

Assemblies of God

# HERITAGE™

CONCLUDING PART  
Marching to Zion

A Pentecostal  
Branch Grows in Zion

Heritage Photo Quiz

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**THE KING OF GOSPEL SONG WRITERS**

**HERBERT  
BUFFUM**



# THE HERITAGE

## LETTER *Wayne Warner*

When Justus du Plessis walks into a room, few people will miss seeing him. Standing tall, erect, and with a shock of white hair, he would pass for a banker if it were not for his clerical collar. Then when he begins to speak, people listen—not only for his striking South African accent but also for what he has to say.

Last spring he participated in the Roman Catholic/Pentecostal Dialogue at Fuller Seminary and then stopped by Springfield for 2 days before returning to South Africa. His visit here included an hour interview in the Archives for our oral history program. Obviously, our recorded interview could barely scratch the surface of his long ministry which now includes frequent international flights.

Naturally, most people wonder if Justus is related to David. Yes, he is David's younger brother. And there is a third Du Plessis brother who is also a preacher in South Africa.

David is, of course, better known around the world, but there are some places where he is introduced as the older brother of Justus. That must keep one humble and the other one smiling. Both have held the office of general secretary for the Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa.

Maybe you did not know that the Apostolic Faith Mission has American roots. That happened when John Lake, Thomas Hezmalhalch (originally from England), and other early Pentecostals went to South Africa in 1908. They were some of the very first Pentecostal missionaries sent abroad. As a result of that effort, the Apostolic Faith Mission was born. Justus, David, and other Apostolic Faith members appreciate their American heritage—and they have found some of that heritage in materials we have collected and other accounts and photographs published in *Heritage*.

The Apostolic Faith Mission has established its own archives and is using some of the same preservation measures which we are using here in Springfield.

We hope to work with them in sharing historical materials of mutual interest.

Here is a little-known footnote to that missionary party which left Indianapolis in 1908.



Wayne E. Warner is Director of the A/G Archives

An 18-year-old girl who attended the Pentecostal mission in the city could hardly bear to see the missionaries leave. She wanted to go. The leaders knew about her spiritual life and her abilities, so they invited her to become one of their number.

She would have gone, but her parents thought she was too young for such far-away exploits. She took her parents' advice, pledged to pray and support the new missionaries, and then enrolled at a college.

In 1911 this young woman fell in love with a young preacher-editor whose name was J. Roswell Flower. They were married that year and entered the ministry. You've guessed by now that her name is Alice Reynolds Flower—or Mother Flower as she is called.

Alice almost began her ministry in South Africa with the Apostolic Faith Mission, but instead stayed at home and helped form a sister organization, the Assemblies of God, 6 years later. She will be 96 in November and is still blessed with a keen mind and continues to minister to others.

How many other ministers join Mother Flower in the 90-and-over class? Probably more than you would guess.

Sherri Doty, Assemblies of God statistician, came up with the following list of ministers who are at least 90 years of age (as of July 1986).

*Heritage* honors these saints and prays that God's richest blessings shall be upon them in their golden years. They have given so much toward the international ministry of the Assemblies of God.

These ministers are listed by age, with the oldest first. The first three—Jonathan Nader, W. W. Teeters, and Elizabeth

Rape—are 99. The first 22 listed are 95 and older, and the rest are at least 90.

## 137 Ministers 90 Years or Older

Jonathan Nader Chicago, IL	Myrtle L. Badger Lakeport, CA
W.W. Teeters Stockton, CA	Minnie Madsen Springfield, MO
Elizabeth Rape Fort Worth, TX	Henry C. Carlson Palm Desert, CA
Charles C. Personeus Kittitas, WA	Bessie Gilroy Manhattan Beach, CA
Tomas Martinez Gallina, NM	Ruby M. Gregurich Tishomingo, OK
Oscar E. Carwile Caseyville, IL	Ben Blake Trumann, AR
Viola N.G. Hughes Santa Rosa, CA	Lola M. Stout Grover City, CA
Horace J. Carter Wilmington, DE	Zealet L. MacDonald Kalispell, MT
Joseph T. Yamada Hines, IL	Edna M. Hawkins Crawford, NE
Gertrude S. Martinez La Mirada, CA	Nicola Valentini Clayton, NJ
Earle V. Jennison Philo, CA	Docia M. Noles Panama City, FL
Harry A. Stemme San Gabriel, CA	Floyd A. Nelson Springfield, CO
Ida B. Hitchcock Santa Cruz, CA	Willard Gearhart Lancaster, PA
Alice R. Flower Springfield, MO	Freed M. Morris Newkirk, OK
Martin W. Evans Lexington, KY	Lorena Touns Des Allemands, LA
Clifford Jackson Grant City, MO	Ruth D. Cook Avon, NY
Natividad R. Nevarez Montebello, CA	Arthur G. Johnson Pleasanton, CA
Josephine K. Williams Springfield, MO	Mary B. Cadwalder Sugarland, TX
Charles S. Brown Daytona Beach, FL	Carlotta Martinez Commerce City, CO
Howard Shelton Garden City, KS	Frank S. Verdone San Bernardino, CA
LeRoy G. Comstock Phoenix, AZ	Herbert R. Snyder Springfield, MO
Lola R. Miles Fredericksburg, TX	Ethel B. Stevens Enid, OK
Felix Rizzo Clinton, MD	Florence M. Heatter Oak Forest, IL
Montie L. Turner Edmond, OK	J.C. Thames Crestview, FL
William F. Voodre Durant, FL	Wasily J. Shepeluk Worcester, MA
Samuel A. Rice Livingston, TX	Iva Dell Kirby S. Africa
Horace M. Reeves Plainview, TX	Harry D. Mamalis Oakland, CA
Florence E. Crider Marysville, OH	Anastacio Valdez Norwalk, CA
Fernando Villegas Tulare, CA	Jannete Koch Smithfield, KY
Rodolfo C. Orozco Mexico	

Continued on page 14

## COVER STORY



The feature on Herbert Buffum, "The King of Gospel Song Writers," begins on page 11. Lois Buffum Parker (above), a daughter, looks at an old family scrapbook. Photo by Ellis Warner



By Edith Blumhofer

As John Alexander Dowie's Zion City grew, his personal sense of destiny intensified. By 1904 he had proclaimed himself first, Elijah, the Restorer, then First Apostle of his own denomination. A fervent restorationist, Dowie instructed his followers to anticipate divine institution of the gifts and ministries listed in 1 Corinthians 12.

Apparently unnoticed among the crowds that surrounded Dowie during the first busy months in Zion was a visiting preacher who also longed for a return to New Testament experience. An itinerant holiness evangelist, Charles Fox Parham had rallied audiences in Kansas to expect a full recovery of the "apostolic faith." He preached holiness and healing and became increasingly intrigued by doctrines of the Holy Spirit. In 1900 his curiosity about how others understood and experienced the Holy Spirit occasioned his visit to Zion. Parham was impressed but dissatisfied. A few months later, his conviction that an experience of Spirit baptism evidenced by tongues was essen-

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*Parham taught two doctrines which were departures from Zion teaching: sanctification and Spirit baptism (evidenced by speaking in tongues).*

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tial to the recovery of the true apostolic faith catapulted him to the leadership of the small, struggling "Apostolic Faith Movement" that later became known as Pentecostalism.

Meanwhile, Dowie encountered increasing opposition. His claim to apostleship alienated some who had become restive under his authoritarian leadership. Accused of financial mismanagement and of erroneous doctrine, Dowie was finally replaced by Wilbur Glenn Voliva. Shortly before this turmoil disrupted his "city of God," Dowie had banished a family that had accepted Parham's teaching on Spirit baptism.<sup>1</sup> The lines were drawn between two of the day's most fervent advocates of an end-times restoration of the "apostolic faith."

By late 1906, Zion was in considerable



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## *Charles F. Parham's 1906 Invasion*

# A Pentecostal Branch Grows in Dowie's Zion



*A group of Pentecostals in Zion about 1909. Front row, left to right, Prudence Davis, Burton B. Bosworth, Carol Hammond, Fred Vogler, and Lilly Hardman. Center, Bernice Flower, Mabel Burgess, Jean Campbell, Zella Reynolds, Maggie Boyer (later Mrs. Fred Vogler), and Alice Reynolds (later Mrs. J. Roswell Flower). Standing, Eithel Bowley Hardman, Lucia Hammond, Augusta Liereth, Emil Schattschneider, Miss Cockran, Edith Baugh, Mary Ropp, Minnie Moore (later Mrs. Emil Chastagnar), Helen Fielden, Lena Davis, Hugo Ulrich, Floyd Reeve, and Bertha McClain.*

disarray. The city was in receivership. Social and economic dissatisfaction affected the church as well. The city, which had routinely excluded religious activity by non-members of Dowie's denomination, soon attracted a variety of religious teachers. Most residents, however, remained loyal to the basic tenets Dowie had taught: faith, consecration, holiness, and healing.

Into this setting a small group of citizens invited Charles Parham. On Thursday, September 20, 1906, Parham began in Zion a revival with significant implications for the future of American Pentecostalism.

Local papers portrayed Parham as having "a pleasant and convincing manner that makes his discourse almost irresistible."<sup>2</sup> His meetings, first conducted in a hotel room, increased to three per day and overflowed into the halls. By the end

of the first week, several hundred regularly attended, and Zion's Overseer Voliva lamented that Parham was "winning some of our most faithful people."<sup>3</sup> In response, Voliva prohibited meetings in the hotel and blocked Parham's efforts to rent schools and the city's one church, Shiloh Tabernacle.

Undaunted, Parham moved his services to five private homes, where audiences spilled out to porches and lawns. Concurrent nightly meetings attracted hundreds. From 7 p.m. until midnight, Parham traveled from one home to another, preaching and exhorting.<sup>4</sup>

Newspapers advertised Parham's message as "old-time religion, Christ's soon coming, repentance, salvation, healing, sanctification, baptism of the Holy Ghost."<sup>5</sup> Parham demanded two departures from Zion teaching: first that



one pursue two discreet experiences beyond conversion—sanctification and Spirit baptism; second, that Spirit baptism be evidenced by speaking in tongues.

Parham's willingness to term "sanctification" "entire consecration" helped Dowie's followers accept the teaching. (Dowie had often stressed "consecration.") The teaching about tongues was presented as both biblical and apostolic in a context where both of those characterizations were of primary concern. Parham's insistence that tongues simply demonstrated the Spirit's infilling made tongues more acceptable in Zion. It is noteworthy that several of those who accepted Parham's message in Zion would later reject the "uniform" necessity of tongues while continuing to regard themselves and their ministries as Pentecostal.<sup>6</sup>

After Parham had preached in Zion for several weeks, individuals began to receive Spirit baptism. A. F. Lee, general ecclesiastical secretary of the Christian Catholic Church, resigned his position to identify with Parham. Hubert Grant,

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*Several of Dowie's followers became members of the A/G, including F. F. Bosworth, Harry Bowley, Marie Brown, F. A. Graves, D. C. O. Opperman, E. N. Richey and his sons, Charles and Daisy Robinson, Fred Vogler, and Helen Wannemacher.*

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Dowie's personal secretary, joined the Pentecostals. F. F. Bosworth, conductor of the widely acclaimed Zion City Band, welcomed Parham into his home. The mayor of Zion, E. N. Richey, joined the new group. By mid-October, 25 claimed to have received Spirit baptism, citing as evidence their having spoken in German, French, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Norwegian and Chinese. One local journalist recommended that high school students struggling with foreign language requirements "get the Pentecostal Spirit and take advanced standing."<sup>7</sup>

Late in October, Parham left Zion to visit the Azusa Street meetings in Los Angeles. During his absence, Zion's Pentecostals continued to recruit disaffected Zionites. Voliva gave citizens an ultimatum: "choose either me or this intruder who has stolen into our church" and deprived Parham's followers of membership in the Christian Catholic Church. This had both economic and social consequences: Pentecostals lost their jobs (the Christian Catholic Church controlled all the city's businesses). Zion residents were forbidden to socialize with the Pentecostals. Anti-Pentecostal billboards posted throughout the city insisted that "these buzzards and buzzers" had no

**A PERFECTLY PLAIN NOTICE**  
 THIS CITY WAS ESTABLISHED BY ZION PEOPLE AND FOR ZION PEOPLE ONLY  
 IT IS THE EXCLUSIVE HEADQUARTERS OF THE CHRISTIAN CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH IN ZION  
 AND THE PRIVATE HOME OF ITS OFFICERS AND MEMBERS.  
 NO GENTLEMAN, NOT TO MENTION A CHRISTIAN WOULD BREAK INTO A CHURCH SETTLEMENT,  
 AND ATTEMPT TO HOLD MEETINGS, OR TO ESTABLISH A COUNTER-ORGANIZATION.  
 THOSE WHO DO ARE NOTHING MORE NOR LESS THAN RELIGIOUS BUMS TRAMPS AND  
 VAGABONDS, WITH LESS HONOR THAN A GANG OF HIGHWAY ROBBERS AND THUGS.  
 GET OUT OF THIS COMMUNITY, IF YOU HAVE A DROP OF HONEST BLOOD, AND  
 GO AND ESTABLISH A SETTLEMENT OF YOUR OWN!  
 PERSONS COMING IN HERE TO HOLD MEETINGS, AT THE INVITATION OF TRAITORS PORCH-CLIMBERS,  
 ELECTION THIEVES, AND TALLY-SHEET MUTILATORS NEED NOT EXPECT ANY COURTESY FROM ZION.  
 AN ECCLESIASTICAL GOAT-HOUSE OR GARBAGE-DUMP HAS NO RIGHT WITHIN THIS SETTLEMENT.  
 THE WAR IS ON RED HOT, AND WILL BE WAGED DAY AND NIGHT UNTIL EVERY TRAITOR  
 GOES TO HIS OWN PLACE!  
 — WILBUR GLENN VOLIVA —

*Above, a typical "welcome" sign in Zion, about 1907. Courtesy of Truman Hudson*



**Right, Charles F. Parham.**



*Right, Shiloh House, Dowie's 25-room mansion built in 1902 for \$75,000. It was later used as the Great Lakes Bible Institute (Assemblies of God) and now houses the Zion Historical Society.*

right "to come into our midst and try to supplant the principles of our community life."<sup>8</sup>

Growth mandated facilities, so Pentecostals erected a tent, seating some 2,000, in the center of the city. Parham returned to the city for a watchnight service in the tent. Warmed by seven coal stoves, some 2,000 heard him preach for 2 hours on "The Baptism of the Holy Ghost." Among those persuaded during the holidays was John G. Lake, one of Dowie's deacons who later helped organize the Apostolic Faith Mission in South Africa.

Before long, the city receiver overruled Voliva and granted the Pentecostals' request for a building, giving them access to the city's one church, Shiloh Tabernacle, on week nights and alternate Sundays.

Early in 1907 Parham traveled from Zion to take Pentecostal teaching to some of Zion's churches elsewhere. Then press reports citing rumors accusing him of financial and sexual irregularities (charges which had surfaced elsewhere) began to appear in local papers. Increasingly separated by both adverse publicity (in July 1907, San Antonio newspapers reported Parham's detention on a morals charge) and personal inclination from leadership within Pentecostalism, Parham for the rest of his life was an isolated figure. He moved his family and head-

quarters from Zion back to Kansas where he continued to minister in a small fellowship he called the "Apostolic Faith."

Parham left in Zion a thriving Pentecostal work with capable members who had prior experience in ministry and were well qualified to nurture and extend the movement.

In June, William J. Seymour, leader of the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, visited Zion and was reminded of "Old Azusa, ten months ago." "People here receive the baptism in their pews while the service is going on," he reported. "Sometimes scores of them receive it. . . . There are little children from six years and on up who have the baptism with the Holy Ghost."<sup>9</sup>

**P**entecostalism spread rapidly from Zion. The missions and churches affiliated with Dowie's organization were systematically challenged, either by Parham or by former Zion colleagues, with the Pentecostal message.

Not all who had serious misgivings about Zion's future opted for Pentecostalism, however. Some simply withdrew from Zion's organization and continued to preach Dowie's essential message, shorn of apostolic claims. One of Dowie's most prominent associates, William Hamner Piper, had founded such a church in Chicago. Organized in



December 1906, Piper's Stone Church attracted some 600 former Zionites. Piper avoided addressing Pentecostal doctrine until June 1907 when, after a spiritual crisis, he invited friends from Zion—Elder F. A. Graves (author of "He Was Nailed to the Cross for Me," "Honey in the Rock" and other gospel songs), Marie Burgess and Jean Campbell—to introduce it in his church.<sup>10</sup>

The acceptance of the Pentecostal message in the Stone Church had far-reaching significance. At a time when virtually all coast-to-coast rail travel

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*"Those of Dowie's followers who identified with Parham's Pentecostal message concurred that in Pentecostalism the real significance of Dowie's message was preserved and expanded."*

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necessitated a change of trains in Chicago, the Stone Church welcomed a steady stream of missionaries and evangelists. In the years before the many independent Pentecostal groups in middle America organized, the Stone Church through a schedule of conventions, in its regular ministries, and through its publication, *The Latter Rain Evangel*, functioned as a vital center of American Pentecostalism.

The men and women who, through Parham's efforts, left Dowie's Christian Catholic Church for Pentecostalism extensively influenced the new movement. Probably most of them ultimately affiliated with the Assemblies of God. Among such were F. F. Bosworth, Harry Bowley, Marie Burgess Brown, F. A. Graves, D. C. O. Opperman, E. N. Richey and his sons, Charles Elmo Robinson, Daisy Robinson, Fred Vogler, and Helen Innes Wannemacher. Deeply committed to "taking God at His word," they worked in many capacities as "pentecostal pioneers." In 1907, for example Marie Burgess (who became Marie Brown in 1909) responded to Parham's request that she take the Pentecostal message to New York City. She remained to establish an influential Assemblies of God church, Glad Tidings Tabernacle. For many years Glad Tidings led Assemblies of God congregations in foreign missions giving. When she died in 1971, Brown had served her congregation for 64 years.

Some 50 years after accepting Pentecostal teaching in Zion, Marie Burgess Brown insisted that in (Dowie's) Zion, she had obtained her "foundation." "If it hadn't been for the truths of the Word of God as I learned them there," she maintained, "I would not be here today. I would never have been able to stand through all these years."<sup>11</sup>

Lilian Yeomans, another ordained Assemblies of God minister deeply influenced by Zion's teaching, undoubtedly expressed a consensus when she stated in the 1930s: "Some people say that Dr. Dowie's work is dead. No! It is more alive today than ever."<sup>12</sup> Those of Dowie's followers who identified with Parham's Pentecostal message concurred that in Pentecostalism the real significance of Dowie's message was preserved and expanded. Shorn of both its secular concerns and its outward apostolic pretensions, Dowie's essential focus on the full validity of New Testament Christianity for 20th-century believers found, they would claim, its logical and fullest development in Pentecostalism.

#### Notes

1. Gordon P. Gardiner, "Out of Zion," *Bread of Life*, XXX (1981), 3.
2. *Waukegan Daily Gazette*, Oct. 15, 1906.
3. *North Chicago News*, Sept. 26, 1906.
4. Sarah Parham, *The Life of Charles Parham*

(Joplin, MO, 1930), pp. 156-157. *The Waukegan Daily Sun*, Nov. 15, 1906, reported that as many as 300 attended a single house meeting.

5. See, for example, the ad in the *Toronto Evening Telegram*, Jan. 19, 1907.

6. See, for example, Bernice C. Lee, "A Holy Jubilee," *Bread of Life*, V (1956), 3-4, 9-10. F. F. Bosworth was the most prominent among those who denied that all the Spirit baptized necessarily spoke in tongues. His stance was applauded by the ministers of the Zion Ministerial Training Homes (known also as the faith homes), all of whom were former Dowieites. The position remains characteristic of that group and its loosely affiliated churches.

7. *Daily Sun*, Oct. 18, 1906; *Waukegan Daily Gazette*, Oct. 19, 1906.

8. *North Chicago News*, Sept. 26, 1906; *Bread of Life*, XXXI (1982), 6.

9. *The Apostolic Faith*, I (June-Sept. 1907), 1.

10. William H. Piper, "Long Weary Months of Spiritual Drought," *Latter Rain Evangel*, I (October 1908), 3-6.

11. Quoted in Gordon P. Gardiner, "The Apostle of Divine Healing," *Bread of Life*, VI (March 1957), 15.

12. *Ibid.*

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## LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

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### Spring Issue Brings Back Memories

The Spring issue was so interesting. I knew so many of the people. My sister Ruth and brother Gordon Bender graduated from Bethel Bible Training School. My sister went to Liberia and my brother to Japan as missionaries. In later years my brother built and pastored the church in Buffalo. He died in 1982; my sister is living in New Castle, Pennsylvania.

I knew the man who received the Holy Spirit in Nyack Bible School. One not mentioned was my uncle, Godfrey Bender, who was a missionary in Venezuela.

My husband Irving attended Rochester Bible Training School and spoke of the spiritual influence the Duncan sisters had on the students.

We were well acquainted with the Beulah Heights students. Maynard Ketcham and my husband were boys together on Long Island.

Joseph Tunmore, superintendent of the old Eastern District, sent my brother Ralph and I to Erie, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 1926 to start an Assembly of God. We pitched a tent in the middle of a Catholic community. The district said, "Trust God." That we did, for the offerings were only about \$2 a week. God did really meet our every need.

Esther Bender Meier  
North Ft. Myers, Florida

*The Meiers pastored the same church in Neptune, New Jersey, for 45 years.*

*Brother Meier died last year. Her brother Ralph now lives in Garden Grove, California.*

### Women in Ministry

I really enjoy *Heritage*. I knew or have met most of the people featured so far.

The spring issue with all those godly women was so interesting. Dear Louise Nankivell looked "just right" on the cover. My interpreter, who is pictured with me on page 8, is Miss Helvi Taponen. She is a missionary to Taiwan. Forty people received the baptism in the Holy Spirit when I ministered in her church in Taiwan. She came home to Finland to especially be my interpreter at the conference in 1952.

Hattie P. Hammond  
Hagerstown, Maryland

*Marjorie K. Baker, editor of the Asian Report in Hong Kong, also wrote to identify Miss Taponen. "Helvi is now retired in Finland. . . she is very much a part of Pentecostal missions history in China and Finland. She is presently active in raising financial and prayer support for the church in China." She retired last year after serving 39 years in China and Taiwan.*

*Sister Hammond is still ministering wherever she has opportunity. In July she ministered to pastors and their wives at a Mennonite retreat.*

### Heritage Helpful for Seminary Paper

Thank you for sending the A/G *Heritage*. It's inspiring to read the great heritage we share as members of the Assemblies of God fellowship. I also found the publication a most helpful resource when I wrote a paper, "My

*Continued on page 16*



## PHOTO QUIZ

How many of the people on this page can you identify? (For a starter, find Billy Graham.) You will find the quiz easier if you are at least 40 years of age or have studied A/G history. For the answers turn to page 16.



1 \_\_\_\_\_



2 \_\_\_\_\_



3 \_\_\_\_\_



4 \_\_\_\_\_



5 \_\_\_\_\_



6 \_\_\_\_\_



7 \_\_\_\_\_



8 \_\_\_\_\_



9 \_\_\_\_\_

ANSWERS ON PAGE 16







on the leading questions of the day. In Australia he had run for parliament on the Social Reform ticket, and he retained this humanitarian orientation throughout his life. A vocal (albeit inconsistent) pacifist, Dowie regularly berated violence at home and American imperialism abroad. His criticism of anti-Semitism and the oppression of serfs in Russia was matched by his opposition to the Western partitioning of China. Trade unions and big corporations also came under attack. There is no evidence that he was conversant with Marxism, yet his critique of trade unions grew from a Marxist-like conviction that unions exploited the working class by accepting the premises of the capitalist state. He was equally quick to score corporate interests. "If the law against trusts were to be enforced, as it ought to be," he asserted, "John D. Rockefeller would be looking at the world through prison bars today." On other questions, such as municipal reform, gun control, public ownership of utilities, taxation of church property, free compulsory public education, and women's suffrage and economic rights, he consistently marched with the most progressive thinkers of the age. But in regard to race relations, he was far ahead of most of them.<sup>4</sup>

Dowie's image of blacks was not free of stereotypes, but he was more humane and less paternalistic than most Protestant leaders, whether liberal or evangelical. He placed the blame for race conflict in the United States squarely on the shoulders of white society and argued that, given the intractability of white prejudice, miscegenation was the only long-term solution. Calling for equality in all aspects of Zion City's life, he insisted that church meetings and seating arrangements be fully integrated and promised that when the full complement of Twelve Apostles was appointed, one or more would be black, because "primitive conditions . . . exclude race prejudices." Zion City residents may have taken some of these views with a grain of salt and, of course, records of ethnic tension may have been suppressed. Nonetheless, the available evidence suggests that the 200 blacks and numerous non-English-speaking immigrants in the city lived harmoniously with the native white majority.<sup>5</sup>

Another important element in the community's outlook was Dowie's conviction that Zion City marked the fulcrum of world history. His eschatological views resembled the dispensational and premillennial ideas popularized by revivalists such as J. Wilbur Chapman and Rueben A. Torrey, who looked for the imminent rapture of the church, followed first by 7 years of tribulation, then the return of Christ and his saints to rule on earth for a thousand years. Christ's Second Coming would be triggered when Jerusalem itself was overtaken by Zion.

"We can get possession of the sacred site of Jerusalem and build it up in preparation for the Coming of Christ our King . . . ZION WILL BUY UP JERUSALEM FOR THE KING." During the millennium, Dowie acknowledged, Christ would reside in Jerusalem, but Zion City would be the real governing center of the world. "After the rapture, when we come back, we shall own the earth, and proceed to take possession of it. We will walk right back into the dear old Temple in Zion City and say, 'Here we are again!'"<sup>6</sup>

These then were the girders that formed the ideology of Zion City: apostolic polity, theocracy, progressive politics, and a radically self-centered view of history. There was, however, another girder, which may have been the most important of all. It was the conviction that the supernatural power of primitive Christianity was still available to meet all human needs, including—especially including—the injuries and diseases that afflict the human body.

The exact origin of Dowie's faith-healing theology is unclear. Although he

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*"No physicians,  
surgeons, nurses,  
veterinarians, or medicines  
of any sort were allowed on  
the premises."*

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wrote hundreds of pages on the subject in his weekly *Leaves of Healing*, it would be risky to try to reduce that material to a systematic position. It suffices to say that Dowie, like many holiness and higher life teachers of the late 19th century, believed that disease is either the indirect result of original sin or the direct result of personal sin. Consequently, Christ's atoning work on the cross provides healing for the body just as it provides healing for the soul. Again and again Dowie reminded his people that Christ "hath borne our griefs (Hebrew, *sicknesses*) and carried our sorrows, and with His stripes we are healed." Thus "the will of God is to heal now, as it was nineteen centuries ago, all who believe." He was contemptuous of the notion, common among Christians, that sickness is a natural part of the human condition or that suffering is educational. "Disease does not bring people nearer to God," he shot back. "It drives them further away from Him." Scripture declares that "disease, like sin, is God's enemy, and the devil's work, and can never be God's will." Dowie liked to remind his followers that the Doxology enjoined Christians to "'Praise God from whom all *blessings* flow,' " not "from whom all *sickness* flows."<sup>7</sup>

Zion City's detractors seldom acknowl-

edged the depth and integrity of the commitment by Dowie and his followers to the doctrine and practice of divine healing. There is no evidence that he ever accepted payment for praying for a person's healing or that he ever made financial contribution to the church a condition for prayer. Even in the final years of his life, when he increasingly was swept up in the momentum of his own apotheosis, Dowie scrupulously insisted that he was nothing but an instrument of God's power. That many of the folk who came to Zion City lost sight of that point is undeniable—but also irrelevant, for they knew they had been healed.

One reporter deadpanned that Dowie's followers routinely claimed to have been cured of everything except "decapitation and *rigor mortis*." He was not far wrong. Week after week, month after month, the *Leaves of Healing* carried dozens, sometimes hundreds, of testimonials sent in by persons for whom Dowie had prayed, personally or by mail. Reporters and visitors were bemused, if not awed, by the array of crutches, trusses, casts, braces, corrective shoes, pill bottles, and wheelchairs lining the walls of Shiloh Tabernacle—"trophies," Dowie boasted, of Zion's war with the power of darkness. No physicians, surgeons, nurses, veterinarians, or medicines of any sort were allowed on the premises. Hundreds of women gave birth without medical assistance. And one terrible morning in 1902 Dowie received word that his daughter, Esther, a student at the University of Chicago, had suffered third degree burns while using an alcohol-burning hair-curling iron. He rushed from Zion City to be with her. Father and daughter agreed not to call for a physician. Esther died that night. For the most part, Dowie and his people put their lives squarely behind their beliefs.<sup>8</sup>

There is no need to rehearse in detail the tangled and still controversial story of Dowie's fall from grace and expulsion from the affairs of Zion City in the spring of 1906. It is enough to say that the deterioration of the economic health of the community after 1903 was probably the critical factor. At the time critics widely believed that Dowie either had embezzled or, through gross negligence, had defrauded the businesses and residents of the town of most of their assets. Recently several scholars have argued that the crisis was basically structural: inadequate capitalization, too many intermediaries, unwillingness to use outside resources. Indeed, Dowie's willingness to pay overscale wages and his determination to honor promised dividends on Zion City stock, regardless of earnings, may have created much of the problem. Whatever the causes, the initial burst of prosperity in Zion City lasted only 2 or 3 years. By 1906 numerous businesses had



## UNITED AT BIER

Zionist's Factions Join in Tribute at Dowie's Funeral.

Plea for Harmony Is Made Over Body of the "First Apostle."

All Parties Represented at Obsequies and Praise Leadership of Founder.

Service Attended by Faithful 300 at Shiloh House Precedes Meeting in Tabernacle.

Deposed Deacons and Overseers Wear Gorgeous Robes of Former Offices.

Voliva, Dead Man's Successor, Does Not Appear, Illness Being Given as Cause of Absence.



Above, Shiloh Tabernacle in 1902, which would seat nearly 8,000. For several months in 1907-8 the Pentecostals were permitted to hold services here. Left, Chicago Chronicle headlines, (March 15, 1907), story of Dowie's funeral. Courtesy Zion Historical Society

been forced to shut down, and many residents who long since had given their life savings to the church were forced onto state-administered charity.<sup>9</sup>

Other less tangible factors also precipitated Dowie's downfall. His increasingly lavish lifestyle was one; an abortive but widely publicized scheme to colonize 100 square miles in Mexico, to be known as Zion Paradise Plantation, was another. But the most dolorous problem was the persistent hint that the laying on of hands sometimes had been, as one cynic put it, "less apostolic than amorous." By the fall of 1905, when he suffered the stroke described at the beginning of this essay, there were growing rumors that the prophet had tried to divorce his wife and, when the church's elders had blocked that move, that he had negotiated with the president of Mexico for legalization of polygamy in Zion Paradise Plantation. The truth behind these and similar charges is difficult to pin down and relatively unimportant in any case, for the pertinent point is that by 1905 many followers already had come to suspect the worst.<sup>10</sup>

Dowie spent the winter of 1905-06 in Jamaica recuperating. While he was away his most trusted aide, Wilbur Glenn "Flat Earth" Voliva, initiated legal proceedings to force his removal. In the courts Dowie fought his antagonists to a standstill, but in July 1906 a federal judge determined that he was not the owner but a removable trustee of the Christian Catholic Apostolic Church and its assets in Zion City. The city passed into a receivership, free elections were ordered, and the people promptly conferred upon Voliva all the powers and privileges they had once given to the first apostle. Although the theocratic foundation of Zion City soon started to crumble, structural remnants persisted into the 1930s, and many cul-

tural reminders of the theocracy lingered into the mid-20th century.<sup>11</sup>

Dowie's final months were spent in lonely, bedridden confinement in Zion City. His name and picture, once ubiquitous, were removed systematically from buildings and documents. Few people came to see him, and before long he was no longer able to lift his own hand. Yet several witnesses claimed that to the very end he possessed the same inexplicable ability to heal others. An attendant who stayed with him on March 9, 1907, remembered that throughout the night he deliriously envisioned himself preaching again to the thousands in Shiloh Tabernacle, jumbling lines from old sermons

*"For the most part, Dowie and his people put their lives squarely behind their beliefs."*

with revival tunes and commands to rise and be healed. He died at dawn. "The millennium has come," he gasped. "I will be back for a thousand years."<sup>12</sup>

All in all, it is not surprising that Dowie's rule in Zion City eventually collapsed. Indeed, given the fragility of all communitarian endeavors, theocratic or otherwise, the salient question is not why did it topple, but why did it survive as long as it did?

In the eyes of many contemporaries the answer was transparent. "For many years," said the *Los Angeles Times*, "this fraud and faker... has attracted dupes from the four corners of the earth," seeking to "fleece... and virtually enslave them." A writer for *Harper's Weekly* de-

scribed the prophet as a "weird little fat man" hawking a "curious jumble of religion and get-rich-quick activities."<sup>13</sup>

Observations of this sort probably tell us more about the values and prejudices of newspaper and magazine writers at the turn of the century than they tell us about Dowie or the men and women who followed him. A few hours sifting through the extensive testimonial literature leaves little doubt that there were numerous reasons people risked their jobs, friendships, and earthly goods in order to move to Zion City. Predictably, the most frequently mentioned reason was the desire to be healed of injuries and illnesses. Another motive, mentioned almost as often, was the wish simply to be near Dowie. While it is true that the letters sometimes suggest adoration, if not idolization, of the general overseer, more often than not they suggest genuine affection mixed with vicarious enjoyment of his notoriety. In addition, some followers hoped to find economic security, to live in a crime-free environment, or to rear children without the competing attractions of worldly amusements and sexual mores. Some said that they longed for the warmth of shared values in a community of like-minded believers. And some who believed that Dowie truly had divined the plan of the future acknowledged that moving to Zion City was a timely attempt to ride the crest of history before it was forever too late.<sup>14</sup>

I would argue, however, that a deeper, more compelling motive often lurked behind these prudential concerns. That motive might be called religious, but I would describe it more precisely as a perfectionist determination to transcend what John Winthrop once called the "usual and ordinary means" of conventional Christianity. Simply stated, it was a desire to be healed, but also, and more fundamentally, a desire to be purified.

The testimonial of one Anna Oestreich

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Wayne E. Warner, Editor

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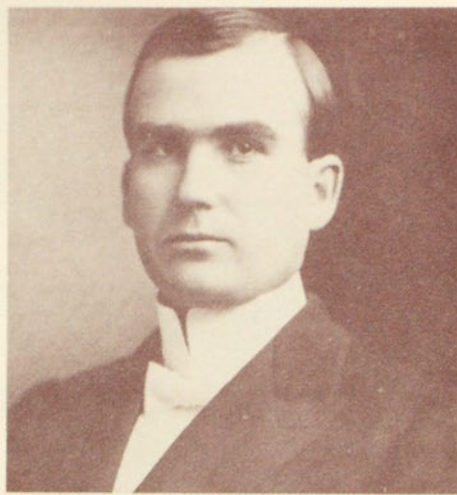
of Iowa Falls, Iowa, illustrates the power of the perfectionist impulse. Her letter is typical of hundreds, if not thousands, scattered through issue after issue of the *Leaves of Healing*. "I was raised in the Lutheran Church," she began, "but "[I was] not a child of God." Following years of constant sickness, the Lord

instantly healed me after I had asked him to forgive me.... That year I united with the Methodist Episcopal Church [but that] did not prove the blessing I had hoped to gain.... I began to have poor health; internal diseases.... About this time... I heard of Dr. Dowie's work in Chicago.... He... told me to... put my case in God's hands.... I asked the Lord then to fill me with His Spirit, and heal me.... A warm thrill went all through my body three times.... I was healed.... I have now been two years in Zion.... They have been the most blessed years in my life.

In this testimonial we should note, first, that Oestreich was not healed until she was certain that her sins had been forgiven; second, that her illness returned when she started to grow anxious about her spiritual life in the Methodist church; and third, that the decisive healing effected by Dowie (which proved permanent) was accompanied by an event that resembled a classic "second blessing" sanctification experience.<sup>15</sup>

Thus the timeless bond between physical infirmity and religious anxiety on the one hand and between physical health and religious assurance on the other is the context in which divine healing in Zion City should be understood. In countless instances healing represented not only a release from pain but also a sacrament, a palpable symbol, of those rare but unforgettable moments of grace in the life of the believer. Obviously individuals came to Zion City in order to be relieved of suffering, but they also came in order to experience healing as a sign of their right-standing with God. Admittedly, those who were not healed bore the stigma of second-class citizenship, for the persistence of illness signified inadequate faith at best and a sinful heart at worst. Even so, they often interpreted their ability to persevere, to endure pain without resorting to worldly medicines or physicians, as confirmation of the genuineness of their salvation and the perfection of their sanctification.<sup>16</sup> The fact that so many of Dowie's followers had been members of established churches before they moved to Zion City, and the fact that so many of them moved on to Pentecostalism after 1906,<sup>17</sup> suggest that they were born pilgrims, restlessly seeking new and more enduring appropriations of the divine.

This analysis brings us, finally, to the import of Zion City for understanding the relation between religion and the



Wilbur Glenn Voliva who succeeded John Alexander Dowie as Zion's leader. Courtesy of *Leaves of Healing*

*"The salient question is not why did [Zion City] topple, but why did it survive as long as it did?"*

perennial impulse to create utopian communities. Without question, environmental strain at the turn of the century did much to foster the growth of the community; in periods of rapid change people grow uneasy with their old lives and restlessly seek new options. But it is difficult to see how any interpretation that overlooks the role of religious and, more precisely, perfectionist motivations can plausibly explain why so many ordinary men and women made such extraordinary choices. The folk who followed Dowie into the Christian Catholic Church, and from there to Zion City, were in mutiny against a culture they perceived to be spiritually a drift.

In the final analysis, Zion City was created and sustained not by John Alexander Dowie but by the conviction, which he stirred to life, that the "usual and ordinary means" of holiness were no longer adequate.

#### Notes

1. Lindsay, *Dowie*, p. 155; Gordon Lindsay, ed., *Champion of Faith: The Sermons of John Alexander Dowie* (Dallas, 1979), p. 102; Lindsay, *Dowie*, pp. 159-160.

2. *Leaves of Healing*, 18 September 1904, p. 799; Harlan, *Dowie*, p. 68.

3. *Leaves of Healing*, 6 April 1901, p. 750; *Zion Banner*, 12 June 1901, pp. 68-69.

4. For the Rockefeller remark, see *Leaves of Healing*, 29 June 1901, p. 229. Dowie's pacifism is examined in Jay Beaman, "Pentecostal Pacifism: The Origin, Development, and Rejection of Pacific Belief among Pentecostals" (M. Div. thesis, North American Baptist Seminary, Sioux Falls, S.D., 1982), pp. 29-34.

5. *Leaves of Healing*, 29 June 1901, pp. 300-303. See also *Leaves of Healing*, 22 April 1905, p. 8; *Zion Banner*, 21 August 1901, p. 229; Philip L. Cook, "Zion City, Illinois—The Kingdom of Heaven and Race," *Illinois Quarterly* 38 (1975):51-62.

6. *Leaves of Healing*, 13 May 1905, p. 114; 7 June 1902 (quoted in Lindsay, *Dowie*, p. 182); 22 April 1905, pp. 10-12.

7. *Leaves of Healing*, 31 August 1894, p. 7; Lindsay, ed., *Sermons*, pp. 98-99, 20, 98; *American First-Fruits*, p. 18.

8. For one of the many pictures of Zion Tabernacle walls lined with trophies "CAPTURED FROM THE ENEMY," see *Leaves of Healing*, 3 May 1895, p. 491.

9. The recent studies by Kusch, Cook, and Pokin tend to exonerate Dowie, but they are not alone. John J. Halsey, a Lake Forest College political scientist who lived in and closely studied the community in 1903, came to the same conclusion; Halsey, *A History of Lake County, Illinois* (n.p., 1912), pp. 215-218.

10. The quotation is from Dwyer, "Elijah," p. 299. Of the 1,918 people who voted for a new General Overseer in September 1906, 1900 voted against Dowie; Cook, "Zion City," p. 396.

11. For the demise of the theocracy after 1906, see Kusch, "Zion, Illinois," esp. pp. 6-8, 282; Cook, "Zion City," chap. 13; Carl Q. Lee, "Biographies of John Alexander Dowie, Wilbur Glenn Voliva, Michael J. Mintern" (B.D. thesis, Bethany Biblical Seminary, Chicago, 1944).

12. Gordon P. Gardiner, "Unquestionably the Apostle of Divine Healing In His Day," *Bread of Life* 3 (1957):15. V.V. Barnes, "Address," *In Memoriam: John Alexander Dowie* (n.p., 1907), p. 13. See also Harlan, *Dowie*, pp. 71, 78-79, for evidence that persons who later left the church and denounced Dowie nonetheless continued to affirm his ability to heal.

13. *Los Angeles Times*, 13 April 1906, pt. 2, p. 4; Henry Underwood, "The Downfall of a Prophet," *Harper's Weekly*, 22 December 1906, p. 1857. It should be acknowledged, however, that a few journalists were quite sympathetic. See, for example, Grover Townshend, "A City of the Plains," *Munsey's Magazine* 27(1902):843-845.

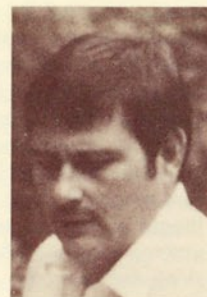
14. Harlan's interviews with Zion City residents in 1906 confirms my impressionistic judgment, based on a survey of the testimonial literature, that healing was the predominant motive; Harlan, *Dowie*, p. 78. For the other motives see, for example, *Zion City News*, 20 September 1907, p. 1. See also Gillian Allen and Roy Wallis, "Pentecostals as a Medical Minority," in Wallis and Peter Morley, eds., *Marginal Medicine* (London, 1976), pp. 129-130.

15. *Leaves of Healing*, 29 December 1900, p. 290.

16. For typical testimonials to this effect, see those by Kate Hubbard-Peckham and W.S. Peckham in *Leaves of Healing*, 13 April 1901, pp. 770-772. Of the several hundred I have read, none states that there had been no healing at all, but many, perhaps a majority, refer to partial healing, or relapses of illness, and the spiritual rewards of perseverance without medicines or physicians. See also Allen and Wallis, "Pentecostals as a Medical Minority," p. 123.

17. Edith L. Blumhofer, "The Christian Catholic Church and the Apostolic Faith: A Study in the 1906 Pentecostal Revival," in *Studies on Pentecostal-Charismatic Experiences in History*, ed. M. Cecil Robeck (Peabody, Mass., forthcoming); and Walter J. Hollenweger, "Handbuch der Pfingstbewegung," 10 vols. (Th.D. diss., University of Zurich, 1965), vol. OZa.OZ.047, pp. 459-460.

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## I'm Going Through

H. B.  
Arr. by THORO HARRIS

HERBERT BUFFUM  
Arr. by WM. B. OLMSTEAD

ed to wall t That shines on my path-way so  
ed to run e, But with our Re-deem-er they  
low my Lor e And have for my pil-low, like  
rades, and wa ay That leads to the king-dom of

s fol-lies a-dieu, And  
e-cause it was new, But  
y pleasures pur-sue, Than  
ad join with the few, Start

n go-ing thro', I'm go-ing thro',

# HERBERT BUFFUM

*The LA Times Called Him "The King of Gospel Song Writers"*

By Wayne Warner

Lois Buffum Parker can close her eyes anytime she chooses and picture her father hunched over a table in a hotel room picking out a tune with his fingers on make-believe piano keys.

If Herbert Buffum couldn't find a piano, he would improvise on a piece of furniture to write a new gospel song. He could always find middle C between the table leaves or the grains in the wood. In this rather unorthodox manner, Buffum wrote many of his 10,000 songs—1,000 of which were published.

Lois, who is the last surviving member of the Buffum evangelistic family, remembers that the four children could climb all over their congenial father while he composed his songs. "We could do anything we wanted while he was writing a new song except sing another song. That would throw off his concentration."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps concentration—after song writing and preaching—was Herbert Buffum's greatest gift. He could write a gospel song during a church service while hundreds of people watched. And his

song output was staggering—a feat for which the *Los Angeles Times* called him "The King of Gospel Song Writers." Ripley's *Believe It or Not* claimed he once wrote 12 songs in an hour!<sup>2</sup>

Even though Buffum has been gone nearly 50 years, many of his special songs remain popular. It probably has not been long since you have heard at least one of these Buffum favorites:

*Lift Me up Above the Shadows*  
*I'm Going Thro', Jesus*  
*I'm Going Higher*  
*Across the Great Divide*  
*My Sheep know my Voice*  
*When I Take My Vacation in Heaven*  
*The Old-fashioned Meeting*  
*In the City Where the Lamb*  
*is the Light*

Often Herbert Buffum would stay up late or rise early to work on new songs. Lois recalls that he would sometimes awaken her early and tell her he had a new song which he wanted her to hear. Lois, at the time, would rather have slept. "When your father has written thousands of songs," she explains, "you don't get too

excited over a new one."<sup>3</sup>

People who knew Herbert Buffum and his wife Lillie didn't think of this evangelistic group without thinking of their frequent travels. Settling in one place for a long period of time was about as uncommon as receiving more than \$5 for one of Herbert's compositions. Neither happened very often.

Much of their life during the first quarter of this century was spent in rooming houses, churches, tents, train stations, and on the move. The railroads and dusty or muddy roads of Kansas became as familiar to them as your hometown is to you.

One sweltering day in 1919 the family returned to their home base in Topeka aboard the Rock Island Railroad. Each of the family members struggled to get their luggage to a street car stop a half block away. There they mopped their brows and waited for the street car.

While they waited, a friend stopped and struck up a conversation with the Buffums. When you visited the Buffums, the conversation invariably got around to where they had been or where they were going. Buffum told him that he had moved on an average of once every 5 weeks during the previous 15 years.

"One of these days," Buffum said with obvious assurance, "I'm going to make my last move."

Later in the old rooming house they called home, Herbert Buffum sat at the kitchen table and tapped out a new song based on the conversation he had had with the man at the street car stop.

*I've been trav'ling for Jesus  
so much of my life,  
I've been trav'ling on land  
and on sea,  
But I'm counting on taking a  
trip to the sky,  
That will be the last move for me.*

It was a typical song for Buffum, a biblical thought coupled with his personal experiences. He called the song "When I Make My Last Move."

The great popularity of Buffum's gospel songs during the first half of the 20th century can be seen by thumbing through old song books and sheet music produced by various publishers and musicians. Herbert Buffum's name is on many of the songs, as creator of both lyrics and music.

He collaborated with his contemporary song writers, including Charles Gabriel, Haldor Lillenas, Charles Tillman, D.M. Shanks, J.M. Henson, and R.E. Winsett.

The *Los Angeles Times* editorialized at Buffum's death in 1939 that he was among the songwriters of the nation who did more for its people than those who made its laws. "What Stephen Foster did for American folklore," the editorial stated, "Herbert Buffum did for its homely religious sentiments; he expressed



it in simple musical strains that all could understand."<sup>4</sup>

**H**erbert Buffum was born in Lafayette, Illinois, a farming community about 30 miles southeast of Moline, in 1879. People who knew him during his rebellious teen years, couldn't dream that he would become an evangelist and song writer.

His great ambition was to become a stage star, and he pursued that career in his teen years. Giving up his acting career was the last thing he wanted to do. After his family moved to Kansas, he attended Wesleyan University at Salina for a few months. He then took a course in telegraphy when he was 17.

Buffum moved to Southern California because of his very bad health, and doctors there told him he could do no work, not even play the piano.

Although his family had a Methodist background, Buffum had built up a strong resentment against churches and especially holiness believers. He did, however, consent to attend a holiness camp meeting in Long Beach in 1897. Here he was converted and healed of extremely painful sores. The next step in his spiritual odyssey was to surrender his life—including his stage ambition—to the Lord.

Soon he was known as the boy preacher and began writing songs. "My Sheep Know My Voice" was written when he was only 18.

Buffum had no musical training, yet with self-instruction combined with natural ability, he learned to play almost everything that had keys or strings. And his song writing ministry flourished.

He received brief ministerial training with the Volunteers of America—an offshoot of the Salvation Army—and this gave him an opportunity to minister in skid row missions in California.

Since he was converted in the once despised holiness movement, he leaned toward them for other preaching opportunities and maturity. In 1898, at the age of 18, he received credentials from the Church of the Nazarene.

While ministering in skid row missions, Herbert Buffum, the boy preacher, met a person who would change his life forever. She was Lillie Fasset.

Lillie was born in 1876 at Ione, California, near the mining town of Jackson. At a very young age, she was influenced by holiness preaching and practices which led her into the Free Methodist Church. By the time she was 17 she was preaching in street meetings.

After teaching school for 3 years, Lillie felt an irresistible call into full-time Christian work, and joined another woman to operate the Peniel Mission in Fresno during the late 1890s. That is how she became acquainted with Herbert Buffum.

She knew of Herbert Buffum's budding



*The Buffum family and Alice Kersey (later Mrs. A. R. Farley) in 1913. The children are, from the left, Naomi, Herbert, Jr., and Ruth. Stephen Strang, publisher of Charisma magazine is a grandson of Alice Kersey Farley. Courtesy of Lorna Medway*

writing and speaking talents, but little could she realize that when she married him in 1899 he would become a prolific song writer.

And there was something else she would learn: Herbert Buffum had an insatiable desire to travel, that his ministry in one place was usually of a short

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### **Buffum's Favorites Included**

**I'm Going Thro', Jesus**

**I'm Going Higher**

**My Sheep Know My Voice**

**When I Take My Vacation**

**in Heaven**

**Lift Me Up Above the Shadows**

**The Old-fashioned Meeting**

---

duration. He had a continuous urge to reach other people in other towns, and many of those people and towns were far away from Lillie's native California.

Lillie would follow her husband wherever he felt led to go, however, and she would strike out on her own while Herbert was ministering elsewhere or confined to a bed in one of his frequent sick spells. Lois remembered her mother as a "tiny thing but dynamite in the pulpit."

**L**illie and the children wrote some songs, but it was Herbert Buffum who had the writing talent that would help shape evangelical worship patterns early in the 20th century.<sup>5</sup>

Often his songs would be sold for just enough to buy food and pay living expenses—usually for \$5. If anyone made money on his creativity it would be the publisher, not Buffum.

His song ideas would come from the ordinary things of life as in the previously related story about "When I Make My Last Move."

Another song idea was born while he walked along a street in Kansas City. Buffum saw an airplane—not so common then as they are today—flying over the city. As he gazed into the sky, he began to think about another song. That plane was not so high; someday he would be going much higher to his heavenly home.

He began to put together words that seemed to flow easily:

*I'm going higher, yes, higher  
someday.*

*I'm going higher to stay.*

*Over the clouds and beyond the  
blue sky.*

*Going where none ever sicken  
or die,*

*Loved ones to meet in the "sweet  
by and by."*

*I'm going higher someday.*

Years later when Delta Airlines was born in Memphis, company officials asked George Beverly Shea to select a sacred song and sing it from a plane on its inaugural flight. "I prayed about it," Shea wrote, "and there was only one logical song to sing, 'I'm Going Higher Someday.'"<sup>6</sup>

Like the above song and "When I Make My Last Move," many of Buffum's com-





Lois Buffum Parker, the last surviving member of the Buffum evangelistic family, with a family scrapbook. She lives in Lake Elsinore, California, and attends First Assembly. Photo by Ellis Warner

positions centered on heaven. He often wrote about the sorrows and hard places here but emphasized the great hope believers have in eternity.

One of these songs is "When I take my Vacation in Heaven." This song title came from an 11-year-old girl who attended one of Buffum's revival meetings in Huntington Beach, California. As was his practice, Buffum asked the congregation for suggested song titles so he could write a song in their presence. He wrote the titles on a blackboard and then asked the congregation to vote on the one they wanted him to use.

The girl's suggestion didn't strike the audience that night and received only three votes. But Buffum could not get the suggestion out of his mind.

That night he let his creative talents work with the title, and in the morning he called his family around the piano to introduce them to yet another song.

An interesting feature of "When I Take My Vacation in Heaven" is that it also became a popular secular song. Buffum surrendered his rights for \$100—probably the most he ever received from any song—and the copyright owners made thousands on recordings and sheet music.

At one time, "When I Take My Vacation in Heaven" was the most requested song on missionary radio station HCJB, Quito, Ecuador.

Another song which Buffum wrote in public and which became popular was "Across the Great Divide." For many years it was published by the Nazarene Publishing House.

One of the first songs Buffum ever wrote came as a result of his failure in Salt Lake City. He had taken his wife to minister at a mission in the city, but after a

few discouraging months returned to California. While aboard the western-bound train, he was determined not to give up the ministry and return to secular employment despite the failure in Salt Lake.

He began to write a song that would underscore his determination: "I bade the

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**"What Stephen Foster did for American folklore, Herbert Buffum did for its homely religious sentiments."**

*Los Angeles Times*

---

world and its follies adieu, I've started in Jesus and I'm going thro'."

Then the chorus, which no doubt every Pentecostal has sung, flowed from his pen:

*I'm going thro', yes, I'm going thro',  
I'll pay the price whatever others do,  
I'll take the way with the Lord's despised few,  
I'm going thro', Jesus,  
I'm going thro'.*

Evangelist Gypsy Smith often sang this song, even adding a verse of his own. Countless believers would tell Buffum how the song had changed their lives and had encouraged them when in difficult circumstances.

Another song which was written to encourage believers is "Lift Me Up

Above the Shadows," a song which Buffum wrote following the death of his mother. This one and "I'm Going Thro', Jesus" were probably his two most popular songs.

An old-fashioned tent revival meeting in Whitfield, Kansas, was the inspiration for another popular song. Buffum had left the tent and began to reminisce about the tent in which he was converted many years before.

He began to write lines that would keep the old-fashioned meetings fresh in the minds of believers. Despite its somewhat annoying repetitive lyrics, "The Old-Fashioned Meeting" caught on and became a favorite. And one of the biggest promoters was Charles E. Fuller and his radio program, *The Old-Fashioned Revival Hour*.

In 1923 during a low period in his life, Buffum dropped out of the ministry and took a job with a railroad shop in Topeka. In the meantime, Lillie was having a great Pentecostal revival in another part of Kansas. She wrote to her husband, telling him what great things God was doing there.

It made Buffum know more than ever that he was out of the will of God. In his typical response, Buffum wrote a song. The chorus goes, "You're a million miles from the gates of peace when you're one step from God." He called it "When You're One Step From God," and it too became popular and was used effectively in prison ministries.

From an artistic view, Herbert Buffum considered his 1932 song "The Loveliness of Christ" as his best work. An evangelist, Ruby James, used this song to win a singing contest on an NBC radio program, which was open to all types of songs—religious and secular.

Here is the first verse of the song writer's best work:

*Could we catch the glitter  
of the dew or snowflake  
And remove the rainbow colors  
from the clouds  
Add to these the brightness of the  
sun or moonbeams  
And the mantel, white, that  
mountain peaks enshroud;  
Then if we could catch the beauty  
of each jewel  
Found on earth or in the depths  
of the briny sea  
Blend them all together in one  
mighty prism  
Still, the Loveliness of Christ  
is more to me.*

The Buffums remained in the Church of the Nazarene during the first decade of the 20th century. Timothy L. Smith, in *Called Unto Holiness*, the history of the denomination, described their



mode of operation in spreading the holiness message throughout Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma in 1901-2:

When their meetings were in "friendly" Methodist churches, the Buffums were often content to organize simply a county holiness association. Where no local church was willing to accept their converts, they would form what was called a "class," receiving members officially into the faraway Los Angeles congregation, and electing lay people to be leaders of local Sunday and weekday services.<sup>7</sup>

By 1913 the Buffums were members of the Churches of God in Christ.<sup>8</sup> However, they did not join the Assemblies of God in 1914 as did so many of the other ministers in that organization.

S. H. Patterson, district superintendent of the Kansas District, wanted to accept Lillie's ordination in 1920. However, he was reluctant to do so because he said Herbert Buffum had been critical of the Assemblies of God and their position on speaking in tongues as the initial evidence for the baptism in the Holy Spirit.<sup>9</sup>

Lillie Buffum did become a member of the Assemblies of God, but there is no record that her husband ever joined. His close association with Aimee Semple McPherson and the Foursquare Gospel during the 1920s and 30s—when the organizations had limited fellowship—probably didn't help his relationship with the Assemblies of God.

An associate of the Buffums for several years, Alice Kersey (later Farley) remembered the camp meeting which the Buffums started at Kill Creek in Western Kansas in 1913. "Camp conveniences were limited," she recalled. "But what of it? The Holy Spirit's presence was in the camp confirming the Word with signs following."<sup>10</sup>

The Kill Creek camp later became the Woodston-Alton Camp Ground and is still used by the Kansas District each summer.

**B**uffum's inspirational songs were to encourage and draw men and women to the Savior. By 1918 they had conducted 130 revivals, mostly in Kansas. Two years later their diaries revealed that some 10,000 decisions had been made in their meetings.

One young man who was converted later in Enid, Oklahoma, credits Lillie Buffum with helping him make a decision for Christ, which ultimately led him into an international ministry. His name is Charles Blair, pastor of Calvary Temple, Denver.

It was 1937 and Blair was 17 years of age. He wandered into a church service—the first church service he had ever been in—and listened as Lloyd Johnson preached a salvation message.

Lillie Buffum had ministered in song during the service, and then when Johnson

*Continued on page 16*

## THE HERITAGE LETTER *Wayne Warner*

### 137 Ministers 90 Years or Older

Continued from page 2

Fred J. Freeland  
Fort Wayne, IN

Albin G. Johnson  
Hemet, CA

Benjamin H. Givens  
Live Oak, CA

Jose C. Caballero  
San Antonio, TX

Edith S. Van Meter  
Gary, IN

James W. Warden  
Carrollton, OH

John R. Harot  
Tampa, FL

Sudie R. Crawford  
Ashdown, AR

Theofanis Kavathas  
San Carlos, CA

Hazelle E. Reed  
Longmont, CO

Maudie M. Wallace  
Granite City, IL

Anne Prettyman  
Sacramento, CA

Helen B. Stewart  
Lakeland, FL

Waymon D. Taylor  
Oakwood, TX

William E. Emanuel  
Durant, FL

Roy F. Meredith  
Granite City, IL

Ralph R. Holder  
Vista, CA

Archie Brown  
West Terre Haute, IN

Albert A. Howell  
Malta, MT

Joseph Wannemacher  
Milwaukee, WI

Ysidro Ramirez  
Albuquerque, NM

William F. Chapman  
Chandler, OK

Charles M. Hazelrigg  
Safford, AZ

Edith V. Imhoff  
Clarion, PA

Cordelia Caudle  
Artesia, NM

John A. Deweber  
Los Lunas, NM

Gertrude O. Shaw  
Fayetteville, AR

Lillie V. Kilgore  
Harrison, AR

Willie M. Johnson  
Fort Worth, TX

Sunshine L. Ball  
San Antonio, TX

James M. Lyon  
Wadsworth, OH

Grace H. Curtis  
La Mesa, TX

R. Elmer Baker  
Durant, FL

Hobart Halsey  
Mount Sterling, KY

George H. Carmichael  
Springfield, MO

Paul K. Derr  
Lucerne, CA

Cornelius O. Sharp  
Corsicana, TX

Ethel W. Musick  
Tulare, CA

James H. Thornhill  
Thorndike, ME

J. Lester Cook  
Brewton, AL

Vern D. Gillen  
Ithaca, NY

Leroy Filby  
Granite City, IL

James C. Gaither  
Fresno, CA

Willie T. Millsaps  
Bristol, VA

William J. George  
Corona, CA

Irene J. Lossier  
Kaufman, TX

Hazel M. Forrester  
Springfield, MO

Henry C. Ball  
San Antonio, TX

Zelma L. Gaines  
Vancouver, WA

Cveta Pavlovich  
Lorain, OH

Veny L. Clark  
West Columbia, SC

Harlen D. Hampton  
Cedar Bluff, VA

Ray Parks  
Paradise, CA

Clara Poland  
Millersburg, IN

John M. Cole  
Marshall, MO

David A. Reed  
Russellville, AR

Merritt Nickerson  
Windsor, CO

Francisco R. Arbizu  
El Salvador

Roy A. Donelson  
Princeton, MO

Robert P. Meador  
Leasburg, MO

Henry C. Judah  
Newton, AL

John S. Astad  
Mountlake Terrace, WA

Walter Steverson  
Waynesboro, MS

Janet C. Rowe  
Portland, ME

John B. Kelly  
Inverness, FL

Louise C. Gray  
Sandpoint, ID

Lulu E. Nelson  
Spokane, WA

Herman G. Johnson  
Tacoma, WA

Zarro Amato  
Indianapolis, IN

W.B. Moore  
Mabelvale, AR

Edna M. Marsh  
Portland, OR

Hattie E. Jordan  
Ontario, CA

William D. Vass  
Burlleson, TX

Thomas E. Hare  
Silsbee, TX

Edwin J. Torgerson  
Puyallup, WA

George W. Hardcastle  
Tulsa, OK

Joseph H. McClure  
Ava, MO

Leota D. Sander  
Indianapolis, IN

One closing thought. If you recognize a name on the above list, please take the time to send a card and let them know how much you appreciate them as a person and as a minister of the gospel.

You'll make their day!

## ARCHIVES ACTIVITIES

### Recent Acquisitions

GPH Catalog (1924-25), Tom Alberti.  
GPH Precious Promise Box (about 1930), Jerry Haden.

Sermon tapes, photographs, U. S. Grant.  
Books and materials on India, George and Miriam Cook.

Photos and clippings, Esther Bender Meier.  
A. A. Allen's video and audio tapes of TV and radio programs, John Carver.

Books and other items from estate of Gordon Gardiner.

Books on Italian Pentecostal origins, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Purcelli.

Audio interviews of Fred Burke, Ruth Burke Rill.

Paper, book, and other items, Gene J. Hudlow.

Early GPH books, Merchandise Sales Department.

1935 *Pentecostal Evangel*, Jewell Cunningham.

Paper: "Power for Witness and Service," Alec E. Rowlands.

Herbert Buffum's autobiography, poetry, book, and other materials, Kansas State Historical Society.

### New Equipment

2 Computer Terminals (Archives holdings will be placed on computer).



# TIME FRAME A QUICK LOOK INTO THE PAST

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

## 20 Years Ago—1976

The end of an era at the Gospel Publishing House was marked on July 29 when the last Linotype, hot lead typesetter, was moved to make room for the new photo typesetter.

The former Valley Forge Army Hospital in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, which is valued at \$20 million, has been awarded by grant to Northeast Bible College, Green Lane. The move to the new campus is expected for the Spring semester, according to President O.L. Harrup, Sr. (See photo.)

## 20 Years Ago—1966

The Sunday School Department has designed the new National Sunday School Standard which will be inaugurated October 1.

John Wright Follette, 82, a minister and Bible teacher for more than a half century, died October 3. He taught for many years at Rochester Bible Training School and at Southern California College.

## 30 Years Ago—1956

Speed-the-Light contributions have reached new highs. Total giving since STL was started in 1944 reached \$2 million this year. The 1,000th vehicle given by STL went to Missionary James Chaney in Africa. (*The 1985 total was more than \$3 million; the 41-year total is \$49,483,546.60.*)

The first Assemblies of God Deaf Convention was held in Springfield with the theme, "Workers Together," aptly telling the story of this ministry.

## 40 Years Ago—1946

The Gold Coast field has elected Homer T. Goodwin as superintendent. Other officers are H. S. Lehmann, assistant superintendent, and Florence Blossom, secretary-treasurer.

Alice Reynolds Flower and William E. Long were the speakers for the Texas District C.A. camp meeting at Southwestern Bible Institute, Waxahachie.

## 50 Years Ago—1936

Frank Nicodem, who for 18 years has labored untiringly for India's boys, died August 28 in North India. His wife Ruby is remaining in India with her six children. (See photo)

Miss Katherine Kuhlman, pastor of the Denver Revival Tabernacle, is conducting revival services at Chicago's Stone Church.

## 60 Years Ago—1926

H. E. Simms writes that a revival con-

ducted in El Dorado, Arkansas, by Roxie Alford has stirred the church. More than 40 were saved and 25-30 received the Pentecostal experience.

A new baby—Myrle Kelley—has been born to the J. C. Morrisons, missionaries to China.

## 70 Years Ago—1916

Residents of the Evangel Home in St. Louis (employees and family members of Gospel Publishing House) are rejoicing over the kindness of a church member in Tacoma, Washington, who sent a beautiful

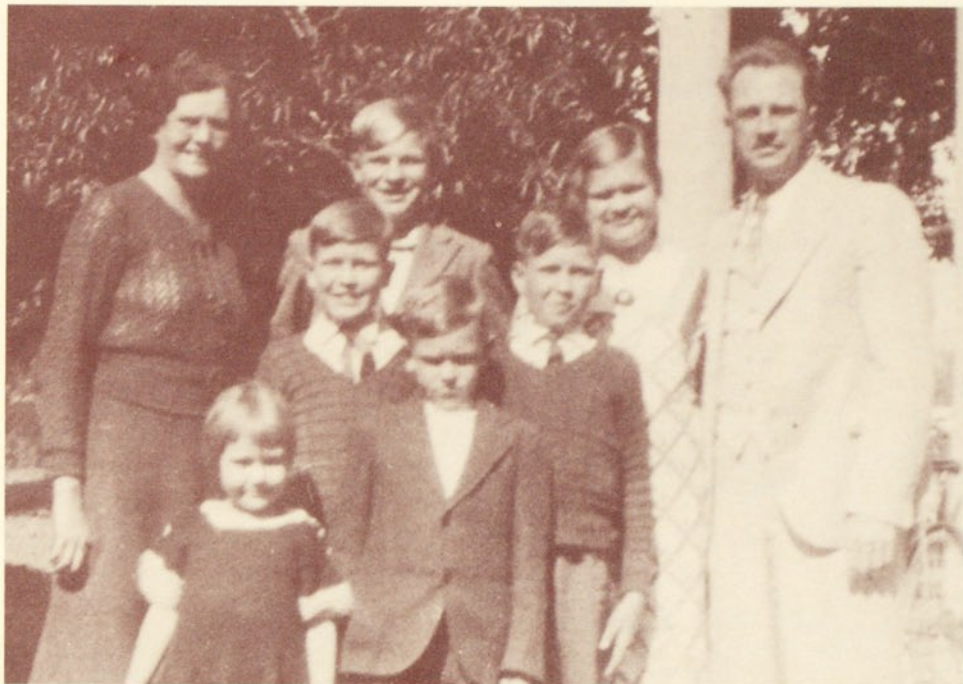
fresh salmon packed in ice. The home can use barrels of potatoes, cabbage, vegetables and fruit of all kinds.

A report from H. C. Ball gives the sad news of the Gulf storm which has destroyed Spanish churches in Texas. The Mexican Tabernacle, which had been pictured earlier in the *Pentecostal Evangel*, was scattered for 300 yards.

## 1906—80 Years Ago

W.J. Seymour tells of the continuing work of the Spirit at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles. He said the meetings attracted spiritualists and others, but they "had the demons cast out of them."

According to M.L. Ryan, prominent officials and state officers have been attending the Pentecostal mission in Salem, Oregon. Many university professors and students also attend the meetings. He said the devil was advertising the meetings through critical newspaper articles.



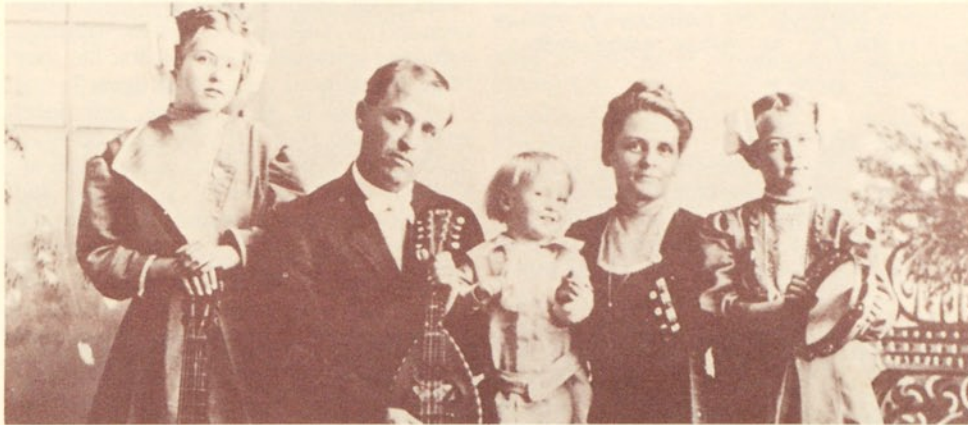
*Mr. and Mrs. Frank Nicodem and children, 1935. The children are, front row, Madge and Bob; middle, Frank and Harold; back, Jack and Eunice. The parents and Jack are deceased. Courtesy of Frank Nicodem*



*Valley Forge Christian College (formerly Northeast) in 1976. President Harrup, inset.*



**HERBERT BUFFUM** from page 14



*The Buffum family in about 1914. Lois, who was born in 1915, said her father could play anything that had strings or keys. Courtesy of Lorna Medway*

gave the altar call, she slipped back to where Blair sat with a pipe sticking out of his shirt pocket. "Don't you want to go forward?" she asked. He did but didn't know what he was supposed to do.

Lillie added, "I'll go with you if that will make it easier." Blair accepted the kind invitation, walked to the front, and knelt at the altar next to Lillie.

Later, Lillie gave him his first Bible and encouraged him to follow the Lord.<sup>11</sup>

**D**uring his latter years, Herbert Buffum was too sick to travel but not too sick to minister. He spent much of his time on skid row, ministering to drunks and other social outcasts. He was back where he started 40 years earlier with the Volunteers of America.

Although he had little money himself, Buffum would often sacrifice to help a less fortunate man to a good meal.

And in the closing days of his life, Herbert Buffum no doubt thought about the many songs which he had written on heaven. "I'm Going Higher," the song he had written on the streets of Kansas City, must have crossed his mind more than once.

*I'm going higher, yes, higher  
 someday,  
 I'm going higher to stay;  
 Over the clouds and beyond  
 the blue sky  
 Going where none ever sicken or  
 die,  
 Loved ones to meet in the  
 "sweet by and by,"  
 I'm going higher some day.*

The "King of Gospel Song Writers" was only 59 when he died in 1939. His life ended but not his songs. "His best legacy to humanity," an editorial writer for the *Los Angeles Times* wrote, "is the number of hymns he left behind him."<sup>12</sup>

Herbert Buffum's "legacy to humanity" began about the turn of the century when he wrote, "I'll pay the price whatever others do."

He really meant it.

**Notes**

1. Taped interview with Lois Buffum Parker by Ellis Warner, June 1981, Long Beach, CA, A/G Archives. Other incidents in this article are drawn from writings by the Buffum family. Herbert Buffum wrote two books: *The Holy Ghost Under the Old and New Testament* (1913) and *From Stage to Pulpit* (3rd ed. 1913). He compiled a book of poetry in 1912. The Buffums also published a paper *Tried by Fire*.

2. *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 12, 1939. Copy of cartoon from a *Ripley's Believe It or Not*.

3. Parker, taped interview.

4. *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 12, 1939.

5. Lillie Buffum wrote a song in 1932 titled "I'm Glad I Struck Oil." She also wrote many poems. Herbert Buffum, Jr., wrote "Let's Talk About Jesus."

6. Herbert Buffum, Jr., *Above the Shadows, Melodies of Treasure* (Long Beach, author, 1969), p. 4.

7. Timothy L. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness* (Kansas City, Nazarene Publishing House, 1962), p. 146.

8. "Ordained Elders, Pastors, Ministers, Evangelists and Missionaries of the Churches of God in Christ With Their Stations for 1914," *Word and Witness*, Dec. 20, 1913, p. 3. A group of white ministers

received permission to use this organization name from Bishop Charles Mason.

9. S.H. Patterson, correspondence to J.W. Welch, June 1, 1920.

10. Christ's Ambassadors Department, *The Harvester, The Historical Presentation of the Kansas District* (Wichita: Kansas District of the Assemblies of God, 1955), p. 43. Alice Kersey married A.R. Farley, an early minister in Kansas. Stephen Strang, one of their grandsons, is publisher of *Charisma* magazine.

11. Charles Blair, *The Man Who Could Do No Wrong* (Lincoln, VA: Chosen Books, 1981), pp. 44-48, and telephone conversation.

12. *Los Angeles Times*, Oct. 12, 1939. Other newspapers carried his obituary, including the *New York Times* and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. ♦

**Letters** from page 5

Spiritual Roots and the Assemblies of God," for a church history class at Fuller Theological Seminary.

I have served as the academic dean at the Latin American Bible College, and presently my wife and I teach there parttime.

Gene Hudlow  
 La Puente, CA

*The writer's Assemblies of God roots go back to Russellville, Arkansas, when his grandfather began attending a tent meeting there. Gene donated to the Archives his Fuller paper and the book Prevailing Prayer by his grandfather, U.L. Hudlow.*

**ANSWERS TO  
 PHOTO QUIZ  
 ON PAGE 6**

1. Billie (Mrs. George) Davis
2. Lillian Sundberg
3. Paul Crouch
4. Bob Harrison and Billy Graham
5. Mr. and Mrs. Willard Cantelon
6. E.M. Clark
7. Noel Perkin, Gayle Lewis, G. Raymond Carlson
8. Marie Brown
9. Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Berg