and testify, but the power of the Holy Spirit came against them and they had to desist. I recall an instance during the Wiser Chapel revival when very discouraging news came to Marvin Biffle. He was told that one of his horses had died. He had only a team of horses so this meant that he would have to do this farming with only one horse. When he was told the bad news, Brother Biffle replied, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

There was a marvelous, charismatic and God-loving family in the community by the name of Newberry. Michael Newberry was one of the old-time circuit-riding Methodist preachers of his day. Members of this family, all of which were adults at that time, served as the nucleus for holding this place of worship together. There was Annie, who was married to John Jenkins; Ruth, whose husband was Ed Cockman; Clara, married to Babe Wiser; and Mamie who was married to "Doc" Brown. Also, there was Lee Newberry whose wife was Dora, a sister of John Jenkins.

There was not a village nor a settlement at the Wiser Chapel location. It was just a little country church where people loved the Lord and where God chose to pour out the Pentecostal blessing in an unusual fashion. From these humble beginnings many ministers, missionaries and laymen have served or are currently serving in the Assemblies of God, other Pentecostal groups, and other denominations. Some of those persons who can trace their spiritual roots to Wiser Chapel and have served or are now serving as ministers of the Gospel are:

Ed Cockman (deceased), Harry Jenkins (deceased)

Kenneth Brown—pastor of Peoples Church, Arnold, Missouri.

Ralph Jenkins—retired, United Methodist Church

Don Corbin—field director for Africa, Assemblies of God

Ed Corbin—missionary to Southern Africa, Assemblies of God

Olin Brown—retired, uncle of Kenneth

James Cockman, son of Ed

Gene Putnam, founded a St. Louis church

Claudie Johnson (deceased) and Noel Johnson, his son

Clara Newberry Wiser (deceased), wife of Ed

Michael and David Brown, sons of Olin Brown

Gary Cockman, son of James Cockman

David Putnam, son of Gene Putnam

Donna Tilley, daughter of Kenneth Brown (she is school administrator



and her husband is associate pastor, Peoples Church, Arnold, Missouri)

Craig Corbin, son of Don Corbin, missionary to Kenya, East Africa

Cherisse Corbin Jackson, daughter of Don Corbin, wife of Chaplain Keith Jackson, Okinawa, Japan

In a letter from Glen Jenkins, Alton, Missouri, he wrote, "It was stated in 1979 at a family reunion in memory of Parson Michael Newberry that a total of at least 21 persons from the Newberry family had been or were ministers of the Gospel." What a heritage for the Kingdom!

Many people who attended the meetings were healed. I remember well, one Sunday afternoon during the revival, when a number of the members of the congregation sensed the need to come together and pray for the services that night. They were all praying in the front yard at the home of Brother and Sister Wiser. Brother Ed Cockman had been diagnosed as having tuberculosis; so he

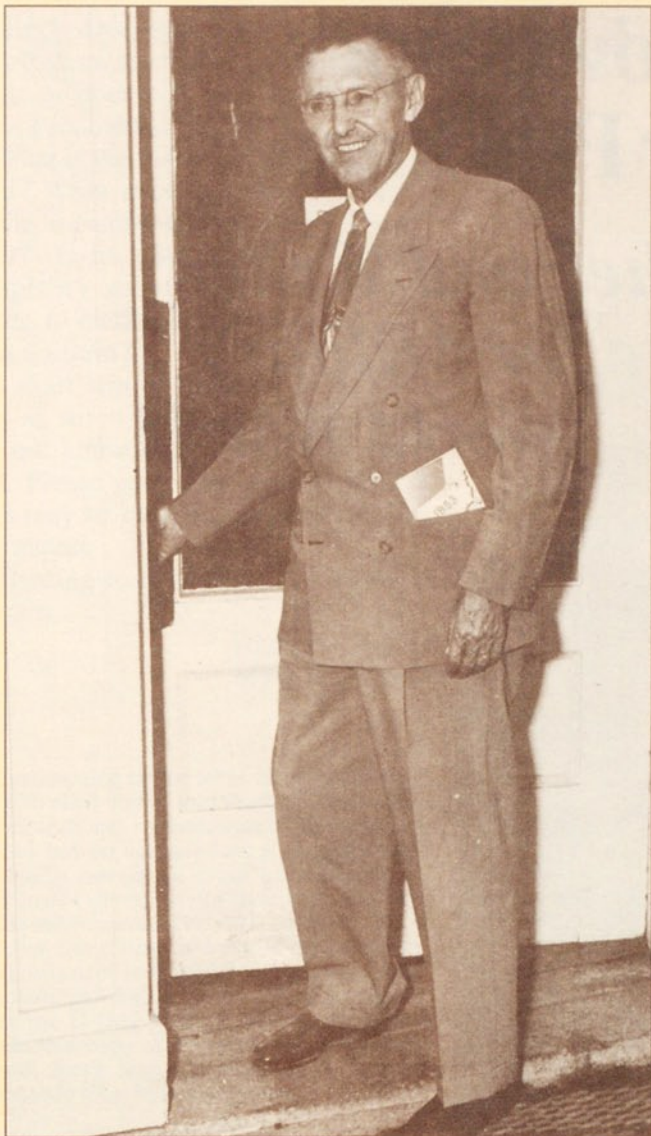
asked the people to pray for him, and when they did he was healed instantly. It was not long until he went into full time ministry and served for many years as an Assemblies of God minister in the Southern Missouri District.

My mother Lydia Corbin was baptized in the Holy Spirit during the meetings at Nebo (Johnson's Shed). I was saved and baptized in the Holy Spirit during the revival at Wiser Chapel, about 3 months before I was 9 years old. I recall, also, that Harry Jenkins received the baptism in the Holy Spirit the same night that I did. Brother Jenkins served as an Assemblies of God pastor in the Southern Missouri District for many years before his death February 15, 1964. His pastorates included churches at Houston, Willow Springs, Steelville, Rolla, Senath, Versailles, Bismarck and Ironton. His wife Violet lived at the Southern Missouri District Campground for a number of years after the death of her husband. She went to be with the Lord in 1993. Many individuals were saved and blessed as a result of the revival, but I can recall only a few of their names.

The revival at Wiser Chapel, led by Brothers Biffle, Risner and Corbin lasted for several weeks. But after these fine men had returned to their homes and their farm work, the revival continued and the Pentecostal fire continued to burn. This little country church stood as a spiritual beacon in the community for the saving of souls and for sounding the Pentecostal message for several years. Clara Wiser was a strong force in keeping the church going. Many of the ministers liked to come back to Wiser Chapel, not only to preach, but to recall that their Pentecostal roots were easily traceable to the 1919 revival in this little country church.

Apparently there were evangelistic meetings held in the county seat town of Alton, Missouri, which spurred the revival at Wiser Chapel. I do not recall such meetings, but I am informed that a tent meeting was held in Alton, probably not long after

Continued on page 32



Left, J. O. Savell, as an assistant general superintendent in 1953. Above, Savell's widow Ibbie during a 1991 interview with Wayne Warner.

1933: Taking Inventory in a New Pastorate

When Trinity Tabernacle, Baytown, Texas, observed its 75th anniversary in November, one of the late pastors honored was J. O. Savell. *Heritage* thought its readers would like to read a letter from Savell to General Secretary J. R. Evans when he accepted the pastorate in June 1933. Maintaining a sense of humor, Savell painted a pretty gloomy picture of his new charge at what was then called Goose Creek, Texas.

"There are so many angles to this work here that to me it will require a man with the tenacity of a mosquito, the persistency of a house fly, the ingenuity of a Noah, the executive ability of a Joseph, the impertunity of a Jacob, the wisdom of a Solomon, the patience of a Job, the meekness of a Moses, the righteousness of Abraham, the faith of Elijah, the militant spirit of Joshua, the courage of Jehu, the adroitness of Nathan, the cunningness of Tamar, the tears of a Jeremiah, the oratory of a Tertullus; yea, and a man

with understanding of dreams and dark sentences, augmented with the love of a John the divine, and endurance of a Samson, together with a man whose heart is filled with the praise of a David—plus the power of God. Then if I should feel disposed to supplement the list, I might add that it will require the longevity of a Methuselah if one would care to live to see the fruits of his labors."

And as if wondering if he had gotten himself in the wrong pastorate, Savell asked, "Art thou the man?"

It turned out that despite the difficult situation, Savell was the man for the church and not only gave it new life during the early 1930s but returned for 4 years in the 1940s and again as interim pastor in the 1950s. He also served as superintendent of the old Texas District (1947-52) and as an assistant general superintendent (1952-57).

Still involved in Trinity Tabernacle are four Savell generations: his widow Ibbie; their three children, J. Paul, David, and Ruth; grandchildren; and great-grandchildren.

A Little-Known Story About Myer Pearlman

This Bible Teacher and Writer Was a Candidate for Military Chaplaincy During World War II



In August Dr. Robert Berg, a professor at Evangel College, delivered to the Archives an old hand-written letter on a Gospel Publishing House letterhead. Stanley Berg, his father and pastor emeritus of Glad Tidings Tabernacle, New York City, had asked Robert to deliver the letter because of its historical significance.

The letter is dated March 27, 1943, and was written by Myer Pearlman, a popular instructor at what is now Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri, and curriculum and book writer for Gospel Publishing House. Pearlman wrote to Stanley Berg—then an army chaplain and a 1937 graduate of the school—about the possibilities of his leaving the Bible college and also becoming a military chaplain.

Before World War I began, Pearlman had come to the U.S. from Scotland and later served in the medical corps in Europe. The Pearlman family donated his World War I army uniform to the Archives.

At the time he wrote the 1943 letter, Pearlman was contributing to the spiritual needs of military men and women as editor of

Reveille, a free interdenominational paper which the Assemblies of God published by the millions of copies. In reading excerpts below, you will note that Pearlman was concerned about qualifying educationally. Although he had taught at the Bible school for nearly 20 years and had written several doctrinal books, he had only a Bible institute education.

Secondly, keep in mind that the beloved Myer Pearlman experienced what was termed a “breakdown” and died in a veteran’s hospital on July 13—less than 4 months after this letter was written. The Pearlman Memorial Library is on the campus of Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri.

March 27, 1943

Dear Brother Berg:

Many thanks for your last letter. I always enjoy hearing about your work.

As you no doubt have guessed from reading between the lines of a previous letter, I have been thinking about the chaplaincy, wondering how I would fit in. Have prayed about the matter and am willing to go if God so wills and directs. For this reason I would greatly appreciate your kindness in answering some questions.

Do you know whether the government waives the formal educational requirements in the case of those who possess the equivalent? This would be my only chance of getting in.

Is each chaplain on his own, or does he work in partnership with another? Is he required to organize entertainment or supervise social

affairs? Does the work differ very much from the usual pastoral ministry, or does it present some problems peculiar to army life?

What is the pay of a 1st Lieut., married? What expenses does he have while in camp—such as room, board, etc.? Is he paid while attending chaplain's school? Is an allowance made to enable him to purchase his first uniform?

I shall appreciate your regarding this as strictly confidential, since we do not know how matters will turn out. Please pray with me that God's will may be clearly seen and done in the matter.

Trusting to hear from you soon. I remain,

Yours sincerely,
Myer Pearlman

Commenting on the letter recently, Stanley Berg recalled that he told Pearlman that under the educational requirements at the time he would not be accepted as a chaplain. Of course it became a moot point because Pearlman's illness would have kept him out of the military even if he did qualify.

After completing training in this country, Berg was sent to England as a replacement chaplain and then to Normandy a few days after the D-Day landing on June 6, 1944. While this issue of *Heritage* was being prepared, Berg was planning to return to Normandy for a 50th anniversary.

A GREAT BIBLE TEACHER PROMOTED



The 45-year-old Myer Pearlman died in July 1943, less than 4 months after he inquired about entering the army chaplaincy. Charles Ramsay, a Gospel Publishing House artist, drew this likeness for the August 7, 1943, *Pentecostal Evangel*.



Stanley Berg (center) with two other World War II army chaplains. On the left is Grant Wacker, Sr.; Max Davis is on the right.

Christ's Ambassadors*

Copyright, 1928, by the So. Calif. & Ariz.
District Council of the Assemblies of God

Melody by Mrs. Geo. Wagner
Harmony by N. L. Ridderhof

Mrs. Geo. Wagner

Chorus

We are Christ's Am-bas-sa-dors; And our col-ors we must un-furl.
we're marching

We must wear a spot-less robe, Clean and righteous be-fore the world.
we're walking

We must show we're cleansed from sin; And that Je-sus dwells with-in.
Oh, glo-ry

Prov-ing du-ly that we're tru-ly Christ's Am-bas-sa-dors. Am-bas-sa-dors.

A 1962 REPRINT

The Story of a Song

Composer of "Christ's Ambassadors" With the Lord

By Leonard Palmer



Leonard Palmer

The composer of the Christ's Ambassadors song is dead. The little lady who 34 years ago wrote "We Are Christ's Ambassadors," the theme song of Assemblies of God youth around the world, passed to her eternal reward March 8, 1962.

Youth of the Assemblies of God formerly were known as Christ's Ambassadors, or C.A.'s. Verona Wagner wrote "Christ's Ambassadors" in 1928, which was adopted as the official youth song. Although still sung by some youth groups, it is no longer the official song.

This article appeared in the July 1962 C. A. Herald, pages 8-10, as "The Song Lives On," by Leonard Palmer. Palmer was Verona Wagner's pastor at First Assembly, Taft, California, at the time of her death in 1962. Leonard Palmer, 86, passed away at Fairfield, California, on November 12, 1994. He held pastorates, conducted evangelistic meetings, was principal of a Bible college in Australia, and served as superintendent of the Montana and Northern California and Nevada districts. The Northern California and Nevada District featured him in their August 1994 issue of *Glad Tidings*.

Verona Elizabeth Wagner Lyden was born Verona Elizabeth Rowe at Negaunee, Michigan, May 29, 1892. Her parents soon moved to California, and Verona grew up in the mountain mining areas near Sonora, Jamestown, and Chinese Camp. About 1925, as a young bride, she moved with her husband to Taft, California, where she was influenced by the gospel for the first time. As the Word was ministered in power she was convicted and yielded her life to Christ.

Not long after her conversion she received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. With her musical training and ability she soon became the choir and orchestra director at the Four-Fold Gospel Tabernacle (now First Assembly of God) in Taft and was greatly blessed of God in this activity.

Almost immediately after her conversion she became gifted at composing gospel songs. While working

about her home she would become inspired with sacred verse and music. Following periods of private prayer or after a cottage prayer meeting or an especially blessed church service, God would inspire her with words and music which would come with such speed she could hardly write them down. When her daughters came home from school, she would teach the song to them, and they would sing it at church that night. Thus she composed almost 40 gospel songs.

During one of the early Christ's Ambassadors conventions in the Southern California District, several people were asked to write possible C. A. theme songs. Going home from the convention, Mrs. Wagner prayed earnestly that God would give her the song which would be a blessing to young people for years to come. God heard her cry. She was soon inspired to begin writing. As she took her pen and notebook, the thrilling words,

"We young people march on for Jesus, We are joined as Christ's Ambassadors," seemed to leap onto the page before her. As she came to the chorus her soul was aflame with the stirring words:

*We are Christ's Ambassadors;
And our colors we must unfurl.
We must wear a spotless robe,
Clean and righteous before the
world.*

*We must show we're cleansed from
sin;
And that Jesus dwells within,
Proving duly that we're truly
Christ's Ambassadors.*

The words to the other verses followed in quick succession. She sat down at the piano and wrote out the tune. The next day the convention delegates were inspired and blessed as Mrs. Wagner's daughters sang the song.

Mrs. Wagner's song was chosen over all others submitted as the C. A. theme song. Today in almost every land, on every continent, and in many languages the song's thrilling message still challenges Pentecostal youth.

Those days of joyous victory in Mrs. Wagner's life were succeeded by years of disappointment, disillusionment, and spiritual loss—days when even some of their dearest friends wondered whether or not



Verona Wagner

she'd ever return to the love of the wonderful Savior she once held so dear. But about 12 years earlier during the ministry of Norman L. Field, pastor in Taft, she and her husband came back to the Lord. Her heart was full again of the great love of Jesus. For the past five years she had been an invalid, for one and one-half years confined to her home. But while the body was weak, the spirit was strong and uncomplaining. During the last year of her life she was especially delighted to enjoy the monthly ministrations of the Holy Communion by her pastor and would often sit and

talk at length about the other days of great blessing.

Hymns sung at her funeral included "Christ's Ambassadors." Among the floral pieces sent for the occasion was one from the National C. A. Department and another with the C. A. motif designed in lovely flowers sent by the Southern California District Christ's Ambassadors.

"Our hearts are grieved with yours; and yet with you we rejoice in the triumphant homegoing of one who has left a rich and blessed heritage to us all!" was the message received by the family of Mrs. Verona Elizabeth Wagner Lyden from the Southern California District Christ's Ambassadors.

The National C. A. Department sent the following message: "We are pointedly reminded that among those outstanding persons who have left a tremendous impact upon the youth of the Assemblies of God, known worldwide as 'Christ's Ambassadors,' your loved one's position is unique indeed. Through her inspired composition which has become their theme song, she has left an indelible impression upon multiplied thousands of C.A.'s for good and for God. We share your grief; we also share her victory!"

ARCHIVES ACTIVITIES

Robert W. Fredricks, First Assembly, Kirksville, MO: "Camp News, 6th Annual Camp," Northern California-Nevada District, 1939. **Paul Feller and Helen (Feller) McCartney**: materials on T. K. Leonard and Findlay, OH, church; missionary prayer cards. **Everett Kelly**: photos of Dan McNally and Jonathan E. Perkins. **Adele Dalton**: photos of dedication of J. Roswell Flower Hall, Central Bible College; cassette interviews of Alice Reynolds Flower and J. Roswell Flower. **Decade of Harvest**: videos of Charles T. Crabtree, "A Visit From the Director." **Paul Hild**: *The Gospel Broadcast* (North Central District ?), Oct. 1930. **Bob Berg**: Letter from Myer Pearlman (March 27, 1943) to R. S. Berg regarding military chaplaincy. **Smith Haley**: J. Rufus Moseley news clippings; History of Fire Baptized Holiness Church, by J. H. King; material on B. H. Irwin.

Jackie Cone: material on Anne Eberhardt (missionary to India). **Hart Armstrong**: book, *The Last 7 on Earth: The First 7 in Heaven* and tract "If God Meant What He Said, We'd Better Listen." **T. E. Hartshorn**: Ohio camp meeting brochures, district bulletins, and photos. **Eloise Dickert**: miscellaneous magazines and photos. **Benton Linder**: photos of Central Assembly, Springfield, MO. **First Assembly, Toms River, NJ**: photos of Anna

Duborg. **Douglas Rudd**, P.A.O.C. Archives: book, *Canadian Pentecostals: A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*, by Thomas William Miller. **Jean Smith**: magazines. **George O. Wood**: 80th Anniversary materials. **Jeanette**, PA, A/G; articles by Peter Kuzmic. **David Willis**: miscellaneous materials including materials from Full Gospel Tabernacle, Fresno, CA.

Patricia Pickard: video interview with David and Dawn Crabtree; *The Witness of God*, March 1932; articles on Charles Parham; miscellaneous items from Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa; newspaper clippings on Clifford and Helen Crabtree; other newspaper clippings and photos. **Alice Shedd**: photos of early Pentecostal activities in the eastern U.S. **Thomas Trask**: Morehouse, MO, A/G History (1954-94). **Tony and Marvel Frantes**: *Maranatha Village Voice* (1984-91). **Ruby Wischart**: video, "Miracles Yesterday, Today, and Forever," ministry of Oral Roberts and Benny Hinn. **Leland Despain**: scrapbook.

Wayne Warner: TV program video, "Something Beautiful," interview on ministry of Kathryn Kuhlman. **Southeastern College**: periodicals, *Motif*, *Home Missions*, and *The Silent Ambassador*. **Carl D. Holleman**: group photo of missionaries at 1947 General Council. **Arthur Lindvall**: person-

At the right, Anne Eberhardt, who served as a missionary in North India (1931-74). She now resides at Maranatha Village, Springfield, Missouri. Jackie Cone donated to the Archives materials on Miss Eberhardt's ministry.



al papers focusing on his ministry to El Salvador. **Mary Lennox**: Grace Walther's missionary items, including Tibetan clothing. **James Kessler**: videos and films, "Send the Light," "This Is Ghana—Past and Present." **DFM**: materials on World Prayer Meeting, Seoul, Korea. **Billy Graham Center Archives**: copy of A/G film, "They Have Overcome: The Congo...Missionaries."



Fourth in a Series
Parental Influence on
Assemblies of God Leaders

Workers for the Lord

General Secretary George O. Wood Reflects on the Life of His Parents, George R. and Elizabeth Weidman Wood

An Interview With Wayne Warner

Dr. George O. Wood is the general secretary of the Assemblies of God, elected to that position in 1993. His parents, George R. and Elizabeth Weidman Wood were missionaries to Northwest China and Tibet before and after World War II. Mrs. Wood went to China in 1924 as a single missionary. Mr. Wood joined her in 1932.

Readers of the *Pentecostal Evangel* during those periods will remember reports from the Woods in remote areas of China and Tibet. When forced to remain in this country during World War II, the Woods pastored Assemblies of God congregations. They returned to China in 1947 and resumed the ministry they had left 10 years earlier. But when the Communists took over in 1949, the Woods—along with other missionaries—were forced out of China for good. Their remaining ministry was in the U.S.

Their children are Doris, Paul, and George. George was born in 1941 and accompanied his family to China when he was 6 years old. He has returned to China three times since 1988 where he visited the church his parents left when they returned to the U.S., a church that now has over 5,000 baptized believers.

Elizabeth Weidman Wood, whose sister Ruth Plymire and brother Paul Weidman also served as Assemblies of God missionaries, died in 1979 at the age of 81. George R. Wood died in 1984 at the age of 76.

WW: Dr. Wood, we're going to talk about your mother and father and their ministry in China and this country. We'll also discuss their influence on your life. So let's go right back to the beginning. Tell us where it all began.

GW: I'd always known my mother was from Cleveland, Ohio, and as a child I heard her talk a lot about her father Oliver Weidman. I heard the stories about how he was a great prayer warrior, that he sold pots and pans door-to-door, that he never owned a car, and that he would ride the street car. At street car changes he would stand on the corner and hold an impromptu street meeting. His kids would duck for cover. He'd bring homeless people to the house and invite them to sit down at the large family table for a meal. When Pentecost came to Cleveland, Grandfather Weidman became a Pentecostal. That was my grandfather.

WW: You mentioned that your grandfather was a staunch believer in the soon coming of Christ and had little use for life insurance.

GW: Mom would talk about the fact that he did not believe in

life insurance like many of the early Pentecostals, because that would, you know, in effect, testify to the idea that you didn't believe the Lord was returning soon if you were expected to die. But Grandpa Weidman died in 1922. Mother delayed her going to the mission field for 2 years to work in a bank to pay off his funeral expenses. She would always say very wryly, thereafter, that she believed in life insurance.

WW: Let's talk more about the Weidman family and their spiritual roots.

GW: Until I was 24, I had not realized my mother was born not in Cleveland but in Portland, Pennsylvania. Once when I was in the area, I met Mother's cousin James Weidman, whose father

Some of his own family called Grandfather Oliver Weidman a religious fanatic. But his children and grandchildren followed his godly example.

James had been the town banker and my grandfather Oliver's brother.

"Boy," he said, "your grandfather was a real fanatic." And I said, "He was? Tell me about him. I never knew him. He died long before I was born." James told me that my grandfather lived in Portland, and he sold candy and newspapers and magazines on the train. He'd get on the train as it came through in the morning and ride it all day, and then get off at night. And one day his boss came to him and said, "Beginning Monday morning, you're going to begin selling cigarettes and cigars." And Oliver said, "I'm a Christian. I don't believe people should smoke those things, and I won't sell them." His boss said, "You'll either sell them or you won't have a job." Oliver said, "In that case, I won't have a job then." And he picked up and moved his young family to Cleveland, Ohio, where he sold pots and pans thereafter.

Well, James told me the story in a kind of disdainful way, like Oliver was indeed real fanatic. From what I could put together, James, Sr.—the town banker—had nine children and none of



George R. Wood distributed this prayer reminder before leaving for China in 1932.



The congregation outside of the Assembly of God in Guidé, Qinghai, China, which the Woods pastored in the late 1940s.



George and Elizabeth Wood and their children in a Midland, Michigan, tent meeting, May 1944. The general secretary stands between Paul and Doris.



The Wood family in 1946 at Traverse City, Michigan.



The Woods at an unidentified tent meeting, probably during World War II.

George and Elizabeth Wood and their family returning to China aboard the *Marine Linx* in 1947 (see oval) with other missionaries. (Philip Hogan, former DFM executive director, is third from left at top). The general secretary, who was then 6 years of age, is in plaid coat.



them really had a vital religious faith. I think James may have gone to church once in a while, but there was nothing I know to date to indicate that the family anywhere down the line from James were believers.

WW: Do you know which church James attended?

GW: Baptist. And they'd go on Sunday mornings. But Oliver the fanatic, you know, who quit his job rather than sell cigars and cigarettes, had three children that became missionaries. Paul Weidman to Africa, Ruth Weidman Plymire to China, my mother to China. His oldest son Claire became the first layperson to ever serve on the board of directors of the Christian Missionary Alliance, which is equivalent to our Executive Presbytery. He had another daughter Grace, who was a devout Christian lay woman. And he had only one son, Floyd, who was really marginal if he had a Christian faith.

And the grandkids coming down the pike, and the great-grandkids, a lot of them, are in the ministry and on the mission field, including myself as a grandkid of Oliver. I really think

Ruth and Elizabeth Weidman were called to China as foreign missionaries. They left the Cleveland church in 1924.

that probably Oliver is a classic example of the scriptural promise regarding the third and fourth generation, that Oliver put a lot of things in the bank spiritually that his descendants had which are not by virtue of their own works. It's what Oliver sowed. I can always remember my mother saying, "When Dad died, the thing I missed most was his prayers." He would pray loudly 2 hours a day. And, out of that context, my mother and her sister were called to the mission field. They left Cleveland, Ohio, in 1924—70 years ago.

WW: Now, by that time, they had gotten into the Pentecostal church?

GW: Yes, they'd been in the Pentecostal church a number of years by that time. Oliver, I think, pretty much since the beginning. Ruth was first before Mother into Pentecost. Mother went to Nyack [Christian and Missionary Alliance school] and was a little bit more like her mother, but there came a point at which she came into a Pentecostal experience.

WW: This old Christian Missionary Alliance Church became First Pentecostal—which enjoyed a good reputation as a strong church.

GW: Yes, the First Pentecostal Church of Cleveland. In fact, Mother always used to describe what a great missionary church it was. So, when I was back there, in Cleveland, looking at my roots, I went to that church at 55th and White, which under T. F. Zimmerman's leadership later had relocated to 57th and Lexington. Now, of course, they're in Lyndhurst. The 57th and Lexington building is now a black church, and a few blocks away at 55th and White, the old wood frame church is also a black church.

WW: Now, let's talk about your mother's appointment to China, which was way back when the Assemblies of God was very young.

GW: I was reading the early Executive Presbytery minutes, and discovered that Mother met with the Executive Presbytery in the fall of 1923 in St. Louis. And then in May 1924 she came through Springfield on her way to the West Coast to sail for China, and she met with the Executive Presbytery again. I was stunned. I never knew she had been in Springfield at that early time in her life.

WW: Her sister Ruth was already in China?

GW: No. I think they went out together. They weren't traveling through Springfield together, but I think they were together,

because they went to language school together and went up to Beijing together. And somewhere along about 1928, after they had been out there 4 years, Ruth married Victor Plymire, about a year after he lost his first wife and child.

WW: Alright, we have laid a foundation for your mother's side of the family. Now, let's learn something about your father, George Roy Wood.

GW: My dad was born in Jeannette, Pennsylvania, in 1908, and he attended First Assembly of God in Jeannette. Last September that church celebrated its 80th anniversary, and they invited me to speak at several of the services.

Dad was the only boy in the family and had three older sisters. When Dad was 2 years of age, his dad—who was a fireman—suffered a heart attack and died. I think it was subsequent to fighting a fire or something like that. His mother took in washing to support the brood; and when my dad was 10, his mother married again, a man who had six children. That placed 10 children under the age of 16 under the same roof.

WW: This must have called for a great number of adjustments. Do you know how the two families meshed?

GW: Dad's stepfather was a very physically and verbally abusive person and an alcoholic. Dad dropped out of school by the 8th grade and worked in a glass factory, turning over his entire earnings to his stepfather. Dad was evidently smoking and gambling. But when he was 16, to accommodate his mother who had only recently recommitted her life to the Lord, he took her to church and was saved.

One day Dad brought a friend home with him, and he gave the friend an apple from a bowl sitting on the dining room table. His stepfather just mercilessly upbraided him for this. And Dad and his step-father, at that point, had a real falling out. It was sort of the keg that blew apart, and he left home. He said, "I've turned over my complete allowance to you. If I want to give an apple to my friend, I'll do that." And so he left, never to again sleep under his stepfather's roof. But he went to Bible school in Beulah.

WW: Was that Beulah Heights Bible and Missionary Training School?

GW: Yes, in North Bergen, New Jersey, near New York City. When he came home on a holiday, the first Thanksgiving or Christmas, his mother met him at the train station and told him that his stepfather said he was not welcome to come home. So he stayed at his sister's home. And then Dad went to the mission field when he was 24.

WW: Your parents had an unusual relationship. Your mother had already served in China; your father didn't arrive there until 8 years later; and your mother was 10 years older than your father.

GW: That's right. Mom was born in 1898 and Dad in 1908; Mom was 34 and Dad was 24 when they married. I grew up in their home as the youngest child. I was born when my mother was 43. And my parents were from the old school. You could not have told by observing them that they were in love with each other. Do you know what I mean? There was no loving endearment present. I think there was genuine human love in a caring sense for each other. I sort of look at their marriage as a result of propinquity. They were both going to China, and who else was there, you know, they could marry? So, they just wound up with each other.

WW: So, your father was credentialed with the Assemblies of God and went out under the A/G too?

GW: Went out as a single missionary. Mom and Dad determined they were going to get to the field before they got married, so they married in China.

WW: As you think back on your father and mother, you must have been aware of sacrifices in going out to China in those days. And they didn't always have the promise of support like we have today.

GW: Their support was very meager. In fact, Dad, from the day he was married until a year after Mom died, kept a journal, a ledger, of every nickel he ever earned or spent. And I could see where he had to, because of the slim pickings that he had

throughout much of his life. Dad was an extremely hard worker. In fact, when I preached his funeral sermon, I called it, "Worker For the Lord."

WW: Your father and Victor Plymire were brothers-in-law.

GW: Yes, but Dad was the junior missionary.

WW: Going into China must have been a tremendous culture shock 60-70 years ago. How did they cope with the change?

GW: It was a struggle getting into the interior. Here my mom and dad were newly married. They got up there, but bandits intercepted all their goods, so everything they owned had been stolen. Even the best of conditions were primitive, but now their shipment had been stolen. Dad was good with his hands, so he took a Sears and Roebuck catalog and used a ruler to figure furniture measurements. He got the wood and made furniture based upon the sizes of the illustration in the catalog.

WW: Obviously, improvising was an essential skill out there. He simply designed their furniture from Sears and Roebuck. What was it like to take a family into those areas before and after World War II?

GW: Living in that area in the 1930s was really dangerous in many ways. It was a rugged, a rugged area of the world. High mountain plateau. We lived at 8,000 feet in Xining and 9,000 feet at Guidé, which was a town through the mountains over a 13,000-foot mountain pass. And, it was dangerous healthwise, because there was no medical attention. I nearly died of scarlet fever as a kid of 8 when we were in Xining.

WW: We've all heard about missionaries who buried children in desolate places—thousands of miles from their homes and loved ones.

GW: Yes, Plymire buried his wife and son—which he recounts in his book *High Adventure in Tibet*.

WW: I thought it would be interesting to look at the missionary application which your parents and other missionary candidates completed. Listen to this question and your father's answer on his 1929 application:

7. Have you fully considered the difficulties and trials of missionary work in heathen darkness, where no one may understand your language? *"I understand and have caught a vision of what it really means and am willing to lay down [my] life if necessary that souls might be won for Christ."*

GW: Once when Dad and a Chinese evangelist were out on a preaching mission among nomadic Tibetan tribesmen, he was poisoned, but God spared his life. It happened when he showed up at an encampment to distribute copies of gospel tracts in the Tibetan language.

The chief was so hospitable to Dad and the evangelist, and let them immediately pass out literature. The chief then offered them a meal, which Dad accepted. But when the chief invited him to stay that night, something within Dad at that point said, "You better leave. Leave. Don't stay here." So Dad excused himself and he and the evangelist got down the road on their horses. Then he began to be violently ill and realized that he had been poisoned, which was the typical way almost all the Tibetan converts were treated.

Dad began throwing up and became so ill by the middle of the night that he tried to break the crystal on his watch to let Mother know what time he had died. But he did not have the strength to break the crystal. Finally, in the morning, the evangelist got him draped over the horse. A few days later, they arrived back at the house. Mother would normally make Dad delouse after he'd been out like that, before he could come inside the house. But this particular time she had Dad come right in and began questioning him if something had happened to him.

And she related how on a certain day, an evening after she had gone to bed, she felt the Holy Spirit telling her to begin to intercede for him, so she stayed up all night praying for him, and only quit praying when the burden lifted early in the morning. It turned out that that was the exact time when Dad had been poisoned.

WW: Did he ever see those tribesmen again?



Paul and George showing a good catch to their mother and sister Doris, in Xining, Qinghai, China.

GW: About a month later some members of that tribe were in town getting supplies; they saw Dad in the marketplace and just turned white. And later they finally established contact with him. They admitted to him that they had given him enough poison to kill 10 men. And they said that the fact that he was alive told them that he served a very powerful God. "We would like to hear more about Him," they told Dad.

So, that tribal group, family group, really became open to the gospel thereafter. I don't know if any of them received, but I can

A tribesman nearly killed Wood with a poisoned meal. But Mrs. Wood was on her knees in the night, praying for his deliverance from a danger she did not identify until he returned from the missionary journey.

remember as a kid, they would come and stay for days at a time and camp in our courtyard. Mother and Dad would preach the gospel. When Dad was in his mid-60s, his stomach got real bad. He always had stomach problems. One of the surgeons who worked with the University of Southern California football team, a Jewish doctor, performed surgery and removed 83 percent of his stomach. And it was just filled with polyps, non-cancerous polyps.

After the surgery, when Dad was recovering, the doctor asked him, "Did you ever have a time in your life when you had a massive shock to your body. I have never seen a stomach like yours in all the years I've done surgery." He explained that normally if a person has more than four or five polyps they are cancerous. He added, "Your stomach is loaded with polyps, and not a one cancerous." He said, "I don't understand it." Dad told him about being poisoned. The doctor was amazed. It was a real witness to him.

WW: That is a great story of God's protective power and certainly a witness to the tribesmen and the doctor. Before they went to the mission field, your parents and other missionaries were well aware of the dangers they faced. But they went anyway. Did they talk to you about their call to the mission field?

GW: You know, I never asked them that. I think Dad got his call in the Jeannette church, and that was added to by the emphasis upon missions at Beulah. But I don't know that. And of course, they had missionaries streaming through the Cleveland church all the time as well.

WW: Did you ever pick up a note of discouragement or regret that they ever answered missionary calls?

GW: Never regret. No. In fact, I really believe that in a lot of ways their life ended in 1949, even though Mom did not die till 1979, and Dad died in 1984. They always felt God had called them to China and Tibet, and when that door closed, they floundered. Dad's ministry floundered. He never quite found himself. He'd stay in a place a year or two and then move on, struggling with small works. They had only one or two decent-sized churches in their whole life. But they had felt called, and they would have gone back at the drop of a hat had the door been open. They would be thrilled with what's happened in the local church they left in China, which now has 5,800 adult baptized believers.

WW: You, of course, were not born until 1941 so missed the earlier terms your parents served in China. And then World War II prevented your parents from returning. But after the war, the A/G had a big push to return missionaries to the foreign fields to resume their ministries. Let's talk about your first trip to China.

GW: That was in 1947 when I was 6 years old. I recall being on the freighter, the *Marine Lynx*. We were with the Hogans and the Riches and I think the Osgoods. All the China missionaries were going back on this freighter which had been converted to a passenger ship.

WW: What do you remember about arriving in China, a country which had been decimated by the war?

GW: My first memory of getting to China was in Shanghai. I picked up dysentery almost immediately, and I wound up in the hospital. Almost died from that. That was a very traumatic experience, which I basically recessed in my memory. I don't have an active memory of that. But my memory is very active concerning an execution. I remember standing on the street one day when an armored vehicle and a parade of soldiers came by, and inside the armored vehicle, looking through the slatted windows, were two Japanese generals who were on their way to Hankow Park to be executed. Shot. And I remember as a 6-year-old kid this feeling of overwhelming terror at having seen two people who would soon be killed. It was just very traumatic.

WW: Now that your parents were back in China in 1947, where did they settle so they could carry on their ministry?

GW: If my memory serves me correctly, we flew into Lanchow from Shanghai. Lanchow is the capital of Kansu Province. And then from Lanchow to Xining was about 120 miles, which in those days was 2 days by truck over dirt roads, through the canyons along the Yellow River. And then the Plymires went on to Huangyuan, which was another day's journey by horseback and cart, which is how you did it in those days. But it was probably about 30 miles distance from the capital city of Xining where my parents settled temporarily. Then shortly after we arrived, our family went to Guidé, which is over the 13,000-foot mountain pass, and the Lagee Mountain Pass. And in the old days, it took 3 days by horseback each way. Dad would have to come from Guidé, a town of about 8-9,000 to Xining once a month to cash his check and get supplies. So, he was gone one week out of every month just on trips to Xining.

WW: Educating missionary children presents problems which we do not face in the United States. Sometimes they are sent to schools at great distances and other times they receive schooling at home. How did your parents handle your education?

GW: Home schooling. Mother was the teacher, and she used the Calvert courses. My brother is 5 years older. My sister is 8 years older than me. So, I was in third grade when we left China. Paul would have been in the eighth, and Doris in the eleventh.

WW: Your family could not return until 1947, so they did not

“Dad and Mother would have returned to China at the drop of a hat—had the door been opened.”

have much time to minister before the Communists ousted General Chiang Kai-Shek and took over the country.

GW: By late 1948, the Communists were gaining more and more strength; nobody knew how soon they would take over. So my parents felt they should get out of Guidé because of its remoteness. We returned to Xining where my parents served another year before leaving in July 1949.

WW: Rough times.

GW: I never knew they were that rough. I never knew we were poor.

WW: Now, George, let's pick up on their story in 1949, the year they were driven out of China by the Communists. They returned to this country and pastored some churches, and you moved around a little bit. Did you ever get the feeling, “I don't want to go through this. I don't want to be a pastor. I want to do something else besides pastoring or being a missionary.”

GW: I always did want to be a minister, from the age of 10 on. And, I think my call came out of an experience in Oklahoma. Dad was pastoring a church in Bristow, after pastoring in Pitcairn, Pennsylvania, for 2 1/2 years. Came to Bristow, Oklahoma, a church much larger than Pitcairn. Ran about a hundred on a good day. And in those days churches in Oklahoma gave the Sunday morning tithes and offerings to the pastor. That can be a nice stipend if the church did well. But the Latter Rain [the New Order of the Latter Rain] moved in with a vengeance in late 1951, only a few months after we had arrived.

WW: The Latter Rain movement caused a lot of trouble in certain areas, splitting churches, claiming to be able to bestow gifts on believers. How did your dad handle it in Bristow?

GW: Dad took a stand against the proponents and their teaching. Then two of the deacons accosted Dad one night at the altar. One was a big fat man; the other was a tall guy. The tall man put his fist on Dad's chin at the altar. Didn't hit him, but put his fist right against his chin. Physically threatened him to get out. And they basically told him, “We'll starve you out of here.” Well, they did. Dad's offerings got down to \$7 a week. And he couldn't make it. But he stayed long enough to expel all the Latter Rain people from the church.

WW: Why didn't they want your dad to stay?

GW: As Latter Rain followers, they didn't think that Dad was spiritual enough. He was keeping the church from being spiritual. It's really interesting how the seeds sown when you're young, always remain with you. To this day I hate the word

Continued on page 33

Missionaries arriving in Lanchow, Kansu, China in 1947. Facing the camera are Ruth Plymire, Elizabeth Wood, Paul, Doris, George, and Mary Plymire.



Doris, George (in striped shirt), and Paul, with other children, pose with Native Americans at the 1949 General Council in Seattle.





Here an old Findlay, Ohio, saloon is in the process of renovation for a church building. Pastor T. K. Leonard is seated at the left. Notice two bottles left on the bar.

T. K. Leonard and the Pentecostal Mission

Some Childhood Memories of Findlay, Ohio

By Paul C. Taylor

Thomas King Leonard, affectionately known to many as "T. K.," was a farmer near McComb, Ohio, when he felt a call from God to the gospel ministry. As it turned out, he became my childhood pastor, and my



Paul Taylor is the associate pastor of the Assembly of God, Hermiston, Oregon. He has pastored in the Ohio District.

father became the co-pastor of the church Brother Leonard founded in Findlay, Ohio, in 1907.

Acting on God's call, Brother Leonard sold his farm equipment and moved to Findlay where he and two other men scouted for property in which to begin a church. Their search led them to a two-story building that had been a saloon and house of ill fame—as houses of prostitution were known in that day.

Leonard negotiated the purchase of the building, and soon remodeling of the building started. The only thing of value salvaged was the old bar rail, which was used as an altar rail where eventually hundreds of people knelt, wept, and prayed for forgiveness of their sins.

Growth of the Assembly of God, as it was called, prompted Leonard to start a Bible school to train students

for ministry in the United States and foreign countries. The rooms upstairs in the former saloon were used to house the students. T. K. and "Mom" Leonard were soon recognized as spiritual father and mother of the students who were coming to Findlay from many areas of the country.

After a period of time, the Bible school attendance grew until it became necessary to obtain larger quarters for the school. Leonard purchased a large building in West Park, an area on the west side of the city. It had been a children's orphanage and was ideally suited for a Bible school.

It was in this setting of early Pentecostal revivalism that my parents, Arthur Taylor and Meribah Cain, met and married.

Coming to the western plains of

Canada from England, my father was converted and felt a call to preach. A religious periodical came into his hands which advertised the Bible school in Findlay. He left his employment on a farm and took a train for Ohio where he enrolled in the school and began preparing for the ministry.

My mother was a school teacher and lived near Caldwell, Ohio. She too responded to a call for Christian service and accepted a teaching position at the Findlay school. Ultimately, the student from England and the teacher fell in love and married. Later they were ordained to the ministry and remained faithful until their deaths.

In addition to lengthy revival meetings which our church scheduled throughout the year, one of the highlights was the annual camp meeting.

T. K. obtained a large tent and would have it set up near the Bible school. After the tent was pitched, benches and chairs would be brought in, a rough platform constructed, and sawdust and straw placed around the platform. Then a rough bench was built for an altar where sinners were urged to come and pray and confess their sins; here too believers sought for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Leonard would call an evangelist to preach during the camp meeting, and a variety of musicians would minister. Camp meeting spirit ran high with evangelists frequently preaching "hell fire and brimstone" sermons. Because many of the students went home for the summer, people who had come from out of town—on the train, the inter-urban electric cars, and automobiles—stayed in the Bible school building.

One camp meeting was forever etched in the minds of the people who attended because it was during a time when God sent rain to end a serious drought.

Crops were withering in the fields; and with no sign of rain in sight, it looked like a bad harvest season. T. K. had scheduled the Argue family as the evangelists that year. The family was composed of A. H. "Dad" and "Mom" Argue and their children,

Zelma and Watson. They arrived in a panel truck, about a 1924 model, with signs painted on the side that read, "Get Right With God," "Jesus Is Coming Soon," "Prepare for Eternity," and similar warnings.

With the camp meeting ready to start, Brother Argue went to the editor of the newspaper and requested publicity for the meetings. Responding, the editor said, "If you people at that camp meeting will pray for rain to break the drought, and it rains, I'll give you front-page publicity."

Argue assured the editor that he would return to the afternoon meeting then in progress and ask the people to pray.

Interrupting the service, Argue told the people what the editor had said. Overhead the sky was clear. The possibility of rain seemed impossible. Amid shouts of "Amen," he urged the congregation to join in prayer for rain.

Flocking to the altar bench, they began to pray as though their lives depended on it. The Spirit of God seemed to permeate the tent, and—as often happened—many fell over in the straw, "slain under the power."

The prayer meeting had been under way for perhaps 30 minutes when it became evident that clouds were forming. Told of the weather change, the people began to thank God for answering their prayers. Then they sang and rejoiced, expecting the rain to come at any moment. The clouds grew darker, and soon the sound of thunder could be heard. Suddenly the rains came, pouring down in a torrent and running off of the tent. Moments later the water flooded the ground and ran through the tent. Worshipers lying in the straw "under the power" were soaked.

The next day the editor, true to his word, plastered a headline across the front page stating that the drought was broken because of the prayers of the Pentecostals at the camp meeting. This publicity brought additional crowds to the tent, and the meetings continued with excitement mounting with each service.

The Argues never forgot that experience, and years later I talked with



Evangelist A. H. Argue and his children, Watson and Zelma, in one of their Findlay, Ohio, meetings.

Watson again about that most exciting camp meeting when the drought was broken.

It seems that in those days a preacher had to have special abilities to preach camp meetings. He or she had to preach with enthusiasm, making people afraid of hell fire; exhorting, pleading, demanding results, were all part of the requirements for a good camp meeting preacher.

One such preacher stands out in my mind: J. A. Wilkerson, David Wilkerson's grandfather.

When J. A. Wilkerson appeared on the scene in Findlay, the old Bible school was not operating, and the camp meeting had been moved to the Turley lots. These were lots on East Main Cross Street where old-time medicine shows, Thurston and His Magic Show, and other tent performances would be held each summer. Leonard had made arrangements to use the lots for the 2-week camp meeting, and we would get the men together to take the tent there and set it up. Several of we young fellows would get the job of staying at the tent all night to guard it against vandals.

J. A.'s fame of previous camp meetings had reached us, and we were anxious to have him. Especially because we had heard that he had climbed a tent pole while preaching in New York City. There it was reported that J. A. was having limited success in a camp meeting

until he felt inspired during his sermon to jump off the platform and, faster than a cat, climb up a tent pole. Hanging on by one hand and with one leg wrapped around the pole, he preached for another 20 minutes. By the time he slid down the pole, the tent was packed, and the camp meeting was really on. The meeting continued another 2 weeks, with J. A. climbing the tent pole each night as part of his sermon.

When J. A. came to Findlay, he did not disappoint us. Leaping from the platform onto the first bench, he would shinny up the tent pole. Then holding on with one hand and a leg

wrapped around the pole—a practice he apparently refined in New York—he would preach up a storm.

At the end of the sermon he would slide down the pole and give the invitation. People would flock to the altar.

J. A. would also tell the congregation that he was mad at the devil. He would take off his shoe and throw it at the piano, declaring that he would put the devil to flight. The crowds loved it and responded enthusiastically.

I heard many other camp meeting preachers but none with the color and excitement of J. A. Wilkerson.

I'll close my reminiscing about Findlay with an amusing incident in a serious water baptism service which Brother Leonard conducted. It was the day Brother Leonard lost his toupee.

Although the old mission had a baptistry built into the platform, T. K. liked to have baptismal services in the creek about a half block away. Because it was along a busy street, people would stop to watch the bap-

“As [T. K. Leonard] immersed her in the water and then brought her back to a standing position, his toupee came off and floated on the water. Fearing that the toupee would float away, T. K. forgot the young woman and retrieved the hairpiece.”

tismal service. At this particular service, T. K. was baptizing a young woman who was rather heavy set. As he immersed her in the water and then brought her back to a standing position, his toupee came off and floated on the water. Fearing that the toupee would float away, T. K. forgot the young woman and retrieved the hairpiece.

Picking up the toupee, he put it on his head, patted it down while the water ran down over his face and neck. Then he remembered the young woman. He returned to her and led her out of the water to the creek bank.

Needless to say, the crowd on the bridge laughed. But they also gave him an enthusiastic ovation. That is the only time in all the years that I was close to Brother Leonard that I saw him without his hairpiece.

My life—and that of my parents’—was closely tied to the old mission in Findlay and its many activities. The interesting, humorous, exciting, and spiritually uplifting experiences of the early days of the Pentecostal movement will always remain in my memory.



Left, a 1922 camp meeting poster; above, T. K. and Mary Leonard, in about 1921.

Below, interior of the Findlay church in about 1940. Courtesy of Paul Feller and Helen Feller McCartney.



1954—40 Years Ago

Students Experiencing Outpouring of Holy Spirit

This is an excerpt from "Pentecostal Blessing at Central Bible Institute," an article published in the November 28, 1954, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel*. Central Bible Institute is now Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri. Readers who were involved in this campus revival 40 years ago are asked to write about their experiences, or tape record them, and send to Wayne Warner, Editor, *Heritage*, 1445 Boonville, Springfield, MO 65802

God is pouring out His Spirit in Pentecostal fullness at Central Bible Institute. More than forty of the students have been filled with the blessed Holy Spirit.

From the very opening of school in September there has been an unusual hunger after God in the hearts of the students. While C. C. Burnett, Vice-President of the Institute, was speaking at an outdoor meeting, on the opening night, the blessing of the Lord suddenly came upon the assembled students in such a manner that the order of the service was entirely changed. Hundreds of the young people sought God throughout the entire evening, some remaining

"I have never seen anything like this for spontaneity and Christian love, either in the great revivals of Eastern Europe or in the early days at Bethel Bible Institute in Newark, New Jersey."

—Nicholas Nikoloff

outdoors under the stars while others retired to the chapel to spend the entire night in prayer. By dawn, four had received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

During the ensuing weeks there have been many glorious interruptions occasioned by the moving of the Spirit,



both in chapel and in the classrooms, with the result that several more students were filled with the Holy Spirit. Both students and faculty set aside daily and weekly seasons to pray for God's Spirit to be poured out at Central Bible Institute this year, and God is answering prayer in abundant measure.

In the larger classes especially, lectures have given way to prayer meetings from time to time. Nicholas Nikoloff has been unable to teach his class in the radio auditorium (where "Revivaltime" originates each Sunday night) on several occasions. On Thursday, November 4, the students assembled for a class in this auditorium, following their chapel service. David Drake, the teacher, attempted to open the class period, but the students were so mightily moved upon by the Spirit of God that they could do nothing but pray. For three hours they continued to seek the Lord. Students from other classes, at the close of their class periods, came to the radio auditorium to see what was happening and joined in the prayer meeting.

Bartlett Peterson, President of C.B.I., called a special meeting in the chapel and invited the students to tell what God had been doing for them. One after another stood to tell how God had filled them with the Spirit, or had healed their bodies, or had spoken to their hearts, or answered prayer in some other remarkable way. There was no preaching in this service. Brother Peterson merely read a passage of Scripture and invited the students to seek the Lord. They moved as a unit, so general was the spiritual hunger and eagerness to pray. The altar's space in the chapel was filled with students praying or prostrate under the spirit's power, while the platform was filled with other students who wanted faculty members to lay hands on them and pray concerning definite needs in their lives.

Prayers were turned into praises as God moved upon hundreds of students in waves of spiritual power and blessing. Some of the young men were dancing for joy and hugging one another. The young ladies, too, were manifesting a mighty spirit of love one for another as God melted their hearts together. The spontaneity of the praying and the great love that was being shed abroad in the students' hearts by the Holy Ghost was such that Brother Nikoloff was heard to say, "I've never seen anything like this for spontaneity and Christian love, either in the great revivals in Eastern Europe or in the early days at Bethel Bible Institute in Newark, New Jersey."

The students leave the chapel to get their meals and take care of necessary duties, but return at the earliest opportunity and continue the great prayer meeting. Classes have been forgotten. The entire student body is united in one great class, being taught by the Holy Spirit truths they never would find in books.

In the midst of a wonderful wave of spiritual blessing, plans and efforts are still going forward toward the erection of a new administration building which will be named after the late dean, W. I. Evans.

FROM PFNA TO P/CCNA

1948-1994

During a highly publicized Pentecostal-charismatic unity meeting in Memphis, October 17-19, the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America was dissolved and the more inclusive Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America was created in its place.

Created in 1948 to foster fellowship among Pentecostals, the PFNA was an all-white organization. The P/CCNA is to provide a framework for fellowship, dialogue, and cooperation among the various Pentecostal and charismatic denominations, churches, and ministries in North America.

For more information on the Memphis meeting, see the December 11, 1994, and January 1, 1995, issues of the *Pentecostal Evangel*.



This 1954 PFNA board of directors photo was taken at Springfield, Missouri. Seated, from left, Howard Courtney, unidentified, Gayle Lewis, E. J. Fulton, W. E. McAlister, and J. A. Synan; standing, unidentified, J. R. Flower, unidentified, Frank W. Smith, C. M. Wortman, and unidentified.

PHOTOS BY JOHN MAEMPA AND WAYNE WARNER



Left, Andraé Crouch singing at closing night of the P/CCNA meeting in Memphis. Above, the co-chairmen of the meeting, Bishop Ithiel Clemmons and Bishop B. E. Underwood, welcome General Superintendent Thomas Trask to the platform.

Below left, three of the participants in the P/CCNA meeting: Roderick R. Caesar, Bishop Barbara Amos, and Dr. Cecil M. Robeck.

Below right, a footwashing service during the Wednesday morning session. Seated are General Superintendent Tom Trask and Bishop Ithiel Clemmons.



FROM OUR READERS

New Subscriber Is 95

Shalom!

Enclosed find \$10. I would like to get *Heritage*. I would like copies of the features on the parents of the executives. I am an A/G retired minister, 95 years old and still used of our Lord. Hallelujah!

Ruth T. Garrett
Durant, Florida

Features on the parents of the executive officers began with the spring 1994 issue. Waldo and Bea Trask, parents of General Superintendent Thomas Trask, were featured in the first part; the story of Clifford and Helen Crabtree—parents of Assistant General Superintendent Charles Crabtree—was told in the summer issue; in the fall issue we published the story of Forrest and Estelline Bridges, parents of General Treasurer James K. Bridges; in this issue you'll find the story of General Secretary George O. Wood's parents, George R. and Elizabeth A. Wood. Back issues of Heritage are available at \$2.50 per copy postpaid.

Recalls Las Cruces Pioneering

I noticed in the *Pentecostal Evangel* that you wanted photos and other materials concerning our Pentecostal heritage. So I am sending this little photo which was taken 65 years ago in Las Cruces, New Mexico. It is the beginning of First Assembly.

I am the toddler with her back to the camera. The blonde boy directly in front of me is my 8-year-old brother Doug King who still resides in Las Cruces and is the grandfather of DeVonna Hutsell, missionary to Paraguay.

Brother and Sister W. I. Smith founded the church and several others in New Mexico. They lived in a tent in our yard and shared poverty with our family to establish an Assembly of God in Mesilla Valley.

My mother and dad, Dora and C. R. King, were among the first to accept the message of the Holy



Bertha King Barrett is the little girl in front of this original congregation at Las Cruces, New Mexico, in 1929. Her parents, Clarence and Dora King, are the couple in the center. The founding pastor W. I. Smith and his wife are standing on the right.

Ghost. I was saved and filled with the Spirit at a young age and was also called to preach. So in 1953 Thurl Barrett (my husband) and I started preaching in West Texas and have been affiliated with the Assemblies of God ever since.

Dear Ones, after 65 years, my message is, "Oh, Lord, great is Thy faithfulness." May God continue to smile

upon our movement. We love you.

Bertha (Mrs. T. M.) Barrett
Glenrock, Wyoming

The Barretts are retired but still minister when called. In 1979 they returned to Las Cruces where they pastored Central Assembly for 9 years. During that time they led the church in a building program.

Correction on Crabtree Story

I am an avid reader of *Heritage*. I was saved as a boy of 9 at Weiser, Idaho, in 1940 under Pastor John Shaw. I began to preach at the age of 16 in 1947, and have preached in 132 countries.

I would like to make a correction on page 4 of the summer 1994 issue. On the article on Clifford Crabtree, it says, "During that period Clifford Crabtree ministered with Carro and Susie Davis, twin sisters, who left their Macon, Georgia teaching careers to spend the rest of their lives preaching and pioneering in Maine."

In reality, they spent very little time in Maine. After ministering in



Bangor, they moved on to St. John, New Brunswick, where they founded Full Gospel Tabernacle in King's Square (seated 1501 people) and ministered there for the rest of their lives. Susie lived to 79, and Carro was still pastor at 91 when she passed away. I was pastor in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and preached for Carro

Davis many times. Susie Davis was already gone by the time I was in that area.

Keep up the good work.

Dr. Eldon R. Wilson
Newport, New York

Appreciates *Heritage*

Thank you, thank you, dear editor and staff for all you do to put together this significant publication! My heart is ever reminded of God's faithfulness as memories flow refreshed and we are quickened by the Holy Spirit to keep useful, fruitful even in our old age.

[I remember] the 1930s and early 40s at Central Bible Institute: dear Mother Bowie, Brother W. I. Evans, Brother Myer Pearlman (I cherish having served as Brother Pearlman's secretary for his Bible classes, 1939-41). Then my husband Willis and I served 5 years as teachers at Peniel Bible Institute in the Kentucky Mountains. From there it was Kentucky pastorates and district superintendent's office. We enjoyed 23 wonderful years pastoring in New Castle and York, Pennsylvania. Then 10 years as pastor to seniors in Fresno Full Gospel Church until my dear one passed away. God fills my heart and days with joyful ways to serve Him. Hallelujah!

Heritage continually reminds us that "Hitherto the Lord God has helped us all." Praise His wonderful name! And the flame burns brightly as the torch passes year after year to committed marvelous younger men and women. O glory!

With love and appreciation,

Jean (Mrs. S. W.) Brewer
Fresno, California

Artist Charlie Ramsay

What a blessing it was to find the generous gift of *Heritage* magazine in my mail box. The tribute honoring Charlie is beautiful [the fall issue featured his artwork for the *Pentecostal Evangel* and the *Adult Teacher*].

I miss him but am thankful for the blessed leading of the Lord in our lives (60 years of marriage). Charlie loved his work. He was a happy,

Continued on next page



Leatha Perkins Dahlgren, Hemet, California, donated this photograph of Faith Temple (later First Assembly, now Evangel Temple), Kansas City, Missouri, to the Archives. Her father, Jonathan Ellsworth Perkins, pastored this church in 1928-29, during the time this photograph was taken, and is standing at the foot of the steps on the right. The man on the left could be J. R. Evans, general secretary at the time; the girl between the two men is Virginia Perkins, Jonathan's youngest daughter. On the right are Leota (Mrs. Perkins), and Kay Perkins; Leatha can barely be seen behind her sister Kay. Leatha reflected on those early days of the church 65 years ago: "The saints prayed so loudly they were arrested for disturbing the peace of the neighborhood. The noise didn't get to me; it was the cockroaches, bedbugs, and fleas [in the basement apartment]. I think our sojourn there was the highlight of my life as a P.K." Inset, a later photo of Kay and Leatha Perkins at Faith Temple. Leatha Dahlgren received the photographs from Kay's children following the death of their mother in July.

For more than 30 years Aaron A. Wilson pastored the church, which became one of the largest A/G congregations.

PHOTOS FROM READERS

Below, this photo presents a challenge. The eight children of the late Edward B. and Sallie Brooks, who grew up in Evergreen, Alabama, believe they might have a world's record. Following the death of their 8-year-old sister, Fannie Edna Brooks, in 1918, no deaths among the remaining eight siblings have been recorded—more than 75 years. They refer to the mark as a "believe-it-or-not" family record. Any challenges?

Standing from the left, according to age: Harold Ronald Brooks, 71; John Edward Brooks, 77; and Eva Montez Brooks Hall, 79; seated from left, Bessie Valera Brooks Miller, 81; Bertha Lee Brooks Address, 85; Ethel Mae Brooks Flowers, 87; Estle Homer Brooks, 89; and James Ary Brooks, 92.

Edward B. Brooks (1881-1950) was an ordained Assemblies of God minister. Seven of his descendants also entered the ministry, including James and Estle Homer, above. Photo courtesy of Estle Homer Brooks.



□ Letters From Our Readers/from page 29

busy, creative, fun-loving, and generous man.

I gave copies of *Heritage* to our three children and two grandchildren. We all treasure them. Thank you. God bless you.

Dorotha Ramsay
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Identifying 1918 Zion City Orchestra

When I noticed your request for identification of people in the Zion City Assembly of 1918 in the fall issue, I contacted an elderly gentleman in our church by the name of Jacob McNabb who grew up in the Zion church. I asked him if he could remember any of the people involved.

First, I was able to identify the person on the left holding his violin as our beloved Uncle Ar—Arthur Graves—son of Fred and sister of Irene.

Brother McNabb couldn't always remember first names, but he did come up with some last names. He believes the gentleman next to Arthur and holding a trombone to be a Drury; the woman between Kirkpatrick and Fred Graves is Hazel Griswold. The man holding the big bass sax is, he believes, the eldest son of the McElroy Quartet. The two on the right he did not remember.

Brother McNabb believes the picture to have been taken on the east side of the church where many pho-

tos were taken. He was born in 1909 and raised in the church. He is still active in prison ministry here in Orange County and faithfully ministers in music as well.

Keep up the good work; our "Heritage" is something to be prized.

Esther Steelberg Pearlman
Tustin, California

And many of our readers will remember Esther as a daughter of Wesley R. and Ruth Steelberg and the daughter-in-law of Myer and Irene Graves Pearlman. Cecil R. Liddle, retired pastor who was raised in Zion and now lives here in Springfield, agrees that the man with the trombone is Drury—John Drury. Cecil explained that the trombone is not the usual sliding trombone but one with valves. Check the caption above the photo for a more complete identification of this 1918 Zion City Assembly orchestra.



This Zion City, Illinois, photo was published in the fall issue with a request for help in identifying these musicians. With two more names added, here is the *Heritage* identification: from left, Arthur Graves, John Drury, William Kirkpatrick, Hazel Griswold, Fred Graves, Irene Graves (later Mrs. Myer Pearlman), Vina (Mrs. Fred) Graves, C. W. Walkem, a McElroy (first name unknown), and the next two unidentified. Fred Graves was the composer of "He Was Nailed to the Cross for Me" and "Honey in the Rock." Arthur Graves was a longtime Assemblies of God pastor and educator.

□ Heritage Letter/from page 4

past so the younger generation "might fear the Lord your God for ever." If you haven't started to record your memoirs, please consider it soon. Sure, a lot of vanity finds its way into autobiographies, but then there will be accounts of God's marvelous acts—the word that should remain for succeeding generations. As the songwriter challenges believers, "May all those who come behind us find us faithful."

**As the songwriter challenges believers,
"May all those who come behind us find
us faithful."**

And a closing request: whenever you write your memoirs (maybe they are already written), kindly run off another copy so we can include them in the Assemblies of God Archives. Thanks. ✿



Wayne E. Warner is
director of the A/G
Archives and editor
of *Heritage*.

Hope for the Lost

The Final Hours, It's too Late to Wait, by Bill Phipps with Dorothy Tuttle (published by author, 1993; paper; \$10). Available from author at 1201 West Gregory Blvd., Kansas City, MO 64114.



Early Pentecostal ranks were filled with men and women who worked hard at sharing their faith—which sometimes brought resistance and even persecution. But they were successful in their efforts and inspired other believers to follow their examples.

Countless believers today carry on that ministry outside the sanctuary, recognizing that sinners can be converted in places other than around the church's altar. One of these believers is businessman Bill Phipps.

But Phipps was not always a soul winner. When friends and family members viewed his ungodly lifestyle before 1971, they had doubts whether anything would change him.

What or who can deliver a man who is immoral, an alcoholic, drug addict, spiritually blinded, and only interested in the material things of life—a man who has not only reached bottom but has been living there for years? Bill Phipps' *The Final Hours* gives one man's answer to this question.

A successful businessman aspiring to become a millionaire, Phipps finally recognized that he was lost, could not help himself, and was in need of a Savior. He discovered that help in the Lord Jesus Christ and saw his life revolutionized. Today he and his wife Marti circle the globe to tell others about One who changed their lives.

Reared in Ava, Missouri, Phipps tasted his first whiskey at the age of 12 when his father urged him to drink. Even though whiskey later killed his father at the age of 42, Phipps drank heavily for the next 38

years—it was simply part of his life. "I did not like alcohol," he wrote, "but I liked what it did to me. Whiskey changed me." He drank and took drugs, he added, because he had an inferiority complex.

In and out of a lot of jails, Phipps now is ashamed of his previous lifestyle. "Everything that was bad, I was into." But one day in 1971 he confessed his sins and was saved and later was baptized in the Holy Spirit. The next day the customers in his Wally's Paint Center in Kansas City saw a dramatic change. And from that moment until he sold the store, it became his witnessing center in one of the toughest areas of the city.

Selling paint suddenly became secondary.

"Somewhere between five and six hundred people came to Jesus during the years we operated the Paint Center," he wrote. "Many were filled with the Holy Ghost, many were healed, and many others received help."

His life is now exciting, he tells everyone, but it is not without danger. After a prostitute was murdered, the police grilled Phipps intensively because they knew he had witnessed to her. In fact, they wanted him to confess murdering nine prostitutes. He was a religious fanatic, the police told him, and was trying to eliminate prostitution by murdering the prostitutes.

During the police interrogation, the pressure mounted on Phipps' friends and family who knew he was innocent. While they prayed, God gave

Phipps a peace during the ordeal and an opportunity to witness to the investigating officers and a psychiatrist called in on the case. Eventually the police released him and arrested a pimp for the crime.

"When you step out to serve Jesus with all your might," Phipps writes from experience, "Satan will come after you with everything he's got at his command! You need God's power in your life—the infilling of the Holy Spirit." His interesting encounters with unbelievers told in this book—many of whom receive Christ—confirm that statement.

In addition to his Paint Center ministry, he started a coffee house nearby and began to give his testimony to church groups and Full Gospel Business Men's chapter meetings. He also began to minister to hippies, a group he once hated and viewed as important only as customers for his illegal drug business. Now he has a different outlook concerning people: "I never criticize a man or woman when they are not doing right if they don't know Jesus. They don't need my criticism, they need my love."

Today he is active in Sheffield Assembly, Kansas City, and has a full-time lay ministry challenging men and women to receive Christ and believe for miracles. He challenges Christians to get involved in witnessing for the Saviour because he believes—as expressed in the book's title—these are the final hours of time.

The inspiration sparkling from these pages comes from one who has been delivered from degradation and who now has a powerful soul-winning ministry. An evening spent reading *The Final Hours* can inspire a new or renewed interest in sharing one's own faith.

OTHER BOOKS

Holiness Manuscripts, A Guide to Sources Documenting the Wesleyan

Holiness Movement in the United States and Canada, by William Kostlevy (Metuchen, NJ: The American Theological Library Association and The Scarecrow Press, 1994, \$49.50).



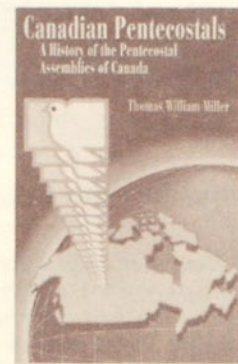
Researchers interested in locating unpublished materials relating to the holiness movement will welcome this new tool by William Kostlevy, archivist and special collections librarian at Asbury Theological Seminary. Because many of the early Pentecostals were once associated with the holiness movement, this volume also includes sources about or by them and their organizations. Perusing the index reveals the names of several Pentecostal organizations and personalities.

Canadian Pentecostals, A History of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, by Thomas William Miller (Mississauga, Ontario: Full Gospel Publishing House, 1994, \$16.95).

Dr. Miller has given the Christian church a long-awaited history of the PAOC. Assemblies of God members in the U.S. should have an interest in

this book as we consider the PAOC a fraternal Pentecostal organization. Also, several A/G ministers—the Argue family, Charles W. H. Scott, Robert Cunningham, J. R. Flower, Aimee Semple McPherson, Noel Perkin, James Swanson, C. M. Ward, and others—have Canadian roots.

The book has photographs, an index, and chapter endnotes.



□ Revival at Wiser Chapel/from page 12

the Pentecostal outpouring at Couch in 1913. The evangelists are thought to be a Brother Lawrence and a Sister Hattie Nickless. The tent was pitched on the edge of town, and God began to bless. Opposition arose as was common in those days. The tent was burned to the ground, along with the chairs and benches or pews which had been borrowed from the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Alton, then located at North Hall and Dunnigan Streets. Glen Jenkins of Alton, Missouri, recalls that his mother Annie Jenkins may have been baptized in the Holy Spirit during this revival. It is now known exactly where the meetings were continued after the burning of the tent nor for how long.

Alton residents and officials remained in opposition to the establishment of a Pentecostal church there for a number of years. I remember that when I graduated from Alton High School in 1928 there still was no Pentecostal church in the city nor in the immediate vicinity.

Times changed in the rural community surrounding Wiser Chapel. People died, individuals and families moved, transportation became more available, the church building was small and poorly furnished, so it did not seem feasible to continue services in the little church house. A church had been started by the Assemblies of God in Alton and some other Pentecostal groups had sprung up in the area, so the especially blessed and highly favored Wiser Chapel “finished its course”. (Elmer L. Cover now pastors the Assembly

of God in Alton, Missouri. The many spiritual results are still indelibly imprinted on the memories of many people today as they look back and remember that their parents, grandparents, relatives or friends were a part of that Wiser Chapel revival more than 75 years ago. Thank God for revival meetings that have had such lasting results.

I was privileged in late 1993, along with my son Ed to visit the site where Wiser Chapel stood when I was a young lad. The building is no longer there, instead the area is a part of pasture land where cattle graze. As I stood at the country roadside and viewed the site, I was inclined to believe in my heart that in some way or somehow God is still smiling on that little plot of ground which was so productive for his Kingdom several decades ago.



Cecil R. Corbin is an Assemblies of God layman who attends Praise Assembly, Springfield, Missouri. Before moving to Springfield in 1992, he was active in South Side Assembly of God, St. Louis, for 47 Years. The retired public school teacher is the father of two Assemblies of God missionaries: Don is the field director for Africa, and Ed is a missionary to Southern Africa.



George and Elizabeth Wood /from page 22



This mid-1970s photo has retired missionaries George and Elizabeth Wood with their children: George, Doris, and Paul.

“spiritual.” I know what the word “Christlike” means, but “spiritual” to me represents somebody who wants to be “woo-woo” and who doesn’t have solid ethics or standards of behavior. So, I don’t like the word spiritual.

WW: What were some of their “spiritual” activities?

GW: They were giving gifts of baking chocolate cakes. They gave the gift of knitting to an Assemblies of God pastor’s wife in Oklahoma. Of course, she had already knitted before, but now that she had the gift, she could knit through Sunday services. The deacons came to the pastor and asked him to get his wife to stop that, but she said it was a gift, and she wouldn’t stop it. It was from God. So that pastor had to leave the church. That was the kind of environment that my folks were going through.

WW: I get the idea that your dad didn’t always handle matters with kid gloves.

GW: My dad did not hesitate to blister people from the pulpit, which is not a practice I follow. And during this period my Dad took on the Latter Rain people and these deacons. I can remember Mother would say sometimes at the dinner table, “Well, Dad preached a real zinger today.”

WW: Even though you didn’t copy your dad in this practice, you must have admired his position.

GW: I generally spent the Sunday evening service laying down. The service would get long, and I’d go to sleep on my mother’s lap, even though I was by that time 10-11 years of age. I remember one Sunday night I looked up at my mother, and I said, “I know what I’m going to be when I grow up. I’m going to be a preacher.” And I could have said, “a preacher like Dad.” But I said, “I’m going to be a preacher, and I’m not going to pussyfoot it either,” which was our term for Dad’s taking a stand.

Well, it’s kind of funny, people who know me would say that I temporize a lot, and I’m not bombastic, and I’m not brittle, and I’m not harsh with people. But it was that occasion where I saw my parents really take a stand for what was right that produced an admiration in me for the ministry. And I always admired the ministry. I always admired my parents hanging in, even though they couldn’t support themselves in the ministry. I mean, they pastored rugged churches. When I was in college here at Evangel, they were up here at St. Robert—adjacent to the Fort Leonard Wood base—in the middle of a cold Missouri winter, living in a cement basement without heat, trying to pastor a run-down church. Same thing in Warsaw, Missouri. Awfully difficult places then.

WW: How did they reconcile the hardships of this life with the next? Did they talk much about rewards on the other side?

GW: Mother would always say, “Well, Georgie, when we stand before God, He will not ask us if we have been successful but if we have been faithful.” People are interested in how successful we’ve been, but God is looking at our faithfulness. And I just admired tremendously that quality in them both.

WW: George, we could go on and on about the lessons you learned in the parsonage. And we can see that your parents made

a great impact on your life. Challenged you to dedicate your life to the Lord.

GW: Absolutely. I would not be in the ministry today without my folks’ influence, especially my mother’s. I admired the way my dad worked hard. I admired my mother’s gentleness and her prayer life. She prayed...probably prayed 2 hours daily. She was like her father. Prayed. Got up at 4-5 o’clock in the morning and spent the first couple of hours of the day in prayer and

“I remember one Sunday night [in church] I looked up at my mother and said, ‘I know what I’m going to be when I grow up. I’m going to be a preacher.’ And I could, have said a preacher like Dad.”

—George O. Wood

reading her Bible. She made a practice of reading her Bible through every year. And the later years of her life, after she retired, she read her Bible through every month.

WW: What would your dad and mother say if they could come back today and see you sitting behind this desk as general secretary of the Assemblies of God?

GW: I sat on the General Council platform after I was elected [August 1993], and I started crying. A thought came through my mind that if Dad were in that meeting, he could never tell me to my face that he was proud of me. Could never tell me verbally that he loved me. Never do I remember Dad voluntarily putting his arms around me ever in my life. And that was Dad’s family background. But Dad could tell everybody else.

WW: You’d get it second-hand.

GW: Get it second-hand. In fact, when Dad died, something happened that told me that he loved me and was proud of me. Somebody else told me about his pride and love. After the stomach surgery, Dad got diabetes. Then he had a heart attack or two. But he pulled through surgery. And he’d been in intensive care about two weeks, and the morning he was to get out of intensive care, I talked to him on the phone. He was at Hoag Hospital, about 4 miles from my office. He seemed to be in good spirits. I said, “I’ll be down to see you later, Dad.” But about 10:30 to 11:00 o’clock, the phone rang, and it was the nurse. She said the doctor wanted me to come down immediately. Some things had happened with Dad. I jumped into the car and raced down to the hospital and got into ICU, and they were just pulling the paddles off Dad.

WW: He was already gone by the time you got there.

GW: Yes. Now, here is where I learned of his pride and love. My Dad was the kind of person who had never met a stranger. He could tell you his life history in the first 5 minutes you knew him. One person who met him was a young nurse who saw me and came over to where I was. She had tears in her eyes and said, “Your dad was such a wonderful person. He talked about you with me for a long time this morning. He was so proud of you.”

What brought tears to my eyes at the General Council when I was elected was the thought that if Dad were alive, he’d be buttonholing everyone in the lobby saying, “That’s my son!” He wouldn’t tell me what he thought, but he would tell everyone else.

WW: George, you’ve had an eventful life, and as you’ve said earlier, you would not be in the ministry and serving as general secretary had it not been for the positive influence of George Roy Wood and Elizabeth Ann Weidman Wood. *Heritage* readers appreciate your candid reflections on their inspiring lives. They were indeed workers for the Lord!

□ Ben Mahan/from page 9

God. In 1938, under Mahan's leadership, the church purchased, remodeled, and enlarged the old McKendree Methodist Episcopal Church at 915 Massachusetts Avenue in downtown Washington, D.C.²³ The Sunday school opening services were held in an auditorium on the ground level. The sanctuary was on the second floor.

Ben Mahan maintained good scriptural order in the services and was sensitive and open to the moving of the spirit, including the operation of tongues and interpretation. He always gave an invitation for the unsaved and believers to come to the altar. An orchestra played on Sunday evenings.²⁴

Mahan's position as pastor of a large church in the nation's capital afforded him some unique areas of ministry. Several government employees attended, including an admiral whose wife taught a Bible class at the church. Dr. Roy Swanstrom, as a young man, attended the church and played the saxophone in the orchestra. At the time he was working for Senator Bone of the State of Washington.²⁵

Also, in 1941, Assemblies of God executives asked Mahan to represent them at a meeting for the National Service Board for Religious Objectors. He attended and gave them a report concerning the Civilian Public Service

“He was always an earnest, sincere, effective preacher of the Word—no wasted small talk.”

—Richard Bishop

Program and how it related to the Assemblies of God at that time.²⁶

From 1941-1951 Mahan headed the Full Gospel Tabernacle radio broadcast, a half-hour program each Sunday evening on station WINX. And for years he was in demand as a speaker at camps and conferences. He was the featured speaker at the 1949 summer camp meeting of the Eastern District Council at Green Lane, Pennsylvania.²⁷

Dr. Richard Bishop of Springfield, Missouri, remembers Ben Mahan as his boyhood and young adulthood pastor at Full Gospel Tabernacle. “He was a nice looking man. Some thought he looked a lot like Franklin D. Roosevelt. He wore his hair straight and combed backwards. And he wore dark pants and a dark, silk-looking coat in the pulpit which was very becoming.”

Bishop also remembers Mahan as an earnest, sincere, and effective preacher of the Word, with no wasted small talk. “Mahan was very supportive of the young people of the church,” he recalls. “He encouraged the young men who felt called into the ministry and supported them.” As a result, a large number of them went into the ministry including Lyman Richardson, Carl Brumback, and Richard and Bash Bishop.²⁸



BENJAMIN E. MAHAN

REV. MAHAN

OF JEANNETTE,

PASTOR OF THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH.

WILL SPEAK ON

NEW YEARS DAY

IN THE MALTA HALL (MAIN AUDITORIUM)

AT 2:30 P. M. AND 7:30 P. M., God willing, under the auspices of the Full Gospel Mission of Freeport. This is one of our district fellowship meetings, to which people from New Kensington, Vandersgriff, Jeannette, and other places, come.

YOU, TOO, ARE INVITED * * *

♦ LATER — beginning January 10, 1932—Rev. H. E. Hardt, of West Virginia, will conduct an evangelistic campaign of three weeks' duration, in the Redpath Building, Market Street, Freeport. Meetings are scheduled for every night, the first week, and every night except Monday, each succeeding week. Make your plans now to attend these interesting meetings.

A 1932 poster for New Year's services at Malta Hall, Freeport, Pennsylvania.

Many of the Assemblies of God churches which have sprung up in the suburbs were started by ministers who came out of Mahan's church in downtown Washington, D.C.

Eleanor Parry also grew up in Full Gospel Tabernacle. Her sister, Louise, married Lyman Richardson. Eleanor says of Mahan, “I remember him as a Bible-oriented preacher. He preached the Word. I can remember him reading from the Psalms and the Epistles.”²⁹

In the providence of God, Washington was Mahan's last pastorate. For in February 1950 he was operated on for cancer. He died one year later on February 19, 1951.³⁰

In 37 years of ministry Mahan had spoken to thousands. Over the years he had many requests to speak at camp meetings and Bible conferences. Invariably he would spend his vacations speaking at groups such as these. His sermons would quite often focus on Old Testament characters, especially Moses and Elijah. He also emphasized the second coming of Christ. One New Testament verse he quoted often was: “Unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28).³¹

J. Bashford Bishop of Lakeland, Florida, a brother of Richard Bishop, was already in the ministry when Mahan became pastor at Washington, D.C. “He asked me to supply for him in the summer months sometimes when he would be gone for several weeks at a time. I felt real honored because I was young then.” Bishop remembers Mahan as a great preacher. “He loved to preach about Elijah. That was his favorite topic. He was also very good at leading people in worship without affectation. He had a very natural way of leading a worship service.”³² Bishop also relates that he had a hand in choosing Mahan's successor. He recommended Lloyd Christiansen to come for a meeting. Then later Mahan asked Lloyd to be his associate. When Mahan retired, he asked Lloyd to be his successor at the Full Gospel Tabernacle (now Christ Church).

Lloyd Christiansen, who is now retired and lives at Tulsa, Oklahoma, remembers Mahan (and so do many others) as a premier preacher of the Bible who had no use for topics that were not Biblically based: “He wasn't interested in telling a lot of stories. He believed that the Word of God could do the job without other embellishments. He had a unique way of putting scriptures together in support of his theme. He was a strong pulpit man.” Pastor Mahan had no

use for "cheap or chintzy" music at church. "He loved the old hymns of the church," Christiansen remembers.

Christiansen's view perhaps sums up Ben Mahan's ministry the best: "Prayer and the Word of God were the primary emphases of Pastor Mahan in the ministry. He was so careful to honor God's presence at church. I remember he used to say 'freedom with reverence' was God's way."³³

An overflow crowd attended Mahan's funeral. More than 50 ministers of the Potomac and Eastern Districts were present. He is buried at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Washington, D.C. The inscription on his tombstone says: "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:17). His wife, Nelle Mahan, passed away in 1976 at age 84 and is buried next to him.³⁴

Ben and Nelle Mahan had two children. The younger daughter, Grace, passed away in April 1991 after a long illness and is buried next to her parents.

The older daughter, Ruth, is married to Dr. Oswald Spence, retired chief dental officer of the U.S. Coast Guard. They live in Arlington, Virginia, and attend Arlington Assembly of God. Ruth has two children. Daughter Dorothy (Amerine) Price and husband Jesse Price live at Ocala, Florida, and have two daughters. The son is Robert P. Amerine, who practices law in Alexandria, Virginia. His wife, Chung Ja (Lee) Amerine is a registered nurse. They have three sons and attend Arlington Assembly of God.³⁵

From the day Ben Mahan responded to a tent meeting altar call, he stayed true to his commitment to God. A fitting quote from the bulletin at his funeral says, "The faithful warrior has laid aside his armor, the workman has put down his tools, and he has received a hearty welcome home!"

Notes

1. Carl Brumback, *Suddenly ... From Heaven* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1961), 246-247.
2. Ruth Mahan Spence, "The Ministry of Benjamin E. Mahan and the Founding of the Church of Jeannette, Pa.," [unpublished manuscript, April 1993], 6.
3. *Ibid.*
4. Brumback, 247.
5. Spence, 1.


6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.* Ben Hardin became a well-known evangelist in the Assemblies of God, preaching at large churches and camp meetings throughout the Midwest and California. He helped establish new churches in Illinois, Minnesota, Washington, D.C., and other places. He was Southern California District Superintendent from 1939-1944. Hardin and Ben Mahan became brothers-in-law, and to distinguish between the two Bens, people sometimes would refer to them as "Big Ben" and "Little Ben" because Hardin was not as tall as Ben Mahan. These nicknames remained with them for the rest of their lives.
10. *Ibid.*, 2.
11. *Ibid.*, 3.
12. Ben Mahan, ministerial file.
13. *Jeannette Assembly of God, 1914-1994* (80th anniversary booklet).
14. Jeannette Assembly of God, certificate of affiliation.
15. Spence, 4.
16. *Jeannette Assembly of God, 1914-1994*.
17. Spence, 4.
18. Ruth Spence, letter to Wayne Warner, April 23, 1993.
19. *Potomac District Bulletin*, March 1951; obituary, *The Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.), February 20, 1951.
20. "With Christ," *Pentecostal Evangel*, April 1, 1951, 14.
21. *Jeannette Assembly of God, 1914-1994*.
22. Leland Despain, personal interview, October 10, 1994.
23. Obituary, *The Evening Star*.
24. Richard W. Bishop, telephone interview, October 7, 1994.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Ben Mahan, ministerial file.
27. Obituary, *The Evening Star*.
28. Richard Bishop interview.
29. Eleanor E. Parry, telephone interview, October 7, 1994.
30. Ben Mahan, ministerial file; "With Christ," *Pentecostal Evangel*, April 1, 1951, 14.
31. Richard Bishop interview.
32. J. Bashford Bishop, personal interview, October 3, 1994.
33. Spence, 7.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Ruth Spence, telephone interview, October 13, 1994.



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

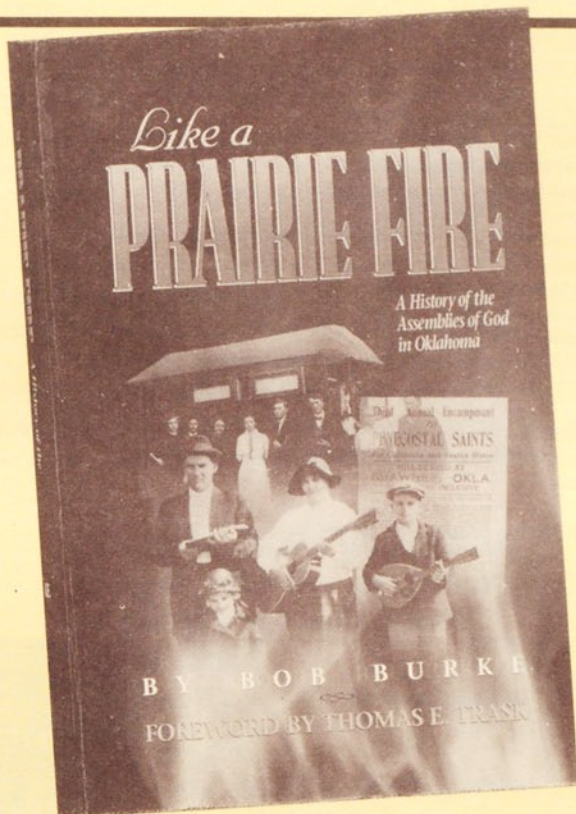
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Bob Burke

Oklahoma District Council Publishes Monumental History Book

In an ambitious publishing project, the Oklahoma District Council has released their first major history, *Like a Prairie Fire*. Researched and written by Bob Burke, the 518-page book brings to life the history and much current information on many of the nearly 500 churches in the district. With a sharp four-color cover design and more than 300 photographs, the book is not only attractive but also filled with interesting information.

Bob Burke is a fourth generation Pentecostal. Growing up in First Assembly, Broken Bow, he has served as deacon, Sunday school teacher,

and worship leader at Cathedral of the Hills in Edmond. Before becoming an attorney, Burke was a newscaster and nationally-known sportscaster. He served as Secretary of Commerce in Governor David Boren's administration and headed Boren's first successful campaign for the U. S. Senate in 1978. *Like a Prairie Fire* is Burke's sixth book.

The new history is available from the Oklahoma District Council of the Assemblies of God, P. O. Box 13179, Oklahoma City, OK 73118. The price is \$12, plus \$2 for postage.

