PENTECOSTAL PIONEER BIOGRAPHIES

PROFILES OF Pentecostal Preachers

VOLUME TWO

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COMPILED BY
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Profiles of Pentecostal Preachers
Volume II

compiled by Mary H. Wallace

©1984 Word Aflame Press
Hazelwood, MO 63402
Reprint 2001

ISBN 0-912315-71-7
Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 84-51290

Cover Design by Paul Povolni

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Printed in the United States of America

WAP WORD AFLAME® PRESS
8855 DUNN ROAD
HAZELWOOD, MO 63042-2299

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FOREWORD

We can best understand any group or a time period through the leaders. As Pentecostals of the *Eighties*, our interest certainly is concerned with the early twentieth century Pentecostal preachers. While their stories have many experiences in common, it is refreshing to read of the uniqueness of each.

The first volume, *Profiles of Pentecostal Preachers* is incomplete for sure without this *Volume II*. These short, but inspiring life stories, further confirm the deep conviction and dedication shared in the early days of the Pentecostal Movement. We can better understand our present day position by carefully reading about the experiences and hardship of our founders.

There are good reasons why the modern day Apostolic message has reached to the far corners of our world. These early Apostolic preachers believe and prophesied about a world revival. Today, their faith and message is being fulfilled. The world is experiencing a world-wide revival of revelation of Jesus' Name and Holy Ghost baptism. The stage was set for such an outpouring of the Spirit by these our brethren.

I want to commend those responsible for preparing and editing this collection of short biographies. To Mary Wallace, we say thank you for another good book. We certainly commend you in your devotion to writing and publishing a number of our very best books.

J. O. Wallace
Former Manager
Pentecostal Publishing House

PREFACE

Samuel Eliot Morrison in the book, *Vistas of History—The Experiences and Principles of an Historian*, says that; "An historian should yield himself to his subject, become immersed in the place and period of his choice."

It is easy to become immersed in the stories of early pioneer Pentecostal preachers. In this second volume of *Profiles of Pentecostal Preachers* I have focused primarily on men whose ministry began in the twenties, thirties and forties. Some began preaching long before there was a United Pentecostal Church. Many of these men are already deceased but others are still somewhat active even in retirement while others are still totally involved in the Lord's work. "Popsie" Gibson in his nineties still gives his grandson, Anthony Mangun, a hand and sits in the pulpit of the Greater United Pentecostal Church, Alexandria, Louisiana, along with Brother Gerald Mangun, his son-in-law.

As the stories come in from relatives and friends, I am totally immersed gleaning nuggets of information that shine in my book of memories. My deep, heartfelt thanks to these writers. For some this is their first story. Others are published professional writers. Their enthusiasm, patience and untiring efforts in checking and re-checking dates and information make this second volume the valuable resource that it now is. And the years to come will only enhance its value.

Mary H. Wallace
Former Editor
Pentecostal Publising House



MARK BAUGHMAN

By Terry R. Baughman

Roy was a sick man. Tuberculosis had reduced him to dependence upon his wife to make a living for him and his four children. The future was not promising.

When he heard about a revival meeting in Salina, Oklahoma, he decided to go. The evangelist preached like none he had ever heard. He felt conviction of his sins, and he made his way with others to the altar of repentance.

Later, the evangelist preached that baptism in Jesus' name by immersion in water was essential to salvation. Roy wanted to be baptized, but the customary place for baptism was the creek, and it was frozen along the bank in this January of 1944. Some people told him that if he were baptized in that icy water in his sickly condition that he would die. Admittedly, Roy was scared.

He felt conviction about his need of baptism, and he was fearful not to obey the Lord. On the other hand, the thought that he might die from the icy water pressed upon him. Then there were the threats of the people in the community.

"If he dies," they said, "we will hang that preacher from the nearest cottonwood tree!"

The evangelist took Roy aside to counsel with him. After talking about the situation he added the vital question: "Roy, are you ready to die."

"Yes," Roy replied, "I believe I am."

"I am too," declared the preacher.

So on Sunday afternoon Roy Adams, his wife, and three others walked out into the freezing water and were baptized in Jesus' name. Instead of dying, Roy was healed, filled with the Holy Ghost, and began a new life as a barber, providing for his family until his retirement.

The evangelist was a farm boy turned preacher named Mark Baughman. "That's all," he would say, "no middle name, just plain ole Mark."

Mark Baughman, born June 6, 1912, in Sparty, Missouri, was raised around Glenpool, Oklahoma. Some of his earliest recollections were of his coming home from school to a prayer meeting in progress at his house. He saw his mother dance and shout in the Spirit. There were no churches, in the community, just an occasional preacher to come by riding the circuit.

At eighteen, Mark married a neighboring farm girl, Zealous LeRuth Powell, on September 27, 1930. The wedding did not take place in a church, but beside a car on the section line. And the ceremony was performed not by a minister but by the Justice of the Peace. Mark's mother

served as a witness.

The young couple continued living in Glenpool. Mark worked on the farm and in the hayfields baling hay. Their first two boys, A. J. and Franklin, were born in Glenpool.

In the sizzling hot summer of 1934, Jess Clayton came to Glenpool to hold an open air meeting. Mark had started attending church services the previous summer, but it was not until 1934 that he became hungry for the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He worked in the field all day and attended the "open air meeting" at night. He sought God several nights, but something hindered him from receiving God's gift. That "something" was tucked in the pocket of his overalls—"Horse Shoe Chewing Tobacco!"

After several nights of prayer, he was ready to give up his chewing tobacco. Then preparations were made for him to be baptized in Jesus' name.

At his dad's house Mark asked to borrow a pair of overalls to be baptized in. But his dad was not too sure that his son was making the right choice.

"You know better than that, Son," his dad argued.

But Mark had made up his mind. "No Dad, I don't," he responded. "I'm going to get baptized. Now, can I use the overalls?"

Mark obeyed the call of God on his heart; he was baptized and he soon received the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Depression years meant hard times for most people, including the Baughmans. There was little money to be made in the farmlands of Oklahoma in the thirties. In order to find work; Mark moved his young family from Glenpool to a seventy acre farm in the Kiamichi Mountains about fifty miles southeast of McAlester, Oklahoma. The farm lay between two creeks in this mountainous,

wooded area. They had to work hard to raise a crop that would provide for the family.

The family had to walk a mile and a half to the nearest neighbors for prayer meeting, but they felt that God was with them even in this remote countryside. When they returned home late after dark, Mark would carry his three-year-old son. His wife would carry the baby and hold to her husband's coattail as they found their way home by the moonlight. Occasionally an owl would let out a screech, sending chills down their spines.

It was while they were living in the log house on this farm in the winter of 1934 that Mark first felt the call to preach the gospel. On the cold winter nights he would cry, pray, and study by the light of the fire as he considered the burden God was placing on his heart.

God was also teaching the young couple to trust Him. As their supplies ran low, they realized they had to go into town for more, but they had no money. When they had only enough food for one more breakfast, Mark Baughman got up early and went to the barn to pray. In prayer he got the answer.

After they ate breakfast, he hitched up the team to the wagon. The family piled in, and they headed for the store that was ten miles around the mountain. Mark, feeling the joy of the Lord, began to whistle as they rode along. His wife, who was not quite as confident in their plight, asked, "What are you so happy about?"

"The Lord is going to help us today," Mark replied.

Town was just a post office and general store. As they drew up in front of the post office, Mark leaped from the wagon's spring seat to the ground. When he got his mail, he opened a letter from a man in Glenpool who owed him

four dollars.

"Praise God!" he said, counting the four dollars in the letter. To a poor family in depression days, that was a lot of money. But more important than the money was the lesson of faith they learned. God would meet their needs as they trusted in Him. Life still was not always easy, but their needs were met. When crops were not good, they picked a lot of polk greens up and down the rail fence.

Hardy Monks came through the country in June, 1935, driving a coupe car and preaching the gospel. He held services in a schoolhouse about three miles from the Baughman's farm. Of course, they went to the services and became acquainted with the Monks and had them over to their house.

After the Monks left to preach in other places, Mark told his wife, "You know, I believe if I didn't have anything but an old coupe car, I could preach!"

Perhaps there were prophetic words, for in just a few days a flood washed out their crop. They felt that they had no choice but to sell and leave the farm. That they had sold for ninety dollars. Mark accepted sixty dollars down, and they never got the rest.

In McAlester they bought a 1926 Dodge Coupe. They loaded up and headed north for Glenpool. As they drove out of the mountains, the Lord spoke to Mark, "You have an old coupe car. Now, I want you to preach!" The call that Mark had felt became real to him. He knew that the road ahead would lead him into the ministry.

In Glenpool, Mark worked in the hayfields baling hay. They attended a revival meeting in the evenings. One Wednesday evening the evangelist announced that he

would be leaving, but that Mark Baughman would be preaching the next night. The revival would continue.

That he was to preach in this revival came as much a surprise to Mark as to anyone else. However, he accepted it as the will of God, but not without deep concern. He cried and prayed all night, and the prayers continued the next day as he worked in the hayfield. When evening came and it was time to preach, he took the pulpit and read his first text:

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5).

The house was full of people. Mark tried to preach, but he could not. He just cried with the burden he felt. The altars filled.

His wife, who was among those who received the Holy Ghost that evening, has been a faithful supporter of his ministry ever since that first "message."

Since the work of God grew in Glenpool, they established a church there in 1935. The church house was a building that they purchased in an oilfield for $150. They used a block and tackle and an oilfield team to move the house to town. They fixed it up for church and the Lord was with them. Many were saved and healed.

In March of 1936, Brother Baughman felt led of the Lord to hold a revival in Mounds, Oklahoma, ten miles away. They pulled a trailer loaded with young people from Glenpool to the revival each evening.

One evening as they were enroute to the service, the young people were singing and praising the Lord when

the power of the Lord fell on them. They began to shout and rejoice on the trailer. As they pulled through Mounds, people came from everywhere to the little church house.

It was a small building, standing with the help of the poles that propped it up. Not everyone could get in the building. As the group began to sing and play on their instruments, the power of the Lord fell again. Such praying! Everyone in the building fell to the floor under the power of the Lord. When the service was over and the building quit shaking, twenty-two had received the Holy Ghost.

During this revival in Mounds, Mark Baughman had the privilege of baptizing his father, Peter Braxton Baughman, in Jesus' name.

Feeling a call into evangelistic work, the Baughmans left the Glenpool church in 1937. They traveled to California to minister in the fruit camps where the harvest workers stayed.

They drove into Weedpatch, California, with fifty cents in their pockets. A Oneness tent meeting was in progress. When they got acquainted with the workers in the camp, they were given a cabin to stay in. Brother Baughman preached some in the meeting, but he received no money. The grape harvest was still two weeks away.

When their food supply was depleted, the Baughmans saw no way of getting more. The boys were hungry and crying for something to eat. Struggling to obey the call of God, the small family, knelt to pray. While they prayed someone knocked on the door with some groceries. Then another and another.

"Here's food!" "And here is $1.50 in cash."

"And we didn't even have to leave the house!" Mark

exclaimed later.

Brother Baughman preached on the streets wherever he could get a crowd. In many areas there were no churches established.

Before there was an apostolic church in Bakersfield, California, Mark Baughman preached on the streets. As they played the guitar and sang, a couple came out of a beer joint and danced in the street to their music. The Baughmans just sang on and preached the gospel to whomever would listen.

When the Baughmans returned to Oklahoma, Mark preached as opportunities were presented. He received a license with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ (PAJC) in 1935, and was ordained by W. T. Witherspoon, General Superintendent, and O. F. Fauss, Assistant Superintendent, in October of 1937 at the General Conference in Tulsa.

Throughout the next few years, the Baughmans traveled to preach revivals, open air meetings, services in schoolhouses, and street meetings. He did not wait for a pulpit to preach in. He gave this advice to young preachers looking for a place to preach: "There are a lot of street corners!"

During the summer of 1938, the Baughmans went to Sperry, Oklahoma, to preach a revival. Henry Ivie pastored a free Pentecostal church. Due to the hot weather they had the revival outdoors. Later that year Brother Baughman went by Sperry and insisted that Brother Ivie go with him to the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ conference in Hennepin, Oklahoma. At this conference, Brother Ivie affiliated with the organization. Years later he declared that going to that conference with Brother

Baughman had saved his ministry.

In a revival at Harmony Star, Oklahoma, an elderly Cherokee Indian woman responded to the altar call. As she prayed she jumped to her feet and said, "I want to get baptized in Jesus' name! I will get the Holy Ghost!"

This seventy-six year old woman, named Chambers, was baptized and received the Holy Ghost. She operated a boarding house in Claremore, Oklahoma. Her home was opened to this evangelist as a preaching place. Another revival was conducted in her front yard; in this way, the gospel was preached in Claremore before there was a church established. Some fifteen years later, C. A. Nelson built an apostolic church in this city. (See his story in *It's Real* published by Word Aflame Press.)

In December of 1939, Brother Baughman was called to preach a conference and revival in Princeton, Kentucky. During the revival a sleeting ice storm struck, closing down the meeting. Another meeting in Russellville, Kentucky, had to be closed out as the ice and cold continued. They were accommodated in the upper story of an old, cold building downtown. All the heat they had came from the slack coal they burned in the open fireplace. The water froze. It was a most difficult time.

Then Brother Baughman received a letter from home that his mother was dying with cancer. They wanted to go home but they had no money and the ice lingered on. Finally, they borrowed fifteen dollars from the farmer who had put them up. Then they headed out on the treacherous roads.

At Cairo, Illinois, they came to the Mississippi River. The operator of the ferry boat had closed the ferry since he did not want to risk the high, swift water of the river.

However, the young preacher prevailed upon the operator to take them across. Reluctantly he consented. The swift water carried them a mile downstream and they had to work their way up to the landing on the other side of the river.

But they were in Missouri. They traveled all night through Missouri, having only enough money for gas to get home.

Mark's mother was unable to care for the household or herself, so Sister Baughman stayed with her mother-in-law while Brother Baughman preached around where he could.

He was in a revival in Spadra, Arkansas, when he received the call that his mother was dying. That evening he told the congregation that he was going to leave for home. He passed the offering plate for expenses, but the people were broke and there was no money. The next morning, however, the people went house to house gathering chickens, and they brought them in a large coop to the preacher. He took the chickens to Clarkesville to sell them, and headed for home. He was with his mother when she passed away May 15, 1940.

There were great encouraging times, but there were also the times of discouragement. His good wife certainly helped through those times. The Baughmans joined with Guy Bohannon and his family to conduct a tent meeting in Taylor Town, Texas. People were being baptized and receiving the Holy Ghost, but discouragement came on Brother Baughman. He loaded up his family and headed south. As he was driving along, filled with self pity, he told his wife, "I think we ought to go to Corpus Christi, rent a house, put A. J. in school, and get

a job so we can make a decent living."

Sister Baughman listened patiently. Then she began to sing this little song:

If I were a preacher,
I tell you what I would do,
I would keep on preaching,
And work on the building too.

Mark stopped the car, walked down to a wooded place, got on his knees, and began to repent. It seemed, however, that God was not listening. He felt nothing. They drove on to Marshall, Texas, to see Elder B. E. Echols, arriving in time for a fellowship meeting that evening. There was a large crowd and several ministers present. Not one invited the visiting evangelist for a revival. After a restless night, Brother Echols asked Mark, "What are you going to do, Brother Baughman?"

"If I can make it, I am going back to that tent in Taylor Town where I left the Lord," he responded.

B. E. Echols gave him five dollars, and he started back down the road he had come. He again stopped long the road and retreated to a pine thicket for a prayer meeting. This time he touched God. He promised the Lord that he would always obey Him and go wherever He would direct.

In the fall of 1941, sensing a need for pastoral training, the Baughmans went to Tulsa and enrolled in Apostolic College under the direction of C. P. Williams. He continued to preach around Tulsa and on the streets. Much of his ministerial training is accredited to Apostolic College and the many Bible conferences that were hosted there each year. The young ministers would sit for hours

listening to Bible teachers such as B. E. Echols, S. L. Wise, W. T. Witherspoon, W. O. McCoin, and C. P. Williams.

In April of 1942, the Baughmans left Tulsa to begin revival in Watts, Oklahoma. He preached three weeks straight and no one came to the altar. Finally in desperation he told God, "If someone doesn't receive the Holy Ghost tonight, I am closing out this revival."

Service time came. It was a good crowd and a good service. The altar call was given, but nobody responded. Sitting down, Brother Baughman was overcome with despondency. Then a lady asked for prayer that she might be healed. Instantly she was healed! She grabbed a lady standing nearby around the neck and began jumping up and down. That lady received the Holy Ghost and began to speak with tongues. Another lady started for the door. She stopped in the doorway and began to seek God. She received the Holy Ghost sitting in the doorway. Needless to say, the revival continued. Soon a building was obtained and an apostolic church was established in Watts, Oklahoma.

The Baughmans resumed evangelistic travel in 1943. Their daughter, Anna Lois, was born in Glenpool, October 6, 1943. Their travels took them west and into Colorado in 1946.

A small group of people in Louisville, Colorado, approached Brother Baughman and asked him to be their pastor. He consented, and they obtained a small storefront building to hold services. In less than three months they were crowded out, so a lot was purchased and they began to build a church. Not only did Brother Baughman build the church but he also worked on a public job as a

painter for the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Their fourth child, Charles Ray, was born in Louisville, October 26, 1946.

While pastoring in Louisville, Mack D. Abbott, superintendent for the Texico district, asked Mark Baughman to go to Dragerton, Utah, for a revival. The district, which included Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and West Texas, purchased a tent and sent it for the missionary effort. Two missionary workers from Albuquerque, New Mexico were conducting Sunday school in a home in Dragerton, a small mining town near Price, Utah.

The Baughmans arrived about a week before the tent, so they began a meeting in an open yard. A Mormon Bishop and his choir attended service one night. Brother Baughman let them sing, and he invited them to stay for preaching. At the conclusion, the Mormon Bishop and the evangelist commenced to debate. As the discussion ended, another Morman man stepped up and said, "Bishop, if you can't handle him, I am ready to be baptized!"

The tent arrived and the Baughmans continued their revival meeting. Opposition was strong. The tent was ripped up with knives and the wind finished it off, and they had to complete the meeting on the lawn, back in the open air. God rewarded their faithfulness. Six were baptized in a swift water canal. They had to hold onto a tight rope to baptize the converts.

In 1950, the Baughmans resigned the church in Louisville, Colorado, and began evangelizing in West Texas. In March they were conducting a revival in Odessa when Brother Baughman prayed that God would supply them with a car. A lady in the church was cleaning a room of her tourist court when the Lord impressed her to help

the evangelist to buy a car.

She said, "Yes, Lord, I'll give $100."

The Lord said, "No, $500."

And she did. God knew the need and supplied the Baughmans with a good automobile.

Again the Lord began to talk to Brother Baughman about a needy area. In April of 1951, they moved to Fayetteville, Arkansas, to establish a church. A. J. Hudson gave them a tent and loud speakers to began this meeting. Mark Baughman preached night after night on Acts 2:38. He never changed his text. A radio preacher made the comment, "We have a man down here that can preach five weeks on water!"

The revival went on for eleven weeks. They baptized twenty-five people. One of these was a Methodist bishop, who was ninety-seven years old. Another was Carl Hays. He and his family were members of a trinitarian Pentecostal church. They attended night after night. One Sunday afternoon, while others were being baptized in the creek, Brother Hays stood on the bank. Suddenly he looked up at the clouds moving over and said, "I see Jesus' name on that cloud!" He jumped into the water to be baptized.

The Baughmans labored in Fayetteville, building a church and establishing the new converts. They pastored in Fayetteville until 1954, when they headed west again on the evangelistic trail.

They were evangelizing in Arizona when they were called to pastor the church in Riverside, California. They pastored there a year and were active in radio ministry and outreach on March Air Base. Several servicemen were baptized and received the Holy Ghost.

The radio broadcast reached a young man, Lloyd Dean, and he sent a card asking for the preacher to come see him as he had no car. The Baughmans picked him up and brought him to church. He was baptized that Sunday. The Lord called him into the ministry, and in time this young man returned to his home town of Moorehead, Kentucky, to establish a church.

Sister Baughman's mother became very ill, so they resigned the church in Riverside and returned to the Tulsa area so that she could care for her mother.

The evangelistic work was always their primary calling. When they were not pastoring, it was just natural that he would be preaching revivals.

In February, 1957, Mark Baughman accepted the pastorate of a small group of people in Wichita, Kansas. He began to walk the streets, meeting people and inviting them to church. The first Sunday they had seventeen in attendance. He was there about a month when he received a call from a good church in Arkansas. They wanted him to be their pastor. As he listened on the phone, he could see the new car he could buy and the new home they would have. In those few minutes he gave them the answer, "No, I can't come. God wants me here."

God began to bless the church in Wichita, and in three months they were having about eighty in Sunday school. He served as presbyter in Kansas until they moved in 1960.

They were evangelizing in the Phoenix area in 1961, when they accepted the pastorate of a small group in Avondale, Arizona, who were meeting in an old adobe building. They began to work and build a new building. Through a lot of hard labor under the hot Arizona sun,

and with some dedicated help, they constructed a beautiful sanctuary for worship. One wall of the old adobe building fell out one night before the new building was completed.

Brother Baughman was invited to preach a sectional campmeeting during July, 1965, in Lincoln.

The people met under a tent until a storefront building on the town square was secured for service. It was a narrow, dusty, little place next door to a domino parlor. Many great services were enjoyed in this humble beginning, however. Acreage was soon obtained and construction began on a new building. They worked long hours every day on the building. During this time Brother Baughman became concerned about having enough time for prayer and study. He asked the Lord to awaken him in the early morning hours so he could pray and read God's Word. God answered, and Brother Baughman has continued this practice of rising early to talk to the Lord.

In Lincoln, Brother Baughman pastored his oldest son, A. J. and his family. Two grandsons, Arnold and Terry, were under his ministry the eight years he pastored there. They are now both in the ministry and pastoring churches.

Brother Baughman felt the burden to return to evangelistic work in 1973, so he resigned the pastorate in Lincoln. It was a difficult decision. After the years of sacrifice and labor, this would be his last church to establish. He preached his last sermon in Lincoln, "I kept back nothing that was profitable to you."

The Baughmans have never lacked places to preach. Revivals have been conducted throughout California, Oregon, Arizona, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas, Indiana,

Kentucky, Alabama, and Mississippi. Meetings have also been held in various other states. In these later years, his ministry had turned toward teaching as his love for the doctrine of truth seeks expression. Hardly a night passes when he doesn't at least touch a little on the "Mighty God in Christ Jesus" or "Baptism in Jesus' Name."

During January, 1977, they experienced a new adventure when they flew to Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, to preach for Daniel Mena. They had never ridden on a large commercial airplane. They later commented that riding the plane was a long way from the horse drawn wagon in the Kiamichi Mountains of Oklahoma.

The church in Edmonton loved Brother Baughman's straightforward preaching, so the next year they were invited to teach at the Alberta campmeeting with Vaughn Morton as the evangelist. In June, 1984, they made their fourth trip to Edmonton.

Responding to invitations, the Baughmans are still on the go—meeting new people, opening the Word, and preaching with the persuasive power of a prophet.

Brother Mark Baughman baptized me on June 15, 1969, in Barren Fork Creek, just outside of Lincoln, Arkansas. That has been fifteen years ago. A few months ago he preached the first revival of my pastoral ministry to our congregation in Canyon, Texas. I was proud to listen to this veteran evangelist, a true soldier of the Cross, a lover of truth, a preacher of righteousness . . . my grandfather.



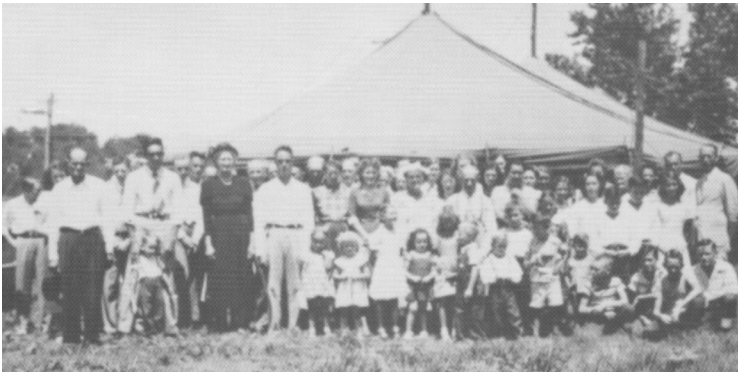
Apostolic Revival! Storefront church in Watts, OK, 1942.



Baptizing in swift water in Dragenton, UT 1949. They held on to a tight rope.



Rev. and Mrs. Mark Baughman and Charles,1946.



Eleven weeks of revival in Fayetteville, AR, 1951. First Sunday School—86.



Four generations: Mark, A. J., Arnold, and Aubrey Baughman.



DONALD BERRY

By LaJoyce Berry Martin

On God's "Prospect List of Preachers" was the name of a small lad born out on the Atlantic Ocean, off the coast of Machias Port, Maine. The year was 1913, and his parents, William and Katherine Berry, knew nothing about God or His "Prospect List."

The "problem" was getting this boy all the way to Central Texas, a nation's distance away, in time for the Holy Ghost explosion scheduled on God's calendar for July of 1932. But, of course, with God there *are* no problems.

William, a prosperous businessman who owned a sawmill on the river in East Machias, anticipated a stable financial future that would endure for a lifetime. For two years, the family lived on Cross Island, commuting the four miles to the mainland, selling lobsters they had trapped. As a preschooler, young Donald was terrified

when an enormous whale chased Will's boat on a return trip home.

Picking blueberries and roaming the woods delighted the small boy. Katherine often sent him to "Mr. Emory's Store" over the snow for a jug of molasses from the big barrel. Will was a volunteer fireman and occasionally allowed Donald to accompany him in the clanging engine. And Will took his son moose hunting. With his powerful rifle, he shot at the magnificent animal across the lake—at the precise moment that Donald fired his B-B gun. The child was sure that he had bagged the trophy.

Then in 1919, when Donald was in his first year of school at the Academy, a "rumor from a far country" reached the northernmost state. Oil had been discovered beneath the vast, untamed expanse of Texas—and riches were to be obtained freely for stouthearted immigrants!

Will packed his trunk, and along with his wealthy friend, Mr. Roberson, headed south to cash in on the black gold, promising to send for the family when he got settled.

A few weeks later, the black-haired, dark-eyed, and spunky Katherine, who was several years younger than Will, packed her rich carnival glass dishes in barrels, put her household treasures in storage, and leaving them all behind never to see them again, boarded a train for Texas, 2400 miles away. She took along only her personal necessities and her five small children. They arrived in Fort Worth on Christmas Day, 1919. And so began young Donald's journey toward a future ministry, guided by that "Unseen Hand."

The buzz of the big city was a new experience for Katherine and her children. Mr. Roberson met them in a big red limousine called a "Jack Rabbit," a glittering piece

of machinery with little seats that pulled down for extra passengers. Their first home in Texas was on the brick streets of North Main in Fort Worth, but as yet Will had struck no oil.

It was during the terrible Texas winter of the early 20s that ten-year-old Donald almost lost his life in a blizzard. He and his brothers were five miles from home, camped on Lake Worth, when the "blue norther" swept in. They started home across the open fields, but Donald became warm and drowsy. An older brother, noticing that Donald was lagging behind in the driving snowstorm, retraced his steps to encourage and retrieve the faltering child. Doubtless, the "Prospect List" had something to do with the rescue.

Will soon found the pot of gold at rainbow's end empty. Penniless, he took his family to the small Bosque County town of Walnut Springs, population 1500, some fifty miles south of Fort Worth, not realizing that he had zeroed in on the exact site, circled on God's eternal map, of the upcoming Holy Ghost outburst!

Will opened a blacksmith shop, and eeked out a meager existence. He worked long and hard; his sinewy hands and auburn beard made the typical picture of a village smithy. But he wanted no part of God. He even frowned upon Katherine's table blessings. "*I* am the one bringing in the food," he would contend in effect, "So why thank God?" They moved constantly from "one old house to another," the roofs of which caught fire two or three times a winter.

The Great Depression further devastated Will's dwindling resources, and the family barely managed to survive. Two more children were born into the family,

bringing the total to seven. But Katherine was a good manager, hiding back canned milk, flour, and sugar in the old "hump-backed trunk." She could make a soup bone without any meat taste gourmet.

Donald was now a talented young teenager whose musical ability was sought after by local party-goers. He and his friend, "Tump" Bohanan, played the fiddle for dances at the noted Flat Top Ranch, and Donald conned Katherine into stealing quarters from Will for tickets to the picture show in Meridian.

Then the *big* show came to town! The holy-rollers were having an outdoor revival with Evangelist Powell Sojourner, who had the audacity to visit the Berry family and invite them to church! Before departing, he asked Katherine, "Could we have a word of prayer?" Prayer? How does a person pray when he doesn't even know God? The family simply listened while the tall preacher said his prayers. But a strange feeling crept over Donald, as well as the other family members, that could not be shaken.

So Donald went to see what was going on; he sat in the darkness on the fender of a Model T. (The angel was reviewing the "Prospect List.") Suddenly, the young man slipped off the fender of that Old Ford, determined to book passage on God's "Glory Bound Train." He repented that night, but he did not receive the Holy Ghost.

He was courting a little Baptist girl named Lorene, one of the Rhodes' dozen, and it was getting pretty serious. She attended the revival and received the Holy Ghost right away, one of sixty-eight who were saved in that bombshell revival. Donald got terribly frightened that she would "quit him" before he "got it," as they were preaching not to date sinners, or marry them.

He became so desperate for the Holy Ghost in the ensuing days that he went to a ladies' prayer meeting on a Saturday afternoon, and there, with his head in one room and his feet in another, he prayed through. He was baptized in Jesus' name in Steel Creek at Webb Crossing on July 24, 1932, along with twenty-six others, by Pastor E. W. Copeland. All of Donald's family were filled with the Holy Ghost except Will and the eldest son.

Donald and Lorene married the following year. Their unorthodox wedding would have been the envy of later generations of environmentalists. The ceremony was performed June 23, 1933, on Pastor Copeland's lawn, with wild flowers in abundance, a choir of native birds nested about, stars for candles, and a great silvery moon glowing resplendently. Pastor Copeland, just returning from a fishing trip, performed the simple ceremony that has lasted for more than half a century, in his fishing attire and sock-footed. Donald paid the preacher with a borrowed dollar.

"Pickin's" were slim for the newlyweds. They borrowed a stripped-down Studebaker from Lorene's younger sister, LaVerne, and headed for DeLeon to pick turkeys. It took two days to cover the fifty-two miles; they had a flat every few miles. One old innertube was almost "solid patches." By the second night, when the lights of DeLeon came into view, "It looked like the New Jerusalem" to the weary young couple.

Donald eventually landed a job with the WPA (Government Work Program) at a whopping $21-a-month salary, but even with this high-paying job, they got behind on the $4-a-month rent. Fortunately, the house was owned by a brother-in-law, who was longsuffering.

In the months that followed, Brother Donald Berry began to feel an urgency to do something for God, unable as yet to detect what the "Prospect List" was all about. Meanwhile, he and his friend, Arthur Clanton, who had received the Holy Ghost in the same revival, along with Brother H. R. Guyton, sang, preached, and testified on the streets. "Brother Clanton would preach like the sidewalk was on *fire*!" reports Brother Berry. Someone would pass the hat (if they had one) and a few pennies, nickels, and dimes would be tossed in. "In those days, a 50¢ piece looked as big as a wagon wheel!" Brother Berry relates humorously.

Late one night while walking in an alley and praying, Brother Berry heard from heaven. (Maybe the angel showed him the "Prospect List"?) He knew he was called to preach the gospel.

Times were hard, and the problem was that he had utterly nothing with which to start. No car . . . no suit . . . Besides all that, he owed the local grocery store 50¢ which he had promised to pay whenever possible. But, of course, with God there *are* no problems.

His faithful little wife patched his one pair of pants and dyed them black so the patch wouldn't show, and packed his one good shirt that would have to be laundered before each service. She often wore "feed sack" dresses herself. They told Will and Katherine and the Rhodes family goodbye and "hit the field," unsure of where they were going or how it would all "turn out." To the natural eye, they could hardly have chosen a worse time to launch their ministry. The year was 1938, and a baby girl, LaJoyce, had joined the family.

Brother Berry's first assignment from above was to

assist Brother G. W. Hamilton in a revival in a little stop-in-the-road place called Frankell, Texas. The glory of the Lord seemed to outshine the gas lamps in the dilapidated old church.

For his first message, Brother Berry read the 53rd Chapter of Isaiah and cried all the way through the chapter; his calling was weighing heavily upon him.

After a few crude sermons, the little church asked him to be their pastor. Thus he began his full-time ministry as pastor of a congregation. He and his young wife moved their few scraps of old-fashioned furniture into the small country parsonage with its pot-bellied stove.

They had somehow fallen heir to an old milk cow. She was so old that she "cried all time." Winter was approaching and Brother Berry desperately needed a vehicle of some sort to see after his rural saints. He had no money, but was able to trade the old weeping milk cow for an ancient flivver in Breckenridge, Texas. But, alas, during that hard winter, the old cow expired. (The flivver probably did, too.)

Everyone seemed happy . . . even the saints. Brother Berry preached hard, giving himself to much prayer and study, and was miraculously able to pay off his 50¢ indebtedness to the grocerman back home. Most of the time the income was less than $5 weekly, but even that was good pay for Depression Days. Were these the Good Old Days?

The Macedonia call reached Brother Berry from the high plains of Texas where Brother Hamilton needed help in finishing the construction of a church building. The town was Lamesa. Brother Berry pastored there for a year, purchasing a $75 trailer house for lodging, and a

son, Bobby Donald, was added to the family tree.

From Lamesa, Brother Berry moved on to other Panhandle cities, preaching and singing. For weeks at a time, the family ate water gravy for breakfast. On one occasion, the Lord gave a dear old sister in the church a dream (or nightmare) that Brother Berry had no milk for his children. So *six months* later she brought a 5¢ can of condensed milk!

Returning to central Texas, he pastored briefly in Blum, Texas. But not briefly enough to suit him; all he seems to remember is the dreadful plague of bedbugs that preceeded him there.

Brother Berry decided to try his hand at evangelizing. He had a marvelous voice for singing, and he wrote most of his own songs. He had no problems getting revivals, and his varied experiences, some amusing and some not so amusing, never dampened his inborn sense of dry humor. He affectionately calls his days of travel his "hay day" in Pentecost, because many times they were forced to lodge in old shacks where the hay and "whatever" was stored!

The average income for the family of four was $3-$4 a week, and often Brother and Sister Berry would let the children eat first—and if there was anything left, they fed themselves; but they never complained. "Some of it would be great to live over again," says Brother Berry optimistically. "There were even a few *rosy* days—like the revival in East Texas where the 80-year-old sister took a particular liking to the young evangelist and brought me a pie with *roses* stuck in the box."

With just enough gasoline to reach their destination, they landed most places "flat broke." But when hungry

souls filled the altars and heaven came down, hungry stomachs were forgotten and, "Yes! It was worth it!" Brother Berry is quick to add.

Guitars cost $3.95 from Sears and Roebuck. Says Brother Berry, "We'd just put a screen-door brace on the neck to keep it from bending and played away in the boundaries of the first three frets, laboring feverishly in the keys of C, D, G, and F, and singing 'Old Time Religion . . . It will do when I am dying!'"

Brother Berry's first baptism was at a place called Rocky Point near Ranger, Texas. The candidate for baptism was an extremely short fellow and Brother Berry, a towering 6'4", forgot about the poor man's height (or lack of it) as he led him farther and farther from shore into the icy pond. The mud was a foot deep on the bottom. As they ventured out, Brother Berry kept hearing gasps. "I was tall and trying to find a place in the pond my size," Brother Berry says. "Finally I noticed the little man was getting too far out, so I backed up to water to fit *him*. I watched all sizes after that experience!"

Baptizing like to have been the ruination of him! Another time, while trying to baptize a huge, grossly overweight sister, she began to "float" and Brother Berry's feet wouldn't stay on the bottom either. "Perhaps I was the most awkward of all preachers!" he admits wryly.

"In West Texas, we baptized people in any old puddle of water or cow tank we could find out there. We preached in old school houses, and the church buildings weren't any too solid—like the one in Glen Rose, Texas, in early Pentecost. There was an old pot-bellied stove in the middle of the church and when the saints began to dance and shout, the floor was a little shaky . . . and the

old stove would start dancing, too!

"Those were great revival days; the power would fall and folks fell under the power; and none of them ever stepped on a child."

Baling wire is all that kept his old model cars from falling apart. They would often get home from the camp-meetings and brush arbor revival services in time for breakfast. It was a common occurrence for souls to pray through well after midnight, and go home in rumbling wagons, shouting and speaking in tongues, at all hours of the night.

Brother Berry has faced death seven times throughout his ministry and still gives his personal testimony, entitled "Seven Valleys of the Shadow of Death." One of the valleys was crossed in an early Pentecostal revival at Etoile, Texas. They drank water from a contaminated old well, even cooking their oatmeal in the water infested with "wiggle tails," and developed malaria. Sister Berry had over fifty chills, and Brother Berry had thirty-nine, and had it not been for divine healing, they would not have lived to tell the story.

While in another revival in Memphis, Texas, a second shadowy valley of death was traversed. Brother Berry's appendix apparently ruptured. The telltale knot in his right side put him to bed. Each day he grew weaker. In a vision, his wife saw a casket on a flatcar passing down the railroad track. But the coffin wasn't his; it was Will's.

Word quickly spread to surrounding areas by the grapevine that Brother Berry was in critical condition. Fasting and prayer were called.

Brother Berry finally instructed his wife to make a sign to be taped to the headboard of his bed in the event

he should lapse into unconsciousness, which seemed inevitable. The sign was to read: "God is going to heal me!"

He never lost consciousness. Instead, he shouted for Sister Berry to bring him his clothes! When she hesitated, probably certain that he was delirious with fever, he called again, insistently. Then, unable to wait a minute longer, he grabbed the bedsheet about him and began dancing about the room, feeling that he was actually "floating" in the air. He was completely healed. Will died shortly thereafter.

Many miracles were performed in those early days of Brother Berry's ministry. Cancers were healed, dead were raised to life, and literally hundreds were filled with the Holy Ghost and baptized in Jesus' name.

In 1942, Brother Berry settled down in the West Texas community of Hamlin, and built his first home missions church "from scratch." He cut and laid the rock by hand. In May of that year, he was ordained into the ministry in Dallas by Brothers Goss, Witherspoon, and Chambers. Brother Abbott was his District Superintendent.

The week of the 1946 Christmas holidays, Brother and Sister Berry picked their children up from school and started for a fellowship meeting in Shamrock, more than one hundred miles away.

First grader Bobby still had on his coat, leather cap, and his first reader in the bib of his striped overalls. Just a few miles out of town, he attempted to open the window to toss out an apple core, but he opened the door instead. The 1941 Chrysler's back doors, which swung opposite from today's conventional models, was caught by the wind. The door flung the child out and onto the pavement

at a traveling speed of sixty miles per hour.

It was a trying moment for the faithful parents. "He's yours, too," Brother Berry said to his trembling spouse. "Shall we take him to the hospital or not?" The little skull seemed "caved in" and the youngster was skinned and bleeding.

"No, let's take him home and pray," she said bravely. Brother and Sister Berry and the local saints believed God for a miracle. The child was delirious until 10 PM, at which time God healed him. He awoke the next morning hungry; he didn't miss a single day of school.

One of Brother Berry's ambitions in life was to take his lovely Christian mother, Katherine, back to her native state during her lifetime. This ambition was not realized, however; she developed cancer and died at the age of fifty-six, shortly after her son moved to Hamlin. After her death, in the year of 1947, Brother Berry made the trip back to Maine, preaching in several churches in the state of his birth and in Canada, and witnessing to his relatives there.

After nine years in Hamlin, Brother Berry moved to Cleburne in the Texas District, leaving behind many friends and memories in the Texico District. He built a new church in Cleburne, reaping a rich harvest of souls. In each of the districts of his residence throughout his ministry, he served on the District Board.

His campmeeting messages, once heard, were never forgotten. One that still lives was entitled "Soldier's Shoes." Brother Berry brought along a pair of combat boots, stained with the blood of the soldier who wore them, and in the process of his illustrious message, he put the soldier's shoes on his feet. Another memory-stamper

was, "I Cannot Fail For There Are Those Who Trust Me!"

Brother Berry pastored Morris, Oklahoma, the church founded by another great pioneer, Brother C. P. Kilgore, for several years before taking his last pastorate in Marshall, Arkansas, in the heart of the beautiful Ozarks. It was while here, after Watch Night Service the last day of 1975, that Sister Berry found him dead. His heart had quit; his eyes were set and his tongue distended. Praying desperately, she began to pound his chest, and God brought him back to life. He insisted on being taken to his daughter's in Temple, where a pacemaker was implanted.

Faith had pulled him through another of those dark valleys. Eighteen months later, the pacemaker malfunctioned, and the doctors were amazed that he survived the ninety-three mile ambulance trip to Little Rock with the unbelievably slow heartbeat he had maintained in the mechanical device's absence. The nurse and ambulance attendant avowed that his was the slowest heartbeat on their survival records; he won again the battle with death.

He retired on his sixty-fifth birthday. "This is the greatest fellowship in the world," Brother Berry humbly concludes. "What a glorious history this unworthy preacher has come through! Through hardship and blessings of the past, I can say, those early years are still *Precious Memories.* They still linger in my mind today. I miss those old friends of mine who have gone to their reward . . . Brother Morgan . . . Brother Fauss . . . Brother Goss . . . Brother Clanton . . . Brother Vouga. But we'll join them in the rapture!"

After more than forty-five years in the active ministry,

Brother and Sister Berry returned to the old home town of Walnut Springs where they first fell in love with the Lord and each other. Both their children are in the ministry. Brother Berry was Master of Ceremonies at the 50th Jubilee of Pentecost in July of 1982 under the old tabernacle that has stood for many years. He still preaches somewhere every week, and writes poetry in his spare time, which has been commemorated by the Governor of Texas and the President of the United States.

"We thought we *retired*, but we have *refired!*" he jests warmly, and those who know him can visualize that toothy grin flashing and his dark eyes sparkling. He sent along this poem which he asked that I dedicate to all the "Old Timers in Pentecost," from "Just a Gospel Plow-Boy. . . ."

OLD TIME PENTECOST

You missed it if you wasn't living
Way back in the "Old Fashioned Day;"
We all went to the Fifth Sunday Meetings
And had dinner on the ground so we'd stay.

Folks would sing and shout, "HALLELUJAH!"
Until the church rafters would ring;
Then we'd go to the banks of the river
And baptize in the Name of the King.

It was great in the days of brush arbors,
Thousands were saved that were lost;
We all had things that were common
In the days of "Old Time Pentecost."

Donald Berry

There was so much glory from heaven,
I still like the old fashioned way;
Folks came from all over the country
To worship, and to sing, and to pray.

They came in T-Models and wagons,
You could hear them come through the hills;
Somehow you want to go back there
And get one more feel of the thrills.

Just before the meetings had started
We'd go down in the pasture and pray;
That night sinners came to the altars,
God would bless in the "old fashioned way."

We'd light up the old gas lanterns
And hover underneath tents or brush;
We were sometimes much persecuted,
But we decided that we wouldn't hush.

The time has made things quite different
And folks don't live the same way;
We can still taste the glories of heaven
Cause the Spirit is the same today.

The Lord can do things all over
Just like back there yesterday;
The power can fall there in the UPC
In the same "Old Fashioned Way!"



The fiddle that played at dances now plays for Jesus, 1932.



Bro. and Sis. Donald Berry and LaJoyce,1937.



The Walnut Springs UPC celebrated Golden Jubilee. Many present (including A. L. Clanton) had attended a large revival there in 1932.



WINFRED I. BLACK

By Aleen Black

December 28, 1978. I remember it well. It was on this cold, snowy, bleak day that our family rushed headlong into the shadows of death.

The words said about Enoch, "He was not; for God took him," were spoken to me that evening at 6:15 PM as I witnessed the Lord taking my husband.

The events of life are sometimes hard to understand, but there is a consolation in knowing that Jesus wanted Brother Black even more than we did.

Some men live a long happy life on earth and hardly make a ripple on life's sea, but Winfred Black in his short life's span of fifty-four years made waves that will splash against the shores of time and be felt by men and women for many years. He was a man who let Christ show through him daily. He loved people and people sensed

that love, for it was not just demonstrated from the pulpit, but was part of his everyday life.

In 1936, Brother and Sister Silas Black and their son, Winfred, started attending the mission in St. Louis, Missouri, where Brother Harry Branding was pastor.

Even though Brother Black was a young boy, Brother Branding was a great influence on his life. Brother Branding would take him with him on his calls on Saturdays and during the summer. It was during these years that the Lord spoke to Brother Branding telling him Brother Black was to help him in the future. After this Brother Branding started calling Winfred "My son in the gospel."

Brother Black played a violin, then a saxophone in the church orchestra.

In 1944 he married Aleen Henderson. In that same year he felt his call into the ministry. A year later, he preached his first sermon at a Labor Day Rally in Jackson, Missouri. The Lord really blessed in that service as he preached "Forget Not The Ancient Landmarks." That day changed his whole life. It was like a "fire had been lit" inside him that never went out until his death.

He had many restless moments as he was anxious to "go out" and preach. All the other young men who felt a call to preach, talked to the pastor and then it was not long until they would leave. Brother Black said, "I'm going to tell Brother Branding how I feel, and that I'm ready to go, too." Upon hearing this, Brother Branding looked straight at him and said, "You can teach, preach on street corners, work at the altar, visit the sick. But outside of that, you're not going anywhere, so get in that orchestra and play that saxophone. Didn't I tell you I'd heard from God?" Brother Branding loved to pull a piece of paper out

of his vest pocket for a person to read at odd moments: "Others may do it, but you may not."

A short time later Brother Black became the Youth Leader and Assistant Pastor to the Apostolic Pentecostal Church. He was also made Youth Leader for the Missouri District.

In the summer of 1954, Brother Black helped start a work in Sedalia, Missouri. A tent was erected, services started, and the Lord blessed with many souls. In the fall of that year, my niece Debbie came to live with us. She was one year old and a great joy to us. We loved her as our own daughter.

In the early spring of 1955, Brother Black went to Munich, Germany, to see how the work that Brother Branding had started was progressing. He stayed two months.

Brother Black carried a burden for Kansas City for many years. Finally Brother Branding sent us to this great city, supposedly for six months, but it turned out to be nine years. In December, 1955, we moved to Kansas City into a building that had been purchased by the Apostolic Pentecostal Church. We started services in January, 1956.

At first there was only Brother Black, Debbie, and me. But after a lot of praying, advertising, knocking on many many doors, people began to come in. The congregation grew, the Lord blessed and a church was established. One day Brother Black asked the Lord, "Why have You been so good to me and given me so many faithful men in this church?" The Lord answered, "Because of your faithfulness to your pastor."

We labored in Kansas City for nine years. During that

time Brother Black preached many revivals, campmeetings, Sunday school conventions, and many other meetings too numerous to recall. We met many wonderful people and gained friends through the years. It was a blessing for us to preach in New York state camps, Louisiana, Texas, Texico District, Illinois, Maine, Arkansas, California, Minnesota, Missouri, Indiana, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and many others. I can't remember them all. I know he really enjoyed ministering in Jamaica, and preaching a crusade in Indonesia.

It was while we were in Kansas City, on September 14, 1957, that a son was born to us. It is impossible to tell how happy we were. We named him Terry Branding Black. My husband said, "This will be my little preacher boy!" However, during his childhood whenever Terry was asked, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" he always replied, "a garbage collector." Well, I'm thankful the Lord changed his mind and called him into the ministry. He now pastors the Maranatha Tabernacle in Vancouver, British Columbia.

In 1965, Brother Branding called us back to St. Louis. He needed help in the church, and he was going to take it easier. It was very hard to leave the Kansas City church. We loved the people very much, but the church in St. Louis was the church we grew up in and we loved it too. Even though Brother Black liked to travel, preach and fellowship, he also wanted to be at his own church and with his family. He was committed to his people and to his district. He had held offices of Youth President, Sunday School Secretary, Sunday School Director, District Secretary, and at his death, he was District Superintendent of the Missouri District.

The General Conferences were very special to him. He always tried to make a way for as many as possible of our young ministers to go. He felt the fellowship of the brethren was very important.

As his wife I knew him well, and I remember him as a humble, loving, kind, sensitive Christian husband, pastor, and father to our children. It was never a chore for me to listen to him preach, for he lived the life he preached about. His sermons were never boring and I had heard some of them more than once. His sermons, "Meal Barrel Religions," "God's Water Boy," "The Eagle Has Landed," and "Destiny's Graveyard," are among others still an inspiration to me. He loved preaching and he loved working at the altar, praying people through to the Holy Ghost.

He had many friends, made friends everywhere he went. He never knew a stranger. He never missed an opportunity to tell someone about the Lord.

Debbie and Terry knew him as a father who loved them, who could laugh, cry, play, and pray with them. We never heard him say a word against anyone, lose his temper, or raise his voice in anger. The words we heard so often were, "Let's pray." He took the time during Debbie and Terry's childhood to do things with them. He never "shut them out" of his life because he was too busy.

I know if he had been given a choice he would have wanted to stay around a little longer. He would want one more time to be with Debbie and her children, Michael, Christy and Becky, one more time with Terry, Cheryl, and their two daughters, Chrystal and Natalie, whom he has never seen. He would want to preach in Vancouver, BC for his son, he would want to minister one more time in his church, and he would want to win a few more souls.

But it did not happen this way. When the Master called, he had to go.

There is a home not made with hands,
Beyond its golden door his spirit now stands.
He's not gone, he's just really away,
Just waiting for us to join him on that day.

—Iva Nell Pugh



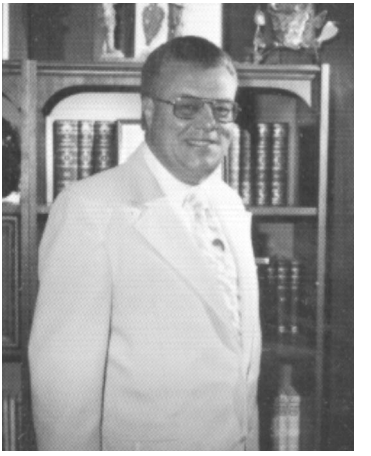
Bro. Harry Branding and "his son in the gospel."



Brother and Sister Black, evangelists.



Wedding Day



Brother Black, a friend to all.



Brother and Sister Black with Brother and Sister Gene McCarthy, United Pentecostal Church General Conference 1951.



Pastor Black



The Missouri District Board.



BENJAMIN BLUNT

By Lois Blunt Dunlap

James Riley Blunt was married to Mary Elizabeth DuVall in Effingham, Illinois. They had ten children, five boys and five girls. Benjamin, or Ben as he was called, was the fifth child, born December 19, 1891.

This family lived on a farm five miles east of Mason, Illinois, in Effingham County. My grandfather farmed and did timber work to support this large family. He was assisted by the boys as each one was old enough to work. The boys sometimes hired out to other people on farms. Grandfather played the violin, or fiddle as he called it, for dances and most of the boys learned to play the violin, and they followed in his footsteps.

My grandparents owned a hundred-acre farm, but in 1908 an agent came through and asked if he would sell his land. Grandpa was anxious to sell and move to

Arkansas. Grandmother objected but finally gave in when she saw that he was determined to move to Arkansas.

At that time, no one understood why they made this move, but later it seemed that it was God moving to save this family. Grandmother was a good little Methodist mother, although she didn't attend church much and the children seldom went. They settled near Redfield, Arkansas, and again worked in the timber.

The older boys had their own horses and wagons for their work. One Saturday night the Blunt boys and some neighbor boys decided to go into town and try to find a good dance with plenty of drinks. When they rode into town and tied their horses, they heard singing and shouting coming from the other end of town. They went to investigate.

A small group of people, both white and black, were making the noise. This was all strange to them, and they went home to tell their mother what they had seen. After they went upstairs to bed, they were still talking and laughing about the activities at that church. About 2:00 AM they were still laughing so hard that it awakened Grandma. She was sure that they had been hypnotized.

The boys continued to attend these services. When a friend or neighbor went to the altar, one of the Blunt boys who professed to be an infidel would make fun and call them "sissies," but not for long. One night during the altar call, he handed his hat to Ben and said, "Take care of my hat. I'm going to the altar."

The pastor, Sister Madge Kinneson, was giving the altar call. "God is calling for twelve people," she declared. Ben counted them as they went down, because he felt that God was calling him. After the eleventh one, Sister

Kinneson insisted. "God promised us twelve. There's still one more." Ben said he was worried about what to do with the hat, but he decided to leave it on the seat—let it take care of itself—while he went down to make his peace with God.

The night Ben received the Holy Ghost, it was very late when he arrived home, speaking in other tongues. After he unsaddled his horse, he went in the house still speaking in tongues. This caused more than a little disturbance. He wanted to tell his mother all about it, but every time he opened his mouth he started speaking in tongues. He sat down in a chair by the old wood stove and took off his shoes, tried to talk to his parents, who were sleeping in the front room, but he could not speak in English. His good old dad got his "Irish" temper riled up and said, "Mary, hand me my clothes. If a Dutchman's come, I'm leaving."

Grandma assured him she'd stop the tongues, so very quietly she slipped up behind Ben and put her hands over his mouth thinking she would stop him. No such luck, if anything it was worse. The tongues continued to flow. His little Methodist mother was face to face with a work of God that she had never witnessed before and did not know existed.

One by one the entire Blunt family received the Holy Ghost, including all of the children except the youngest (who was very young) and three of the daughters-in-law and one son-in-law. Four of the Blunt boys became Pentecostal ministers and preached until their death. The one exception was my grandfather. He repented, but he did not receive the Holy Ghost.

Just a few days after Brother Ben Blunt received the

Holy Ghost, he was working in the timber hauling logs to a mill along with the rest of the family. He was thinking about this new experience and rejoicing in God when suddenly the devil began to talk to him, "You didn't really get the Holy Ghost, that was just some sort of a spell." Ben began to pray as he remembered all of the Scriptures he had learned in that short while. He finally pulled over to the side of the road, got off the wagon and tied his horse to a tree. He read some verses in the New Testament he had with him, knelt to pray, and asked God for reassurance. God came down and blessed his soul again. He began to speak with other tongues, and from that time on the doubts never troubled him.

The pastor gave every convert a New Testament and instructed them to carry it with them at all times and in all places.

Sister Madge Kinneson and her husband, her aunt Sister Nancy Elizabeth Hudzen, who was fondly called "Aunt Kate" by all who knew her, and her cousin Myrtle Hudzen had all received the Holy Ghost in the great revival of 1906 in Los Angeles, California, at the Azusa Street Mission. God called them to go to Redfield, Arkansas, a place entirely unknown to them and start a church. They obeyed the call. They were the ones who led the Blunt family to God along with many others.

God knows just how to move people around so that they are in the right place at the right time. Brother Kinneson died shortly after they went to Redfield, leaving only the three women to take care of the church Sister Kinneson and Sister Myrtle Hudzen were both preachers, but Sister Kinneson was the pastor.

The church at Redfield grew. They built a new taber-

nacle, as it was called then, with living quarters in the back. In the summer of 1909, Sister Kinneson had Brother Howard A. Goss to come and baptize about sixty people in the titles of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. They did not know about Jesus Name baptism at this time.

I remember hearing Brother Blunt tell about a man sending word to the church one night that he was going to kill Sister Kinneson. Brother Ben and several others stayed after church. They turned off the lights and waited to see what happened. Sure enough a short while later there was a knock on the door. Sister Kinneson insisted on answering the door. There stood a man with a pistol pointed at her. He told her he was there to kill her. She said, "You can't kill me. God won't let you. He isn't through with me here yet." They all started praying and Sister Kinneson began speaking in tongues. The man was so scared that he started shaking. He shook so hard as he backed down the stairs on his knees that the gun fell from his hand.

Brother Ben felt his call to preach shortly after he received the Holy Ghost. He received his first minister's license at Redfield, (Greene County) Arkansas. He married Sister Myrtle Hudzen on December 24, 1910. They shared the same burden. Their greatest desire was to spread the true gospel and reach as many people as possible. This prompted them to sell all of their worldly possessions and use the money to do a work for God. They sold his fine team of horses and almost new log wagon and a lot of personal things.

They felt led to go to Chicago, Illinois, where they became acquainted with the Urshan family.

I recall hearing them tell of being in desperate financial need. They had the total sum of seven cents left, and

he could not find work. My mother said, "Seven is God's number, so let's lay these seven pennies out on a chair and ask God to multiply them one hundred fold." They laid the pennies out, knelt and asked God to supply their needs.

That night Brother Blunt went to church where Brother Urshan was the pastor. While they were kneeling in prayer, he heard footsteps coming down the aisle and stop beside him. A hand went into his pocket and he heard the crumple of bills. He could hardly wait to see what was in his pocket. When he did get a chance to look, it was seven dollars. God had come to their rescue.

Their next move was to Poplar Bluff, Missouri, where there was no Pentecostal church. Again they sold everything they could do without—watches, gold pens, jewelry and china left to my mother by my grandmother. They rented an upstairs hall on Vine Street at the railroad crossing. Dad bought some lumber and built some pews, a small platform, a Bible stand and also bought an organ for my mother to play. They were ready to start.

This new church caused quite a commotion and attracted a lot of people. Dad worked at a handle mill to support them and pay the church expense. After they were there a while, they heard about a group of Pentecostals about fourteen miles southwest of Poplar Bluff in a community called Lone Hill. This was a Baptist community, but some of the teenagers got in earnest with God and received the Holy Ghost. It spread like wildfire in that little community. Dad decided to find out what was taking place. They had built a little church and called it "New Harmony."

Dad walked the whole fourteen miles. After church

that night the Cox family invited him to spend the night with them. They lived on a farm and my dad, being a lover of farm animals, got up early and went with Brother Cox to the barn to help out with the chores. When he turned the horses out, my dad recognized the horses and he exclaimed, "Now I know where I've seen you before. You were selling meat down on 5th Street. I wanted to buy some meat but only had thirty-five cents. You told me you couldn't cut that small amount."

Tears started streaming down Brother Cox's face. He said, "Brother Blunt, why didn't you give me the password and I would have given you more meat than you wanted to buy." They sent Dad home on one of their horses, and it was loaded down with goodies, fruits, vegetables, a whole ham, among other things. That was the beginning of a lifelong friendship between our families.

During the winter months, work was not steady and problems increased. Dad fasted to let my mother have what little food they had because she was expecting their first child. For several days they had only cocoa and bread. But souls were being saved and that made them happy.

On March 5, 1912, a little skinny baby boy arrived, whom they named Paul. November 21, 1917, another son, Samuel, arrived on the scene. Finally on April 24, 1920, a daughter, Lois, came to join the family. October 1, 1926, another daughter, Bertha Lee, came to bless their home. She was called to preach in her early teens and preached until her death January 13, 1962.

While Paul was very small, Brother and Sister Blunt felt a call to the state of Kansas. They settled in a German community and got permission to have church in the

schoolhouse. A lot of the people spoke German, especially at home. Fortunately Brother Blunt could speak German fairly well.

A lot of the people were afraid of Pentecost and would not even come in the house, but large crowds gathered on the outside to hear this young preacher. They would crowd up to the windows to hear and see better and in front of the doorways. God's Spirit moved on them and they began to come inside. Many were filled with the precious Holy Ghost. Some thirty-five years later a minister friend of our family happened to be in that part of Kansas and one of the saints sent word to my parents that the people who received the baptism of the Spirit in their ministry were still living for God. That made it worth it all.

They did have one problem, though. Paul learned to talk while they were in Kansas and he spoke German. That really complicated things since Sister Blunt spoke or understood very little German. Paul learned English after they left Kansas.

Brother Blunt and Brother W. E. Kidson had become good friends and labored together for a few years. Their preaching together started in Louisiana and spread through Missouri and Northern Arkansas.

In the fall of 1915, they attended the second conference of the Assemblies of God in St. Louis. At this conference a debate was conducted to determine whether or not baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ was the correct formula of water baptism. Brother E. N. Bell was Chairman of the Assemblies of God at this time. He and Brother G. T. Haywood from Indianapolis took the affirmative side. Brother Collins and Brother Miller took the

negative side. It was determined at that time that the ministers could baptize either way. (This was changed at the next conference in 1916.)

In the spring of 1916, Brother Blunt went to Paragould, Arkansas, and Brother Kidson came to help him. They had a brand new tent. At this time they both still believed in the Trinity. While they were in Paragould, two oneness ministers, Brother H. E. Reid and Brother Oliver Marine of Corning, Arkansas, talked to Brother Blunt and Brother Kidson about the oneness of the Godhead. But they were still undecided.

In the spring of 1917, Brother Earl Hill came to Quincy, Illinois, and baptized Brother Blunt and Brother Kidson in the name of Jesus Christ. Shortly after this, Brother Blunt and Brother Kidson each went their separate ways.

After evangelizing for a few years, Brother and Sister Blunt moved back to Poplar Bluff, Missouri. While there, on November 21, 1917, another son, Samuel, was born to them. While they were living in Poplar Bluff, Brother Blunt preached in southern Missouri and northeast Arkansas. He preached in schoolhouses, tents, brush arbors, and homes when there was no church available. My parents would walk for miles, each carrying a child a good deal of the time, to preach the gospel.

They moved to Success, Arkansas, in 1919, and pastored the church there about four years. I was born in Success, where my parents lived in the parsonage in the back of the church, on April 24, 1920.

There was a lot of persecution in Success at that time. Rotten eggs and tomatoes and rocks were thrown through the windows over and over again. Even while we were

sleeping, stones were thrown through the windows over our beds. My second brother, Samuel, always said that when he was grown he would go back and whip the guys who scared him to death with those rocks, but he changed his mind. By then they were all too old for him to whip. Moreover, some of the young men who threw the rocks and eggs were saved later and became ministers, some of Brother Blunt's best friends.

Later we moved out of the parsonage and into a house while a new church was being built.

Almost everyone at that time came to church in horse-drawn buggies or wagons or rode horses. One of the saints started home from church one Sunday and the horse got scared and ran away with her. She was thrown from the wagon and was pronounced dead by the doctor when they brought her back into town. They came to get Brother Blunt to pray for her. She began to breathe again and sat up and began to praise the Lord. She lived for many years after that. Thank the Lord! He's a miracle worker.

In 1920 Brother Blunt went back to Louisiana, Missouri, to preach a revival, alternating nights with Sister Mattie Crawford. Brother Kidson was pastor, and he had rented the Opera House, which would seat eight hundred people. He used a public address system and put a large horn in an upstairs window so those who were outside could also hear. The building was filled almost every night of the revival with people standing on the outside. Many people were healed, God filled people with the Holy Ghost and they were baptized in His name in the Mississippi River. Large crowds attended the baptismal services; even the large ferry boats would sometimes float up close so that the passengers on it could watch the

baptizing. God moved in a great way.

It was during this revival that one man thought he had figured out what brought on the shout and move of God. He came up to Brother Blunt and said, "I know now where you keep that powder you sprinkle on the people. I've noticed that when you pull out your handkerchief and wave it around in the air, that's when they go wild."

The southern ministers had problems attending the conferences in the North, so they called a special conference to discuss these problems. Brother Blunt was a part of the sixteen ministers who formed the committee to organize the First Southern Bible Conference, which was held in Little Rock, Arkansas, November 3-12, 1922. This conference was well attended; some sixty or seventy ministers came for this great conference. There was much prayer, and a spirit of weeping came over that congregation that sometimes lasted far into the night or morning.

We moved from Success, Arkansas to Carbondale, Illinois, in the summer of 1923. Brother Blunt preached in Southern Illinois and pastored the church in Cambria, Illinois, for a while. He preached a tent revival in Herrin, Illinois, during the time that the clans were having an undeclared war against each other. People were being killed right and left. It was so bad that the state militia was called in. They came and stood around the outside of the tent to keep down trouble and protect the innocent people during service.

I remember being in the car with my dad during broad daylight and hearing the gunfire. People were running into the stores for shelter. Dad pulled over to the curb and got out to see if he could help anyone. There were five people lying dead on the sidewalk when we got to them.

This feud was so bad they called the area "Bloody Williamson County."

In 1924 Dad bought us a brand-new Model T Ford touring car with side curtains and a luggage carrier on back. He bought it at the Ford agency in Carbondale, Illinois, for the great sum of $425.00. We were all proud of that car. It hauled us and our luggage many a mile.

Early in 1925 we moved to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, where Dad pastored the church in South Cape, then known as Smelterville. This group of people were about to lose the church building. Dad went to see an attorney who told him that unless they were organized they had no church according to the law. Dad called a business meeting and set the church in order, complete with a roster roll signed by all members who claimed that as their church home. He took this to the Court House in Jackson, Missouri, (county seat) and they were able to save their church. The church prospered and the Lord blessed.

From there we moved back to Poplar Bluff, and Brother Blunt again went on the evangelistic field. While he was in a revival in Paragould, Arkansas, he wrote home that he had a surprise for me when he came home.

You can't imagine how happy and excited I was when I saw what was in the back seat of the Model T. The top was rolled back and there was an organ tied down in the back seat. An elderly couple in the church had sent it to me. It was a beautiful pump organ with a special place on each side for a kerosene lamp to provide light for reading the notes and words. Needless to say, it was carted from here to there for brush arbor meetings, tent meetings, yard meetings and any other place that music was needed.

When we moved from Poplar Bluff to Illinois, we had

an auction and all of our furniture was sold, including my organ. It almost broke my heart. All of our clothing, as much kitchen supplies as possible, and our personal belongings were packed in and on the old Model "T" Ford, along with our family of six. Can you imagine what that looked like? Dad had a small two-wheel trailer he was pulling behind. There was no sitting room in the back seat, so two of us older children took turns lying on top of the trunks, luggage, and boxes.

The first night we pulled into a park in Southern Illinois after crossing the Mississippi on a ferry at Cape Girardeau. My mother cooked a meal for us over an open fire. Just about bedtime it started to rain. Dad and the two boys, Paul and Samuel, slept, or tried to, in a small tent, sort of like a pup tent. Mom, my baby sister, Bertha Lee, and I slept in the car, and that wasn't exactly the Waldorf Astoria Hotel either. But we all survived and were none the worse for it.

Two or three days later we were all settled in our new home with new furniture to replace what was sold. Almost. My organ was not replaced. I later learned to play by going to church and practicing on the church piano and organ.

From the summer of 1928 to April, 1930, we lived in Vandalia and Mt. Vernon, Illinois. Dad evangelized in several states during those years. I remember one revival in Port Arthur, Texas, when the Lord really poured out His spirit and one hundred people received the Holy Ghost. From there he went to Beaumont, Texas; Norphlet and Smackover, Arkansas, on up through Arkansas and Missouri. Then he came home, and "O happy day" for all of us.

The brightest spot in our days then was the daily letter from my dad. Occasionally one would be detained and we would get two letters the same day. Churches where he preached revivals would occasionally give Dad a shirt, sock and tie shower (probably when they could see the need), but the church in Port Arthur remembered the ones at home and bought for us also. It was just like Christmas.

In the spring of 1930, we moved back to Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Dad pastored the same church he had pastored before, so we felt at home as soon as we got in the city. Later Dad began preaching a couple of nights a week in an upstairs rented hall in the north end of town. It was called the "Glory Barn," and that it was! There were a lot of Pentecostal people in the north end of Cape Girardeau who could not attend the big church in South Cape (Smelterville), so there was a definite need for another church. Soon the church in South Cape moved into a larger building and continued to grow.

This was during the "Big Depression" which hit Cape Girardeau with a heavy blow. My oldest brother wore the soles off a new pair of shoes walking here and there in search of work.

We moved to Morley, Missouri (south of Cape Girardeau), but Dad still pastored the church at Cape Girardeau and drove back and forth. Later that year, 1931, we moved back to the Poplar Bluff area and stayed there about four years. We lived fifteen miles southwest of town on a farm. Brother Blunt was evangelizing again, and he was also District Elder (now called presbyter) for southern Missouri. He had revivals in Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia,

Texas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and other places. He had lots of "repeat" revivals, returning to places where he had been before. While Dad was preaching the night services for the District Conference at Naylor, Missouri, both of my brothers received the Holy Ghost.

In 1935 and 1936, Dad pastored in Smithville, Indiana, just south of Bloomington. He had previously preached numerous revivals in Bloomington and the surrounding area.

During one of our good revivals there, a group of teenagers bragged that they would stop the revival. They sat in back, talked loud, threw paper wads, ran in and out—anything to disturb and draw attention to themselves. Brother Blunt called them down from the pulpit, and asked for their attention. They were angry and threatened him.

One evening, the church gave us a grocery shower. Some of the people helped carry the groceries to the car. Dad came out of the church with both arms full of groceries, and with Bertha Lee hanging onto him. When he got just outside the door and started down the walk, the teenagers jumped him from behind, kicking him and beating him. They knocked the groceries out of his arms and knocked my little sister down. She lost one of her shoes, which we never found. My brothers and some of the church men started helping Dad out, and the roughnecks began to scatter. The revival went on and people continued to receive the Holy Ghost.

We moved from Indiana to Keysport, Illinois, where Brother Harry Blunt pastored a church for many years.

Early in 1937, we moved back to Missouri near Poplar Bluff. The people in the Morgan Corner community built

a brush arbor every summer and had church in it as long as the weather permitted. Even when we lived away from there, Dad always came back and preached a revival or two during the summer months. He also preached in other communities around Poplar Bluff. He preached numerous revivals in brush arbors near Doniphan, Missouri, in the West Point community and helped them start the church there. We later built a church at Morgan Corner, which Dad pastored for many years. During this time, he was also active in the district work in southern Missouri. He evangelized quite a lot leaving Uncle Jim Blunt, who lived with us, in charge of the church.

We lived on a farm while Dad pastored Morgan Corner church. I remember one time when they were raking up hay Dad got bit by a copperhead snake. Everyone around told him he'd better go to the hospital, but he refused. We all prayed and God touched him. The swelling left and he did not get sick.

In November 1941, my mother passed on to be with the Lord at the age of fifty-four years.

Brother Blunt later married Sister Lena Carson. She was a preacher, and had evangelized and pastored. They had three sons: Bennie Joe, Eldon Dale, and Leonard Doyle. Dad and Sister Lena stayed on at the Morgan Corner church, except for two short intervals, until his death. They pastored a church near Birchtree, Missouri, for a while and also pastored at Alicia, Arkansas. They returned to the Poplar Bluff area late in 1952. He was in very bad health, but he continued to preach all he could for about six months.

Morgan Corner was a small rural church, and I asked

my dad several times why he stayed on there when he had so many calls to pastor large churches where he could have had so much more and not have to worry about money so much. He always replied something like this: "The small churches need a good pastor too and very few would be willing to stay there." Many preachers and preachers' wives came from the Morgan Corner church and are still laboring for the Lord today. I was fortunate to have grown up under his preaching and teaching. I often think I didn't pay close enough attention to his teaching then, for I find myself wishing I could ask him some questions about things going on today.

Brother Blunt used to preach a sermon entitled "Life's Fox Chase." He compared the fox chase with the spiritual race. It was a lengthy sermon, but you never realized it was long. There was the "quitter" who started out with a big boom but never finished a race. There was the "cutter" who wouldn't follow the trail but cut across and came out in front of all the others loud and clear. Then there are the ones who won't bark at all unless they are in front; that's the sneaky kind. And there is the one who always wants to have their own race. They'll leave the main race and go start one a few miles away all on their own. That one he called the "splitter."

Our home was like Grand Central Station. In the early days of Pentecost, most ministers could not afford to stop at hotels. They tried to space their travel so that they could stop and spend a night (sometimes longer) with a minister friend. A lot of the time they had their entire family with them. Lots of people who were only slightly acquainted with my dad stopped to spend a night. But that was fine with my parents. They really believed the

verse of Scripture which says, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unaware" (Hebrews 13:2).

In the early days of this century, baptizing was done in open streams. I remember one incident when Dad took his stick out into the river to test the depth of the water in order to find a fairly level place. He stuck the stick into the river bottom to mark his place and started back to the bank to lead the people into the water. Just as he got to the bank, his feet flew out from under him and he almost went under. Needless to say, we had to sing two or three songs to let everyone stop laughing and get serious again.

Dad had hundreds of good friends among the ministry. He corresponded regularly with Brother G. T. Haywood, and went to visit and counsel with him from time to time. The last time he went to see Brother Haywood, he came home and told us that Brother Haywood was very ill and would not live long unless God intervened. Brother Haywood asked the church not to pray for him. He said, "As long as you pray like that, I can't go home and I'm so tired." In that service he sang a new song he had written which I have never seen in print. Dad brought it home to me to sing. The chorus goes like this:

Chorus

I am on the gospel highway,
Pressing forward to the goal.
Where for me a rest remaineth,

In the homeland of the soul.
Every hour I'm pressing onward,
Not a moment to delay,
I am going home to glory,
In that good old-fashioned way.

Shortly after Dad's visit, we received word of Brother Haywood's death.

On May 9, 1953, Dad passed on to be with the Lord at the age of sixty-one. He preached on Sunday before he went to the hospital on Monday. He was swollen so badly that his waistline was about ten inches larger than normal. Sister Lena had sewed a large gusset in back of his trousers, but he preached even though he had to hold to the pulpit to keep from falling.

Sister Lena and the three little boys, ages eight, six and nineteen months, continued to live in the same community. She pastored Morgan Corner church for several months. The two youngest sons are both deceased.

The oldest son, Bennie Joe, received the Holy Ghost on April 10, 1967, shortly after he came home from the US Navy. He is married to Pat Brooks, and they have two children, Bryan and Melanie. He felt called to open a home missions church in Wentzville, Missouri, where they have built a good congregation over the past nine years.



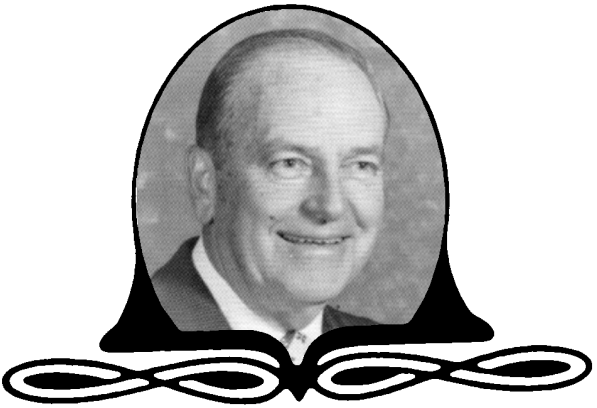
Bro. and Sis. Blunt on the right share watermelons with friends.



Lois, Samuel and Paul Blunt.



Brother Ben and his second wife, Lena, 1944.



PAUL H. BOX

By Olga M. Box

To a lovely couple, who moved to Yonkers, New York, from Cornwall, England, a fifth child was born on November 9, 1910. Paul was greeted by his older brothers and sisters—Hetty, Carl, Ernest, Ruth—and they were a happy family.

Mother Box, as she was called, became the leader of the family in almost all activities. She was the first to receive the Holy Spirit and the family followed her in baptism.

Paul was an excellent student skipping two grades. As soon as he was old enough, he went to work wherever he found something he could do. Since there were seven mouths to feed, the father needed help.

Later Paul secured a job at the New York Central Railroad in New York City. He worked there for seventeen

years, enjoying his work as secretary in the executive office of the Vice-President. He and his boss often traveled together, escorting dignitaries such as the Postmaster General of the United States, the honorable James Farley, and others. Mr. Farley was a very pleasant and outgoing personality. He never forgot a name and called people by their first names. He had a wonderful memory.

When Paul returned home from one of these trips, having eaten sumptuously, Paul would tease his family by asking them to pass the finger bowl to wash his hands after completing his meal.

Paul commuted by train from Yonkers to New York, about a thirty-minute ride to Grand Central Station. It was exciting to see people rushing here and there either going home or coming to work. The gateman was very punctual and many times the latecomers had the gate closed in their faces. Often people turned away sad or angry. Then there was Fifth Avenue where many parades were held and beautiful shops. St. Patrick's Cathedral was open to the public. Paul could view the beautiful buildings and surrounding of Rockefeller Plaza, visit the music hall, and watch ice skating in the winter time at the Plaza. New York was alive with many attractions.

Mother Lily Box was a devout Christian. When she was a young lady she belonged to the Salvation Army, and she could really play the tamborine. She sought the Lord and desired to worship in a Pentecostal church, but to her knowledge there were none close by. When she heard of a black church in Harlem, she made a trip to visit. It was about twenty-five miles from her home and she traveled the distance by train. The pastor was Sister Lightford, who was loved by the people. This church was a large

Oneness church, and the people worshiped with all their hearts and sang and clapped their hands.

Paul and his sisters and brothers were Baptist. Mother Box let her children attend their Baptist church, but she demanded that they join her at the Harlem church. They took their lunch to their church; when they finished eating, they joined their mother at the Pentecostal church.

One day Paul was invited to attend a gathering at the home of Ethel Stefan. When he was about to go home, the young lady asked him to attend Sunday school and morning service at the Assembly of God. He seemed happy to go. Paul was very well liked at the new church and was soon elected to be the youth leader.

When Paul heard the message of the oneness of God and baptism in Jesus' name, he was baptized. When the leaders of the Assembly of God church heard that he was baptized in Jesus' name, they asked him to resign his position as youth leader.

Soon after that incident, another black church was discovered to be in Mt. Vernon, New York, where Mother Schultz and her daughter Olga lived. This Oneness church, pastored by Sister Richardson, proved to be a friendly people who loved to worship God. Lily Box and her family joined this church in worship, and it was at this church that Paul was baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit in January 1931. The service that night became so noisy that the police came to investigate. The answer was that Paul Box had received the Spirit of God. He was the noisy "baby" in Jesus Christ.

Paul thought he would tell all the people in his office about his experience, but they were not as happy as he thought. They told him to keep his religion in his church.

This did not discourage Paul, however, for he told people everywhere about his experience with God. People said he spoke in "divers" tongues and magnified God.

The family was thankful to have a church to worship in. It was almost half black and half white. Before the people had a church building, they had gathered in different homes for prayers and sought God. Their first church building was a storefront church, as they were called in those days. A pot belly stove stood in the center of the room.

One day when a young lady walked into the church, Paul said, "That is the girl I am going to marry." Olga Schultz was a member of the Lutheran faith, but she promised her mother she would come to church if she could have a date, and they agreed. As she continued to attend the services, she too was filled with the Holy Spirit and baptised the same night in Jesus' name. It was a grand and wonderful experience to be filled and become a new creature in Christ. Other young people were also filled in the same service.

Mother Box received a paper called *The Witness of God* in which was an advertisement concerning the opening of a church in New York City. The paper was edited by Brother Andrew D. Urshan. It was a Oneness, Jesus Name church. Paul Box and others found the church and attended. They were welcomed by a group of people who had come from Columbus, Ohio. The pastor was Brother S. G. Norris, who had come to New York to work. It was in 1932 during the depression years and work was hard to find. Coming with Brother Norris were Brother W. T. Witherspoon, his wife, his son Arthur, his son's wife Veda, and another couple who would take care of the building.

We were blessed by the beautiful talent Veda had playing the piano. She was full of the Spirit. Many times the playing would stop and she would dance before the Lord. We had some marvelous services.

The people in Mt. Vernon and Yonkers felt they should support the new church, and so the church called "Satisfaction Tabernacle" was begun. Olga Schultz and her brother Adolph joined the group. Souls were added to the church as God poured out His blessing upon us.

About a year later, Brother Norris left New York and returned to Columbus, Ohio. The saints were brokenhearted. We loved the Norrises very much. Before leaving New York, Brother Norris installed Brother Box as the pastor and leader of the church. He was ordained and pastored until Brother J. T. Thomas came from Louisiana, enroute to the foreign field of Iran. Brother Box turned the church to Brother Thomas. The church moved to a smaller quarters on 85th Street, a building that was later called the "ice box" by Brother A. D. Urshan. It was so cold inside the building that in order to baptize a candidate, the ice had to be chopped from the baptismal tank.

When Brother Andrew Urshan came to New York to pastor the church, we were happy to have a full-time pastor, and we esteemed him highly.

A beautiful courtship developed between Olga Schultz and Paul Box. Sister Olga worked on Lexington Avenue and 42nd Street and Brother Box worked on 45th Street and Park Avenue. Since their offices were not far apart, they met often at noon for lunch.

Brother Urshan did not like the cold church, which formerly had been a blacksmith's shop, so he made arrangements to purchase a building on the west side of the

city. It was four stories high, a narrow building. Brother Urshan could live in the building with his children.

Although all the original saints who had come from Columbus had returned to Ohio, the church grew. The saints from the Brooklyn church attended services with us on Sunday evenings. They were a blessing to us. Sister Catherine Chambers and her family often visited our church.

The wedding of Sister Olga and Brother Paul was announced, and they were married in a small church building in Mt. Vernon. Brother Urshan performed the wedding. About seven years later Carole was born, making her parents very happy. Brother and Sister Box had prayed often for a child, and they wept for joy when God answered. Brother A. D. Urshan dedicated Carole to the Lord.

One day Brother W. T. Witherspoon came to visit Brother Urshan. While in New York, he asked Brother Urshan if he would release Brother Box and let him help with the pastoring of the church in Columbus. Brother Urshan consented, and Brother Box sought the Lord for guidance. He said he walked the floor all night praying and seeking. When he finished praying, he felt led to go to Columbus. Olga and Carole moved to Columbus by train. Brother Box followed in the car after all was taken care of in New York. In his new position Brother Box was busy. He had charge of the weekly youth meeting and prayer. He also taught Sunday school. He also helped with the 6:00 AM live radio broadcast. He would pick up six singers and the pianist and return them to their homes. He was due at the office at 9:00 AM to make sick calls with the pastor and to visit the elderly. Some of the time

Brother Witherspoon preached on the radio. There was a lot to do in this large, growing church.

Sister Box kept house, cooking and entertaining guests. She attended all the activities of the church, sang in the choir, and helped in the summer Vacation Bible School. Brother Witherspoon expected her to be the example.

We had many enjoyable times in Columbus.

Brother Goss, who was then superintendent of the United Pentecostal Church, called for the services of Brother Box. It was a sad day when we left Columbus as we had many friends and happy times there. We moved to St. Louis into the apartment occupied by Brother Goss, who, with his family, was still living in Tupelo, Mississippi. Brother and Sister Chambers and their two children were occupying two rooms on one floor. Brother Box became the editor of the official paper called *The Pentecostal Herald.* We all pitched in and helped roll *The Pentecostal Herald* and get it to the Post Office.

Our next move was to pastor a church in Texas. The church in Sherman, Texas, was a large, growing church. God blessed our ministry and souls were added. We enjoyed living in Sherman and loved the people. At the time, Brother and Sister Ray Agnew were living in Sherman. When they were called to St. Louis, we felt sad and missed them very much. They may have had something to do in asking Brother Box to pastor in Sherman. Later we returned to St. Louis to work with the Foreign Missions Division. Brother Box and Brother Stairs were the two officials. When Brother Stairs had to be overseas, Brother Box was alone to handle the growing demands of the division. Since the work soon became too much for one

person to keep up, Brother Box would many times bring work home for his wife to help him.

For several years Brother Box did not even have one office secretary, which meant that he had to do most of the office work himself. He carried this tremendous task with total dedication. When Brother Box's health was broken, his burden for Foreign Missions remained the same. When he was well again, he continued his work as Foreign Missions Secretary until he retired in 1975.

Brother Box had the heart of a missionary. After his retirement, he was named as an honorary member of the Foreign Missions Board. He loved the missionary Board and he loved missions. He was a very great asset to the Board and was greatly esteemed by all.

He made his last contribution to the Foreign Missions on the last day of his life. He had ninety dollars and wanted to designate it to some needy cause. What a shock it was to learn later that he had suddenly passed away that evening!

His funeral was conducted in Brother Roy Gerald's church in St. Louis on the 13th of October. A great soldier, a beautiful Christian and a friend of the missionary was laid to rest.

These following words were made by Brother Harry Scism.

"**THE END:** The two little words at the bottom of the last page of the Bible. The beginning of any purpose may be sweet, but what about its end? And what will you do in the end thereof? Everything has an end. Every road, every book, every song, every continued story, every life in the world. The psalmist said, 'Make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is that I may

know how frail I am' (Psalm 39:4). The sinner's end, the hypocrite's end. The end of the righteous is to be desired: 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!' (Numbers 23:10). When our life here ends? What then?"



Courting Days!



The Boxes at WEC



Daughter Carol, her husband and children.



Foreign Missions Day at General Conference



Foreign missions, Bro. Box speaking.



ARNOLD HAROLD BROWNING

By Mrs. A. H. Browning

Since the lives of husband and wife are very closely intertwined and interrelated, it is almost impossible to write of the one without including the other. As I sketch some of the history and highlights of my husband, Arnold H. Browning, it may seem at times that I am also writing about myself. While seeking a modicum of modesty in writing this biography, I want to give honor unto whom honor is due relative to the life of the man of God.

Arnold Harold Browning was born into the home of Gideon and Lilly Browning on December 9, 1911, at Lohn, Texas. This little country town is geographically located almost in the heart of Texas, a few miles north of Brady, Texas, the county seat of McCulloch County. Arnold was the second of six children born into this family.

Although the parents were not overly religious, they

tried to instill into their children the values of honesty, integrity, and hard work.

His father was a successful farmer and always provided well for his family, and Arnold's mother was a wonderful cook and housekeeper.

At an early age Arnold was already an avid reader and student, being able to read newspapers before he started to school. He made excellent grades throughout his school years. He finished one elementary and two secondary schools with the honor of being first in his class. After graduation he took a correspondence course in business and later took some Bible courses taught by a Bible school in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His love for books and study carried over into his life as a minister. After his call into the work of God, he began to purchase books and build a personal library.

In the early years of his ministry, books, religious publications, and ministerial helps were not looked upon with favor by many of the Pentecostals; nevertheless, Arnold continued to read and study and to encourage other preachers to do the same. The result of his studies was reflected in his preaching, giving a quality to his sermons that seemed to be above the ordinary.

Arnold seemed to be God-conscious at an early age. The hand of restraint concerning sin was upon him. He did not feel free to do what other young people were doing. He felt he should read some verses of Scripture before retiring no matter what time of night it was. In his youth, he attended a denominational church and served as a youth leader and was involved in the Sunday school.

In 1932 a young lady by the name of Ollie Brown came to his hometown to teach school. They became

acquainted and started dating just before the spring semester ended. She returned to the State Teacher's College in San Marcos, Texas, to continue her studies. They continued contact by correspondence. Meanwhile, they had come into contact with the Pentecostal teaching and both were baptized in Jesus' name in San Antonio, Texas. Ollie Brown returned to Lohn to teach another term of school, and she received the Holy Ghost in a revival meeting in November of 1932.

Arnold's intense hunger for the Holy Ghost experience drove him to an extreme effort in his quest. On February 1, 1933, out under the trees on a ranch a few miles from his home, as he and a friend were praying, God marvelously baptized him with the Spirit. It was a tremendous experience in his life. A very short time later God called him to preach in a very definite and miraculous way.

On May 1, 1933, Arnold preached his first sermon. He preached it in the little town where he was born and reared, and the whole town and countryside turned out to hear him. The house was filled and people were looking in at the windows. He preached from Isaiah 1:3. "The ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib" (*NKJV*). It was a very good sermon to be his first.

On June 25, 1933, Arnold married the school teacher, Ollie Brown. It was a simple wedding performed before the Sunday morning service in the pastor's parsonage. This marriage has been very successful. Arnold has been a very devoted sweetheart, lover, and husband and still is to this day. The Texico District honored us this past June 25 with a Golden Wedding celebration in honor of our marriage and his fifty years in the ministry.

Arnold was given ministerial license in July, 1933, by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ. He was ordained in 1934. Our first pastoral work was in the little town of Lohn, where he had preached his first sermon. Some of the saints in the church had received the Holy Ghost before Arnold was born. He had the Holy Ghost only a few months when they asked him to pastor.

We did not know too much about what we were trying to do, only that the presence and blessings of God could do what the human could not do. We always strove for the presence and blessings of God and would hardly allow people to leave our service without some kind of touch from God. It seemed to work, for people found God and He put His approval on our efforts.

Our second pastorate was Menard, Texas. This church was in the throes of division and strife. We continued our ministry here for about one year and three months. We were able through God to bind up the wounds and to get their property clear of debt. These were the dreadful days of depression with but little money and not too much food on the table, but God always made a way where there seemed no way.

After giving up this church, we spent some time in evangelizing in the central Texas area. Some of our effort was in established churches and in places that had probably never heard the Pentecostal message. The first offering that we took in this evangelistic effort contained the whole sum of seventeen cents. We surely were not in the ministry for money. If we preached in an area where there was no church, we would ask some one to allow us to stay in his home. We felt the people needed to hear this truth and we had no other alternative. We look back now and

wonder at our boldness. If we were treated well, we were thankful. If people were unkind to us, we merely shrugged it off.

In 1936, some friends asked us to take them by car to the west Texas town of Grandfalls to see their daughter who was sick. It was a very unpleasant trip of two hundred and fifty miles. We faced a strong west wind with blowing sand and tumbleweeds. The man we visited said they had little rain in the two years he had lived there.

We thought, what an awful place to be!

Yet within a very short time we felt the Lord calling us to this part of western Texas. Brother J. F. Solomon asked us to help him in an evangelistic effort just three miles from Grandfalls. We spent several months evangelizing in that area, preaching in Grandfalls, Royalty, Odessa, Wink, and Pyote. The church in Wink was without a pastor and asked us to help them for a time. There were hardly any churches in that area of West Texas at that time. There were not enough to have fellowship meetings.

We felt the definite call of God to the town of Monahans, Texas. Our first effort there was an open air revival. Due to blowing sand, winds that continually seem to blow, we recognized the futility of our efforts without some kind of building. We moved there in 1937. We had no members, very little money, no prospects for employment, nothing guaranteed or underwritten by any missions department. Those depression days were hard. We finally found a lot we could buy for a mere twenty-five dollars down. We found friends in another city who would co-sign with us for some lumber.

I worked as a house cleaner in homes that wanted me. One of these homes was the home of the maintenance

foreman for the Texas Highway Department. One day he asked me if Brother Browning would like to go to work. This was God's blessings since men were standing in line to get employment. Brother Browning went to work for thirty-five cents an hour, two dollars and eighty cents a day. With that income we lived, paid rent and bought food, and gave monthly to the bills due on the lot and the lumber.

The day came when we were able to have services in our own building. Later we raised this building and dug a basement underneath which provided us with Sunday school rooms. This basement became the scene of many all-night prayer meetings, which surely contributed to the blessings of God that began to be poured out upon us. Many people entered our doors and came to our altars. The church later became self-supporting and Brother Browning was able to leave his job with the highway department.

We spent about seventeen years as pastors in Monahans. People came from all walks in life to the church—the good and the moral, the drunkard and the disreputable. Many ministers came from this church. Brother J. B. Twilley, a business man, came to church and prayed through. He became a successful minister and he started a church in San Antonio, which is still a growing church. An insurance salesman came in one Sunday night. A few days later he was in the altar. After praying through, God gave him a call. He went west and built a thriving work in Bakersfield, California. Just recently this insurance salesman, Brother I. H. Terry, completed forty years as the successful pastor of Bakersfield, California. Brother Wayne Maxwell was just a Sunday school kid in

the Monahans church, today he is a successful pastor in San Angelo. O, the blessing of obeying God! While Brother Browning was in Monahans he helped build church buildings in Grandfalls, Kermit, and Wink. While still pastor of the Monahans church, Brother Browning was elected District Superintendent of the Texico District of the United Pentecostal Church.

Feeling that the Lord was calling us to another field of labor, after much prayer we accepted the pastorate of the church in Hobbs, New Mexico. The church there had purchased a very desirable new building site. The old church was in a very bad location and in a state of deterioration. Brother Browning managed to sell the old building for cash, and he and his two brothers built a very beautiful new church in Hobbs. We only stayed in Hobbs about eight or nine months as the burden of the district work plus the pastoral obligation seemed too heavy for one man to carry. Brother Browning felt like devoting all his time to district work.

One desire of the Texico brethren was the development of a district campground. Brother Browning set the wheels in motion. A parcel of land was purchased in north Amarillo. We moved to Amarillo and started building a tabernacle and various dorms and kitchen areas. The Ladies Auxiliary took the responsibility of helping raise funds for a district parsonage, and the spacious district parsonage is still a beautiful building today. We always kept the various speakers who came to our district meeting in our guest rooms in the parsonage. Although this was a lot of extra toil, it was well worth the effort in the fellowship and friendship that was a result.

The Texico District was one of the larger geographical

districts in our fellowship. At that time it included all of West Texas, the States of New Mexico, Colorado, and a portion of Utah. From the southern tip at Del Rio, Texas, to the northern borders of Colorado was well over twelve hundred miles. I'm sure from east to west it must have been at least eight hundred miles. You can readily realize the amount of traveling that occupied Brother Browning's time. Brother Browning seemed to have come into the district work at a time when the district ministers and churches were hungry for growth and progress. We had a wonderful spirit of cooperation and fellowship. We could never express our appreciation for the love and respect accorded unto us from the great Texico District. Under his leadership, ministers and churches were added to the district.

It became a part of Brother Browning's world especially to preach to the ministers in our district meetings and many wonderful services were held under the old tabernacle. He seemed to have done some of his best preaching at this time. While he was so involved in district work, I spent a lot of time in evangelistic work within the district. We thoroughly enjoyed our work. Many of the services in those days were deeply moving with much weeping and seeking God. We need more of that type of services today. The presence of God was so manifested that we hardly knew what to do. Some of the most able men in our fellowship filled the pulpit in our district meetings and were such a tremendous blessing to God's work.

Brother Browning was involved in the organizational and administrative aspect of the Lord's work and served in various capacities. In the days of the former Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ, he was involved

in the youth and Sunday school departments. He served as a superintendent of the western section of the Texas District. After the merger he served as district-secretary for a number of years prior to his selection as district superintendent. He served as superintendent of the Texico District almost seventeen years. He was reelected on the nominating ballot just months prior to his resignation.

In a special service honoring us some time prior to his resignation, the following excerpts are a part of the expression of the district. This was submitted by the district secretary, Brother W. T. George. "We salute you as our leader in directing the affairs of this district. When you first assumed the duties of district superintendent sixteen years ago, there were one hundred and twenty ministers in this district. Eighty-seven of those are deceased or have moved away, leaving thirty-three of that group. Today, one hundred and sixty names constitute our district ministerial list. Sixteen years ago there were fifty-five churches in the Texico District. This number has increased to ninety, which is a sixty-five percent growth. In these years thirty-two men have filled the office of presbyter, two men the office of district secretary, and sixteen people have been leaders of the various departments. While our views do not always necessarily coincide with yours, we appreciate the fact that you are considerate of others and you do allow others the privilege of individuality. We borrow the words of another: 'A great man is determined by his attitude toward little men.'"

Brother and Sister Elroy Martin submitted the following: "And it came to pass in the process of time, that God looked down from His great, high heaven. And His eyes

fell upon the Texico District. And God's big heart went out in love and compassion to the Texico District. And He said, 'It is but an infant district and it must have a guardian.'

"Thus God began His intensive search. All along the road from earth to heaven He looked. And by and by, He spied a faithful man who had borne the burden and heat of the day. He and his devoted companion had worked hard and fearlessly in God's vineyard. And God said, 'Heretofore, I have given this couple no children in the natural, so I shall endow them with the awesome responsibility of my growing district.'

"As with rearing any healthy youngster, the spiritual food bill was enormous, the discipline often more painful to parent than to child, the cleansing oft. But Brother Browning bravely bore the staggering cost of providing for his spiritual family, hence seeing many days of intermingled grief and joy.

"And Brother Browning purposed in his heart to build a house for the young district. To wit, land was purchased, and a tabernacle, dormitories, a kitchen, a children's chapel encompassed the happy family. And God saw the work that it was good, and God blessed it, saying, 'Be fruitful and win souls.' And many home missionary churches were erected and the work progressed with God-speed.

"But the family grew exceedingly and waxed mighty. And God smiled and said, 'The house thou hast build is not large enough; construct yet a larger one.' And, Brother Browning, with hair much grayer and shoulders more stooped, set about to enlarge his coasts. It was a glorious day in 1969 when the vast family moved into the

brand new house of worship."

We began to feel a need for a home of our own and began to seek a desirable place. While preaching for Brother Vernon Neely in Abilene, Texas, we found some very choice property at a little place called Clyde, just a few miles east of Abilene. Immediately we began to clear a building site and started on the building. We erected a beautiful brick home on this property and spent part of our time there and part of our time in Amarillo on the campground.

Some time later Brother Vernon Neely accepted the pastorate of the church in Odessa, Texas. The church he vacated in Abilene asked us to consider taking the church. After much prayer and waiting upon the Lord, we felt it the will of God for us to do so. Somewhat tired of so much traveling in district work and feeling that we had served our alloted time in this administrative task, Brother Browning submitted his resignation as Texico District Superintendent.

We really felt thrilled over this new adventure, but it was indeed a new world after being out of pastoral work for sixteen years. How different the attitudes of people had become during this sixteen year interval! Nevertheless, the Lord really blessed our efforts. We had almost a continual revival, with people receiving the Holy Ghost almost every week. We had a month-long revival with Evangelist David Dean, a revival that surpassed any revival we had ever been in. People just seemed to come in off the streets and come to our altars the first time they attended. Many of them received the Holy Ghost and were baptized in Jesus' name. We had some outstanding healings. One healing was especially impressive. A man came

into the service on crutches, and after we prayed for him, he discarded the crutches, danced all over the place and walked out without any assistance. He never used the crutches again.

We felt that it might be better for us to live in Abilene, so we sold our beautiful home in Clyde and moved into a very nice mobile home which was parked on a nice lot. Our revival spirit continued. I suppose it was too much for the devil, for he began to raise his ugly head and our trials began to come.

We have always felt that this added pressure put such a strain upon Brother Browning that it was his physical undoing. On the night of February 22, 1973, he was stricken with a massive heart attack. For several days he was hanging between life and death. On one day his heart quit completely and he felt himself drifting into another realm. The doctors and nurses said he was clinically dead. But across the hall from the intensive care unit was a little prayer chapel. Several ministers were gathered there praying. God heard their cries and Brother Browning felt his spirit return to his body. He spent sixteen days in intensive care and another fifteen days in the regular hospital.

Then began the slow road to at least a partial recovery. His strength had been almost completely depleted. He was unable to get in and out of the bath tub without assistance and he could hardly feed himself. Other afflictions took advantage of his bodily weakness to seize upon him. The emotional stress was hard for him to cope with. His inactivity and inability to perform physical tasks chafed and tormented him. Brother Browning had always been active in working and doing things with his

hands. The Lord only knows the countless hours he had spent in working on home mission churches in Texas, New Mexico, and Colorado, plus the work they did on Indian Mission projects.

He spent entire days developing the district campgrounds, in building and landscaping. His family seemed to be gifted in building, two of his brothers were master carpenters. Now he found himself helpless, not even able to take care of himself. I am sure the sustaining force through it all was the prayers and kindnesses of our many friends.

Brother Browning's physical breakdown necessitated our giving up the church in Abilene. We felt it would be best for us to be in another location. We decided to locate in the little town of De Leon, Texas. We had a cabin on a lake in that area. Also our old friends and fellow ministers, Brother and Sister Frank Martin, lived there. After purchasing a lot from Brother F. D. Martin, we had our mobile home moved to De Leon in July, 1973. Our lake property was sold and made into a retirement home for Reverend and Mrs. Oscar Welch.

When Brother Browning began to get a little of his strength back, he began to improve our property in De Leon. We now have a very comfortable place to live since several rooms have been added and a gable roof covers the entire structure. We enjoy three porches, with one of them screened in. De Leon is a nice little town, friendly people, all kinds of orchards, a watermelon and cantaloupe center, with pecans and peanuts in abundance.

Sometime during Brother Browning's intense battle with physical pain, his vocal organs were paralyzed. This greatly restricted his ability to breathe. A throat specialist

suggested that one alternative was a permanent tracheotomy, which was performed. This has helped with his breathing, but it is almost impossible for him to talk and breathe at the same time. Nevertheless, he has been able to preach and teach, although in a limited capacity. He feels so thankful to be able to do even this much.

Perhaps some of his most effective preaching and teaching has been done since all of this has happened. His struggle against physical problems and his refusal to succumb to pessimism and despair has encouraged many. Ministers and saints have come up to him after some of his messages and told him they could understand why God allowed him to live.

We now attend church in Comanche, Texas. Brother and Sister Wendell Elms are the pastors. These are very precious people and they have treated us with the utmost kindness and courtesy, as have all the members of the church. Brother Browning teaches the adult class for Brother Elms when his strength permits. He also takes some invitations that are extended to us to teach in other churches. I am so thankful, and I tell the Lord every day, that I have my husband still alive and still with me even though he is not in perfect health. He has lost both his parents and all three of his brothers in the last few years. This has been an emotional thing to him.

We are very happy and enjoying life. We have a lot of good friends and a lot of fellow ministers and saints. The general organization has been good to us making Brother Browning an honorary member of the General Board. We are still able to go to most of our conventions and district campmeetings.

As I listened to Brother Arnold Browning teach the

Sunday school class last Sunday, using for his subject, "Hands," I was well aware that I had never heard a lesson just like it. I was made to say again, "He is still my favorite preacher."

I've left out many things that could have been written but trust this at least will present a few of the highlights of the life of this man of God and some of his accomplishments. If our lives have meant anything worthwhile, to God be all the glory, for we owe it all to Him.



Golden Wedding Day!



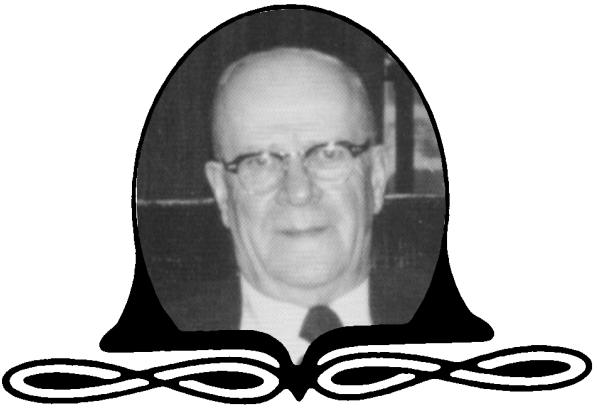
Wedding Day!



Pastoring in Monahans, TX.



Early Days in the ministry.



GEORGE CLAYTON CHAMBERS

By James K. Stewart

On July 28, 1900, the Chambers home on Eakin Road in Columbus, Ohio, was blessed with a baby boy who was destined to become a leader in God's kingdom. George Clayton Chambers was born on a farm on the southwestern edge of Columbus and received his early education at the Briggsdale school.

As a young man George helped his father, Warren Chambers, and Uncle Melvin in the dairy.

George was deeply saddened by the loss of his mother at the early age of twelve. When his father became ill a few years later, he was forced to quit school to help support his father and family. Although times were hard and jobs not easy to come by, he found a good job at Buckeye Steel Castings on the south edge of Columbus. He had a sound, healthy body and he gave everything he had to his

job; his family was depending on him.

During his early years George attended the Briggsdale Methodist Church where he assisted in the music of the church by helping to play the pipe organ! Actually the old organ had to be pumped with a hand pump and it was his responsibility to pump the air to the organ. But without George's faithful pumping there would have been no beautiful music wafting through the Old Briggsdale church.

It seemed that George was consigned to a life of hard work. However, he never complained about the long hard hours. In fact, he always enjoyed working and on numerous occasions has remarked that while God never gave him any money to pay his bills, He did give him a good healthy body capable of working sixteen hours a day!

While he prided himself in winning an argument, George lost one important argument that changed his life. Brother A. D. Urshan preached a revival at the Apostolic Gospel Church on Hayden Avenue in 1927. The church was pastored by W. T. Witherspoon, one of the pioneer leaders in the Pentecostal movement and the Chairman of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ. A friend invited the Chambers' family to attend the revival services. George really was not too impressed with the Pentecostal people. After all, they were a strange lot, singing loudly and praising the Lord—quite a change from the sedate, dignified services at Briggsdale Methodist!

No amount of argument could assuage the conviction he felt on Sunday night. But then, he did not want to be too emotional about religion, so he left. Monday morning he was up long before dawn to begin his sixteen-hour day at the bakery. He was a route salesman and got to work

early to pack his horse-drawn wagon for his day's deliveries.

That evening he attended the weekly sales meeting. George was always receiving awards for selling. Later, during the depression, he was still one of the bakery's most outstanding salesmen. He made sure he had fresh rolls or bread with him. When the woman of the house came to the door and said she didn't need anything, he would hold those fresh rolls right under her nose until she could not resist.

The sales meeting that Monday evening went as usual. George was home by 9:00 PM and supper was on the stove waiting. His family had gone to church. Restless, he just could not get Sunday night's experience off his mind. Something was gnawing at him and he could not shake it off. The more he thought about it, the more miserable he became. Finally, he picked up his Bible to read. Surely he could prove from the Scriptures that these Pentecostal people were crazy. But it was no use. In disgust, he threw his Bible against the wall and stalked out, heading for the Apostolic Gospel Church.

Things were still quite alive at the church on Hayden Avenue when he arrived. Evangelist Urshan was still preaching with his usual gusto accompanied by nods of approval and punctuated with "amens." George Chambers just could not take any more. He threw his hat down and headed straight for the altar. Brother Witherspoon came to pray with him and it was not long before George was speaking in a new language as the Holy Spirit filled his heart with new found joy. Something else rather strange happened: the man who prided himself in always winning the argument, humbly submitted

himself to baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit of Christ had transformed the spirit of pride into a spirit of humility and submission.

Brother Witherspoon quickly spotted the leadership in young George and assigned him the post of teacher of the Young Married's Class. In those days there was no Sunday school literature; the teacher taught the Bible. What to teach? George decided on the Book of Revelation. What better place to begin than the book few people understood? But George was sure he had figured out the symbolism of this book, so he tackled it with bold enthusiasm. He was a popular teacher and well loved by his students.

Pastor Witherspoon had a willing volunteer in George Chambers. No job in the church was too insignificant for him. When someone was needed to scrub the floors, George was there to do it. So, in addition to working a sixteen-hour day, he was now at the church working. When did he sleep? That remains one of the unanswered mysteries of his young life. It was not long until this industrious young man was appointed a deacon in the church.

The deacons sat in the front during service ready to do the pastor's bidding. If anyone became unruly, all Pastor Witherspoon had to do was nod toward the deacons and the matter was quickly dispatched.

One night a woman refused to sit down when the pastor asked everyone to be seated. She continued to speak loudly and shout. As soon as the pastor nodded to the deacons, young George was on his feet. He took the woman by the back of the neck and escorted her down the aisle toward the back of the church while she contin-

ued to loudly "speak in tongues." When they got outside, out of earshot, she gave him "one of the worst cursings I ever got."

All of these experiences were preparing this young man to be a leader. His pastor could see the hand of God upon him and admired the dauntless energy he devoted to the work of God. It soon became evident that he was destined to be more than a deacon. He admitted to the "call of God" and began preparing himself for the ministry. Many years would intervene before he would realize his dream but nonetheless, he threw himself wholeheartedly into the study of the Bible.

In 1930, George C. Chambers was ordained into the ministry by W. T. Witherspoon. He had embarked on a new phase of life.

Brother Chambers fondly recalls his "Bible school." He has often remarked that he would have liked to have attended a Bible school but there were none in those days. The Apostolic Bible Institute of which he is a trustee would not be founded by his friend S. G. Norris for another seventeen years. His "Bible school" was held in his bakery wagon. Brother Chambers had trained his horse so well that the horse knew every stop. While the horse pulled the wagon from one stop to another and watched out for the traffic, the man whom God had called studied his Bible.

His devotion and study continued day in and day out. He got up at 4:30 AM, went to work, packed the bread wagon, sold the bakery goods, returned to the bakery, arrived home by 7:00 PM, grabbed something to eat, and rushed off to church. But in it all, God molded a man to be the leader He had proposed.

Personal griefs that have destroyed some men left him undaunted. He forged ahead believing that God had called him and would make a way for his ministry some day, somehow.

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, leaving the United States shaken. Young men by the thousands volunteered to fight for freedom. But there were still not enough volunteers to fill the military needs to resist the enemies in both Europe and Asia, so the draft began. In 1942, as he approached middle age, Brother Chambers was caught by the draft. He had missed being passed over by two short months. He was shipped to Hawaii where he was stationed for the next thirty-three months. Does Hawaii sound exotic? Could he not sit under palm trees and drink pineapple juice? Not quite. Most of his time was spent on military exercises and sometimes standing outside the mess tent in mud up to his knees, eating from his mess kit in pouring rain.

His highest rank was private first class while his son, Willard, became a second Lieutenant. But Brother Chambers did not lose sight of his call. He organized chapel services and led singing from a hodge-podge of songbooks, hardly any two alike. Before service he would look up the songs he wanted to sing in all the books and give out the page numbers. He had a great deal of respect from the men. They affectionately called him "Dad" and would often seek his counsel. God was using him as He had promised.

The Apostolic Gospel Church had founded a branch church in West Jefferson. It was here that a young woman came to the Lord and she gave herself unselfishly to the Lord's work. Golva Lockwood became the church secre-

tary and after the war began, she felt it her duty to write to the men in the service and encourage them.

One of the men to whom she wrote was George Chambers. And he responded. He enjoyed receiving letters and cookies from home. He wrote to Sister Lockwood thanking her for her consideration. That's the way it began: "Dear Brother Chambers" and "Dear Sister Lockwood." But something happened, just how and when is a little unclear. One letter began, "Dear Golva" and the next one began "Dear George."

It seems by now that Sister Lockwood was going beyond the call of duty in encouraging the men in service. It appears that she was feeling a strong burden for one particular man and he was responding. This correspondence was to continue until he was discharged from the army.

After the war, it was back to work. He had suffered some severe financial reverses prior to entering the service, and when he returned, Brother Chambers found himself with a number of debts hanging over his head. Undaunted, he plunged into work: first real estate, then insurance, finally back to the Omar Bakery.

By this time he had a truck that, strangely, could not drive itself as his faithful horse had. So much for the modern achievements of man! He felt a frustration about secular work that he had not experienced before. While he did well and used his financial rewards to completely pay off his debts, he could not seem to maintain his commitment. He quit the bakery three times although he worked there until 1946.

The Apostolic Gospel Church had moved to 1074 West Broad Street by this time and was greatly blessed of

the Lord. Brother Witherspoon asked George Chambers to pastor the branch church in West Jefferson.

Then there was Sister Lockwood! It was not long until wedding bells were ringing and the lovely Golva Lockwood became Mrs. George Chambers, united in marriage by Pastor Witherspoon on March 20, 1946. Brother Witherspoon asked them to come to the mother church on Broad Street and assist. So it was that in 1946 that Brother Chambers began his full-time ministry for the Lord and finally achieved the goal he had felt for so many years.

He had just finished paying off his debts. He had not time to save money for a down payment on a house. Fortunately, Sister Chambers had a house and all he had to do was move in with her. She had been worth waiting for! She was a very gracious person dedicated to the Lord and a home!

Unfortunately, Sister Chambers was so kind to her husband that it caused some problems in other households. When word got out (and he told it!) that Sister Chambers met her husband at the door every day after work, escorted him to his favorite chair, removed his shoes, and pampered him, it caused no small stir. She has continued this devoted care for her husband throughout the years, and still today an occasional husband's complaint can be heard: "Why don't you treat me the way Sister Chambers treats him?"

Following the death of his beloved friend and pastor, W. T. Witherspoon, in 1948, Brother Chambers, along with a group of people from the church located the Greenwood Armory and made arrangements to found a new church.

Calvary Apostolic Church was founded by Brother Chambers in September, 1948. The church grew under his capable leadership and ministry. During those early years there were some difficult times.

Once he was voted out as pastor by the church board. According to Brother Chambers, he left the matter in the Lord's hands and stayed home. However, during that time, he received more from people who came to his home with their tithes than he did when he was at the church. After a few short weeks, things were settled and Brother Chambers was still the pastor.

In January, 1957, he brought James and Helen Stewart to Calvary to assist in the ministry. When the young, inexperienced Bible school graduate asked his boss what he wanted him to do the first day at work, he was told: "Look, I'm very busy. I brought you here to help me. If I have to take my time showing you what to do, I might as well do it myself. You will have to find your own work." At that, the young man timidly backed out of the great man's office and pondered "his work."

Thus began a great relationship where a young man was to learn much about working with people by the excellent example set before him. He learned about everything. He learned how to rent a trailer and move people, how to repair theater seats that were forever falling apart, how to fix up old buildings so that people could worship in them, how to have compassion, and how to be unselfish.

Under Brother Chambers' leadership, many other young men have been trained who are today serving in various capacities of ministry. Donald Ball served for several years as Assistant Pastor, James Hinkle served as

Associate Pastor, and Robert Ferguson served as Assistant Pastor and Associate Pastor. These men have had first-hand experience working with Brother Chambers on a day-to-day basis and have been deeply touched by his life. Many other young men have left Calvary to pastor a branch church and, consequently, have had the opportunity to derive much from this great man's sound advice and guidance. The majority of those branch churches have developed into independent churches.

Brother Chambers served the Ohio District as Home Missions Director for ten years. During that time, several churches were founded. He always had a deep burden for Home Missions and thrilled at initiating the beginning of a new church. In addition to the churches he helped start with the help of the district, he started several branch churches which were underwritten by the Calvary Apostolic Church. He also served as Campground Manager for twelve years. When asked about his many hours of hard work, he would reply: "It's worth everything when I walk into the tabernacle and see another young person or adult filled with the Holy Ghost."

The church on the West Side began as a branch in New Rome. One day, Brother Chambers was working on the theater seats (one of his many specialities) when a young couple walked in the door. The young man inquired if he was a preacher and was assured that he was. He then asked if Brother Chambers, who was wearing old work clothes and a tattered straw hat, would consent to marry them! Brother Chambers got up, dusted off his clothes, doffed his hat and proceeded to recall as much of the wedding ceremony as he could remember. The happy couple left husband and wife. Brother Chambers standing

in the door watching them leave wondered what would happen next.

Brother Chambers' ministry is his life. He is still quite active in God's work. He conducts a well-attended prayer meeting at 9:30 AM on Tuesday and a worship service Thursday evening at 7:30, teaches a Sunday school class every Sunday morning, visits the sick in hospitals and in their homes, counsels, preaches occasionally on Sunday, and teaches Bible study from time to time on Tuesday. At 83, he is still doing remarkably well and wants to work as long as the Lord gives him strength.

Sister Chambers continues to be the ideal "helpmeet." She is not only devoted to her husband but has actively assisted in his ministry. She has counseled with people and freely shared her love with them. She was always a favorite of primary children, whom she taught for some thirty years. Together, they have been a great team in Christ's kingdom.

Brother Chambers has four children. Stanley was formerly General Secretary-Treasurer of the United Pentecostal Church, Inc., and then General Superintendent. Currently he is Superintendent of the Missouri District. Williard is retired as a Lt. Colonel in the United States Army. Edith is living in Columbus, while Georgia Mae is residing in Florida. He is the proud grandfather of twelve grandchildren, a great-grandfather with twenty-four great grandchildren, and a great-great-grandfather with five great-great-grandchildren.

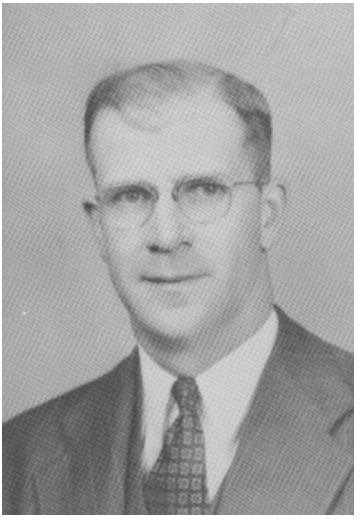
We might add that Brother Chambers was always a favorite with the children. His wife buys him exotic mechanical animal toys for Christmas, toys which he shares with all the children of the church. Sometimes on

Sunday mornings his office is crowded with wide-eyed children who are totally fascinated with the ample display of his toys all operating together with Brother Chambers beaming as they excitedly point first to one and then to another. And it is not unusual to see a small child sitting on his lap at his desk while he demonstrated one of his toys. And, of course, his desk held an endless reservoir of sweet delights! As the rapt child climbed down, he would beam with excitement as he clutched a piece of prized candy in his small fist.

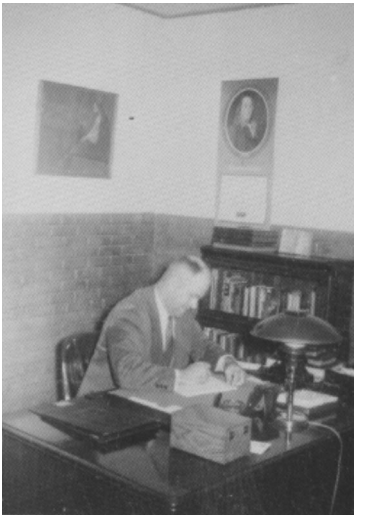
To say that Brother and Sister Chambers are dearly loved hardly expresses adequately the sentiment of people to whom they have ministered for so many years. So many have recalled that he has been a real father, helping with family problems and assisting in financial crises. Truly, he has been a loving pastor, a true friend, and a capable leader.



Two great people



"Deacon" Chambers at age 35.



Pastor Chambers in his first office in the Greenwood Armory (the new church).



80th birthday celebration at the Ohio State Rhodes Center.



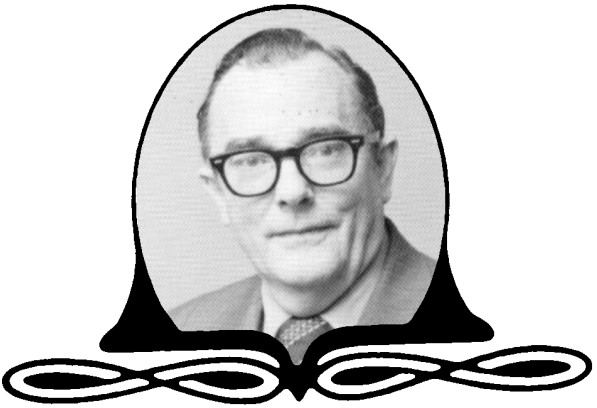
Four generations lt. to rt. Larry holding Curt Alan, Stanley and George Chambers.

Home sweet home!





Three generations, Lt. George, Lt. Col. Will, P.F.C. George Chambers.



ARTHUR L. CLANTON

By Grace Clanton

"You will never know, Son, how much you embarrassed me when you came into town a while ago!" The voice which was usually warm and kind had taken on a sharp edge—stern, accusing, hurt. She had been busily preparing supper, this mother with the soft gray, anxious eyes. Now she nervously wiped the flour from her hands, and turned to face her son.

Quietly Arthur Clanton closed the back door he had just entered, the words cutting deeply into his heart. The bits of news he had meant to share with her about the street meeting froze on his lips. The harshness of the remark caused the sensitive teenager to make a quick descent from the clouds.

In his room he began to consider. Could it be that he and the other young people, with whom he had been to a

street meeting in a nearby town, had been a bit too noisy as they drove back into Walnut Springs? To someone like his mother, who did not understand, he supposed it did sound somewhat strange. All that singing and shouting on the back of a flatbed truck!

Yet it wasn't logical that anyone should ever have to stop worshiping God, the Creator of all things! Especially when those praises were bubbling up in a person's heart with such force that it was sure to burst wide open if he didn't shout "Hallelujah" to the top of his voice! Why, it was only a few weeks ago that he and this same group of young people, along with most of the town, had made a lot more noise yelling for the Walnut Springs Panthers, and no one thought it strange. Praising and worshiping God made a lot more sense.

What were those words of Jesus that Brother Powell Sojourner had so often quoted? Arthur flipped through his Bible that was already showing signs of wear from much use, to Luke 19:40. "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

He closed his Bible with a smile. He had his answer. He would just have to be patient with his parents. His stepfather and his mother were good, honest people. In time they would understand what he had in his heart. He prayed a quick prayer that God would open their eyes to the truth.

Arthur's mother, Julia Ann Rhodes, and his father, Pickford Clanton, were married late in life. It was a first marriage for Julia. Pickford was a widower. Because of her late marriage, Julia was especially thankful that God had blessed her to be the mother of two healthy, although slightly mischievous, boys.

The Clantons lived on a farm near Iredell, Texas. On September 29,1915, when their second child, Arthur Lee, was born, World War I was in its second year, and the United States was in a tremendous struggle trying to maintain strict neutrality. The outlook was bleak indeed, but for Julia, Pick (as his friends were known to call him), and little two-year-old R. C. there were more important things to think about than a war. The birth of a son and a little brother called for rejoicing.

Julia now had the family for which she had always longed. She felt very secure in her role as the loving, busy wife of a farmer, and a devoted mother. Especiallly did she enjoy sprucing up the babies in their best bib and tucker, and showing them off in church. With their beautiful red hair, she was sure that no one had boys quite as handsome as hers.

Pick and Julia were strict Baptists, and on Sundays when the church had dinner-on-the ground, Pick was just as sure that no one could come near making chicken and dumplings like his Julia.

Arthur was only two when tragedy struck the little family. After a brief illness, Pickford Clanton died. Julia was devastated by grief, as any young wife would be. But she was also a very strong person who could do what had to be done. So she threw back her shoulders and went about running the farm by herself. Babysitting was not yet a common practice, so Julia donned her bonnet and, carrying Arthur on one hip with R. C. holding to her free hand, went about the farm performing the many chores. Neighbors were good to help, but it was a continual struggle.

Trudging home from the fields in the evening with two

tired, hungry, and whimpering little boys, her own shoulders aching from hoeing beans or picking cotton, Julia often wondered what would become of her and her little family. She didn't have a free hand to wipe away the tears that flooded her eyes, so they just had to spill over and join the sweat that rolled off her pale cheeks.

She knew that she could not carry on like this much longer. It was simply too hard on the children, taking them out into the fields every day. Although they seemed healthy enough, she couldn't get out of her mind the morning when she had been chopping cotton and made a routine check on the boys underneath the shade tree at the end of the cotton row. As she approached the pallet, on which the boys lay sleeping, a snake slithered out of the nearby weeds, coiled breath-takingly close to her babies, lifted its evil head, its threatening tongue darting in and out, preparing to strike. Luckily, Julia had her hoe in hand, and she made certain that Texas had one less live rattlesnake.

Perhaps it was the incident with the venomous rattler, more than anything else, that shocked Julia into praying, "God, please send a good man to be a husband to me and a kind father to my sons." God heard that honest prayer, and allowed John Lee, a widower who worked for the Santa Fe Railroad in Fort Worth, to hear about a young, pretty widow in Iredell.

After a short courtship, John and Julia were married, and the family moved to Fort Worth. John Lee proved to be the most loving husband and devoted father a man could possibly be. The boys and Julia felt the same affection for him. In later years Arthur reminisced, "Never in my life did I hear my dad (stepfather) use a bad word. He was truly a good man."

While Arthur was still in grade school, his stepfather decided to move the family to Walnut Springs, Texas. It was a small, quiet town, just made for raising boys, and he had easily found employment in the Missouri Kansas Texas Railroad Shops.

The boys felt so close to their stepfather that upon entering the Walnut Springs school, they signed their names Lee instead of Clanton. This made Arthur, who was named at birth, Arthur Lee Clanton, now Arthur Lee Lee. This became a family joke. However, John Lee impressed upon the boys the importance of keeping their father's name, and within a few years they began to use their paternal name again.

Arthur was a very studious person. He learned to read before starting school and was allowed to skip the second grade, thus graduating from high school at sixteen years of age.

As far back as he could remember he had wanted to be a Christian. When just a lad of eight or ten, the tall, kindly pastor of First Baptist, where his parents were members, laid his big hand upon Arthur's head and told him, "Son, I'm counting on you to be a preacher." These words did not sound strange to the child. Although he had made no move toward serving God, there had been a tugging at his heart for a long time.

With the ever-present desire to do good, there was also a desire in young Arthur's heart to follow his peers. During his last year of high school he had begun to smoke, to take a drink occasionally, and to fiddle for dances.

His mother had bought the violin for him when he was around twelve or thirteen. His father had been an accomplished country music fiddler, and Arthur felt that he had

inherited his talent. He acquired the necessary books and taught himself to read music, and to play the violin. He was a perfectionist, and did not want to play by ear.

Seeing his interest for music, his mother also bought an organ. It was not long before Arthur was playing the organ, and also the piano. Now he was using his God-given musical talent playing for dances.

He was definitely getting in with the wrong crowd. At night, after coming home from fiddling for a dance, he would lie on his bed, look out the window into the deep, clear blue of a Texas sky, and ask himself, "What if the Lord should come tonight?"

It was such thoughts as these that led him to join the Baptist church early in the summer of 1932, a sixteen-year-old lad, just out of high school. He was determined to live a different kind of life. No more drinking. No more smoking. No more going to dances. He felt clean and good—until a group of the guys came by and asked if he would like to go swimming.

Typically, there was a lot of clean horseplay. Also, typically, there was one in the gang who had to carry things a bit too far. At least that is the way Arthur felt about it when a pair of tightly rolled, wet swim trunks came sailing across the old swimming hole and hit him square in the face. Forgetting all about having joined the church the day before, he let out a string of filthy curse words, that would have burned the mouth of even the most immoral reprobate, let alone a sixteen-year-old boy who was supposed to be a Christian.

Before the last word left his lips, Arthur realized what he had done. He also realized that his life had not really been changed at all. It had only been wishful thinking. He

was deeply depressed. What could a person do to get rid of the guilt of sin? And where could he get the strength needed to live a clean, Christian life?

Around the first of July of that same year, things began to happen in Walnut Springs. A tall, slender evangelist by the name of Powell Sojourner came to preach a revival at the Pentecostal Church where Brother Copeland pastored. The revival lasted six weeks. Sixty-eight received the Holy Ghost, and about the same number were baptized in the name of Jesus. Out of this revival God called five men and two women into the ministry. (Of their descendants, three sons and one grandson has been called to preach.)

Among those receiving this strange experience were some of Arthur's friends and cousins, so he decided to attend one of the services and see for himself some of these unusual happenings. After he had attended once or twice, the Baptist pastor paid the Lee home a visit. He was very disturbed about the "Holiness" revival and urged Mr. and Mrs. Lee to persuade Arthur and his brother not to attend the revival anymore.

The pastor had come too late. The night before, Arthur had watched as a friend received the Holy Ghost. After speaking in a language he did not know for several minutes, this young man had started laughing in the Spirit. He kept it up for twenty minutes or more. As he watched, Arthur's heart ached to be able to experience such peace and joy.

That night as he lay upon his bed, once again gazing into the sky, he prayed that the Lord would please delay His coming until he had time to make his heart right with God. He spent all day the next day repenting, and could hardly wait for the altar call that night.

Kneeling at the altar, with his eyes wide open, yet seeing nothing but Jesus, he was speaking with tongues within five minutes. He did not laugh in the Spirit, as his friend had done, but the experience was as real, the joy and peace as wonderful! Someone said, "Testify." Arthur needed no urging. Jumping up on the front brush-arbor-type bench, he boldly proclaimed, "Folks, you don't know what you are missing!"

Arthur later said that it was while giving this brief, from-the-heart testimony that God first whispered to him, "I want you to preach My gospel." He kept this calling from God to himself for a time, although he soon began giving talks in youth services. Every Saturday afternoon he, H. R. Guyton, and Donald Berry, who had also just received the Holy Ghost, would go to neighboring towns and preach street meetings. It was Arthur's deep, personal desire to work for God, coupled with his firm conviction that God had commissioned the church to spread the gospel, that prompted Arthur to pen these lines:

'Tis not alone to quench men's thirst
That rivers go their seaward way,
But they descend and give their pow'r
That wheels may turn from day to day.

'Tis not alone to bless the soul
That streams of life from heaven flow,
But God has poured His Spirit out
That we may work for Him below.

These were the Depression years when jobs were scarce everywhere. About the only work to be found was

on the nearby farms or ranches. Arthur would pick cotton all day in the sweltering Texas heat, get home with barely enough time for a quick bath, no time for supper, and then go with a group from the church to the nearest revival. They could find one somewhere almost every night during the summer. They were needed to help with the music, singing, and praying in the altar with the seekers. Arthur's violin had been converted the night he was, and now he played it at church along with the many guitars and mandolins of the other young people.

Evangelists often took groups of helpers along with them. Arthur helped in several revivals in that part of Texas in the early years. Money was scarce, and sometimes the offering was almost nil. In one such revival, a house had been rented for the evangelistic party. The small offerings barely paid the rent and utilities. All they had to eat was food brought in by outsiders who attended the revival. An abundance of homemade syrup had been brought, but little else.

Arthur had never before eaten syrup without a generous helping of his mother's homemade butter. He told the evangelist's motherly wife that he was going to drive out into the hills to pray, and that he intended to pray for the Lord to lay it on someone's heart to bring some butter. The evangelist's wife rebuked him sternly. "You should be satisfied with what God has provided us, and not ask for luxuries," she admonished. But Arthur did not consider butter a luxury. He felt sure that God would not have sent them syrup had He not planned for them to have butter with it. So he reminded the Lord that whoever He had told to bring the butter had forgotten it, and would He please remind them, because he would sure

love some hot biscuits, butter, and syrup for breakfast the next morning. That night the butter came! This incident was a great bolster to his faith throughout life.

At seventeen, after Arthur contracted typhoid fever and almost died, he promised the Lord that if He would heal him, he would publicly acknowledge his call to the ministry. The Lord did heal him, and his cousin Lorene Berry recalls, "He preached his first sermon, after acknowledging his call, at a small country church called County Line Church. Even his very first sermons were good. The text of one of his first messages, perhaps his very first, was taken from I Kings 20:40: 'As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.'"

The community churches and old school houses where the young man preached were usually small, but the crowds were large. The spillover stood outside listening through the open windows and doors. Occasionally someone who was angered because his pet sin had been preached against, or because his wife, son, or daughter had gone to the altar, would create a disturbance. However, God always worked those things out.

Arthur was still quite thin from his bout with typhoid fever when word was passed to him one night during the service that there was a man outside the church, waiting to beat him up. Arthur had seen the man before, a big, burly fellow, for whom he certainly was no match. There was nothing to do but pray, "Lord, take care of it," and go ahead and preach.

After the service he was told that a rancher who had heard the man's threats had stepped up and said, "I'm more your size. I'll take the preacher's place. Come on and fight me." The troublemaker had quietly gone home.

In 1937, Brother and Sister E. W. Caughron brought Arthur to Louisiana. He preached a revival for Brother Hollie Lee Bennett in DeQuincy and then accepted the pastorate of the church in the small town. It was while in Rosepine, 1938, that he was ordained, at the age of twenty-three.

Brother B. Dees pastored the church in DeRidder, about five miles from Rosepine. Arthur found a great source of strength and understanding in this older, kindly minister. They often exchanged ideas for sermons.

One Saturday night Arthur dropped in at the DeRidder church. He thought Brother Dees' sermon exceptionally good. In fact, he thought it so good that he decided to do something he had never done before in his life (and never did again); use the sermon outline verbatim. And this he did on Sunday night.

Tuesday night was regular service night for Rosepine, so Brother Dees, as he often did, drove over. Arthur asked him to preach, and Brother Dees, not knowing that Arthur had preached his sermon two nights before, preached the same sermon over again! Brother Dees, in his droll way, said that was one way of finding out if people were listening.

Arthur left Rosepine in 1940 to work with Brother Arthur T. Morgan as assistant pastor in Alexandria, Louisiana. This was the beginning of a long and lasting friendship with a great man.

After being in Alexandria about a year, Arthur was asked by the officials of the Pentecostal Church Incorporated to come to Houston, Texas, to assist Brother W. E. Kidson as editor of the *Apostolic Herald.* The wages were better—fifteen dollars a week!

That was just what he had been praying for, a salary increase so he could get married! He had been engaged for about a year now, so the date was set for February 8, 1942. His financee was Grace Lance, a girl from the church he had pastored in Rosepine.

The wedding was at high noon on a Sunday, in the Beaumont Pentecostal Church. Brother H. L. Bennett, a very dear friend of the bride and groom, performed the wedding ceremony. There was a lovely wedding reception in the Lance home. The usual happiness and gaity abounded, but underneath was a tinge of sadness. Once again the United States was at war.

After the reception, the newlyweds drove to Houston to their little upstairs apartment. By the time all the luggage and wedding gifts were carried from the car, up the long stairway, it was time to hurry to church. Part of Arthur's duties was assisting Brother Kidson in the church. Brother Kidson was well known for his strictness in punctuality, but we did linger in the car a bit so we would not have to speak to anyone before the service began.

As we entered the vestibule, we heard the organ pealing forth the unmistakable strains of a wedding march. An usher met us and said. "You are about to be married again! But this time, Brother Clanton, *you* may walk down the aisle with the lady of your choice." As exhausted newlyweds, we marched arm in arm down the aisle, and knelt before Brother Kidson, who placed his hands upon our heads, and prayed God's blessings upon our marriage. We were asked to remain, after standing, while the congregation filed by and shook our hands. We were both deeply touched. Underneath all his austerity, we found Brother Kidson to be a kind, warm person.

When the altar call was given that night, we dutifully started praying with the seekers. After about thirty minutes, Brother Kidson, who took pity on us, whispered to Arthur, "I know that you and Grace have had a taxing day. Why don't you go on home."

Arthur was kept extremely busy working in the headquarters' office. He assisted with the church work at Houston Gospel Tabernacle and preached revivals here and there in the Houston area when time permitted. The burden to get back more fully into preaching was heavy, and Arthur talked it over with Brother Kidson. Plans were made for us to leave in May.

We had time for one revival in Texas and one revival in Arkansas before Brother Howard Goss, General Superintendent of the Pentecostal Church Incorporated, asked my husband to assume the pastorate of a church in Shreveport, Louisiana, from which his wife was resigning.

We had been in Shreveport two years, and were expecting our first child, when Arthur announced, "I feel that God is through with us here. I don't know where He wants us. We will evangelize, and if it is His will for us to pastor, He will open something up."

I had hoped we were settled, at least until after the baby came! But to my husband I said, sweetly, "Whatever you say, dear." To myself I muttered, "It's easy for him to be nonchalant about leaving security when we are expecting a baby. But I'm not used to walking by faith. I've never had butter sent to go with my syrup, just because I asked God for it."

As these thoughts whirled through my befuddled head, the phone rang. It was Brother A. T. Morgan. He had resigned the church in Alexandria, Louisiana, and the

church wanted my husband for their new pastor! Would he be willing to resign in Shreveport and come? I was thoroughly condemned for my secret thoughts, and never again did I question my husband's decisions if he said he had heard from God.

We stayed in Alexandria from 1944 until 1948. The war was still in full swing during 1944 and part of 1945. During this time our home was filled with soldiers and their wives who attended our church while stationed there. We prayed with them and tried to encourage them.

The army chaplain at the nearby base sent young men with problems, who had a Pentecostal background, to Arthur for counselling. One fine young soldier who spent Christmas in our home seemed exceptionally quiet and withdrawn. He never divulged that he was scheduled to be shipped overseas the day after Christmas. Seeing his despondency, Arthur talked at length with him, trying to break through his shell of gloom. As Arthur led him to talk about his parents, brothers, and sisters, a brief flicker of light shone in his eyes. He was from a fine Pentecostal family, and it was easy to see that they were closely knit.

A few months later Arthur received a letter from the young man. He told how fearful he had been of going overseas, and how he had made definite plans to commit suicide upon returning to base Christmas night. But my husband's deep concern for him had touched his heart, making him realize that God still loved him so much that He brought him into contact with someone who could encourage him when he needed it very badly. "And since God had so sufficiently cared for him thus far," he reasoned. "why wouldn't His covert protection continue, even while he was overseas?"

Arthur felt a heavy burden for the military men and their wives. We felt that this was a great part of our ministry while in Alexandria.

On April 3, 1945, our first child, Charles, was born. Arthur was the typical proud father.

The merger of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ with the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated took place in 1945, our second year in Alexandria. Brother S. L. Wise became the superintendent of the Louisiana District. My husband found this wonderful man to be of deep integrity, and wonderful to work with. Arthur served as a sectional presbyter in Louisiana from 1945 until he resigned in 1952 because of health reasons.

One night during the midweek Bible study, a well-dressed, distinguished looking man slipped into the sanctuary of the Alexandria church. My husband was about to begin the Bible lesson. He always considered that anything he presented from the pulpit should demand his very best in prayer, preparation, and study. The stranger took notes during the Bible lesson, and slipped out quietly during the benediction.

A few weeks later Arthur received a letter from the pastor of a Presbyterian church in New Orleans. He said that he had recently dropped into the Pentecostal Church in Alexandria on a week night. He had found the sermon especially inspiring and thought-provoking. He had taken notes and used the sermon in the two morning services the following Sunday in his church, taking the liberty to make a few minor changes to make it more adaptable to his congregation. He concluded by saying, "If you would be interested, I could get you placed as pastor in a good Presbyterian church. The great Presbyterian church

needs preachers who preach with your enthusiasm and conviction." Of course, Arthur was not interested.

Never once in accepting a position as pastor of a church did Arthur inquire about the salary. We simply felt that anywhere God sent us, He meant to provide butter with the syrup! And He always did.

In 1948 Arthur again decided it was time to move along. He resigned as pastor with no idea where God wanted us to go. But God already had the place waiting. This time it was Jena, Louisiana.

The Jena church was a rural one, reminiscently called "Shady Grove," because of the country school house that had stood on the same ground long years before. The people were a pleasure to work with, and the church was in almost constant revival. The small building was soon outgrown, and a larger one built beside it, using the old building for Sunday school rooms.

We were living in Jena when our second child, Stephen, was born, in 1951. We felt that God gave him to us for a special purpose. Just prior to Steve's birth his father had become desperately ill. Steve's presence made the rough places so much easier for both of us.

Wanting to give the impression of a thrifty wife, I acquired a small flock of chickens (which I kept for a very short time). Arthur decided it would be fun to have a rooster to awaken us in the mornings—no more alarm clocks needed! Sure enough that rooster came equipped with one of the finest "crowers" any rooster ever had. The only catch was that his timer was already set, and there was no way under the sun to change it. He crowed every morning at 4:30 on the dot. If we could manage to roll over and fall asleep again, we could count on the rooster's

repeated crowing every thirty minutes until daylight. His daylight schedule was to crow every hour, plus every time one of the hens laid an egg, and a few times thrown in just to keep his crower in good working order.

Once when we had been up until the wee morning hours praying for someone who was sick, the rooster's crowing at 4:30 was a bit too much for my husband. "I've decided that rooster needs a name," he told the family at breakfast. "How about our naming him Robinson?" The children were caught up in the excitement of naming our rooster. Robinson would be a good name, they agreed.

"Now," Arthur continued, "I think we ought to ask your Mom to make a big pan of chicken and dressing, for dinner tonight, out of Robinson."

"Aw, Daddy, why do we hafta kill Robinson," they wailed. With a poker face he answered, "Because Robinson crew so." The children were familiar with Robinson Crusoe, the hero of Daniel Defoe's novel, and thought their Dad's punning hilarious.

One of the men in the Jena church likes to tell of the time he passed the church in the before-daylight-hours on his way to work one morning. His carpool friend asked, "Why is that light in the window of your church at this hour?" Brother Collins answered proudly, "That's our pastor's study. He is up early like that every morning, praying and studying." Of course, Brother Collins didn't know about our rooster!

In all honesty, Arthur was by nature an early riser, a perfectionist, and a pusher. Perhaps it was these traits that caused him in the summer of 1951 to have what we thought was a heart attack. In the hospital his condition was diagnosed as complete exhaustion. "I know that your

only vacation every year is one week at your church's conference, and that is *not* a vacation," his doctor admonished.

The way those precious Shady Grove people rallied around us endeared them to us forever. Arthur was unable to preach for about two months. It was two hard, bleak months of prayer, fasting, and more prayer.

The first night he went back to church, he was still so weak that he had to hold onto my arm for support, as he walked the few steps from the parsonage to the church. I feared he would fall as he walked to the pulpit. The church was filled to overflowing, because of the community's love and concern for him. And as he took his text, the Lord anointed him and gave him strength. He preached as if he had never been sick! There was a new depth to his preaching, which he never lost. We both were made to know that his illness had been for a purpose, and were deeply thankful.

It was because of Arthur's newly awakened awareness and appreciation for God—his deep gratitude for all that He had done for him, especially in bringing him through his recent illness—that caused a precious little lady's testimony to catch his attention. She was trying so hard to put into words her thankfulness for God's goodness. "I'll never live long enough to properly thank Him for what He has done for me," she concluded. My husband made a notation on his ever-present note pad.

The next morning he was up bright and early in his study. He was writing the song which became well-loved in most of our churches, especially across the south, "My Thanks to Him." It has been published in many songbooks and church hymnals, and recorded by a number of

our own Pentecostal artists, as well as many other professionals in the music field.

MY THANKS TO HIM

I love to tell how Jesus saved my soul,
When I was lost and facing dark despair;
But mortal tongue could never tell the whole
Nor thank Him for such wonderous love and care.

O He is more than all the world to me,
The dearest friend that I have ever known;
And it will take the whole eternity,
To thank Him for the love that He has shown.

When I am sad He brings me hope and cheer,
And gives me grace when-e're the way is rough;
How could I thank Him for such blessings here?
My life on earth will not be long enough.

Though I should live a thousand years below,
And praise the Lord from dawn till set of sun;
Still that would not be time enough to show
My thanks to Him for all that He has done.

The General Conference was held in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1955. My husband attended, but duties kept me at home that year. One morning Brother Arthur T. Morgan, the General Superintendent, asked Arthur if he would consider moving to St. Louis to become editor at the headquarters office. Arthur was so content and happy with the church in Jena that he did not have to give it a

second thought. "I appreciate your thinking of me, Brother Morgan, but I am not interested in the least," was his reply.

After returning to his hotel room that evening, however, he felt burdened to pray, and the Lord spoke very strongly to him that he should accept Brother Morgan's proposal. "But I have already given my answer. They have decided on someone else by now," he tried to argue with the Lord. But he reluctantly dialed Brother Morgan's room. "I still want you," Brother Morgan assured him.

"Let me call my wife before giving you my final answer," my husband said. When he called with the news, he added, "Honey, it will be a bit of a salary cut, but. . . ."

"We'll manage fine," I added quickly. We both knew that God would provide butter to go with the syrup, but we did hate leaving those wonderful, precious people!

The work closest to Arthur's heart while in St. Louis, was the editing of *The Pentecostal Herald*, although he was Editor in Chief of all publications. He was also a member of the General and Executive Boards, Chairman of the Board of Publication, Chairman of the Executive Publication Committee, and a member of the Church School Executive Committee. He preached here and there on weekends and sometimes during the week. At times it meant driving home through a snowstorm at 2 AM to be able to meet deadlines on Monday morning, but he did not complain. He never doubted that he was in God's will in moving to St. Louis.

Arthur was very close to our sons, Charles and Steve, and it meant much to him to be able to baptize each of them in the name of Jesus while they were still in their teens. He was also pleased to perform their weddings. I

suppose one of the most thrilling moments of his life was in 1971 when Charles tapped on his office door and asked to talk with him. He had come to tell his father of his call to the ministry.

In 1970, Arthur's book *United We Stand*, was published. He had put in three years of hard work and research writing the book, and was deeply thankful to the brethren for the way they accepted it. He was especially pleased that many of our Bible schools used it in their curriculum.

Arthur was the writer of the adult Sunday school manuals for approximately thirty years—until 1969. He began writing the manual for the Pentecostal Church Incorporated before the merger, and he was asked to continue after the merger. Part of that time he was writing both the adult and the young people's manuals. He also wrote a number of tracts. Fifty-two of the many gospel songs he composed were published.

Arthur preached his last sermon on Sunday morning, February 1, 1976, in Dyersburg, Tennessee. He had prepared his sermon well on Saturday night, but when he was within a block of the church the Lord impressed upon him very strongly that he should not use the sermon he had prepared. "Preach on, 'Why I Know There is a God,'" the Lord told him. He had never before spoken on that subject, or written anything on it. His mind seemed completely blank, and he tried to dismiss the urgent prompting as his imagination. But it would not leave him.

As the pastor, Brother James Herbert Austin, gave a short introduction, Arthur jotted down a few verses of Scripture. After reading his text he told the people that what he had to say was direct from God. "I have no idea

who the person is who needs this message, but I do know the person is sitting here this morning."

Brother Austin said of the sermon, "God used him in a powerful way as he spoke."

Unknown to Arthur, the pastor's son-in-law, Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth R. Huey, was in the audience. Colonel Huey had been a US Air Force F-4 pilot in Viet Nam. While he was flying a mission over North Viet Nam, a serious trouble had developed. He had prayed earnestly for God to deliver him, but he had been shot down. For five-and-one-half long, tortuous years, he had been held a prisoner of war. One year of that time he had been kept in solitary with intensive interrogation sessions, and excruciating, fiendish torture. He found it difficult to understand, if there was a God, why He had not answered his fervent prayer the day he had been shot down. "If there is a God," he reasoned, "He would not allow such suffering as I see all around me." At length he concluded, "There is no God."

There was no doubt in Kenneth Huey's mind, as he listened to my husband preach, that God was speaking to him through this man. He was filled with awe that God could love him enough to do all this just for him. As he listened, there was an answer for all of his haunting questions. A great load was lifted from his shoulders as all doubts were removed, and his faith in God restored.

The next evening, February 2, 1976, Arthur attended a farewell banquet given for Cleveland Becton, who was leaving World Evangelism Center to accept the pastorate of a church in Nashville, Tennessee. I was ill and unable to attend.

Around 9:00 PM my phone rang. I was startled to hear

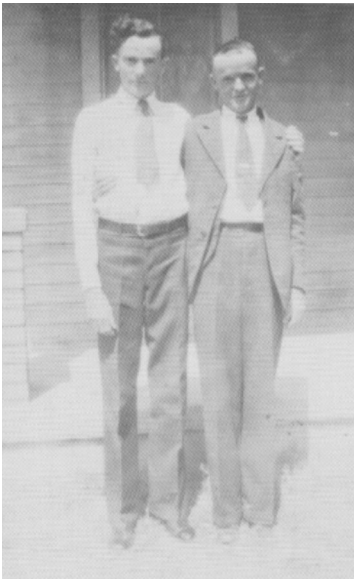
Arthur's voice, as I knew the banquet would not be over that early. I asked if anything were wrong, and he said lightly, "Not really. I just felt that I needed some fresh air and thought I would call you while I was out." We chatted for a moment. He told me that he was enjoying the banquet, that everyone seemed to be having fun. Then he added, as he always did, "I love you!"

He walked back inside, sat down, and a few minutes later, at the age of sixty, he was with Jesus.

Arthur Clanton served his Lord and the church faithfully in his ministry, and left a legacy of songs, articles, books, and sermons that continue to bless the work of God.



Newlyweds Arthur and Grace Clanton, 1942.



A. L. and R. C. Clanton.



Arthur Clanton—Early preaching days.



Grace Clanton.



Bro. Copeland baptized A. L. Clanton (9th from rt.) July 24,1932 in Steele Creek near Walnut Springs, TX.



ARTHUR GEORGE DOWNING

By Tina Gravelle

Arthur George Downing was born in Kent, England, in 1908, the second eldest of seven children. His father, who was a school caretaker, moved to Toronto, Ontario, to establish himself in his career and to prepare a home for his family who would meet him there sometime later. In 1912, he sent word to his wife to bring their three young children (Arthur was the middle child at that time) to Toronto, a city they would call home for the rest of their lives.

Arthur's mother was booked on the famous "Titanic" and was thrilled to become a passenger on this new "unsinkable ship" which would ensure her and her family a safe trip to join her husband in her new home. While in the midst of preparing for this exciting journey, she received a telephone call advising her that she would have

to take the next scheduled boat trip across the Atlantic since the Titanic was overbooked.

Arthur's mother and her three children were on board a ship traveling behind the Titanic when that great ship went down. Arthur Downing, especially after his conversion, would look upon that early childhood event and thankfully remember how the hand of the Lord had been upon him from such a young age.

God had a plan for Arthur Downing's life!

Arthur often recalled some stories of his youth when God's hand of protection was so wonderfully present in his life. At sixteen, he got a job as a "newsy" on the train selling papers, food and drinks. One particular day, when the train stopped at a station, Arthur decided to step off and take a look around. In just a few moments, the train started moving again. He ran and jumped onto the step, desperately grabbing onto the hand railing, but the door had been closed! The train gained speed and Arthur held on for dear life. When the train finally stopped at the next station, Arthur managed to get through the door. Black with soot from head to toe, he staggered into the baggage room and fell exhausted to the floor. The conductor rushed to his side. In a short time, he was back up on his feet again, going up and down the aisles, calling out his wares.

One of the more humorous stories he would recall was about his experience as a farmer's helper at seventeen. Arthur was one of those city boys who had yet to learn a few tips about country living. The farmer, who was going to town that day, asked Arthur to put the pigs in the pen. Arthur spent the entire afternoon chasing them, pushing them, booting them, smacking them and yelling at them.

By the time the farmer arrived home, Arthur had managed to get exactly "0" pigs into the pen. The farmer casually picked up a bag of beans and dropped them onto the ground making a trail right into the pen. One by one each pig cheerfully (if pigs can be cheerful) entered in.

In his senior years Arthur often used real-life situation such as this as an object lesson not only to teach a spiritual truth, but also to practice it: "One cannot drive people to God. One has to lead them by dropping the Word of God into their hearts." And that is exactly what he did.

Arthur was eighteen when he went to Paris, Ontario, to work for a construction firm. While in the midst of blasting rocks and stumps, Arthur lit a stick of dynamite. The dynamite exploded prematurely and burnt twenty-eight holes in his body. While in the hospital, he got news that another young man who had been ten feet away from the blast had died. This injury caused Arthur much pain and infection, but God had once again mercifully spared his life.

In the fall of 1929, a young Christian woman, Florence Stevens, was dutifully carrying out her responsibilities in a small Toronto meat firm when a young man walked in. At the moment, she could not have known that he was going to change the direction of her life. But little did he know that her influence on him would lead to an even greater change in his life.

One Sunday night, Florence had fervently sought God in her home church prayer room. She wanted the Lord to give her a new job, particularly one she had applied for where her three Pentecostal friends were employed. In her desperation, she called out to the Lord, "Jesus, take

me out of that place!" Then she heard herself pray, "Lord, keep me there!" Within a few months she understood why her prayers had taken such a different course. She would one day become Mrs. Arthur Downing and spend the rest of her life with her husband in the ministry.

One of Florence's earliest memories of her husband was when he cheerfully sauntered into work singing, "Hallelujah I'm a Bum," to the tune of "Hallelujah Thine the Glory."

She called him over. "I hear you're a Sunday school teacher." (Her curiosity about this handsome-looking young man had led her, to find out his name and a little about his background.)

"Yes," he said.

"Then why are you singing that song?"

"What's the matter with it?" he retorted.

This was Florence's first opportunity to witness to Arthur about God.

Later, Arthur shared more of his life's story with her. His mother and father never went to church. His mother was a partial invalid and was confined to the home. His father claimed to be an atheist, yet the entire family belonged to the United Church.

Arthur had become a Sunday school teacher at the request of the superintendent who was having difficulty finding teachers. Each Sunday, Arthur would be diligently teaching his class when the superintendent would glance through the window to make sure all was well. Arthur's young boys would always be leaning forward, wide-eyed, intently listening to their teacher. The superintendent often commented to members of the congregation, "He's such a good teacher. He surely keeps good control of

those boys." Meanwhile, that "terrific" Sunday school teacher was giving his students the low-down on the latest thriller cowboy movie he had seen in town that week or the details of a suspense-filled detective story he had just spent the night reading.

One day he approached Florence at work. "I'm going to an Orange Lodge banquet tonight. Do you go to those things?"

"No," she replied.

"Do you go to shows, or dances?"

"No."

"Where do you go?"

"To church."

"What do you do in your spare time?"

She was glad to be able to say, "Give your heart to the Lord and you'll find out!"

On the eve of December 28, 1929, in a prayer room at Florence's home church, under the leadership of Pastor Howard A. Goss, Arthur Downing gave his heart to the Lord. After the message and the altar call to the prayer room, a young man left the platform where he had been singing in the choir and asked Arthur, "Are you a Christian?"

"No, but I'd like to be," Arthur responded.

Then the young man invited, "Follow me."

Arthur followed him downstairs, over and around bodies slain out in the Spirit until he found a place of prayer. Sister Ethel Goss prayed for him while he surrendered his life to the Lord.

On his way to church that night, he had said to himself, "This is my last cigarette." Deep down in his heart, he knew the commitment that he was about to make

would change his life. On his way out the church doors after service, he threw his cigarettes as far as he could throw them. With the determination of a new convert, he said, "I've had my last smoke!"

He sought out his friends with whom he always spent his Sunday evenings. As he approached them, he shocked them by saying, "I have given my life to the Lord tonight and from now on I'm living for Him. I'm through with the old lie I've been living." The next morning he told his boss the same thing.

One of his co-workers said, "OK, if you live it, but look out if you don't." From that moment on, some of the men took it upon themselves to put Arthur to the test. Satan tried hard to get Arthur's mind off the Lord, but his mind was made up. Nothing could change him now.

A few weeks before his new found experience in the Lord, Arthur had been in the dentist's office looking over some tracts which another Christian had passed on to him.

"What are you reading?" the dentist asked.

"Christian tracts, but they'll never get me with this stuff," Arthur insisted. A short time after he was saved, he had another appointment with the dentist. Arthur reminded him of those tracts and told him, "They got me!" He continued on to give his testimony.

Arthur's father was not too impressed with this new "religion." At mealtime, when Arthur would bow his head and ask God to bless the food, his father would become obviously aggravated. The tension would always increase when Arthur refused to reach out for his "after-dinner smoke." Inevitably his father would accusingly raise his voice and cry out, "What do you think you're doing?"

Arthur gathered up his worldly records and maga-

zines. As he confidently strolled through his home with this pile of paraphernalia bundled up under his arms, some member of his family asked, "What are you going to do with that stuff?"

With every ounce of conviction, he said, "It's all going to the furnace."

"Why don't you give it all to someone who would appreciate it?" they pressured.

"This stuff isn't good for me, so it's not good for anyone else!" Arthur burned all his bridges behind him!

Before Arthur was converted, his father had never shown any concern about his activities. Now, each night he would ask him, "Where are you going?" His father thought he spent too much time in church and therefore sought counseling for his son from the principal at the school where he was employed. He thought that the principal's education would make him fit to give the proper answers.

The principal's professional advice was, "Give him a year and he'll come out of it." Seven months later Arthur's father died suddenly. Arthur grieved, especially since he knew his dad wasn't saved. His father had come out to church once, but he never served the Lord.

Arthur's brothers and sisters called him "The Parson." His mother, a very quiet and gentle woman, seemed to be pleased with the change in his life. In fact, one day she told him that her sister who lived in England was a Christian. Arthur was so excited to hear this news about his aunt that he wrote her immediately about his experience in the Lord. She sent him back a lovely letter telling him that when he was a baby, she would hold him on her knees and pray that God's hand would be upon

his life. When Arthur read this letter, he danced around the table and thanked the Lord for an aunt who prayed for him.

Arthur still had lots to learn about his new-found Christian life. At work the day after his prayer room experience, he asked Florence, "Who was that guy across from me who was praising the Lord out loud?" Florence told him it was her father. "Oh!" he said, a little embarrassed.

"You'll make as much noise and maybe even more some day," she told him. And, sure enough, he did!

Two months after he was baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost, Arthur was offered a transfer to London, Ontario, with a higher salary. Through prayer, he felt it was God's will for him to go. There wasn't a Oneness church in London at that time, so Pastor Goss gave him a letter of recommendation to take to the Pentecostal Assemblies pastor, Reverend R. E. McAlister.

Florence was well aware of the doctrinal differences between the Pentecostal Assemblies and the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated, the organization she was associated with. She realized that Arthur would suddenly be confronted with controversial teachings on the Godhead and the formula for water baptism. Since Arthur was a new convert who had simply obeyed the "New Birth" Scriptures without having had any solid teaching on any doctrinal issues, Florence knew he was not equipped to handle the challenge which faced him. She knew it was her responsibility to explain the Scriptures to him before he left Toronto.

Basically she told him that Matthew 28:19 blended beautifully with Acts 2:38 because on the Day of Pente-

cost, Matthew 28:19 was actually fulfilled. Naturally, since he had never received any opposition on the subject to date, he didn't feel "the matter was worth splitting hairs over." Ultimately, Arthur Downing would choose Bible doctrine, the truth, and when he did, the course of his life was changed considerably.

When Arthur arrived in London, he was directed to the home of a lovely middle-aged couple who did not have any children. They were good to him and treated him like their own son.

A week after his departure from Toronto, Florence got word that she was accepted for the job she had applied for earlier when she had prayed, "Jesus, take me out of that place!" God was certainly watching over this young couple.

Arthur willingly took up any responsibilities he was given by Pastor McAlister. He would go to church early to shake hands with people as they came into church and hand out hymn books. He took up the offering and was available at all times to assist in church work.

The pastor and the people accepted him fully. Some of the congregation members, however, tried to warn him about this Oneness teaching that was influencing him. In the meantime, Arthur wrote letters to Florence asking her about the questions that were raised in his mind. She would faithfully reply by sending him many verses of Scripture to study.

He spent many hours searching out the Scriptures. One day, the Lord gave him the understanding of the oneness of the Godhead while reading a verse of Scripture: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in

heaven" (Matthew 16:17). He was thrilled beyond words! This was the Bible answer he was looking for. Now he was satisfied.

Shortly afterward, as Arthur was walking home one evening after a Bible study, the love of God's Word started to pour into his heart. He was so blessed that he ran along the street hugging his Bible. That Thompson Chain Bible which he purchased in 1930 is still in his wife's possession today.

One summer evening two years later, Florence visited Arthur in his boarding home in London. He said to her, "I have something I want to talk to you about." He had been saving his money for their up-coming Christmastime wedding. He continued, "I feel the Lord is calling me to Bible school." That meant their marriage would be delayed for about three more years. Now the money Arthur had been saving would be spent on Bible school training.

Florence vividly recalls her thoughts and feelings at that moment. "He asked me to pray about it and I said I would. I went to my bedroom that night, but instead of praying first, I began thinking of the past two years—all the letters and the far too few times we could see each other. The more I thought about three more years of this way of life, the more resentful I became. Arthur said he would base his decision about going to Bible school on *my* answer. That made me feel quite important, so I decided I'd tell him *exactly* how I felt about it the very next evening.

"That night, I didn't pray; I said my prayers (there's a big difference). When I got into bed, the Lord spoke to me and said, 'I can soon put you aside!' When He said that, I knew He meant it and I began to tremble from head

to foot. Then I really prayed, 'Lord, forgive me and help me to never hinder Your plan or will for Arthur's life.' When things were made right between me and the Lord, I went to sleep peacefully.

"The next evening I told Arthur, 'Whatever the Lord wants you to do, do it!' He said, 'I thought you would say that.' I sure didn't feel so important anymore. God knows how to humble His people."

In the fall of 1931, Arthur went to Bible school in Toronto and the following year in Winnipeg. Immediately after his second year of college in 1933, he and a friend from Bible school went to Red Lake, a mining center in Northern Ontario, to preach the gospel in that town. During the few short months that they stayed in Red Lake, they had an unforgettable encounter with a near tragedy.

One day while taking a leisurely walk in the woods, they suddenly realized that they had somehow lost their path and couldn't find it again. It dawned on them that they were helplessly lost. For a period of time they were actually panic-stricken and went dashing through the woods tearing their clothes and calling for help. For hours there appeared to be no sign of hope. They would stop and pray and then try again to find their way back to town.

They seemed to be wandering aimlessly when Arthur decided to shout with all his strength. He had developed strong lungs as a newspaper boy and he knew his voice could carry quite a distance. He thought he heard his echo, so he shouted again, but there was a voice in the distance answering his call. Finally, after continuous shouting, the two callers came face to face.

The man who had joined them related his story. He

was very familiar with those woods but somehow had gotten off course that day and, in fact, hardly knew where he was when he heard the boys' shouts. Arthur and his friend Bob thanked him for saving their lives, meanwhile giving all glory to the Lord.

Oftentimes in the future when Arthur preached to people about being "lost in sin," he used the example of the horrors of being lost in the woods.

Early in the fall of 1933, Arthur returned to Toronto from Red Lake. He still had one year of Bible college left to get his diploma, but he felt, once again, the hand of God redirecting his life.

He had spent two years in a Pentecostal Assemblies church and two more years in their Bible schools, but he still held firmly to the Oneness preaching and was one day to become a United Pentecostal Church preacher when that organization was established in Ontario.

In the meantime, he was approached by the Pentecostal Assemblies organization about taking a church in Quebec. The Pentecostal Assemblies at that time did not forbid the preaching and teaching of the Acts 2:38 message. Arthur would be given the liberty to work with them as a home missionary and to preach the truth.

When the superintendent approached him with a list of towns that needed workers, he asked Arthur, "Would you be willing to go to Shawville, Quebec?" Brother Downing simply answered, "Yes." His answer came so quickly that he took the superintendent quite by surprise, but God had already laid that particular town on Brother Downing's heart. He felt certain this was God's answer to his prayers.

In October of 1933, Reverend Arthur A. Downing held

his first official services in Orange Hall in Shawville, Quebec. The hall needed lots of repair and a few coats of paint, but Brother Downing was more than happy to do the Lord's work regardless of what it entailed.

Not only did he realize then how much he *wanted* a wife, but he was certainly in a position where he *needed* one. After all, who was going to play the piano, teach the Sunday school children and be his close friend and companion in the work of the Lord?

The wedding date was set for March 14, 1934, in Pastor Howard A. Goss' church in Toronto.

A few days before his trip to Toronto for his wedding, Brother Downing realized he did not even have enough money to pay for the train fare. One night he dreamed that a man came to his door and gave him a ten dollar bill. The next morning he heard a sharp knock on the door. When he opened it, he was greeted by a man with an upraised hooked arm holding some money in his outstretched good hand. "Here," he said, "the Lord told me to give you this." It was exactly ten dollars; just what he needed!

Pastor Goss, upon noticing a few hand-sewn patches on Brother Downing's suit asked him, "Is that the best suit you own?" When Brother Downing replied "yes," Brother Goss wasted no time in taking him to the nearest store to buy him a new suit for this special occasion.

With one good suit, a little money in his pocket and a whole lot of faith and anticipation for the future, Arthur George Downing became the loving, devoted husband of his beautiful, dedicated wife, Sister Florence Downing.

The day after the wedding, the excited newlyweds hurriedly packed all their belongings, including shower

and wedding gifts, and took the night train to their destination, Shawville, Quebec. Recently, as Sister Downing looked back upon this memorable moment, she said, "We found out we didn't need a lot of this world's goods to be happy. The happiest and safest place in the world to be is in God's will. We were happy just being together."

Shawville was a town full of holiness people. They occupied three churches, each under a different government: "Standard," "Wesleyan," and "Holiness." The doctrine and holiness standards of all three were much the same. The women dressed mostly in dark, long dresses with high necks and long sleeves. The men did not wear ties, and the preachers wore the ministerial garb. These people did not particularly like Pentecostals because they followed this "strange" doctrine of speaking in tongues, although the Downings learned that some of them spoke in tongues secretly. For people who thought tongues was a strange phenomenon, they surely knew how to get blessed. Their camp services, which were held in Shawville, could be heard miles away.

The Lord blessed the Downings with a number of souls during their two-year stay in Shawville. They were there during the days of depression and relied heavily on the Lord to meet rental payments on both the hall and their small house.

Brother Downing's first wedding took place during that period when he married a young man who had been saved under his ministry to another new convert who had come out from the holiness movement. The Lord eventually used this young couple in the ministry.

Sister Downing sees this first step in the pathway of their ministry as a time when they learned to trust in the

Lord. He always met their needs and often, their wants. She recalls a verse of Scripture which was dear to both their hearts: "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

Brother Downing had begun prayer meetings in Starks Corners, a small town only five miles from Shawville. Since the prayer meetings seemed to grow quite rapidly, he felt led of God to start a full time work in that town. Therefore, he turned the church in Shawville over to two qualified lady workers.

In the spring of 1936, the Downings moved into an old unfinished house in Starks Corners. For awhile, Brother Downing and his wife kept busy conducting house meetings, tent meetings (when the weather permitted) and building a new home where they would hold their services for the next few years. The Lord gave them many souls, one of whom was a carpenter. They soon heard about some holiness people in Horton, Ontario, who were receptive to the Pentecostal message. Doors opened and they began prayer meetings in several of the homes that fall. Horton was directly across the Ottawa River from Starks Corners. The Downings traveled across the ice by horse and cutter in the winter and drove the washboard, country roads during the other seasons.

One misty, dark evening in October, they headed out to a prayer meeting carrying five other passengers when their car spun into a ditch. The men managed to get the car back onto the road. One headlight was broken, thus made the driving more treacherous. As they drove through the town of Portage du Fort and headed down the main street, which was a sharp downgrade, Brother Downing's car slid into a parked car, which in turn started

sliding down the hill. The owner, who had been standing by his car at the time, ran after it and managed to bring it to a stop.

Angrily the owner rushed back to the Downings and rudely demanded to know what the driver thought he was doing. His words were interspersed with some very disturbing language. Brother Downing showed him that the brake had been jammed with some floor board that had been loosed, convincing him that the accident was caused by a mechanical failure. The man became more passive and expressed his apologies.

When this man found out that Brother Downing was a minister on his way to a prayer meeting, he apologized even more for his unruly tongue and said he realized the accident could not have been avoided. This young man happened to be the mayor's son. Although the Downings wondered why all this should happen . . . the Lord could see ahead.

During the wintertime, the Downings could be seen regularly crossing the Ottawa River heading towards Ontario. After a snowfall, the pathway was difficult to find, but the sound of rapids in the distance would give them some bearings. On the Ontario side, a woman heard about the Downings' weekly pursuits and put a lamp in her window just at the time of their crossing to give them some light. How the Downings appreciated that light as a guide! It was a reminder to them to "keep their lights burning on the dark sea of life."

In January of 1937, Arthur and Florence Downing became the proud parents of their firstborn son, George. God was blessing them once again.

That same year, Brother Downing started tent meet-

ings in Horton, Ontario. When the tent meetings began, the Lord started pouring out His Spirit and touching hearts and lives in very special ways.

By 1938, The Downings, with the help of some dedicated workers, were looking after two full time works—Starks Corners, Quebec and Horton, Ontario. Then Brother Downing felt led to start street meetings in Portage du Fort, Quebec. The town mayor gave his consent. These meetings generated such a response, that soon Brother Downing erected a tent.

Portage was a strong Catholic community. Although the people held steadfastly to their traditions, they felt free to go to the tent meetings simply because they were in a tent.

Besides services which were held at night, Brother Downing began holding afternoon services for the children. Portage was only a short distance from Starks Corners and many of the saints came to help out. The crowds increased each service. The children were so enthusiastic about their program that they sparked interest in their parents. Soon families were attending the services.

The mayor's son Thomas Dagg (the man whose car had been rammed into) came to the tent meetings with his wife and soon both came to the altar of repentance. Eventually, their whole family came regularly and their teenage son Kenneth played the piano for Brother Downing. It may have taken the car accident experience and the subsequent contact with God's people to get this young man thinking about his need for God.

The Lord added souls to the church. Some ex-Catholics had their jobs threatened, but they leaned on

the Lord. In a short time, the Downings were able to purchase a stone building in which to hold their services.

Early in 1939 an opportunity arose for the Downings to use an old Baptist church and parsonage in Starks Corners. After lots of cleaning and repairs, they rented their home and moved into their new environment, which proved to be much more suitable for holding church services.

Until the next major change in the course of their lives, the Downings served the three communities of Starks Corners, Horton and Portage, all works which the Downings had pioneered. Sister Downing's responsibilities had shifted largely to that of "Mom" but, nevertheless, both their lives were dedicated to the work and the people.

In the summer of 1940, Brother Downing attended the Pentecostal Assemblies Camp at Cobourg, Ontario. During that time, board members and the ministry got together to discuss doctrinal issues, particularly, the subject of the Godhead and the formula for water baptism.

The Pentecostal Assemblies voted to adhere strictly to the doctrinal teachings contained in their original articles of faith. Consequently, anyone teaching otherwise could no longer carry a license with their organization.

Because of the vast difference between the Pentecostal Assemblies' position on the doctrinal issues at hand and Brother Downing's Bible-based convictions, it was inevitable that they could no longer work together. Brother and Sister Downing began earnestly seeking the Lord for their next move.

On September 25 of that same year, the Downings were blessed with a second son, David.

Reverend C. L. Cross, who was pastoring a church in Brockville, Ontario, wrote to Brother Downing asking him to pray about establishing a church in Prescott, Ontario. In May of 1941, Brother and Sister Downing left their home in Starks Corners and their three churches in the hands of the Pentecostal Assemblies to begin their new ministry in Prescott. Sorrowfully, they left but they knew they must "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

They rented a small, old house which was damaged, but they finally managed to set up housekeeping. Brother Downing contacted a group called "Apostolic Pentecost" in Western Canada. This organization held to some doctrines which Brother Downing could not agree with, but they were a Oneness organization, and he needed to identify himself with some established group.

The P. E. Lowenberg Evangelists came to help the Downings in revival meetings and to help get them settled in the work. For the next few years, the Lowenbergs were a blessing and an encouragement to the Downings.

Brother Downing's ministry in Prescott began in June with tent meetings. Within a short period of time, they had some faithful workers in the church, people who had already been saved and who found the location of the Prescott church convenient to travel to. A young man, Paul Moulton, and his family faithfully supported the work.

"We need more permanent facilities," Brother Downing announced. So he found a hall on Main Street which had been a blacksmith shop. The owner had put a storefront on it hoping to sell it as a store, but because of its filthy condition, none wanted to buy it. The owner told

Brother Downing, "If you clean it up, you can rent it for as long as you want to."

When the new facility was in decent shape, it proved to be a perfect spot for holding Sunday services and special services during the week. Its location drew the attention of many passersby, many of whom dropped in through curiosity, but many of whom stayed because of the presence of the Lord.

Street meetings were scheduled every Saturday evening. Brother Downing's only competition on these occasions was a band stand down the street which regularly accommodated local groups.

One evening while Brother Paul Reynolds was playing his saxaphone, he was approached by a band member who asked him to join his group. Of course, he graciously declined the invitation.

In April of 1944, Brother Downing felt impressed of the Lord to start up a children's radio broadcast in Brockville. He went to the radio station. After introducing himself, he stated his purpose to the manager: "We are interested in starting a half-hour Christian children's program on Saturday mornings. Do you think this could be arranged?"

The station manager responded, "*The Town and Country Children's Program* is on one of the stations every Saturday morning. I don't think there is a need for another program for kids."

Brother Downing, who was never one to back down from a challenge, pursued the matter. "Would you consider giving us a try for a month?"

The station manager agreed to do so. He scheduled the "Happy Gospel Family" for the same half-hour time

block as the *"Town and Country"* program. God wanted *His* program on the air and gave the Downings a good listening audience for the next *twenty* years.

Each broadcast cost $5.00, which had to be paid before entering the studio. One Saturday morning, Brother Downing did not have the money. As he was about to enter the radio station, he heard his name being called. "Brother Downing!" A man from the Brockville church was approaching him. "The Lord told me to give you this." He handed Brother Downing a crisp $5.00 bill.

All tent meetings (which were held around the countryside) and special services could be announced over the radio. This extremely effective method of advertising reaped many results. Inevitably some listeners would show up in all services.

One young girl, Doris Stephenson, who faithfully listened to *"Town and Country"* tuned into *"The Happy Gospel Family"* at her mother's persuasion, not knowing that some day she would become a part of the program itself, and even more wonderfully, a part of the Lord's family.

That same summer the Downings arranged to hold tent meetings in Spencerville, Ontario. Their plans were interrupted when a sister from the Prescott church told them of her burden for Charleville, Ontario, and asked them to pitch a tent in that town for a few days. Services were scheduled in Charleville from Tuesday to Friday, but the following Sunday, services were to begin in Spencerville. With only a few stores and several houses scattered here and there in the village, the prospects for a great tent revival meeting, or any kind of meeting at all, were pretty dismal. But by Friday night, the tent was

packed, the altar was full and the Spencerville meetings were cancelled!

Sister Downing's parents were visiting at the time. When the tent had been pitched and the chairs set up and everything was in order, her father said, "There's no one around here to come to the tent meetings." The place was somewhat desolate. A few children had gathered around the tent and were asking, "Is there going to be a circus today?"

While all this was taking place, God had complete control of the situation. He knew what He was doing! He sent an abundance of rain which hindered the people from working the land (they were farmers by trade), so they had nothing better to do than to listen to the radio where they heard the announcements about the tent meetings. He burdened the heart of a woman to pray for the people so He could soften their hearts to go to the meetings, and He drove them there by His Spirit.

Cars started coming from all directions, and each night their numbers increased. Once the Lord got the people where He wanted them, He used a man of God to preach the gospel. Other children of God ministered in song, prayer and worship. Then He performed the greatest miracle of all—He filled them with His Spirit.

We must never underestimate the power of God working in human lives! What seems impossible with man is possible with God. Through these tent meetings, our young, avid listener to the "Happy Gospel Family," Doris Stephenson, was one of many who were baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost and who went on to serve the Lord till this day.

Shortly after the services started, the Sheet family,

returning missionaries from China, came and preached about the Holy Ghost baptism. The people were like baby birds with their mouths wide open waiting for mother to tuck in some food. The Word of God moved the people to seek after Him. Immediately many were filled with the Holy Ghost. Then those with the Holy Ghost found others to pray for. Soon people were praying inside and outside of the tent.

The Lowenberg Evangelists came once again to help the Downings since they were now looking after both Prescott and Charleville. Church services were held in Prescott on Sundays and tent services in Charleville throughout the week. Radio programs continued weekly, and sometimes, for special outreach, daily for two-week periods. That, along with street meetings on Saturday evenings, kept Brother and Sister Downing fervently committed to the Lord's work.

In the spring of 1945, Brother Downing felt the Charleville people needed his full time attention. He left the Prescott church in the hands of what he thought was a capable young couple. In Charleville he built a small church to which he later attached an addition for Sunday school classes.

In the course of their lives, tragedy beset the Downing family when their young four-year old son David was thrown out of the car and cut his head open. He was on the verge of permanent physical and mental affliction when God, in answer to prayer, miraculously gave the child a speedy recovery. Sister Downing recalls those long hours of uncertainty after the doctor had given them little hope. "My only source of strength," she said, "was when I truly recognized that Jesus is the Lily of the Valley.

The perfume of His presence was in our valley experience."

A Christian couple whose home was near the hospital and with whom they were going to spend a few nights greeted Brother and Sister Downing as they arrived at their doorstep. Sister Henry's first words were, "I was in prayer for David and the Lord gave me a verse of Scripture. It was in Psalm 118:17: 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.'" God's Word and Spirit had once again provided them with the comfort they needed so desperately during this personal crisis.

The people of Charleville were thrilled with their new-found joy in the Lord. They attended all the services and would lovingly complain that they wanted more. When they went to street meetings or rallies, they would all pile into the Downing's van and then sing all the way to their destination and back again. They would get blessed, blessed, blessed! Even a stop at the gas station wouldn't hinder them from singing, praying and speaking in tongues. An attendant at the station got an earful one night. The saints were not even aware of the stop, but for the gasoline attendant, it was one he would never forget.

In August of 1949, during their fourth year in Charleville, the Downings had one more bundle of joy enter into their lives, their third son, Paul.

The Downing's three children participated in the Lord's work over the years, especially in the Radio Ministry. Young David, in particular, developed quite a reputation for the singing talent with which God had blessed him. Sister Downing has among her treasures some tape recordings of her son Paul singing on the

radio. Such tapes were not common during George and David's younger years, but their mother stored their young voices in her treasured memories.

Paul Moulton, who had married a young woman from the Brockville church, had two young girls who sang beautifully for the Lord. They were a tremendous asset to the radio ministry. Other young people from Brockville also contributed to its success.

Doris Stephenson, their "Happy Gospel Family" convert, went to live with the Downings shortly after Paul was born. Doris devoted her life to assisting the Downings in the Lord's work. She was an extra special blessing in the radio Ministry since she had a talent for music and singing. She would take care of all the mail sent to the Happy Gospel Family and keep track of special requests.

Only a pioneer in the Lord's work back in the 30s, 40s and 50s could describe accurately the many challenges, opportunities, blessings and frustrations which accompanied tent meeting after tent meeting. Tent work always meant lots of hard work for Brother Downing; however, he always looked forward to every tent meeting with joy and anticipation.

The Downings lived in a constant realm of expectancy. They never knew what the Lord was going to do next when they had tent meetings. Many people refused to go to church, but few passed up old-fashioned (which was then in-fashion) tent meetings.

Weather conditions determined whether or not it was going to be smooth or rough. Many times Brother Downing would spend nights tent-sitting because Mother Nature was out on the rampage, or he would rush off in the middle of the night to check his "baby" only to find it

waterlogged or partially destroyed by violent winds. Physical labor was the key to keeping the tent securely fastened to the ground and in good condition. Rain or shine, those tent meetings went on because it was not what was happening on the outside that counted, but what God was doing on the inside.

Brother Downing's motto was "Sunday School and Outreach." He had a favorite saying, "We should pray as though everything depended on God, and work as though everything depended on us." During his eighteen years in Charleville, Brother Downing seized every opportunity to preach the gospel to both the young and old. He put his motto into practice.

While he was in Charleville, the United Pentecostal Church Oneness organization finally established itself in Ontario. Brother Downing held several offices in the organization's Ontario District, some of which included Presbyter, Sunday School Director, Junior Camp Director (Outlet Camp) and Home Missions Board Member. He also taught in Ontario's United Pentecostal Church Bible schools, and on one occasion in particular, in the Fredericton, New Brunswick Bible School.

He especially loved the responsibility of overseeing Junior Camp, but due to his poor heart condition, he had to give it up. Brother Downing had a way with children and during Junior Camp he had ample opportunity to reach out to them.

Brother and Sister Downing owned a cottage at the Lansdowne (Outlet) Campgrounds. Occasionally, when there were no meetings in progress, they would spend a few days at camp. One day, when a terrific wind arose suddenly, Brother Downing headed out to a certain spot

under the trees where someone had left a lawn chair. At the moment he was passing the men's washroom, a voice distinctly said to him, "Turn in here." Without any hesitation, he headed into the washroom. Immediately a large tree fell across the pathway at the exact spot he would have been crossing. He rushed back to the cottage, a little out of breath, announcing to Sister Downing that he had almost got killed.

During the Charleville years, the Latter Rain Movement came full force into Prescott, Ontario. The Downings received the disturbing news that the young couple who was pastoring the church in Prescott had joined this movement and succeeded in converting their congregation. The Downings had built up this work with many prayers and efforts, and were grieved at this report. They could do nothing but lean on Scriptures which reminded them "that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58) and that "it was required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:2), which they had been.

During their last five years in Charleville, until the year of 1963, several people from Ottawa helped faithfully in the work, since Brother Downing's church was the closest Oneness church to that city. Because of his increased interest in this group of people and their obvious burden for Ottawa, Brother Downing began praying faithfully for God to send them a pastor.

Then God called him.

One Sunday morning, a real estate man from Ottawa attended the Charleville service. After speaking with Brother Downing, he committed himself to helping him find a church in Ottawa. Soon, one was purchased by the

Ontario District on Echo Drive. This was to be the Downings' new home for the next few years.

It was not easy for the Downings to leave Charleville. They had invested a good part of their lives there and had grown to love the people, most of whom they had brought up and nurtured in the Lord. They had watched these precious souls grow physically and spiritually, as parents would watch over children.

In March of 1963, they conducted their farewell service and turned the church over to Brother and Sister Ross Kingsley.

Mr. Jack Radford, the radio station manager, attended Brother Downing's last service in Charleville. He told the Downings that he had been offered $20.00 for their half-hour spot on the air. Although they were still only paying $5.00, he would not settle for a greater profit since the "Happy Gospel Family" program was drawing an 86% average listening audience.

Even after the Downings were settled in Ottawa, they continued traveling to Brockville, Ontario, each Saturday morning for their broadcast. A year later, however, Brother Downing had to deliver his farewell program. The Downings considered that day to be the saddest day of the year. For weeks afterwards, they longed to be back on the air reaching out to their audiences.

Brother and Sister Downing spent the next ten years pastoring the Ottawa church. A number of faithful workers shared in the burden of their ministry. The Downings were thankful for the prayers and sacrificial giving of the saints. They appreciated what Sister Downing described as "the sweet family unity that was manifested in the Calvary Church." The Lord gave them souls. Shortly

before their ministry ended, they had a total of 112 in Sunday school.

Brother Downing had a congenital heart disease which did not bother him for years until age and stress brought it to the surface. Increasing pain caused Brother Downing to seek a doctor's advice. The doctor explained to him the seriousness of his heart condition and suggested he start enjoying a more relaxed lifestyle if he wanted to live.

In 1972 arrangements were made for Brother and Sister Fred Morris to look after the Ottawa church services while the Downings spent the summer at the Lansdowne Campground for a much needed rest. In the fall of 1972, they returned to the church and spent the winter months with the Morrises. It was not easy for Brother Downing to retire from the ministry.

On April 28, 1973, the Downings were honored with a surprise testimonial dinner. Many saints from other churches, friends and relatives showed up for what turned out to be a lovely surprise celebration.

After his retirement, Brother Downing stayed active in the ministry by helping out other pastors. He did this until he was absolutely no longer physically able to do so. His heart condition was catching up on him. The Downings enjoyed two long overdue, wonderful trips to Miami, Florida for which Sister Downing is still thankful. She had some time to spend with her husband before his death—time that she considers very precious.

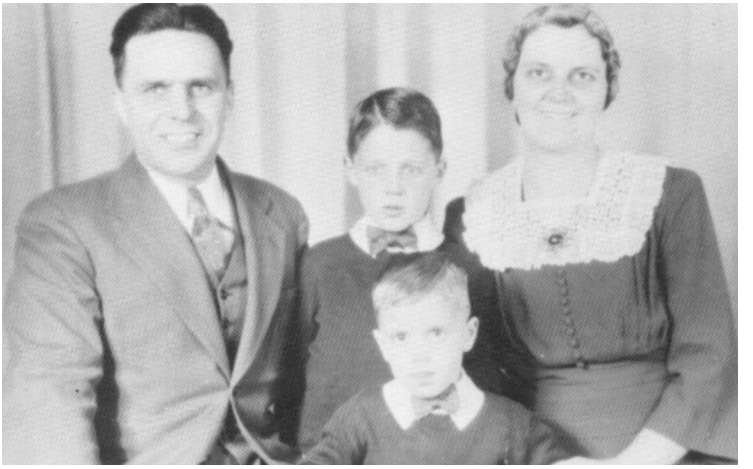
Brother Downing had been noticing how his voice was giving out on him. One day he said to his wife, "Dear, this is not just a cold."

On June 9, 1979, Brother Downing was cleaning

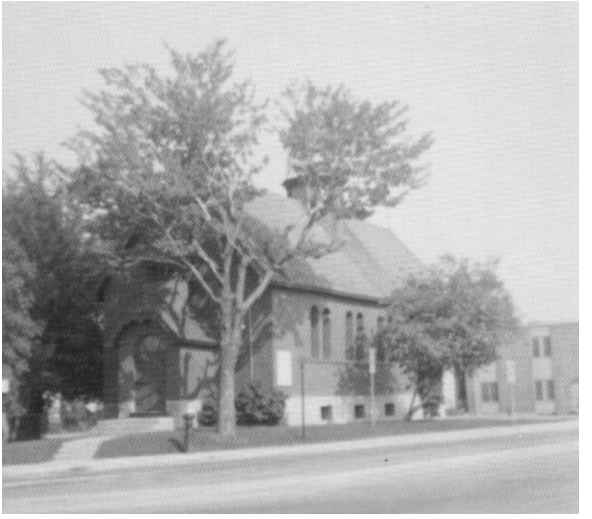
some windows in the apartment when he took a sudden heart attack. He died at seventy-one years of age.



The Golden Years, 1979.



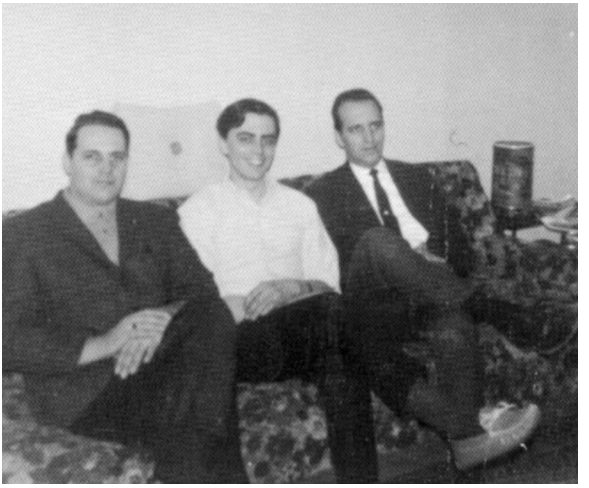
The Downings, 1944.



Ottawa, Ontario, church, Bro. Downing founded and pastored 1963-1973.



The Downings, 1973.



George, Paul and David Downing, 1969.



ROY DENVER GIBSON

By Nora Gibson Wenrich

Born October 20, 1890, Roy was the first child to grace the marriage of Isaiah Argailus and Narcissus Arizona Gibson. Having such classic names themselves, the young couple named their splendid son Royal Denver, but everyone called him Roy.

Ray grew up on the family farm and ranch located in East Texas, just ten miles south of Lufkin in the heart of the piney woods. The community was called Gibsonville and was so named after Roy's father and uncles, who were the principle landholders.

Being the oldest of ten children, Roy learned hard work and accepted responsibility at an early age. Even though his parents were people of means and the home in which he was reared was very elegant with its imported beaded lumber, life was demanding and each day brought

a new challenge.

It was the turn of the century, and electricity and plumbing with running water were amenities that were found only in the homes of the affluent in the cities. In the rural areas, kerosene lamps and lanterns provided the light, and water was drawn from deep wells or cisterns with a bucket tied to a rope. Sometimes it was necessary to go a long distance to find a good supply of water and transport it in barrels in a wagon drawn by horses or mules. The times were rugged and austere, but they made the man.

Roy's exemplary parents, Narrie and Gail, as they were affectionately called, were leaders in the community and were well respected. They imparted to their children honesty, integrity and good moral values. Roy was always religiously inclined, more so than his brothers and sisters. He was baptized in the Baptist church at a young age. He had an affinity for preachers and sought out their company even as a child.

When he was twenty-one years of age, Roy met a beautiful young girl by the name of Eula Annie Hudiburgh. Roy fell deeply in love with Eula, and although she was only fifteen years old, after a brief courtship he asked for her hand in marriage. On November 29, 1911, the girl with the golden brown curls and the gentle ways became Roy's bride.

A little more than a year passed, and a beautiful baby girl was born to the happy couple. They named her Nona Ellen. Their next child was a boy, but he died mysteriously the same day of his birth. God then favored them with another son whom they named Royal Denver, Jr. Everything about their charmingly simple life seemed

idyllic; however, Roy and Eula were destined to be used greatly by God, and tragedy would soon be interjected into their peaceful, well-ordered lives.

Approximately two years after R.D. was born, another son was born and Roy and Eula named him simply Ray. Considering their penchant for unusual names, one might wonder if the brief name conferred upon the child was an omen. At any rate, it was soon apparent that Ray was a very special child. Not only was he perfect in every way, he also was blessed with exceptional intelligence and perceptiveness. Ray was the darling of the whole family, but there existed a special bond between Roy and the child.

One day when Eula was in her kitchen, where she was the happiest, an audible voice said to her: "What would you do if I took your baby?" Eula dropped to her knees and cried, "Lord, I can't give up my baby." Two weeks from that day Ray became very ill, and even though the family doctor did everything within his power and knowledge, Ray died three days after the onset of the illness. He was exactly fourteen months old.

The family was shattered and stunned by grief. Even the family pet, a dog named Bringer, left home and did not return for days. Life became tedious and meaningless. Inconsolable, Roy would walk through the beautiful forests of virgin timber and wonder if he would ever see his darling Ray again.

On a routine trip to the grocery store in Zavalla, five miles south of Gibsonville, Roy overheard the owner talking about "a bunch of fanatics" who were having a revival in a brush arbor near town. The man went on to say that the preacher hypnotized the people and even threw powder on them and they did strange things. As Roy listened,

he became very indignant and said, "Those people ought to be run out of town."

The more Roy thought on the things he had heard, the more curious he became. Finally curiosity prevailed over common sense and he decided to go check the story out for himself. He said, "I'll keep my mind whirling so they can't hypnotize me."

The first night Roy went, he was skittish and would not get very close. But he soon began to feel sorry for them. He believed they were sincere but that they were just deceived. He loved the singing but there was something powerful and unexplainable that kept him coming back night after night. Roy was troubled about his feelings and went to his uncles and the deacons of his church for advice. They advised him to stay away, but Roy could not stay away.

One night it rained so hard that they were unable to have service under the brush arbor, so they had service in the community church building. As Roy sat on the back pew watching the choir sing under the anointing of the Holy Ghost, a very strange thing happened. Suddenly, the faces of the singers became radiant and glowed with effulgence. Their clothes turned pristine white and were luminous. They looked like an angelic host to Roy, and as he watched, transfixed, he realize he was lost and had to have what those people had in order to be saved.

That night when the altar call was given Roy, deeply under conviction, stepped out in the aisle. The devil said, "All these people are looking at you." Roy stopped abruptly and a young man by the name of Wesley Mott, who later became a preacher and a close friend and colleague to Roy, took him by the hand and said, "Brother Roy, let's go

pray." Meekly Roy went and fell down at the altar.

He wept profusely and bitterly that night as he repented and made a full confession of his sins, but he did not receive the Holy Ghost. The second night was a repeat of the first. The third night as Roy was praying earnestly for the Lord to fill him with the Holy Ghost, the minister, Brother Polk, asked him what was wrong. Roy answered, "I don't know. I've done everything you told me to do." Brother Polk asked him if he wanted to be baptized in Jesus' name and Roy quickly answered, "Yes, right now!"

Althought it was near midnight, Brother Polk baptized him in the name of Jesus Christ.

The next night Roy could hardly wait for the altar call to be given. Sitting on the second row, Roy took what seemed to him to be one big step and he was at the altar crying and praying desperately. A Methodist preacher also came to the altar that night, but his wife made him leave. She said, "That man will kill you!"

Roy prayed until he fell out under the power of God. A doctor's wife was in the service that night. As she stood on a bench watching, she exclaimed, "That man is dying and they won't do anything for him."

When Roy came to himself, he was on his feet talking in tongues and praising God. The grief that had stalked him and the burden he had carried since Ray's death were gone and he was happier than he had thought possible. The Methodist preacher was still there, and he came back to the altar. He said, "I came here for the Holy Ghost and I'm going to have the Spirit!" He also prayed through to the Holy Ghost that night, August 4, 1921.

When they got home that night, Eula said, "Let's stay

in the Baptist church."

"You can stay there if you wish, but I've found the truth and even if it means giving up wife, family or friends I intend to stay with it," Roy replied.

The next night Eula went to the altar and received the baptism of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Since that night she has stood by Roy's side, and together they have served God valiantly.

When Roy was seeking for the Holy Ghost, he told God he would go anywhere and do anything if He would save him. Preaching never occurred to him, but he was desperate and was willing to do anything.

One day while Roy was praying, the Lord called him to preach the gospel. Roy started making excuses and told God that he didn't have the proper clothes to wear and had never been to a seminary to learn how to preach.

"If you will follow Me and do as I say, I'll set you on high," the Lord assured him.

In obedience to God, Brother Gibson began his ministry at a small community called Stumpville, Texas. He and Brother Bohannon, another pioneer preacher, began the revival together and alternated nights preaching. When Brother Bohannon became discouraged and left, Brother Gibson continued the revival for two weeks. At the end of the two weeks, fifteen to twenty people had received the Holy Ghost and were baptized in Jesus' name.

Having completed his first revival, Brother Gibson accepted an invitation to preach at Doucette, Texas. Brother Best, the pastor, secured a large tabernacle which was located in the middle of Doucette, a small sawmill town. The tabernacle was not ceiled and when the anoint-

ing and power of God would come upon Brother Gibson, he would take hold of a rafter and pull himself up. A lady who attended the services each night went all over town saying, "Come out and see that preacher chin the rafters." There were capacity crowds each night and the Lord blessed mightily. Many people were saved and healed of diseases.

Brother Gibson preached at several small towns in East and Southeast Texas. The Lord began dealing with him to go to Huntington and preach a revival. Both he and Sister Gibson were reluctant to go because each of them had relatives living there. Their relatives had been very critical when they received the Holy Ghost and told them they had disgraced the family. However, God had a work for Brother Gibson to do in Huntington, and He used extreme measures to get him willing to go.

Brother Gibson walked to Huntington one day, which was a distance of five miles. On the return trip home, he accepted a ride from a man who was going through Gibsonville on his way to Zavalla. Rather than inconvenience his friend, Brother Gibson stood on the running board of the car and told the man just to slow down when they got to Gibsonville and he would jump off.

Things did not go as planned. When Brother Gibson jumped, his pant leg inadvertently got caught in the door of the car and he was dragged several hundred feet before the driver realized what was happening. When the car finally stopped, Brother Gibson, bruised and bleeding, his clothes torn badly, picked himself up and started repenting and making plans to go to Huntington.

To secure the location for his revival, Brother Gibson went to a prominent businessman by the name of John

Renfro. Mr. Renfro owned a beautiful thirteen-acre oak grove in the middle of Huntington, and he readily agreed to let Brother Gibson use the property. With the help of a local carpenter by the name of Thomas, Brother Gibson constructed benches and a rostrum. To make his naturally strong resonant voice carry, Brother Gibson built a backboard behind the rostrum. People declared they could sit on their porches as much as four miles away and hear the preaching.

From the first night of the revival, large crowds were in attendance. The local churches were unable to have service because all their people were attending the open-air revival. For forty nights except one when it rained him out, Brother Gibson preached the gospel in its fulness and the people hungrily received the Word.

The local churches were upset. A delegation made up of deacons from these churches went to Mr. Renfro and offered him money to stop the revival. Mr. Renfro refused to do so. He told them that as long as Brother Gibson preached Jesus Christ he could stay on his property. Mr. Renfro would often stop by and give Brother Gibson ten dollars, which was a good offering in those days.

Not having any luck with Mr. Renfro, the delegation went to Lufkin, which was the seat of Angelina county, to talk to the district attorney, Curtis Finley. They attempted to get a court injunction against Brother Gibson on the grounds that he was not a member of any organization. Being an astute man, Mr. Finley replied, "The best organization I know of is recorded in Matthew 18:20 where Jesus said, 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'"

This attitude on the part of the district attorney in-

censed the group. They said, "You must be fixing to join up with them."

Mr. Finley replied, "No, I'm not going to join up with them, but I didn't think you were that kind of men."

When the revival closed, forty-five people, including an aunt and a cousin of Brother Gibson, had received the Holy Ghost and were baptized in Jesus' name.

After preaching a revival at Ora, a small farming community south of Huntington. Brother Gibson went back to Huntington and built a church sanctuary for the people who had gotten saved in his revival there. One New Year's Eve at an all-night prayer meeting, a woman by the name of Rosie Snowden, a member of the Methodist church, came and asked Brother Gibson to pray for her. When Brother Gibson laid hands on her, she received the Holy Ghost and was healed of an affliction that she had endured since her childhood.

When Rosie went home and told her husband what had happened, he became very angry and threatened to kill Brother Gibson. After that, as Mr. Snowden was attempting to cross the road in front of his house, a car ran over him and broke both of his legs. One leg had to be amputated. He then called for Brother Gibson to come pray for him.

Another miraculous healing that the Lord performed through Brother Gibson at this particular time concerned a black woman who had a large malignant tumor protruding from her forehead. The dear lady came to Brother Gibson's home and said, "I'm not worthy to come into your house, but if you'll just step outside and lay hands on me, I'll be healed." Brother Gibson anointed her with oil and prayed for her. The next morning the lady returned

shouting with joy. "Reverend Gibson, come see what the Lord has done for me!" Her forehead was smooth and there was no sign of the malignancy that had been there the day before.

While pastoring the church in Huntington, Brother Gibson preached revivals all over East Texas. He went to Nacogdoches and preached a tent revival in which many people were filled with the Holy Ghost. Later Brother Wesley Mott came, built a sanctuary, and pastored the people.

After he went to Nacogdoches, Brother Gibson went to a large community called Allentown and preached a revival in a brush arbor. Over one hundred people received the Holy Ghost and were baptized in Jesus' name. The two churches that were there, a Baptist church and a Methodist church, had to close their doors because most of their members had received the Holy Ghost. The building that was once the Baptist church became the sanctuary for the Pentecostal church.

From the red clay hills of Nacogdoches and Allentown to the black river-bottom land at Oak Flat, Etoille and Ora, Brother Gibson preached the saving gospel of Jesus Christ without fear or favor. Doing everything he could to further the kingdom of God, Brother Gibson went without money and without price and God always supplied his needs.

After Ray was born, the family doctor told Sister Gibson that for her health's sake she should have no more children. However, after receiving the Holy Ghost, Brother and Sister Gibson were blessed with three more children: Clibborn Isaiah, Vesta Layne and Nara Lee, in that order. They, along with Nona and R. D. were reared in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

Brother Gibson believed strongly in divine healing and preached it unequivocally. He trusted God implicitly for the healing of his children, and many miracles were performed in each of their lives. Nona remembers well the dramatic changes that took place in the home after her parents received the Holy Ghost. Once she remarked that the thing that made her the happiest was the fact that she did not have to take medicine anymore.

In 1940, Brother Gibson resigned the church in Huntington and moved to Lufkin to pastor. The church in Lufkin had been without a pastor for quite a while and the building was outdated and inadequate. Brother Gibson immediately began making plans to build a new building.

While he was tearing the old building down and constructing a new one, Brother Gibson preached an open-air revival. Each Saturday he preached on the street corner or the court house square. By the time the new building was completed, the congregation had grown considerably. While pastoring the church in Lufkin Brother Gibson often preached at other churches within a thirty-mile-radius when they were without a pastor.

In September of 1944, Brother Gibson was elected pastor of the church in Beaumont, Texas. Clibborn was now a pilot in the United States Air Force; Vesta Layne had married a young minister by the name of Gerald Mangun the year before; so Brother and Sister Gibson with Nara Lee moved to Beaumont where Brother Gibson would pastor for the next twenty-five years.

Brother Gibson's ministry was characterized by acts of divine healing. Although it would not be possible to relate all of them in this chapter, there is one in particular that should be related because it occurred shortly

after he moved to Beaumont, and it was significant.

Brother Gibson and his family had been living in Beaumont about a month when a man by the name of Al Debbs came to his door and asked, "Are you Brother Gibson?" Brother Debbs was a member of the Greek Orthodox church and a professional wrestler before receiving the Holy Ghost. He told Brother Gibson that he had stuck a piece of wood in the pupil of his eye and the doctor had informed him that he would lose his sight in that eye. Brother Debbs said, "They tell me that you pray for the sick and they get healed."

Brother Gibson anointed him with oil and prayed for him, and the Lord healed Brother Debbs' eye immediately. That healing resulted in several people coming to God and being saved.

Great things were accomplished for God in Beaumont. In 1954, consistent with his pattern of building churches, Brother Gibson tore the old frame building down and built a much larger brick building. He was known and respected by the business community for his honesty, integrity and uprightness. Being a man of prayer, he taught his people the value and necessity of prayer. He constantly admonished them to pray lest they be caught in a snare and deceived by Satan. According to the testimony of many, Brother Gibson taught them to love the truth and he put such a firm doctrinal foundation under them that they could never be deceived or led astray by a false doctrine.

In 1969, Brother Gibson, approaching eighty years of age, resigned the church in Beaumont and Brother Treadway was elected as the new pastor. In 1970, Brother Gibson moved to Alexandria to be near his daughters,

Vesta Layne and Nara Lee. Since living in Alexandria, he has been a source of strength and inspiration to many. By his own confession, he never lays his head on his pillow at night until he has "prayed through" and talked in tongues. When he steps to the pulpit, his voice is strong as he exalts the name of Jesus. He still prays for the sick and they recover. He is now affectionately referred to as "Popsy," and is loved by the young as well as the elderly.

At the time of this writing, Brother Gibson is approaching ninety-four years of age. He has the distinction of being the oldest United Pentecostal minister. Although his step is feeble, his mind is still sharp and his recall of the Scriptures is amazing as he quotes it by memory. Observing Popsy now, one does not see the aging body; he is aware only of the indomitable spirit and the fervor that he possesses.

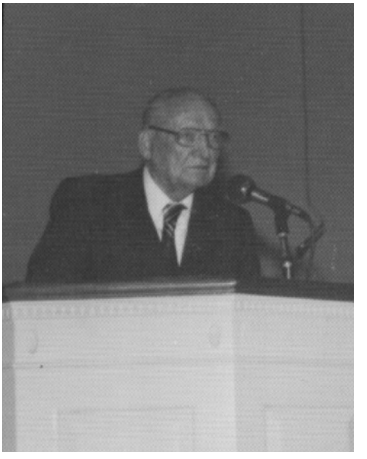
Only eternity will reveal what Brother Gibson has meant to the kingdom of God, but I believe if the Bible were being written today it would read: "The God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Roy Gibson."



Newlyweds Bro. and Sis. Gibson, 1911.



Rev. R. D. Gibson.



Brother Gibson at 90 in the pulpit at Greater First Pentecostal Church, Alexandria, LA.



DAVID F. GRAY

By Shirley J. Buxton

Situated strategically on the southern coast of California, the city of San Diego nestles among its beautiful hills that rear up from the sparkling Pacific. Gradually they climb, pushing their peaks beyond the metropolis to join the Laguna range that flanks San Diego county to the east. To the south joins the borders of Mexico, while northward is sprawled urban Orange County and the great Los Angeles basin. Boasting a temperate Mediterranean climate with near flawless sky and thriving economy, greater San Diego is home to 1,861,846 persons.

Among these eminent environs has arisen a powerful arm of the church of God. The reason for the undisputed excellence of the local congregation may be found in the person of its founder and current pastor, the Reverend David F. Gray.

It was a splendid spring day. City traffic bustled around me as I edged toward Brother Gray's home for an interview. Nudging the limits of the city is suburban El Cajon where Brother Gray has chosen to live. In my car I climbed the hills, winding through well clipped neighborhood to arrive at his dwelling. The house is of recent construction, two stories high, and is set to face the Fletcher Hills. Later, he would show me the upstairs room that commands the sweeping view. An old English styled G adorns the front of the residence.

Having arrived a few minutes early, I sat contemplating the assignment, and the distinguished gentleman with whom I would be speaking. It was a long way from his birthplace in the Orient, and more than sixty years since his mother held him in her arms and spoke to the father, "We must guard this baby carefully. The devil would have him."

In his advancing years, Reverend Gray is well known and highly respected throughout the United Pentecostal Church International. That his life has been lived with distinction, both within the religious and the secular world, is evidenced by the fact that for several years he has been written into *Who's Who In Religion*, and *Who's Who In The West*. He has preached widely—at campmeetings, conferences, and other special meetings. He is in continued demand for service on directionary boards, having served many years as district presbyter, as well as being an Executive Presbyter of the United Pentecostal Church International from 1977 to 1980. Currently he is a member of the Board of Directors of the United Pentecostal Church Historical Center, and he also serves on the Board of Publication. Since 1972 he has

been an associate editor of *The Gospel Tidings*. He is the author of several books and booklets and a frequent contributor of material to several religious publications. A long list of other honors and accomplishments could be enumerated.

On his mother's side, he springs from the Rittenhouse family, who trace their origins to royalty in Bohemia, and to King Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.

David Franklin Gray was born in Yokohama, Japan, on May 16, 1917, to his parents, Franklin Hoover and Elizabeth May, who were independent Pentecostal missionaries. His mother had served as a single lady one term in Japan as a missionary with the Christian and Missionary Alliance. David was their second child, his sister Olive being sixteen months older. Two years later, his brother Paul was born to complete the family. When David was two years old, his parents returned to California where he spent the rest of his childhood, living mostly in the Los Angeles area.

Upon moving to the United States, his father involved himself at first with carpentry and building homes, turning later to chicken ranching and selling eggs and produce. The family was involved with Pentecostal churches, and Brother Gray's earliest recollection of church services are those of Belvedere Tabernacle in east Los Angeles, pastored by Frank Ewart. That wonderful man of God distinctly impressed young David. "I can remember his sermons to this day," Brother Gray told me. "The sermons are vivid in my mind." They stayed at the church all day on Sunday, leaving their home early in the morning and not returning until night time.

Brother Gray clearly remembers a device they owned

called the Fireless Cooker. It was a commercial product, a highly insulated square box with a round opening in the center. A particular round stone was provided. After being heated to red hot on the stove, it was handled with a hook on the end of a wire and placed into the round opening of the box. Fitted aluminum pots were filled with meats and vegetables and then set on top of the stone inside the cooker. The lid came down, and the dinner began to cook.

On Sunday mornings Father loaded the device into their old car. While the family worshiped in the morning service, their dinner brewed in the car. At meal time Mother Gray served the food.

For a while the family lived in Baldwin Park, attending a church there. It was at the age of fifteen that David Gray received the Holy Ghost and was baptized in Jesus' name by Pastor Henry Smith.

Evidence of rare leadership ability appeared early. Shortly after his receiving the Holy Ghost, he was asked to become the Sunday school superintendent. Wanting to motivate each class to growth, he rummaged through his mother's trunk, and found some old pennants. She gave them to him, and he recut and relettered the pennants, using them for a contest. The growth was immediate; the Sunday school swelled from 50 or 60 to 112—unimaginable growth for that day.

The month he turned fifteen he graduated from Monte Vista Christian School in Watsonville, having also attended Garfield High School and Hazard Street Grammar School in Los Angeles. The principal of that school was a close friend of his mother's, and he remembers the day that the principal came to his classroom to report that there could be no more Bible reading or Christian songs. He recalls

that she broke down and wept as she made the announcement. Later he attended Citrus College in Azusa.

It was during his seventeenth year that at four o'clock one morning David stood alone on a Los Angeles harbor pier. Bewildered, he stared into the dark and down at the gangplank he had just moved across. He had spoken goodbyes to his family. Now he stood, fused with despair as the ship clanged its signals and began edging from the wharf.

His parents and his brother were returning to Japan to join Brother L. W. Coote for another stint of missionary work. The congregation they had turned over to Brother Coote when they left Japan was to become the nucleus of the work, and now he had sent for them. Olive was grown and had recently married Brother Clyde Haney, who lived in Stockton. Only David had been free to see his family off.

The freighter Kirishima Maru was their vessel of travel, and earlier David had sat with his family in their cabin. Eagerly he promised his mother that he would live for God, and that he would meet them in heaven. "I don't expect to see you again, Son," she told him. "The Lord is coming so soon." His dad had told him that when the loading of the freighter was complete the crew would sound the gong to drive out evil spirits, and that visitors on hearing the sound should disembark. David had kissed his family, spoken final goodbyes, and in abysmal despair had walked down the gangplank that led to the pier where he now stood, alone, and in the blackest of night.

It was surely one of the lowest points of David Gray's life. Loneliness sucked him dry; he was an emptied

beach, and the sun had dipped. Then penetrating the cold air, the singing tones of his mother's voice reached him, and he remembered. The nights in their parlor when they had sung that same hymn she sang now. The family had gathered, and his mother, singing, had pumped the organ with her feet. In his loneliness the words of the song whirled around him as the ship pulled away from the dock.

Sweet is the promise, I will not forget thee;
Nothing shall offend or turn my soul away.
Even though the night be dark within the valley.
Just beyond is shining, one eternal day.

I will not forget thee or leave thee.
In my hands I'll hold thee,
In my arms, I'll fold thee.
I will not forget thee or leave thee.
I am thy Redeemer, I will care for thee.

The night mists swallowed the vessel, and the voice faded into the distance. "I felt so alone," Brother Gray reflected. "I don't remember anybody else being there at all. It was so dark."

His father had left a 1926 Dodge car for David to deliver as payment in full for a debt the father owed. After the ship was gone, David routed himself out of Los Angeles on old highway 99 toward Watsonville.

Along the way, he sadly considered the final hours with his family. In his dire sense of loneliness, the words of the familiar hymn came back to him, and he began to sing:

I will not forget thee or leave thee.
In my hands I'll hold thee,
In my arms I'll fold thee.
I will not forget thee or leave thee.
I am thy Redeemer, I will care for thee.

He sang softly at first, full of self-pity, but soon the presence of God routed the despondence and he sang in true worship, and he wept. As he neared the Tagus Ranch, he felt the car shudder. Looking down and noting the speedometer to read over 60 mph, he released the accelerator and pulled to the shoulder of the highway. From the car he danced to a peach tree where underneath it he released himself in worship.

His eyes brimmed as he told the story. "I'll never forget that day. That loneliness left me, and I had an assurance that God was with me."

Somewhat as forerunners of Bible schools, "homes" where promising young workers could live and study and train for gospel work were opened by pastors. One such home was run by a Sister Swinton. It was at this home in Stockton that David Gray's parents had made arrangements for him to live while they worked in Japan.

David began baling hay with Clyde Haney on his ranch. On the third day out, however, he met with a terrible accident. The hay baler was horse drawn. At the end of the day, David and another worker each took an animal, intending to ride them in to shelter for feeding. David rode bareback with no bridle, having just a rope drawn around the horse's neck.

The horse, knowing the location of the barn, galloped in that direction. Coming upon a place where there was a

swale in the ground, the horse swerved to avoid it. An unexpected move to David, he slid off and landed in front of the horse. An inexperienced rider, he did not want to lose control so he hung onto the rope around the horse's neck.

The huge animal galloped over him, tearing his right side. The skin and muscles were pulled off his ribs, and his right arm and leg were severely injured. Blood coursed from his nose and ears. Clyde Haney, running a combine in a far section of the field, but observing the accident, quickly ran across the field to David's side. He thought at first that his brother-in-law was dead. He gathered him up and transported him to a hospital.

That was on Wednesday or Thursday. On Sunday night David maneuvered himself to church, walking with crutches, having his arm heavily bandaged, and in a sling. For some time he had felt the Lord dealing with him concerning the ministry, but he had been reluctant to submit to the calling. His natural love lay with mathematics, and his professor at Citrus College had predicted a sterling career for him in engineering. Yet he was a sincere young man who loved God and who was sensitive to the direction of the Holy Ghost.

The service that night was special. The very air was permeated with the Divine Presence. Sometime during the service, he picked himself up, threw down his crutches, and danced in the Spirit. When he realized what he was doing, he spoke to himself in astonishment: "You can't be dancing! You're injured!"

Later, a person beside him questioned, "Do you know what has happened?"

"Yes," he replied. "Why, yes. I've been healed."

He smiled broadly when he related the story. "It was miraculous!"

At this point he surrendered his life to the Lord, accepting the call to preach.

It was many years later, of course, as we sat together in his living room in El Cajon, when Brother Gray told me that story. As was the case with much of the happening that he called, he was deeply moved at the telling. Often I saw tears in his eyes and heard his throat catch. He is graphic and smooth with words, which enabled me to easily "see" with him as he recounted his life. His sincerity and unfeigned love for God pervaded our conversation. It was not hard to relate to him in the Spirit.

It was while he attended a Bible training school in Oakland that David Gray met his future wife, Miss Emily Belle Butler. He had stayed at Sister Swinton's in Stockton for some time, but serious problems had arisen. Typical of many early Pentecostal churches, this woman pastor, though no doubt sincere, did not have a sound understanding of the Scriptures, or of biblical doctrines. On one occasion when she had her workers gathered, she tried to teach them how to hear from God. "Just speak it right out," she instructed. "As you pray, say aloud the words that come into your head."

Brother David, sincere young man that he was, buried his head, closed his eyes and pressed his way into things spiritual. Suddenly words came into his head, and he thought, "This is it. This is hearing from God." He blurted out the words, "Someone in this room has committed adultery." The room became a tomb. When he opened his eyes, he was alone with Sister Swinton, who glared at him.

One devastating doctrine she taught called for people

to rise above natural desires, even demanding married couples to live platonically. She was able somehow to persuade some young people to live this way for awhile, even to the extent that one young husband had to "kidnap" his wife who was being kept from him.

Naturally this was a source of extreme confusion and distress in the church. Brother David, sensing that these things were not right, moved from Stockton to Brother Harry Morse's school in Oakland, where he met the young lady who would become his wife.

On November 22, 1936, in a Sunday afternoon ceremony Brother David took Emily to be his wife, having obtained the necessary permission from his parents, who were still in Japan. Pastor Harry Morse married them, and Brother Frank Ewart was present. Approximately 350 persons attended the wedding, many of whom were ministers. Immediately after the wedding ceremony, they were formally dedicated to the work of the Lord.

It was a formal wedding, she with a long white gown and veil, and he wearing a dark suit, adorned with a bow tie, and a proper boutonniere.

He looked solemnly at me as he spoke of their wedding. "Sister Gray's mother bought me that suit, and it was special to me. Any other suit I had ever owned had come from thrift stores, or were hand-me-downs. My wedding suit was the first new one I had ever owned."

Brother David had worked at a cannery in San Jose to raise money for the wedding and for the week's honeymoon in San Francisco. The hotel in San Francisco was a sleezy sort of place with a bath down the hall.

On Thursday night of their honeymoon week, they attended Brother Ewart's church in San Francisco.

Brother Ewart had been called away on business, and feeling that the newlyweds might visit, had left word that Brother Gray should preach. And preach he did!

In preparation for traveling to evangelize, Brother Gray bought a car, a two-door coach with metal all around except for the middle of the top, which was an oilcloth sort of material. (Later they discovered that the top leaked so much that they would open an umbrella and hold it over their heads inside the car.) He paid $35.00 for the car, leaving $4.00 for him and Sister Gray to live on until the pay from their first revival. Staying with her parents, they pledged never to tell anyone when they were in need. Instead they would trust God.

Brother Gray gave $2.00 of the money to Sister Gray to keep for things she would need. On Thursday night they attended a special missionary service at Brother Morse's, where Brother Gray sat on the platform. At the conclusion of the service, a special appeal was made for a missionary offering. God spoke to Brother Gray, "Give the $2.00." At first he resisted, remembering the tiny amount of money he had for his family. Then easily he relented, dug into his pocket and dropped in the $2.00, feeling quite thankful that he had previously given a portion to his wife.

He worried how to tell Sister Gray. On the way home he spoke cautiously. "Honey, God spoke to me tonight, and I gave away my $2.00."

In the darkened car she stared at him. "David! God said the same thing to me."

His heart sank. The awful silence chanted at them all the way home. They were absolutely broke, but they had to get to Stockton with the car somehow for their first revival. There were a few necessities they just must have.

Remembering their pledge, they spoke not a word of their need to anyone. For the next two days, they continued their preparations for the trip.

On Saturday Sister Gray walked outside where Brother Gray worked near the car. She handed him an envelope, fresh from the mail delivered that day. As he opened the envelope, a check for $19.71 fell out. Mailed from Japan three months prior, it was destined to arrive at a critical moment in their lives.

Another church had been started in Stockton by Brother Van Buskirk, who had pulled out of Sister Swinton's church because of the extreme problems that were there. The church was named Harmony Chapel. Although the building was not yet finished, it was at this church that Brother and Sister Gray preached their first revival.

After they preached a few revivals, their schedule ran out. When Brother Gray prayed for direction, he felt inspired to go to Pasadena where a church was pastored by two unmarried ladies, Sisters Peden and Andrews. On arriving, they were stunned to find that Sister Peden had died of cancer, and had been buried only the day before. "God has sent you," Sister Andrews cried. "I'm so worn from her long illness, that I need to go to Canada for a rest." So they assumed their first pastorate.

After three months Sister Andrews returned to assume control of the church. Although she just could not preach (she had been the singer when Sister Peden lived), Brother Gray considered her the pastor. The congregation was displeased, so Brother Gray left, sensing trouble and not wanting to contribute to it.

Finally Sister Andrew's church was forced to close when the saints as a body left her. The people sent for

Brother Gray to pastor them. He returned to Pasadena and found a large hall for services. Later he located a building on Orange Grove near Lake. The building was white and had red venetian blinds on the windows. Doing all the work himself, the young pastor built a small platform and all the pews from a pattern he had obtained.

Elderly people comprised a large portion of the church body, several of them coming from the Azusa Street Mission. The Grays were the youngest people in the church, and some of the saints considered their youth a distinct liability. "Now, I love Brother David," one man spoke out in church one night. "I love him like a son, but I do not consider him my pastor. He is an evangelist. And if ever he doesn't preach properly, I will have to speak to him about it." It was a difficult situation for the young pastor.

The church was very missionary minded, sending most of their tithes to foreign fields. For many weeks at a stretch, the Gray household had no meat, being unable to afford any on the $13.00 weekly they were paid. Their first child, Ruth Miriam had been stillborn. Their second child, Naomi, was born while they were at Pasadena. Once when they were given a dozen eggs, they doled them out one a day to feed their baby daughter. That Christmas the church took them a food gift, among which were two hams, one large and one small. They sat in the floor and cried at the sight of that wonderful meat.

Brother Howard A. Goss of the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated came to visit and to encourage Brother Gray to join his organization. After discussing questions that had arisen, Brother Gray agreed to join the PCI, and to attend a district conference that was soon to convene in Monterey Park, where Brother Ewart now pastored.

It was while he was in Brother Morse's church in Oakland that he had been ordained. A minister named Jake Siebol had offered membership in his organization and ordination for a price of $2.00. The primary reason for ordination in an organization was that it entitled the holder of ministerial license to reduced rail fares. Brother Gray had paid his $2.00 and had gone one night to the prescribed service. The people jumped up and down, turned over chairs, and laid hands on him. He didn't feel a thing, he decided, but he was glad that he could travel at the reduced rates. He never saw Jake again, but he retained his certificate of ordination.

"I want to be ordained again," he told Brother Goss. "I do not accept my previous ordination."

At the conference in Monterey Park, the service was a sacred, special time for him, and the laying on of hands was an occasion that would change him. "Something came on me, took hold of me, and anointed me," he recalled. "It made a change in my life." He was twenty-one years old.

One of the godliest men he ever knew was a part of the church in Pasadena. Although the man, Brother George Studd, was very old, Brother Gray rejoiced that he and his wife were members of the church. Brother Gray later preached Sister Studd's funeral. Still later, after Clyde Haney became pastor of the church in Pasadena, he joined with him in preaching George Studd's funeral.

After the Grays were in Pasadena for two and one half years, Brother Gray received a call to pastor the church in Turlock; after praying, he decided it was the will of God for them to go to Turlock. They turned the church in Pasadena over to a couple named DuPrau, who were

down from Canada. Unfortunately the church failed to stay with this man, his ministry being sadly lacking. Later Brother Clyde Haney accepted the pastorate, and the work prospered.

Their first year in Turlock saw continuous revival. There was a special enthusiasm among the young people with whom they worked closely. They had glorious times of fellowship, even driving to Merced for a weekly radio broadcast on station KYOS. The church numbered about 200, being probably the third largest in the state at that time. After three and one half years, they felt the Lord leading them again into evangelistic work. They preached throughout Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Kansas, Pennsylvania, New York, and the Canadian province of Ontario.

While ministering in the midwest area of the United States, Brother Gray felt a burden for San Diego, California. He had never been there, and he did not know whether there was a Jesus Name church in the city. When he returned to California, he went to San Diego, where he felt the Spirit of God confirming that he should establish a church.

On February 11, 1945, with a congregation of five adults and nine children, the first service of Revival Tabernacle was conducted. Brother Gray had searched the city for a suitable building, finally locating a storefront, the Townsend Old Age Pension Hall on 7th Avenue between Broadway and E.

Immediately after opening service in the Townsend Hall, Brother Gray began looking for more suitable quarters. Because of the crowded wartime conditions, this was a difficult task. But Brother Gray located a building that

had once been an auto repair shop, but which was then being used for storage. From the tax files he located the owner, who gave him the name and address of the lessee, who in turn consented to sublet the building to him for one year. They agreed on a rental price of $60.00 monthly.

Extensive remodeling was necessary before the building would be suitable for church services. Brother Gray rewired the building. With some help from navy personnel, he built a platform, installed restrooms, built benches and the altar, and painted the building completely, inside and out.

On the Friday before the scheduled Sunday opening, the building department of the city placed a "condemned" notice on the structure. After a long weekend of despair and frustration, and much praying, Brother Gray presented himself at the appropriate office on Monday morning. The head building inspector, after chiding him for thinking he was an electrician, became very friendly with him. Together with the city fire chief, the inspector met with Brother Gray at the building and "bent" the city building code, if not altogether shattering it completely. Again, God had come to the rescue.

Thus in April, 1945, the congregation met for the first time in their new location. Approximately twenty persons attended. The church grew to about fifty at this location. In August, 1945, another group in San Diego contacted Brother Gray and requested that he also become their pastor. These people agreed that their church building at 16th and E Streets would be turned over to him, and that they would join Revival Tabernacle. Although this property was heavily mortgaged, Revival Tabernacle was now

in its own building. Merely six months had elapsed since their beginning service.

In 1941, while pastoring in Turlock, Brother Gray had been elected as District President of the Pentecostal Gleaners, the youth department of the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated. This department had primarily existed in name only, and the president's responsibilities were vague and meaningless. Brother Gray determined to use his office to organize the department and to provide the youth of the district with viable programs and functions.

He arranged the district into sections, each one having its own youth director, and these persons forming the district youth board. He scheduled regular youth rallies in each section, and he changed the name of the department to Pentecostal Conquerors. He disliked the name Gleaners, feeling that it denoted a lack of challenge, that it suggested that the youth could be expected merely to gather leavings after the reapers had gathered the harvest. It was in Visalia that he conducted the very first district youth convention. The result of these changes was a great surge of revival among the young people of the churches throughout California.

The pioneer efforts of Brother Gray were not unnoticed by leadership of the general organization. When the merger of the two Jesus Name organizations, the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ, was effected in 1945, Brother Gray was called to head up a committee to organize the youth department for the general body. After a year of intense work and prayer, the committee formulated its youth policy, which was structured much like that of the

California District. The 1946 General Conference of the United Pentecostal Church, held in the Kiel auditorium in St. Louis, Missouri, overwhelmingly adopted the policy with no changes. Previously a serious disagreement had developed within the resolution committee, but the General Board had ruled in favor of the youth group. After adopting the policy, the Conference elected Brother Gray as the first General President of the Pentecostal Conquerors, the name having also been accepted by the conference body.

During Brother Gray's three and one half year tenure as president, nationwide contests were held to adopt an official song and to design a pertinent emblem. Concerted effort was made to organize every district in the United Pentecostal Church. This was not easy. Many persons had serious reservations. They feared that the youth would assume too powerful a position within the fellowship. Brother Gray pressed on. Along with other enlightened men, he raised his voice in district and general conventions. Today the youth department of the United Pentecostal Church International is a powerful force in the army of God, its tremendous value to the body unquestioned.

The work in San Diego thrived. In 1951 Brother Gray took a six-month leave of absence to establish the work in Oakland, where services were first held in St. George Hall and later in Havenscourt Women's Club. Upon his return to San Diego, Brother Gray turned the Oakland work over to Brother Johnny Klemin.

By 1952 Revival Tabernacle was so crowded that branch churches were started in Palm City and in Lemon Grove, with members of the home church providing the

nucleus for each work. The building, however, presented problems. It was poorly constructed and infested with termites. A search was begun for a new location.

The congregation, 150 people strong now, moved to 3777 Nile street, but their beautiful new church was soon filled to capacity. They experienced tremendous growth at this location, opening branch churches periodically to relieve the overcrowding and to propagate the gospel. In 1955 a group of twenty-five people from Revival Tabernacle began the church in National City; in 1957 a church was started in Clairemont; in 1961 a mission church opened on Logan Avenue; and in 1962 a work was begun in El Cajon.

Plans were on the drawing board to convert the auditorium to educational facilities and to build a large new church when word came that an interstate freeway was to be built through their property. They would be forced to sell. Searching for a new location began again. After prolonged prayer, God opened up a five-acre hill (later expanded to six), a location of tremendous possibilities in a strategic area. The property had such valuable improvements at such a comparatively low price that Brother Gray felt sure that it was the hand of God. They bought the property and named it Pentecost Park.

The property is an entire hill, dominating the surrounding areas. It gives an unobstructed view for miles in every direction, including that of downtown San Diego. It is located near three main arterials and immediately above and behind the Metropolitan Shopping Center. The property came with a large one-story modern mansion that was converted into an educational unit, a two-bedroom home for the custodian, and another structure

that was made into the publicity building. A large ranch-styled home was also on the property.

Design of the new sanctuary accommodated 600 persons, and it was built in such a way that strategic partitions could be moved to expand the seating to 1000. In November of 1965, the construction was finished, and their first service ensued. Around 250 persons attended the opening Sunday school session.

Pentecost Way is the name of the street that provides access to the church. For my second interview with Brother Gray, I wound my way up it, having arranged to meet at the church. It is impressive property with a large sign highly visible from the streets below. The congregation numbers 600 now, and the auditorium walls that were designed to move are coming down for expansion.

He led me through the property, explaining the construction that was evident on the side of the auditorium—new offices, nurseries, computer room, and a large prayer room. When the expansion is finished, the building will accommodate 1000 people. A two-story educational unit built during 1976 houses Tabernacle Christian Academy, whose services are directed toward apostolic youngsters from kindergarten through high school.

The school library was the room chosen for our concluding discussion. It was a small room, having relatively few books, two or three study carrels, and was rather in disarray. Outside our room we heard the yells and shouts of youngsters in the play area, the slamming of doors, and the ringing of phones. Once our meeting was momentarily interrupted by the door being flung open as a secretary started in. I was impressed. This obviously great man of God was as comfortable and at ease in this situation as

in any other in which I had personally observed him. He is a talented, successful minister, who is honest enough to recognize this fact. Yet he truly exhibits a magnificent spirit of humility. Repeatedly this was demonstrated to me as I interviewed him.

Interviewer: "Brother Gray, why do you feel you have been successful in San Diego?"

Brother Gray: "We have here a freedom of worship, along with a solid preaching of the Word of God—the real balance that is necessary for Christian living. I believe a successful pastor must of necessity be also a teacher. The people know where I stand. There is a confidence that has been built up over the years. I try to love everybody, I really do. I feel like when God sends someone—I don't care how obnoxious they seem to other people—they're my responsibility. They're in my hands. I must do my best for them. I see them as souls Jesus died for."

Interviewer: "Do you have any dreams that are not fulfilled at this point?"

Brother Gray: "Oh, yes. I feel very dissatisfied with my progress, and I know that I have not become what I had hoped to become in God. I know that. I am very well aware of that. Now, when you say dreams, it is my philosophy that if I am what I ought to be, God will take care of His church."

Interviewer: "You mean that as the pastor, if you're what you should be as the pastor?"

Brother Gray: "Yes, as the pastor. So I don't set a goal or say that I'm not a success unless I have a thousand people. That is not my goal. My goal is to be what God wants me to be. If I am that, I believe God will take care of the rest."

Interviewer: "So you don't really do goal-setting for your church?"

Brother Gray: "I won't say that I don't. I do, for the sake of the people, but not to feel like I'm a failure if I don't reach a certain number. I don't feel like my success or failure is measured by the number of people I have. I feel like quality is what counts. It's God's business to add to the church such as should be saved."

Interviewer: "I noticed, of course, your extensive library at your house. Do you usually study there and do you have a routine for study?"

Brother Gray: "Yes, I usually do my studying at home, and Saturday is my day with the Lord and for preparation for Sunday. All week I'm praying and seeking God for thoughts for the services on the weekend and for Wednesday night Bible study. But Saturday I'll bring them all together and wait before the Lord as to which direction He wants me to go."

Interviewer: "Then you might not know until Saturday what you will be preaching on Sunday?"

Brother Gray: "That's right. Now, this has been the way that I have done. I may have a dozen different thoughts, leading in a dozen different directions. Some of them have been developed over a period of weeks or even months, but they're not ready for preaching yet. Others have just come to me that week, and I'm just starting on them. Sometimes they'll just open up, just like that, and I'll get my entire message. But I feel that I don't want to sermonize either. I feel that what I need is a message from God. I spread them out before the Lord and wait on Him for direction. Then I'll get my study books down and go on from there."

Interviewer: "Do you make copious notes, do you file them, and how about the presentation? Do you use the notes a lot?"

Brother Gray: "Yes, I have notes, and I generally use them. But there are times that I feel the Spirit of God has directed me in another direction, and I'll just go that way, and leave myself open to His leading. I've had the Lord completely change a message, and I would not use any notes. There are times when I'll teach or preach on the selected subject, but not use the notes. And I might add, to this day I will not feel right unless I have spent a minimum of three hours of study and prayer over every sermon I preach—a minimum of three hours. Quite often it is much more than that."

Interviewer: "Brother Gray, have you made plans for retirement?"

Brother Gray: "Our church set up a program years ago for a retirement fund, and financially I suppose I could retire right now and never have to worry about living. But I don't feel ready to retire. At the same time I am concerned that I don't hold on longer than I should. I want to know when I am starting to lose the grip, and that God is really through, that someone else could take over, to carry on the work better than I."

Interviewer: "And do you have a plan to transfer?"

Brother Gray: "There is a sealed envelope that is in the safe. In the event that something should happen to me, or at my retirement, the people should open the envelope and there is a plan in there for the church to go by as to the next pastor."

Interviewer: "And you have names on that paper?"

Brother Gray: "I have a list of twenty names."

Interviewer: "Do the people know they are on the list?"

Brother Gray: "I think I've told one or two. The rest I have not."

Interviewer: "May I tell this in the book?"

Brother Gray: "Oh yes. Yes, indeed."

Interviewer: "Were there things in the church years ago that you miss now, and conversely things that you were glad to see go?"

Brother Gray: "Yes, I think both. Let me say this. Now we all need money. I feel we have all suffered from a lack of money. I remember putting ten-cent soles on my shoes, retreading my shoes with that glued sole. I remember putting cardboard in my shoes sometimes.

"I remember one time at Harry Morse's church when I was absolutely flat broke. I was on my face crying to God and somebody came up to me and put his arm around me. I got up and he put out his hand to shake hands with me. When we shook hands, he left a five dollar bill in my hand. I told him of my prayer, and he told me that he had been praying and the Lord directed him to look up a certain verse of Scripture. ('I forget where it is now,') Brother Gray interrupted himself to say. When the brother looked it up, the verse of Scripture said, 'Do good to David,' so he brought me the five dollars."

Interviewer: "That's priceless."

Brother Gray: "Yes, it is. So we all need money, and the Lord has blessed us. We drive good cars, have wall to wall carpeting. We would complain if we didn't have them since we're so used to them. We have things beyond my wildest dreams as a boy. But with these comes a danger. In those days we had to pray down every dime we got. We

had to walk with God and depend on Him. We don't have to do that today. So, although we're blessed, we've lost much in that simplicity of trusting God. We depend on money to do for us, instead of relying on the supernatural power of God. So I think we have lost in that respect. But I wouldn't exchange, because I think that what we have gained in so many other areas of life far outweighs what we have lost."

Interviewer: "How about some positive changes?"

Brother Gray: "I believe in those early days there were allowances given to anybody to believe almost anything they wanted to believe—relative to the new birth, to holiness, to other doctrines. Harry Morse was very liberal in this way, and others were too. The doctrine of the new birth was not made an issue. People just flowed with the tide. Constantly the thing necessary was to keep the unity of the spirit. Now there is a sense in which that can be true, but it went too far. Nobody really knew what they did believe. They could make private interpretations of the Word of God. It wasn't laid down, line upon line, and line upon line with authority and power. The merger did help us establish a solid doctrinal base we could all agree on, and in the main we have come together in doctrine. I believe we have also made strides in outward holiness."

One of the most important contributions to the work of God that Brother Gray has made is his in-depth study of and the establishing of a church along theocratic lines, which he refers to as theocratic church government. Early in his ministry he came to realize that the local churches had carried over some of the methods of the denominational world, ousting pastors at a whim and doing much as they pleased. While traveling in the evangelistic work, he

made an extensive study of the situation by searching the Scriptures and by observing which churches were being blessed of God. It became increasingly clear to him that the thriving churches were ones who had pastors who were in control, yet who were not dictators. Revival Tabernacle was the first church established on the west coast that employed this biblical principle.

Interviewer: "Is preaching the focal point of your ministry? When do you feel most fulfilled?"

Brother Gray: "Let me tell you when I feel fulfilled. When I see a young man who has struggled to get his feet on the solid rock and move ahead for God, I feel like everything is worthwhile. I don't feel like my sermon is the ultimate. It's what is accomplished in the individual's life that gives me joy. It's been one of our specialites here to develop lives to their fullest potential."

Interviewer: "Tell me about your children, David and Deborah. Do you object to the word *adoption?"*

Brother Gray: "Not at all. Some years after Sister Gray and I knew we would be unable to have other children, we decided to adopt. We brought both David and Deborah home directly from the hospital, and as far as we know they have never seen their natural parents."

At their home the day before, I had talked with Deborah about her upcoming wedding. At twenty years old, she is a beautiful, vibrant young lady. David, a very talented twenty-three year old young man was married on June 23, 1984, to a neighboring pastor's daughter, and he lives now in El Cajon not far from his parents. Naomi, their only living child born naturally to them, now lives in Los Angeles with her husband, John Burrow. The family is close and warm, and the distance from their homes is

such that Brother and Sister Gray frequently enjoy visits with their grandchildren, John III and Mindi.

When my interview with Brother Gray was finished, my mind whirled with his memories; in the early days of finding his way, he had thought he must go to China; the abhorrence he felt of the big red cars in Los Angeles; in his boyhood he had placed rocks on the rails to be ground into sand; his working for Sister Nelson in Fresno and gathering marginal food from merchants to hand out to the needy; and the cooking of sausages on the manifold of his delivery truck for breakfast as they made their rounds. "You've never had breakfast until you've had pork sausage burned on one side and raw on the other," he had told me with a chuckle. I recalled his spiritual struggle when the devil tormented him so that young David got up and literally fought with him dancing around the room; he threw the devil out the door. My mind went to the day he was healed of the heat stroke he had suffered while building a brush arbor; then there was the revival in which he was paid one dollar for preaching a whole week; the trailer with holes that dripped water onto their bed; and the pastor that drank the juice from the fruit, giving the pulp to him and Sister Gray.

I felt his despair the day on the mountain pass when the head on his 1927 Chevy cracked and he refused to spend the tithe money he had. Instead he bought a head on which he had to work late into the night, grinding the valves. When he arrived at his destination the next day, a seven-dollar check was at his breakfast plate!

I pictured Brothers Morse, Ewart, Vouga, Guidroz, and Andrew Urshan, greatly influenced his life. I sensed his enthusiasm as he preached to empty benches in the

tent he slept in to guard. I tried to recall the names on the impressive list of ministers he had developed. (Sister Gray has been known to say, "He has been called 'the maker of men.'")

I also recalled the words of my editor who warned, "Don't make a God out of him. Let us see the humanity." I tried, I really did. I looked for flaws and searched for his Achilles heel, knowing it surely must be there.

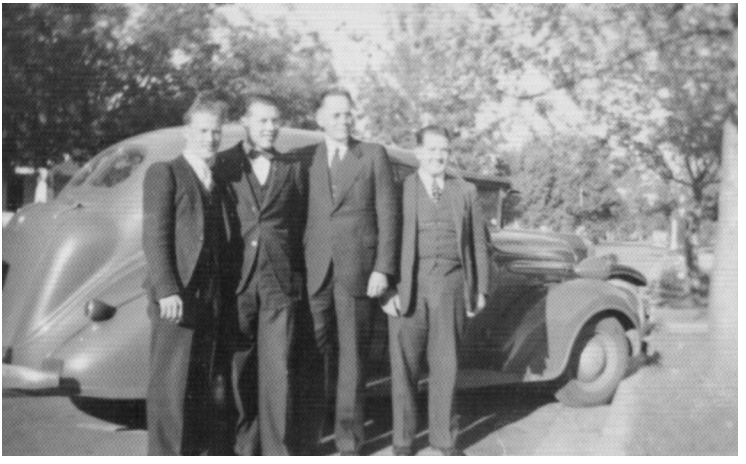
But as I stopped at the bottom of the hill on which the church stood as a beacon to look again his way, it was all I could do to refrain from saluting.



Rev. and Mrs. David F. Gray.



In evangelistic work.



Lt. to rt. unknown, David F. Gray, A. O. Moore, Paul Gregory.



Revival Pentecostal Tabernacle San Diego, CA 1980.



WILLIS MC CLELLAN GREER

By Ann Brinkley Luther

On the warm summer day of August 11, 1906, Willis McClellan Greer was born in a one room log cabin in Benton County, Tennessee, near the small town of Camden. Unknown to anyone at that time, this infant was born in an area that was destined in just a few short years to become the cradle of Oneness Pentecost for that area of the United States.

Willis McClellan was the fourth of seven children born to Jim Willie Greer and Elizabeth McEwen Greer. The other children were Maude, Vivian, Allie, William, who died at the age of nine, Earnestine, who died at the age of three, and Truman.

Willis McClellan's parents named him after two young men in the community whom they admired very much. They were Willis Cole, a first cousin of his father, and

McClellan Vick, an outstanding young man in the community.

Although Jim Willie Greer did not possess a great deal of money or wealth, he was a well-known and much loved man in the county. He had a reputation for being honest and upright in his work at the sawmill, cotton gin, and gristmill where he worked. He and his wife, Elizabeth McEwen Greer were both born in Tennessee of Scotch-Irish parents.

These were honest, hard working people but times were hard and although they did all they could for their children, there were usually only the bare necessities available. As a result, all the brothers and sisters learned early in life some valuable lessons of sacrifice and hard work.

The children were expected to work picking cotton which Brother Greer loved to do lying flat on his back on the cotton sack reach up to pull the boles. When his sister Maude would scold him, he would soothe her ruffled spirit by telling her stories and getting her mind off his lack of work.

In the country there was always chores to be done. Young Willis was expected to go out into the woods, find the cows, round them up and drive them late every afternoon. However, it was not all work and no play; there was always something exciting to do. The play was simple but satisfying—a game of marbles, spin-the-top, baseball, walking a rail fence barefooted in summer and an inexhaustible number of ways to play in the ice and snow in the winter time.

The first school attended by Willis McClellan was the Post Oak School in Benton County, which consisted of

only one room, heated by a wood stove and with no electricity. Although it was not very comfortable for the physical body, Willis learned well the fundamentals of education, which provided a good foundation for learning in later life.

His teacher felt that six-year-old Willis was exceptional because of his extraordinary memory and perception. This special perception demonstrated itself quite well on a particular spring day. It was Saturday, and the ground was soft and damp as the warm spring sunshine was enticing it out from under the long, hard freeze of winter. As the children were playing around the yard, his youngest brother, Truman, became quite ill.

Their worried mother immediately made the small child come in from play. She put him to bed and began giving him a homemade remedy. Young Willis went to his busy mother and asked her, "Mom, please give Earnestine some medicine too. I feel that she is very sick." His mother soon forgot the request because the little girl did not really appear to be sick.

As Willis McClellan went about his work and play the remainder of the day, it was with a heaviness of spirit. He would return to the house again and again to request his mother to treat Earnestine with the simple home treatment. The young mother with more work than she could get done and with one child already sick in bed, did not pay much attention to the concerned boy. It was only late the following day that the little girl began showing signs of listlessness and sickness. By 9:00 PM that same night, she died of an unknown malady.

Social life in the community always revolved around the home. When Willis was twelve years of age, a group of

young people gathered in his home for talk and music. He made a speech about the war, then just over in 1918, that caused them all to sit still and listen. Even then he remembered events like a history book, just like his grandmother who was well-known for her splendid memory.

Church life in the county consisted of once-a-month services, which were conducted by a circuit-riding Methodist preacher who pastored from three to five churches at a time. The building was just a simple one room building with swinging oil chandeliers in the middle of the room and oil lamps with reflectors that were nailed to the unpainted wall. It was heated in the winter by a woodburning stove and cooled in the summer by palm leaf fans, if one was fortunate enough to own one. "Big Meeting Time" was one week in the summer. It would begin on a Sunday and usually closed the following Friday night. Services were both day and night, as crops were laid by and the farmers were not too busy at that time.

The church building was two miles away from the little log cabin where the Greers lived. Usually they rode in the horse-pulled wagon, but many times they would just walk. They did not attend much in the winter due to the bad weather which made the dirt roads a quagmire of deep ruts and muddy paste.

These were days of real spiritual services where many repented and were baptized. There were times of great rejoicing and worship in the services. It was during these times that there was planted in the heart of little blond-haired Willis McClellan a respect and deep longing for a Christ, whom he did not personally know.

In the early months of 1920, Brother Greer's father's health began declining rapidly, even though he was only

fifty years old. Due to the hard work of the farm, it became necessary for Jim Willie Greer to began looking for another way to earn a living for his growing family. In May, 1920, Jim Greer and his oldest son, Allie, moved to Bemis, Tennessee, to work in the cotton mill. As soon as they could get a house, the rest of the family moved in June, 1920. Shortly afterwards, young Willis McCellan himself went to work in the cotton mill at the age of fourteen. The industrious young man was soon promoted to a foreman, and he served in this capacity over the factory for many years, working until the year 1942.

Jim Greer's health did not hold up long in the cotton mill, and in November of 1920 it became necessary for him to quit work altogether. Tragedy struck the struggling family a few short months later on January 10, 1921, when Mr. Greer died. His death placed much responsibility upon the older children, especially Willis Greer. In those days there were no welfare programs or special agencies to assist families in need, so all members of the family did their part. Brother Greer's mother opened a "boarding house" and "Mammy" Greer, as she soon became known, gained a reputation in the small town of being a good cook and determined provider and protector of her little family.

The General Superintendent of the Bemis Cotton Mill soon took an interest in Brother Greer, recognizing his administrative and leadership abilities, and at age twenty, he was made manager of the Supply Room, where he continued for some time.

Willis McClellan Greer soon became quite the man about town. Successful in his work and earning a good salary for those days, he bought his first car, a little brown

sports model Ford Roadster. His ability to tell an interesting story, his quick wit and his keen sense of humor always seemed to make him the life of the party at social events.

It was in the year of 1925 that Willis, now nineteen, began to take a certain beautiful dark-haired girl home after the parties. He was soon captivated by her beauty, her out-going personality and fun-loving ways. It was on one of those first walks to her front door that Odis Vaughn remarked that "she was going to be an old maid." Willis Greer laughingly replied, "Perhaps I could cause you to change your mind." This he set about to do with the greatest of pleasure.

Over the next three years the young couple continued going to places of the world and doing things that unsaved youth did in the "roaring twenties." Since they both owned Model T Fords, Odis a touring car and Willis a sports model roadster, they had a lot of fun and good times together. After dating for a year and a half, they became engaged but no specific wedding date was set.

In 1924, Brother Greer's oldest sister, Maude Greer Luther, began attending services at the Pentecostal Church in Bemis. There she made her way to an altar of repentance, received the Holy Ghost and later was baptized by Brother A. D. Gurley. None of her brothers or sisters would have anything to do with the "holy roller" church; but, after two years of prayer and being faithful to her Lord, her mother, Elizabeth Greer, was baptized in the precious name of Jesus. She received the Holy Ghost in 1926 while taking communion in the Bemis church. Mrs. Greer had been a member of the Methodist church for forty years at the time she received the Holy Ghost.

Events were also destined soon to make a change in the life of Willis McClellan. His mother asked him to stay home on a particular Sunday for dinner as she had asked Brother A. D. Gurley to dine. She wanted her son to meet this dynamic man of God. He consented to stay for dinner with the preacher, but it was two years later before the results of that visit came to the forefront.

Brother Gurley talked to the young man for the remainder of the afternoon, encouraging him to give his heart to the Lord and dedicate his life to serve God. For the next two years, Brother Gurley regularly requested prayer for the worldly-minded young man. He would say, "Sister Greer's boy needs to be saved. He would be useful in the kingdom of God."

Brother Greer thought about his conversation with Brother Gurley a lot, but he continued to run from the Lord until, on one March night, he became very sick.

It was on a Sunday night in March of 1928. While visiting in the home of his soon-to-be wife, Miss Odis Vaughn, he became very ill. He managed to drive himself home where he fell into bed. He was not able to get out of bed the following morning and go to his job. His mother finally prevailed upon him to let her call the preachers. Brother Gurley and Brother James W. Wallace arrived at the home around 9:00 AM, after talking briefly with Willis, they asked if they might pray for him.

At this time, Brother Greer's mother was still running a boarding house. When the boarders came in for lunch on this day, there was none. Instead, the prayer meeting was still going on—lasting until 1:00 PM when Brother Greer surrendered his heart to the Lord midst great

rejoicing. He was later baptized in a lake in Jackson, Tennessee, where Truex Chevrolet car dealership now stands.

After several months of seeking the Holy Ghost, Brother Greer accompanied Brother Gurley to Corinth, Mississippi, where he was conducting a revival. Although it was a great revival with many praying through, Brother Greer came back to Bemis empty and discouraged. He had just about decided to give up and cease seeking for the Holy Ghost. On the job the next day, Brother Greer was sitting at his desk when a man came by and enthusiastically stated, "I had a prayer meeting at my home last night, and several got the Holy Ghost."

Brother Greer did not say much at the time, but later he went up into the factory where the people who had received the Holy Ghost were working, and talked with them about their experience. He later talked with the same man and asked him if he was going to have a prayer meeting that night. His reply was, "We can." The man somehow got together a group and organized a prayer meeting for that night.

Brother Greer and Odis Vaughn attended that prayer meeting on the night of August 31, 1928, in the home of D. L. Branch. There God gloriously filled Brother Greer with the Holy Ghost. Some wondered if the girl he had his heart set on would quit him now, but quite the opposite was true. Although she and her family were members of the Baptist church, when Brother Greer repented, she never cut her hair again and never went to another movie or worldly place from that day on. She jokingly said she did not marry a preacher. Two years after their marriage, she followed in his footsteps and was baptized by Brother

A. D. Gurley in 1930. Shortly thereafter, she received the Holy Ghost in a campmeeting where Brother Frank Ewart was preaching.

On Saturday, September 22, 1928, Willis McClellan Greer and Odis Vaughn, along with another couple, were married in Jackson, Tennessee. The ceremony was performed by Reverend Alvin West as the couple sat in the back seat of an automobile. This rather humble and intimate wedding was the beginning of a loving relationship that spanned over half a century of committed devotion that was anything but uneventful.

After a short honeymoon in a Memphis hotel, the young couple returned to Bemis to live in an apartment in his mother's boarding house on the corner of Tennessee and B Street.

God blessed the marriage of Willis McClellan and his lovely wife, Odis, in many, many ways. Brother Greer was soon pressed into active service in the church. He began teaching a Sunday school class even when, according to his own statement, "I didn't know Genesis from Revelation." Some four months after receiving the Holy Ghost he was appointed to serve on a committee to preside over the treasury and also to select a place and make plans for a new church building. This committee selected and secured the lots where the Bemis Pentecostal Church now stands.

He held many and varied positions in those early days under the ministry of Brother Gurley. Soon after acknowledging his call to the ministry in 1930, he began preaching in the local church, especially on Sunday nights. In 1931 he was elected the first President of the Gleaners and did a lot of preaching in the youth services where

they had scores of young adults coming to the Lord. There were from fifty to sixty single young people in the youth group during this time. Under Brother Greer's direction, the youth would have cottage prayer meetings where many of them were slain under the power of God and filled with His Spirit. They just set chairs out for the altar. After prayer meeting, you would not ask, "Did anyone receive the Holy Ghost?" but you would ask, "How many received the Holy Ghost tonight?"

In 1932 Brother Greer was elected the choir director. The following year he was appointed to the church board, on which he served until he was elected pastor at the Finley Pentecostal Church in Finley, Tennessee, in late 1937. He served this church for eighteen months. Those were very trying but rewarding times. He was still working in the factory and driving the distance of 110 miles several times a week and taking his young family with him part of the time. The family now consisted of himself, his wife and three small daughters. They were Dorothy Sue, born November 9, 1929; Shirley Maxine, born November 11, 1934; and Patricia Ruth, born January 10, 1936. A son, William Wray, was born several years later on December 26, 1943.

Before and during the pastorate in the Finley church, Bro. Greer preached around the area in brush arbors, tents, street meetings, and in school houses. He also preached in the local church and filled other pulpits in established churches during the absence of their pastors and for revival meetings.

In the year 1932, he attended his first General Conference in the Pentecostal Church Incorporated. Brother Greer along with five other adults traveled, along with

their luggage in a 1929 Model A Ford to Little Rock, Arkansas.

The conference was held at the fairgrounds and the men's dorm was an old display barn. On the first night of the conference, Brother Greer slept on an old army cot without a sheet, quilt, pillow or mattress. On the second night he was given a pad for the cot which made it a little more comfortable.

The great surprise and miracle at this Conference for Brother Greer happened one day when the pastor at the Little Rock Church, Brother G. H. Brown, rushed down to the conference hall and wanted someone to preach for a radio broadcast. He chose Brother Greer as speaker, Sister Catherine (Mrs. M. H.) Hansford as piano player and four others to sing. How these seven people got into a 1931 Model A Ford still is a mystery. Brother Greer had never been in a studio or before a microphone. His text for this never-to-be-forgotten sermon was John 3:16. He still laughs and reminisces about the one time he was the radio preacher at a General Conference.

Even with keeping up this rather arduous schedule, he continued to hold his position in industry. He earned a promotion in 1938 to head foreman over the spinning department in the factory. His personal desire was to become the General Superintendent of the mill when the position became vacant. This would have been a very prestigious and powerful position in the small community. However, the call of God became stronger than personal desire and he answered the call to become the assistant pastor to Brother J. W. Wallace in his home church in Bemis. While there in 1940, he was ordained to the preaching ministry by Brother A. D. Gurley and

Brother J. W. Wallace.

Brother Greer relates how he and Brother Wallace would both be teaching a Bible class on Sunday morning in the same auditorium—one on each side of the middle aisle. There was not a curtain or divider of any kind down the aisle, and he would sometimes hear himself repeating a sentence a few words behind Brother Wallace. One would just have to get louder than the other to be heard.

Brother Greer served as assistant pastor to Brother Wallace until early in 1941 when Brother Wallace resigned and moved to Nashville, Tennessee. God had a plan for Brother Wallace in Nashville, and he became founding pastor of the West Nashville Church and did pioneer preaching for all the works east of the Tennessee River since there were none at that point in time. Brother Wallace had been a steadfast, reliable leader, a man of peace and faith. The qualities of this great man very deeply and lastingly influenced Brother Greer and are still his own strong characteristics to this day.

On February 16, 1941, the Bemis Pentecostal Church elected Brother Greer to become their pastor by a 100% vote. He faithfully and diligently served in this capacity until September 2, 1962, when he resigned after twenty-one years of successful pastoring.

Immediately after his election, the church plunged into a building program and began to grow in every respect. The Sunday school grew from 130 to over 300. Revivals were held where many came to the Lord.

In the same year, 1941, on September 20, a radio broadcast live from the church was started. It was called "The Bemis Pentecostal Hour." It was said by many in the community to be the best religious broadcast at that time.

It was broadcast live from the church on Sunday afternoon. All of the singing and preaching were done in front of the large audience that would gather each Sunday afternoon for the broadcast. Brother Greer went to three live broadcasts a week for a while, then to an 8:00 AM broadcast on Sunday morning when the entire adult choir would often come to sing and then return at 9:45 for Sunday school. Later the Sunday morning worship service was broadcast, and then the Sunday night worship service. At the conclusion of many of these Sunday night broadcasts, sinners under conviction from hearing the broadcast on their radios would make their way to the church before the altar service was over and pray through.

In the building program of 1941, the church building was completely remodeled, office space built, and a new Sunday school annex was added. Another annex was added in 1949; then the fellowship hall was built in 1955. A prayer room was added in 1958 and a new entrance to the sanctuary was completed the same year. Property surrounding the church building was acquired and made into parking lots. A parsonage was built in 1947 and the last parsonage was acquired in 1958.

Brother Greer was a progressive Sunday school oriented pastor with many ideas that were both innovative and progressive. The Sunday school more than doubled during his pastorate. At the time of his resignation in 1961, the Sunday school had ten departments with a staff of eighty-six workers. Brother Greer instituted the Pastor's Council, which met weekly. Staff meetings were held monthly, and he also had a Board of Education meeting monthly.

During his years at Bemis, the church enjoyed the ministry of many great preachers including Frank Ewart, B. H. Hite, A. D. Gurley, V. A. Guidroz, C. M. Becton, Harry Branding, N. A. Urshan, Howard A. Goss, A. T. Morgan, S. W. Chambers, G. L. Glass, Sr., Paul Gregory and many others. Many revivals lasting three to six weeks, six nights a week, were conducted by Brother and Sister Norman Paslay (when the record Sunday school attendance of 646 was set), Sister Lyndal Kraus and the Kinzie Evangelistic Party.

Brother Greer was not only busy building a church during those years, but his interest also reached out around the state and nation. He served on the District Board of the South Eastern District from March, 1941, until the merger in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1945. Then he served on the newly formed board of the new Southern District of the United Pentecostal Church.

Brother Greer gives the following account of the merger conference in 1945: "The conference where the merger took place met in St. Louis, Missouri, in September, 1945, in the Kiel Auditorium. The vote to merge was taken by the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated in the Kiel Auditorium and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ met and took their vote in Brother Guinn's church. After all votes were taken the other group met with the Pentecostal Church Incorporated in the Kiel Auditorium, I remember that suddenly the conference was filled with people who were strangers—people I had not seen before. But, of course, through the years I have become acquainted with them and learned to love, work with, and appreciate many of them greatly."

The new Southern District consisted of Tennessee,

Mississippi, and Alabama. One of the first things they did was to purchase a Bible school in Tupelo, Mississippi, which became known as the Tupelo Bible Institute.

At the district conference in Bemis, Tennessee, in April, 1949, the conference delegates voted to make each state a separate district. Brother Greer was elected by 100% vote as the first district superintendent of the Tennessee District, which office he held for thirty years. He was elected to the superintendent's office fifteen times—this by acclamation as long as it was allowed. He had opposition only two times in the entire thirty years.

His first official act was to call a board meeting. They voted to send out a letter to all the preachers, but they discovered they did not own a postage stamp. This has been laughed about many times.

Throughout his ministry, Brother Greer attended over forty General Conferences, not missing one the entire time he was on the General Board. He recalls many times when both General and District Board meetings have lasted throughout the night as they wrestled with problems and difficult situations.

When Tennessee became a separate district in 1949, the old Southern District had a campground in Mississippi, and that usual procedure of attending this camp was followed for the summer of 1949. After that year, the Tennessee District sold their interest in the campground, which made further meetings there impossible. However, the people of Tennessee had an inherent love for campmeetings. It was this particular region, over half a century before that witnessed the great religious fervor in the campmeetings of that day. Tennessee had been a part of the old campmeeting league that was formed under the

able leadership of Brother A. D. Gurley in the year of 1941, which later became the official campmeeting of the Southern District of the United Pentecostal Church.

Naturally, with such a background, it was imperative that a place for campmeetings be found. In April of 1951, land was purchased and an able building superintendent, Brother J. W. Wallace, went to work. By July of the same year, he had a rustic tabernacle, dining hall and other buildings for the first great campmeeting of the Tennessee District. "Holiness Hill," as it has been named by the local residents, is situated on a heavily wooded hill overlooking the beautiful Tennessee River. Brother Norman and Sister Mary Alice Pasley were the evangelists for that first and memorable campmeeting.

Property was purchased in Jackson, Tennessee, in 1972, for a District Office building. The building has been completed and the Tennessee District can well be proud of this modern brick structure.

Brother Greer pastored the Bemis church and was Tennessee District Superintendent for over thirteen years before he became full time as superintendent. There came the time when the load was too heavy and one responsibility had to go. Brother Greer thought that after over twenty-one years as pastor, the greater challenge was in the district, so this was the choice in September, 1962.

As superintendent he has traveled innumerable miles, preached countless sermons, officiated in scores of special services such as note-burning of church property, anniversaries of churches all over the district. No church was ever too small or too large for him to visit.

In April, 1974, the district officials and ministers celebrated the 25th Anniversary of the Tennessee District

and also Brother Greer's 25th Anniversary as superintendent. There were special banquets, meetings, gifts and a lovely silver-covered commemorative album, which portrayed in pictures and words the involvement of the Tennessee District, United Pentecostal Church in the worldwide work of the kingdom of God.

Sister Greer's health began to fail and Brother Greer could never feel free to leave her when she had been so true when he had needed her so much through the years. Under the cares of life and long years of service, he resigned as district superintendent in the midst of his thirtieth year of office.

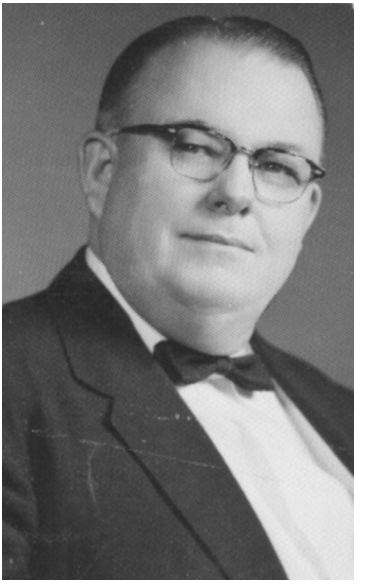
Brother Greer spent the next five and one-half years caring for his beloved companion. He would preach close by and go on long trips when she was able to go along. His dear wife for over fifty years was promoted to glory on August 25, 1983.

Brother Greer is now Superintendent Emeritus of the Tennessee District and an honorary member of the General Board. He still travels widely in the district filling pulpits for special services and days. He is greatly enjoying serving with his "son in the gospel" and great-nephew, Brother Bill Luther (grandson to Brother Greer's sister, Maude, who was the first member of his family to receive the Holy Ghost) in the Bemis Pentecostal Church. He is teacher of the Men's Bible Class, where exciting things are happening. He taught a Bible Class in the same place over fifty years ago, and laughingly relates that "history is repeating itself."

He is very active in the hospital and sick visitation and has been actively involved in door to door contacts in a very successful "Enroll To Grow" campaign. He has a

study at the church with his "old desk" and study books installed.

Brother Greer is a man of principle and strong convictions—firm and uncompromising with that which he knows to be wrong—yet kind, considerate and gentle with those who need help. He is a man of phenomenal wisdom, a lover of peace, and gifted with an ability to deal with complex problems and help resolve differences between people. His distinctive sense of humor and benevolent smile have made him a man much loved, appreciated, and highly respected by those who know him.



Rev. W. M. Greer



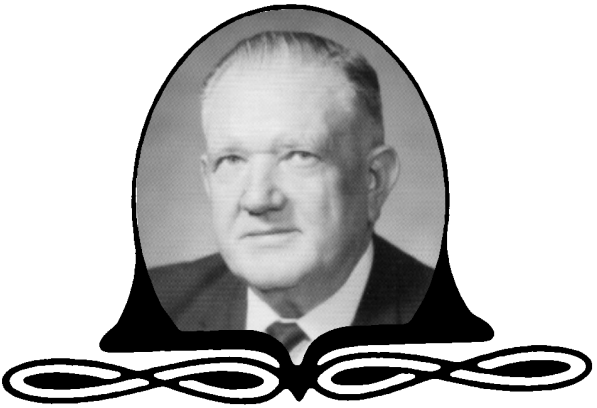
Mrs. W. M. Greer



Rev. and Mrs. W. M. Greer.



The W. M. Greer Family, 1944.



PAUL GREGORY

By Alice Price

"Bless God! Every time I pass a thirty-one flavors ice cream parlor my taste buds stand up and salute. That's right! That's right! And . . . heaven is going to be Big Rock Candy Mountain and Hershey bars!"

This indomitable man, preaching the Beulah Campmeeting for the Western District, had the masses longing for heaven when he interjected the most delectable way he could think of to describe its mighty worthwhileness. Ice cream was one thing he could not get enough of—and heaven was the other. Preaching, to him, was like standing in the entryway.

He roared and puffed like a monstrous steam engine skimming the railroad tracks, melting snow into rivulets of waters. Thirsty souls drank of the living water as he thundered by.

Where did this mighty preacher get his start?

"Despise not the day of small things;" for Paul Gregory came from the little town of Chester, Arkansas, which boasted of a warmth-filled, friendly post office and a forbidding dental store. These comprised the whole business community, and when the echo vibrated from one of the humble homes, the news, "It's a boy!" spread quickly to announce that Paul Gregory had chosen Chester as his place of birth.

Dad placed a bold, red lopsided circle around August 12, 1910, on the calendar. Paul had four years for weaning, training, and loving before his brother Silas joined him to complete the Gregory family. Paul took great pleasure in protecting his younger brother as the two of them marched toward manhood. One day, not many years after Silas' birth, the little family car was loaded from rumble seat to running board with the family's possessions, and the four Gregorys made a final stop to bid the postmaster goodbye.

"So you all are heading out West;" the bespectacled man stated flatly as they closed their post office box for the last time. Rubbing his shining pate, he added, "We'll miss you'ens around here—but then I guess you may be back sometime, you suppose?"

Paul had a hold on Silas' hand as he looked toward his dad. Though he was brave, he had always been timid, and somewhat bashful. Saying goodbye to all the familiar things took some of the excitement away from the adventure of the long move to California.

The noise of the motor carried the Gregorys out of Chester and straight down the long, skinny road. Paul and Silas peeked out of the small space between boxes left for

looking and waved the little town out of their lives.

Mother grew silent as she thought back on the things left behind, things that were so much a part of her. None seemed to matter, however, as much as the little church where she had received the Holy Ghost.

Her pastor endured the rotten-egg bombardment that came on the night she received the Holy Ghost. In fact, she remembered feeling some of the splattered residue slip from her hair just as the Holy Ghost fell upon her. If her husband had not been such a kind, faithful man to his family and his God, she perhaps would not have wanted to make the move. But it was his desire. They would all adjust to the new life.

The palm-lined streets of Santa Ana were a welcome sight after biting the desert dust which seemed to be heated seven times hotter than it was ever imagined to be. Paul looked at the tall stately trees in wonderment. In due time, he reluctantly trotted off to school.

Revivals came and went, and the Gregory family attended as many as were in driving distance; yet Paul never gave his heart to God.

The church at 1036 East First Street was located in Belvedere, which has long since been swallowed up by Los Angeles proper. Sitting a few rows forward and to the left was a lady-like little girl—always prim and proper, who hardly knew Paul was there. They grew at the same time, sang the same songs, seldom spoke, and parted to go home—never suspecting their future roles together.

Eventually the Gregorys attended a Spanish church nearer their Santa Ana home and Paul continued his growing, schooling, and wonderment. There always seemed to be a certain marvel in Paul toward life, and all

of its mysteries had a luster. It was with this attitude that he sat in Brother Frank J. Ewart's church, listening to the preacher expound God's Word.

Nineteen years had turned its pages since his birth in Chester, Arkansas, when once again the Gregory family found themselves attending the Belvedere church. During one service, something grabbed Paul's soul, and conviction compelled him to his knees. When the repenting had ended and the praises broke forth, it was as a volcanic explosion. The Holy Ghost language rolled fluently from his lips. One hour . . . two hours . . . three hours . . . and the door of the church slowly creaked open.

A strange-capped man stood momentarily at the door—then edged closer and closer to where Paul was. The afternoon's sun was nearing the last half of its journey and the pastor and his wife were the only two left from the morning service.

"Is this a synagogue?" the man queried in awe and bewilderment. Obviously, the man was a Jewish rabbi.

"No" Brother Ewart answered surprisedly. "Why do you ask?"

"This boy—this boy, here. He is Jewish?"

"No, sir, he isn't;" Brother Ewart replied.

The rabbi waited in rapt astonishment while listening intently.

"Where did he learn so perfectly the Hebrew language?"

"Rabbi," Brother Ewart explained carefully, "this lad does not know the Hebrew language. He is being filled with God's Holy Spirit."

"He is speaking perfect Hebrew," the rabbi declared. "He is telling me about the Messiah—and my need of

being saved." The rabbi appeared stunned. He turned and slowly left, looking back and shaking his head while declaring, "I don't understand—I don't understand."

A call of God fell like a mantle on Paul's shoulders and he immediately was changed. His ability was apparent and the anointing was mightily upon him—but at the same time his timidity, bashfulness, and wonderment did not leave him.

Many daughters of ministers and members of the assembly began to cast a wistful eye toward this promising young preacher. Some suggested he might consider their daughter and would invite him over to have fellowship at their homes. But the prim little girl of childhood had grown into a charming young lady of reserve and this one charming lady of reserve had a sterling quality that he secretly admired the most.

"Praise the Lord. We are going to have a good meeting." Paul Gregory spoke so fast that it was difficult to understand him. When he spoke to Naomi Smith, his charming one, he would hasten off immediately to keep from turning red in the face.

His testimonies were powerful—but one had to listen closely—for they were also fast, furious, and short.

The day of days came when Paul received an invitation from the Smith's house to have dinner. This gave him the opportunity to talk to gracious Naomi. He quickly found that she was easy to talk to. Paul became relaxed and comfortable that evening, but as he and Naomi sped to church afterward, the eucalyptus trees bent as they whipped by, headed for worship in the house of God.

The wedding bells spruced up and began their merry ring on December 7, 1935. The world was in the great

depression at that time, but Paul and Naomi did not find it out until they decided to leave their little place of housekeeping for the evangelistic field.

Brother Harry Morse, the pastor of the big downtown Mission in Oakland, California, and his wife planned on a two week vacation at the lake. They began looking for a good preacher for the mission while they were gone. Brother Morse called Brother David Gray to ask his advice. "Brother Gray, do you happen to know of a man to help us?" Brother Gray recommended Paul Gregory.

Arriving for their first revival, Paul and Naomi found themselves sitting in the big mission. A beer joint was above the mission, and the city bums lined up on the dirty street out front. The Morses ran a home for training would-be preachers and would-be preachers' wives. Whosoever wanted to trust God for their daily bread and manna from heaven, willing to apply themselves to study and prayer, were welcome. The soup-line was also available as God provided.

During the revival, Paul preached fire and brimstone messages, causing saint and sinner alike to cry aloud. Sometimes a drunk would open the door, straighten his crooked tie, try to walk dignified to the front pews, roll the brim of his hat reverently, and take a seat. Trained bouncers standing by the door kept a close watch on the congregation. Anyone whose behavior was not proper was shown the exit, or more vigorously helped to find the sidewalk if cooperation was beyond his ability.

God gave a mighty revival! When Brother Morse came home, he felt its impact and extended the two weeks to four. One night while preaching with power, Paul noticed that the knee of his pants was wet. He did not think the

perspiration would have reached his knees. Bending forward, he rubbed his pants—wet it was. But how? He looked up and saw the leaking roof just before he smelled the beer. A drunk had spilled the contents of a bottle or mug on a weak plank and Paul was getting the residue below. The yeasty odor followed him home.

The revival stretched into six weeks. Miracles and wonders were witnessed before they reluctantly closed the great revival.

Brother Morse recognized that Brother Gregory was a delightfully power-packed young preacher, and he wanted to introduce him to the ministers across the nation. He used the phone to call his brethren. "Central? I wish to speak to Reverend Hite, H-I-T-E, in St. Louis, please!" "Hello, Brother Reeter of Illinois? This is Brother Morse of Downtown Mission, Oakland, California!" "Yes!—I wish to speak to Reverend Bibbs in Indiana!"

The Pentecostals soon heard of Paul Gregory, and he and his sweet companion hit the road to become blessed and to be a blessing at campmeetings throughout the south and midwest.

They rolled into St. Louis, Missouri, to be greeted by the soot that began immediately to settle on Naomi's white blouse. The smoke poured from the factories, painting the red-brick city a melancholy gray.

Brother Hite had invited him to stay in St. Louis while speaking for the Missouri Pentecostal Church Inc. campmeeting. Brother and Sister Gregory admired and loved Brother Hite, recognizing that he was a great man of character. God had found Brother Hite walking the cluttered streets of his hometown, Nashville, Tennessee, discouraged, sick, and dying of tuberculosis. One day God

permitted a tract of salvation to flutter at his feet.

Upon being healed and delivered, Brother Hite reached out to others in order to rescue them from sin. God greatly used his testimony and ministry.

After a glorious week of campmeeting preaching, Paul and Naomi were invited by Brother A. D. Gurley to preach at Corinth, Mississippi.

Paul was filled with wonder at the many sights and sounds of the South. The swamps, the fireflies, the summer storms, the sweat, and the scare of any minute tornado kept his curiosity and excitement at its peak!

One night after Paul preached long and hard to a spellbound audience with one of his never failing judgment-filled, spine-chilling sermons, and after the workers prayed loudly with the soul-searching seekers, the Gregorys and Gurleys left for home and to Paul's favorite ice cream treat. They noticed that clouds were climbing upon the backs of each other and that a distinct rumble echoed across the horizon. At home the Gregorys said their goodnights to the Gurleys and closed their door of their bedroom.

Naomi crawled into bed and was soon fast asleep while Paul, clad in his night-shirt, indulged in his favorite pastime—reading. Secondhand books were piled high at his disposal, and he savored the flavor of several before finally delving into one of particular interest.

Suddenly a sharp crack, followed by a jet-thundering rumble that rolled across miles of heaven lit the sky and earth such as Paul had never seen. Light flashed into the shade-drawn room with such brightness that Paul jumped to his feet, and jerked his head back and forth to look for its source. When he recognized a dreadful storm threat-

ened, he tiptoed across the creaking floor, descended the stairs in the darkness, and cracked the front door. "Ba-rho-ooom-m!" the thunder shouted, and Paul thrust the door shut as he bounced a foot from his moorings.

But the wonder of it all enticed him to crack the door again for another look. He stood fascinated at the mighty display of God's doings. The zig-zagging of the lightning, the tossing of the massive billows rolled together as great smoke-puffs and the streaking of the rain to earth captured the attention of eyes, ears, and imagination, pulling Paul to the edge of the porch. Suddenly the wind caught the door and slammed it shut, leaving Paul to twitter in frustration in his slippers and night shirt. Paul grabbed for the door, but he was too late. It was solidly locked. He analyzed his situation a moment before gingerly stepping onto the soaked grass and sneaking near Naomi's upstairs window. "Naomi! Na---omi!" He cupped his hands and hoarsely whispered, but his presence and noise awakened the Gurley's dog, whose ferocious bark bounded around the corner from its doghouse. Frustrated and somewhat frightened, Paul spun and sloshed in a circle around the house to stay ahead of the noisy threats of the dog.

"Where is the window now?" he wondered. "Na--om--i-----Na--om--i!" He called with no reservations, for he had no desire to become a three-hundred-pound meal for any mutt. He kept moving and shouting for Naomi. One lap . . . two laps . . . three laps! He had to quit. He was out of breath, and could go on no longer. Grabbing a rose arbor, he stopped and tried to protect himself. The dog stopped, too, and quizzically began to sniff at him in curiosity. He was standing in this pose when the door suddenly jutted open. Naomi and the Gurleys looked on in shock at the

rain-soaked but rather humorous spectacle.

Paul grinned his little boy grin. Naomi threw his robe around him as he pushed himself through the door toward their room. His grin remained on his face for a long time as he thought of what he had seen of one of God's mighty wonders and of his embarrassing episode during that wonder.

Brother Bibbs, Superintendent of the Indiana District, called to ask Brother Gregory to preach their campmeeting. During the meeting a little white-haired lady received a glorious infilling of the Holy Spirit. Her joy was radiating when she asked Sister Gregory to come to her room. With a slight twinkle of the eye, Brother Bibbs' little mother fingered among the lace-trimmed petticoat to produce her petite clay pipe. She would need it no longer. The aroma that had been so pleasant to her for years was now a stench; she had found something so much better.

Brother Wolff from Illinois wanted Paul to come to his state for the cities and towns were stirred with revival. Wherever Brother Gregory threaded his message with its sombre threads of gray warnings of judgments to come, both sinners and saints earnestly prayed and sought God. Brother Gregory could make a person feel the burning fury of hellfire. Great drops of perspiration would burst forth on his brow. When his eyes widened in terror of the envisioned destruction, however, he softly transferred their attention to glittering highlights of the New Jerusalem and to God's precious love.

Upon ending one of the sermons in Illinois, a small boy stood patiently between Brother Reeter, the District Secretary, and Brother Gregory. After his failure to get Brother Reeter's attention, the lad turned his uplifted face

to Paul, who bent to speak with the lad.

"He would like for you to pray for him," the father, who had stepped near, stated without explanation.

"In Jesus' name!" Brother Gregory prayed, and the boy's face became alive. From that moment on, the lad could hear and speak plainly for the first time in life.

The Ohio District Campmeeting was next in line. For six months Paul and Naomi traveled from one mighty revival to another mighty revival. Paul feasted on both spiritual and delectable goodies, enjoying both with great wonder. After touching both Florida and Canada with his ministry, they turned their wheels again to the West.

When the Second World War started, rationing of gas, blackouts, and long lines for sugar, silk hose and numerous other items changed the way of living for most Americans. During these years, Brother Gregory took over a floundering work in San Francisco. He thrived on the rush of city activity, always excited over life with all of its multiplicities.

After he learned that hard-to-get items such as clothespins were available in the Valley of Turlock, he often took a trek to his good friends, the David F. Grays, and returned to sell his purchases at a profit. This commerce helped supplement his income while his church became better established. Upon one of his visits, he noticed a toad hopping in the Grays' yard.

"Don't touch, Naomi," Sister Gray cautioned her small, two-year old, who was Sister Gregory's namesake. The subject turned to toads momentarily, and Paul marveled at the ugly, warted creation. "If you put a little lye on a toad after spitting on it to make the lye stick." Sister Gray smilingly told him, "it will flop over dead."

"Immediately?" Paul asked.

"Yes, immediately. I'll go get some and show you. It is something David found out by accident."

Sister Gray returned and Paul tried the trick. It worked! One gigantic hop and the toad keeled over. Sister Gray explained how her husband had discovered this method of killing toads, which often gathered under the light by the multitudes and were a nuisance.

One day a tramp happened by asking for a handout. While doing the lawn for hire, the tramp noticed a gopher hole and suggested putting lye in the hole. When the lye got on the gopher's feet, the gopher would lick them and die. Feeling that it was a simple remedy, David Gray purchased his can of lye for a nickel, and experimented with the toads. He noticed that the lye did not stick to the skin, and this led to the spittle.

Two o'clock the next morning, Paul sneaked to the laundry room, grabbed the can of lye, and quietly closed the door behind him. The little boy in the preacher was surfacing and a toad search was on.

Paul Gregory loved to watch the trains whisk by, but he was also awed by the beam of a five-cell battery flashlight. "Look at it, David, just look at it" he would exclaim. The light would brighten a far tree. What he saw dancing in that beam would never be seen by the average eye.

He purchased the first auto burglar alarm he heard of and explained its function admirably to an interested group at a fellowship meeting. But they had to wait for a demonstration until the middle of the preaching when someone bumped into his car. "Beep, Be-ep---Be-ep---Be-ep!" Only Paul Gregory knew how to disconnect the wonder-filled gadget.

In 1955, the Gregorys moved to Southern California to open a work in the beautiful San Fernando valley. The work prospered, and Paul and Naomi felt happy in their new effort for the Lord. Paul's book collection continued to grow as his church grew; he also collected a stack of newspapers on the coffee table, which Naomi deplored. Everything readable held openings of new thoughts to Paul's hungering mind. As his knowledge of life increased, there was one burning desire beginning to develop in him.

Jerusalem—Jerusalem! How Paul longed to be a part of its mysteries of time! On the first trip, he went with Brother R. E. Nichols, who arranged a tour in 1964. What a thrill to preach in Ireland enroute to Jerusalem.

In 1971, he made the second trip. After leaving Belgium on his return flight, the plane encountered hard, adverse winds over the Atlantic. Food was flung to the floor, stewardesses were beat against the wall, and it was feared the plane would be hurled into the ocean. Suddenly, Paul's tremendous voice bellowed, "Ride 'em, cowboy! That much closer to heaven!" He was having a time on his "thrill ride" among the stars.

Paul was soon sponsoring tours to Jerusalem, and Brother David F. Gray was invited to be the Bible teacher on a particular trip. With his love for food, Paul had grown quite heavy and often expressed his need for a rubber suit to accommodate his off-and-on dieting efforts. He was a pleasure to be with, but his health was being somewhat impaired by his growing older and fighting the continuous battle of the bulge—his metabolism seemed to count every calorie twice.

There was a special part of the tour that Paul wanted

to see, an area not often visited because of its inconvenience. Every tour did not visit Petra, the rock city of ancient Edom.

Tourists would travel to a rest house at the Spring of Moses, the traditional place where the rock was struck. Here they would mount horses and enter a very narrow defile called the "Siq." This winding trail zig-zagged through the rock mountain with steep walls of 200 feet on either side. This is the only entrance to the hidden city. The guide on this trip was careful to explain the treacherous trail to the tourists. "We lost one of our people here," he cautioned them. He explained that they would ride horses through the entrance.

As Brother Gregory mounted his horse, the strap broke on the saddle under his heavy weight. The horse bucked and snorted and headed for a cliff as if to commit suicide. Six men caught the horse and fought to hold it while Paul slid to the ground. The Bedouin in charge of the horses refused to offer another horse to Paul, insisting that no horse was willing to carry such a huge man.

Paul was heartbroken, but determined. "Well, I'm going," he declared. "I'll walk!"

"It's a shame," Brother Gray pled with the Bedouin. "What can we do?"

"Nothing," the guide insisted.

"But he paid his fee," Brother Gray implored, but to no avail. Leaving Brother Gregory, the riders started along the trail and were almost immediately out of sight. As they rode, the guide described the history of the city, stopping for lectures at different places. David Gray noticed that Paul Gregory would arrive—pockets bulging with souvenirs, camera covering his necktie, two tape

recorders drooping on his side—just as the entourage trekked off to another place. Each lecture lasted about thirty minutes—long enough for Paul to appear around the bend before they moved forward to the next stop. Eventually they reached the last place, a climb of 130 steps to see the place where human sacrifices had been offered to the gods.

Bottles of iced coke were freely passed out, and the guide went into his long discourse. Just as he finished, Paul's head and body came up the steps. He was hot, red-faced, and panting.

The guide turned. "Well, that's it." Everyone followed him down the 130 steps to their horses.

"I'm worn out, David. I'm gonna die in this place," Paul spoke dejectedly.

"No, you're not! My horse is waiting. They have brought fresh horses and the man will not know me. You'll ride and I will walk!" David declared emphatically.

Paul had to be reassured. "Would you do that?"

"Sure. I'll do that. Come on, let's get down, but go slow."

As they reached the bottom of the steps, the accompanying men and horses were waiting. One held out the stirrups to David, who pointed to Paul. However, the Arab guide had heard of the incident in which the horse had attempted suicide, so he refused to offer his horse to Paul.

"Let's walk a little bit, Paul," David suggested. "Maybe if he sees I won't ride he will change his mind." But the guide just scratched his head and galloped off.

"I can't walk out of the 'Sig,'" Paul moaned. "Just let my bones bleach here, leave me!" At these words, Paul

plunked himself down on a rock.

"Paul," David spoke reassuringly. "Look at that little rise! The rest house is just around the corner from it. I remember that little rise! The guide told us it was to hold back flashfloods"

David heard a noise and they both stepped back close to the rock wall. A jeep of Jordanian soldiers going into Petra rounded the bend, passed them, and left them in the dust.

When Paul and David reached the rise, David realized that he was mistaken. It was not the place he thought. Perhaps they were still half an hour or an hour away. When Paul heard the bad news, he simply lay down and refused to go another step.

David was in a quandary. Paul could not walk farther, so what was to be done? He told Paul that he would go for help, but he had taken only a few steps when he heard the jeep returning from Petra. David knew what he would do this time. He stood in the middle of the road.

The jeep jerked to a halt. "Take him on board?" David broke his English for the Arabs, pointing toward Paul lying beside the road.

"Is he the one that broke the stirrup?" the Arab driver asked in perfect English. When David answered, all the Arabs burst into loud laughter. The story had spread through the entire tourist company.

There was room for both of them in the jeep, and they were soon back at the rest house. Two lunches revived Paul and put him back in good shape to travel. On the return trip to Jerusalem, the tourists heard him tell of the wonder of it all.

In December, 1972, Paul was hospitalized. He was

placed in intensive care with thrombosis of the artery. As Sister Gregory stayed by his bedside, he would declare, "If I didn't love you and Silas so much, I would just ask the Lord to burst a blood vessel and take me away!" But as time went on, he felt encouraged to preach again. "I've seen life and death in here," he declared. "I have a message on life and death." But this message was never preached by him from a pulpit. He slipped quietly away on January 16, 1973.

Brother Paul Price, Superintendent of the Western District, preached the funeral service. He stated that Brother Gregory was at the gate waiting for us to accompany him on the grandest tour of all ages.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Corinthians 2:9). I feel that Brother Gregory is singing as he tours the mansions God has prepared for us,

The wonder of it all!
The wonder of it alt!
Just to know that Jesus loved me!



Bro. and Sis. Gurley stand with Bro. and Sis. Gregory and Bro. Haskell Yadon at 1951 United Pentecostal Church General Conference.



In his youth.



The traveling preacher.



EARL LOVEJOY JACQUES

By Leona Jacques and Florence Stickles

On January 31, 1900, a tiny two-pound son was born to George and Lillian (Day) Jacques of Woodstock, New Brunswick. They kept him wrapped in cotton batts and bathed him in olive oil for several weeks. They named him Earl Lovejoy; he was the youngest of a family of six.

His school years were spent in Woodstock. In his late teenage years, he worked in partnership with his brother, Al, on a potato farm in Littleton, Maine.

While in Littleton, he was taken ill with what was known as quinsy (a throat infection). The doctor treated him for diphtheria, but he reacted to the treatment and was taken home in a semi-conscious condition.

His mother, who was a nurse, knew that he was dying. She and her husband were members of the Baptist

church, but she had heard of people who were conducting meetings in Woodstock who believed in divine healing. She knew there was no other help for her son. The doctor had given her no hope of his recovery.

She sent for Brother Edgar Grant and some of his people. After they anointed Earl with oil, they continued to pray until God answered. Earl sat up and asked for a drink of water. He was completely healed and was soon up and about as usual.

Earl gave thanks for his healing and determined he would "serve the Lord." Brother Grant persuaded him to go with him to tent meetings he was conducting in Southhampton. This was where Brother Jacques first gave his testimony of his healing. Later years, in telling of this experience, he said, "I pulled myself up by the back of the seat ahead of me and said, 'The Lord saved me and healed me' and sat down." He was so nervous that his knees knocked together.

Brother Grant received light on baptism in Jesus' name through the teaching of Brother Dearing, who was pastoring in Bangor, Maine. Brother Grant baptized Brother Jacques, Brother Wynn Stairs, Brother Milford Stairs, and Brother Quincy Stairs during the revival in Southhampton. Brother Jacques received his baptism in the Holy Ghost during family altar in his mother's kitchen in Woodstock in 1920.

He felt the call of God to preach the Word, so he asked his brother to buy his part in the potato farm. Then he went to Bangor, Maine, to assist Sister Carol and Susie Davis, who had felt led of God to come up north from their home in Macon, Georgia.

In the summer of 1923, Brother Jacques, Wynn

Stairs, and Brother Charlie Flewelling with his wife Ida (later missionaries to Africa) pitched a tent in Zealand, N. B. where they had a revival. Several were filled with the Holy Ghost. This was the beginning of the church which is established there now.

In the following summer of 1924, the tent was again pitched in the city of Fredericton, but only after much difficulty in getting a plot of land. A lady who had a field on the Woodstock Road felt led of God to let them locate there. She was opposed by her church and others who had heard of the meetings in Zealand, but she continued to let them have the field as long as they needed it.

The workers that summer were Brother Jacques, who did most of the preaching; the Davis sisters, who also preached; Brother Harvey Flewelling, who played the trumpet; his wife Margaret, who had a beautiful voice, sang and played the piano; and Brother Wynn Stairs, who helped with the tent, kept order and helped pay expenses (he worked in the lumber mill in Southhampton). Others came to help, one of which was Brother Clifford Crabtree.

The meetings met with a lot of opposition from the church community and many young people gathered around the outside of the tent and sat in the back seats to disturb in any way they could. The first one to receive the Holy Ghost in Fredericton was Brother Archie McFawn, and the second one was Sister Tom Stickles, who was filled in her own home after coming from service. The revival grew and many received their baptism.

One night an angry mother whose daughter had been "slain out" [fell prostrate under the power of the Spirit] and spoke with tongues, called the police to bring her daughter home. In the confusion that followed, one of the

leaders called from the platform, "Who is on the Lord's side?" A young lady stood and raised her hand. This was Abbie Staples, who later became Sister Verner Larsen and who gave her life as a missionary in Colombia, South America.

When the weather became too cold for the tent, a hall had to be found for the growing congregation, yet all doors seemed to be closed. Finally one of the city councilmen, who was a business man in Fredericton, had a dispute with the council. To spite the others, he agreed to rent his hall, which was situated on York Street, to Brother Jacques and Brother Wynn Stairs. They also had a room in the hall where they lived for the winter.

The revival continued with large crowds attending. The *Daily Gleaner* never missed an opportunity to report any event in connection with the meetings. When the leaders with some men from the congregation went out to chop some wood for the winter, the headlines read, "Holy Rollers as Wood Choppers a Howling Success." The following spring the growing congregation moved across the river to Neil's Lane where rent was less expensive.

Brother Jacques stayed to pastor the work while the Davis sisters moved to Saint John where they had a large revival.

Opposition fed the fires of revival and a strong church was founded in Fredericton. Baptism was performed through a hole in the ice of the Saint John river in winter and at the bathing beach in summer, drawing large crowds and much opposition. At one baptism, three young men in a boat on the river, were mocking. Each time a convert was immersed, one of them immersed his paddle. He leaned too far over the side, however, and fell

into the water and drowned. This was taken as a warning and a judgment from God as the young man was a strong swimmer.

> On May 25, 1926 the *Daily Gleaner* carried another article:
>
> "Elder Earl Lovejoy Jacques, leader of the Pentecostal sect in this locality, and Miss Leona Dail Carr, one of the members of the sect, were married at the Reformed Baptist parsonage by Rev. E. F. Kierstead . . ."

There was no Pentecostal minister to marry them.

The following summer of 1926, Brother Jacques with his new wife to play the piano, Brother Wynn Stairs, and Brother Quincy Stairs felt in the will of God to take the tent to St. Stephen, N. B. Support was poor but they didn't go hungry as there were plenty of clams for the digging. But consecration and faithfulness had their reward in a revival and a church pastored by Brother Wynn Stairs was the results.

Brother Jacques told of an amusing incident while in St. Stephen. It seems that he and Quincy went in bathing on a Saturday. Quincy proceeded to "duck" Brother Jacques and in the struggle Brother Jacques lost his dentures. Because of the condition of the water due to their activity, the teeth could not be found. Brother Jacques had to preach a street meeting Saturday evening without them. However, early Sunday morning, Brother Quincy went out to the lake, waded very cautiously into the water, saw the teeth lying on the bottom of the lake, retrieved

them, and took them to Brother Jacques in time for him to preach that morning.

The following summer of 1927, they again pitched the tent in Sussex, where a church was again established and is still growing.

The summer of 1939 the tent was pitched for the final time in Hoyt, New Brunswick. A growing church in that community is the fruit of that summer.

During all this time Brother Jacques continued to pastor the work in Fredericton, always having someone to fill in while he was breaking new ground in the summer in tent meetings. When the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church was organized in 1939, he was its superintendent. Later they merged with the brethren from the United States to be a part of the United Pentecostal Church International. Brother Jacques became the Superintendent of the Atlantic District. With the exception of four years (1946-1950) he served in this capacity until his death.

When the district brethren decided to build a camp ground at Harvey Lake, he worked with them to bring it to pass. He had the ability to bring a congregation to worship. He enjoyed the moving of the Spirit and invariably preached under the anointing of the Holy Ghost. He was a great Bible teacher, having come by his ability by long hours of study and prayer. In preaching he used very few notes. He would say, "Stay with me and I'll bring you out before I'm through!" One left the service feeling fed and uplifted.

He loved young people and there was always a pat on the head of a child, a hand on the shoulder and a word of encouragement as they left the service. Consequently, when the brethren decided on a Bible school in the area

he became its first principal and teacher.

Coming into class with a cheery smile, he would say, "Now, where were we?" He would take up where he left off the day before. According to the students of those early days, they will never forget his Spirit-anointed teaching and words of wisdom. He taught them to be sensitive to the needs of others and the necessity of walking in the Spirit. He had his own dry sense of humor that appealed to young people. He could counsel and reprimand when necessary with a smile and in a gentle way so that they came away feeling he was their friend. He saw them as God's children needing guidance and example. Because of this attitude, they loved and respected him.

One little fellow, as he sat in the barber chair, told the barber that he wanted a hair cut like Brother Jacques. This was amusing as Brother Jacques was quite bald by the time he was thirty.

His influence was felt throughout the Atlantic District and in the city his name was synonomous with Pentecost. He proclaimed water baptism in the name of Jesus, the oneness of the Godhead, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues. He took a strong stand on holiness as taught in the Scriptures—heart holiness that manifested itself outwardly. He said, "If you shoot a bird in the heart, the feathers will fall."

Sunday August 26, 1960, he taught that "As a steward of the Lord we ought to walk, talk, and dress as such."

January 8, 1961, he taught, "If the church of Jesus Christ has anything to give, it must have an overflowing experience itself."

His message on "Covetousness" will long be remembered by those who heard it.

Long hours of prayer, loving, caring, Spirit-anointed teaching and preaching left a lasting influence and a strong church that acknowledged him as their spiritual father. The only time the congregation had any serious trouble was when he was not there to guide and direct them. He taught and preached many campmeetings and conventions in Canada and the United States.

The pressure and burden of the Word took their toll. After a period of ill health, when he was lovingly cared for by the wife of his youth, "Lona" as he called her, on October 7, 1961, getting up from the breakfast table after thanking God for another day and food provided, his loving heart was stilled. He dropped to the floor and went to the One he had served so faithfully. Those to whom he ministered will always remember him.

He was the loving father of Paul, Philip (who died at fifteen months), Helen, Barbara, and Earl Junior (Buster).

The *Daily Gleaner* again had a story:

"REV. E. L. JACQUES SUCCUMBS AT 61 YEARS.
One of the founders of Full Gospel Pentecostal Church which merged with United Pentecostal Church International with the headquarters at St. Louis.
Superintendent of Atlantic District
Presbyter of the General Board
Principal and teacher of United Pentecostal Bible Institute
Served on the board of the British and Foreign Bible Society

> Belonged to the local ministerial association for many years.
> He had a wide and successful ministry in Canada and the United States."

Surely it can be said of him that he "kept the faith."



Rev. and Mrs. E. L. Jacques



FRANK D. MARTIN

By LaJoyce Martin

In that city not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, rings the echo of a sixteen ounce plumb hammer, used in the construction of twenty-six home mission churches across the southwestern United States.

Frank Debs Martin, the man who wielded the hammer, took no remuneration for his work. What he accomplished was quite a production for a person who didn't know God was anything but a curse word until he was nine years old!

Non-religious Comanche County Texas farmers, Julia and Harlin Martin already had three sons when Frank was born on November 6, 1911. Harlin sold the farm in 1916 and staked claim on some government land near Caprock, east of Roswell, New Mexico. The family lived in a dugout, and their menu included cornbread and water,

antelope chased down in the Model T, and a sampling of the neighbor's rabbit stew. Ironically, after the bitter sacrifice, Harlin sold the land, not realizing the undiscovered minerals beneath its surface.

They returned to Texas via covered wagon and settled seven miles from DeLeon in the Suez Community. Across the road was a Methodist Church and an adjoining tabernacle. In 1921, Evangelists A. F. Johnson and Jim Gressett "borrowed" the facilities for a protracted meeting which lasted from May until September.

When 116 people received the Holy Ghost, the Methodist church deacons ordered them out, but a neighbor donated the lot "next over." A brush arbor was erected, kerosene lamps strung up, and the revival continued.

Persecution was strong. Threats to beat the evangelists and workers were made. Someone put arsenic in the bucket of drinking water in an attempt to "kill those fanatics," but "if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them," no ill effects were felt.

The Martins could hear the services from their house, and soon Julia was taking her children and "sitting in." Before long, she was a holy-roller, too.

One evening Frank and a twelve-year-old friend were down at the old pump getting a drink of water. "If they give an altar call tonight, I'm going," avowed the friend. "Me, too," Frank responded.

Only five altar workers were available to assist the twenty or thirty seekers that night, but nine-year-old Frank received the Holy Ghost. He was somehow overlooked in the baptismal service that followed, and it was not until 1923 that Brother Lyons baptized him in Jesus'

name in a dirt pond near the old tabernacle.

Evangelist Gressett's youngest sister, eight-year-old Fay, also received the Holy Ghost in August and was baptized in Coppers Creek. Fourteen times her family drove one hundred miles in a Model T to attend this revival, often staying over the weekend. Bashful Frank slipped the "cute little girl with curls" peaches from the tree in his yard.

The spiritual testing time came for young Frank shortly after his conversion. He, his brother, and two friends made the customary Saturday afternoon trip into Comanche with the family. He stood outside the picture show on the west side of the square, swinging around and around the iron pole, his mind whirling, while the three were inside watching the movie. He was thinking . . . deciding. From that day forward, his mind was made up; he chose his path and never looked back.

Much to Frank's delight, the Gressetts moved to Suez and he and Fay attended the same school for two years. Fay's mother, Sister Bertha Gressett, established a work in Suez in 1927. But alas, Harlin moved his family to another town. The girl was not forgotten, however, and by 1930, they were "going steady."

Frank was an avid Bible-reader. While staying with his older brother Jay and working in the oil field near Brownwood, he read a verse of Scripture one night from Hebrews 2:9 which states that Jesus "should taste death for every man." He slid from the chair to the floor and dedicated himself to carry the gospel. He had received his call. He was eighteen.

He and Fay were married on December 1, 1931, by Brother Griffith, a family friend. Brother Sojourner, who

had taken the Suez church, asked him to preach his first message. The date was January, 1932, and his subject was "Fight the good fight of faith," a title that aptly epitomizes his labor of love.

Then on the cold, clear day of March 4, 1932, the Martins left for the full-time ministry. Frank's brother, who did not live for God but who wanted Frank to "obey the Lord," took them to Gorman in his roadster. Several relatives went along "for the ride" they were seated three-deep.

Harlin was highly displeased; his plans were for Frank to stay on the farm and help with the crops that year. But God had other plans.

Arriving in Gorman to assist Brother Powell Sojourner in a revival, they were initiated by an all-night prayer meeting in a big antiquated, non-insulated feed store with only one wood heater. They were almost "frozen stiff" by 6 AM Until that fall, they lived in a community house for church workers. Breakfast each morning consisted of mush; they washed their clothing, stretching them on weeds to dry. During this time, they received no money. "The Lord knows what you need," they were told. Offerings were seldom taken, but God did supply the necessities.

Brother Martin was ordained into the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ in the spring of that year in Gorman by Brothers T. J. Lambert and Powell Sojourner.

His first revival was at a place called Taylor's Chapel, in the Congregational Methodist Church building in the corner of a field eight miles northwest of Comanche. He had no car, but an unsaved man and his wife, Ed and Hattie Williams, who owned a Model T flatbed truck without the luxury of doors, offered to take him to and from serv-

ices each night. Brother Frank and Sister Fay camped out in a borrowed house, cooking cornbread for breakfast on a flat-topped heater.

The revival began in September—and so did the rain! The roads soon became utterly impassible.

Hattie Williams was Brother Martin's first candidate for baptism on his twenty-first birthday.

"Well, we're going to close the meeting," Brother Martin said to Ed Williams one night at church.

Ed "fell apart" to think that the revival would close and leave him lost without God. On the return trip, he pulled the gas lever down and shot right past the Martin's campsite. They thought he was angry! He got out of the truck at his own home, motioning for them to follow. Sister Martin's sister Pauline, more experienced in the gospel work than they, asked, "Do you want the Holy Ghost, Ed?"

"What do you think I brought you down here for?" he blurted out. He prayed through the next night.

Brother Sojourner started a revival back in Suez and continued for six weeks without a single convert. His lengthy two-hour sermons had provided the groundwork, however, and when he called young Brother Martin to "take over," the fiery fifteen minute messages of the novice brought scores of people to the altar and a great harvest was reaped.

In January of 1933, Brother Sojourner took the Martins to Blum, a very small town, where they pastored until August. Poverty drove them back to the Gressetts where they stayed until the arrival of their first child, Keither, in January of 1934. They held revivals in Elm Grove and Beattie, then went to Silent Home, near Cheyenne,

Oklahoma, where baby Keither contacted pneumonia and lay near death. God sent instant healing.

A friend located them a 1928 Chevy for $25. The car was literally in tatters. Brother Martin started home in it, but he turned to his wife and said, "I'd rather have a good car for three months than this thing for a lifetime!" They turned around and headed for the Chevrolet House in Cleburne; the dealer offered them "$60 for that old car" as a down payment on a nice 1931 Chevy, with a balance of $10 a month for a year. They did not miss a payment; Brother Martin made extra money hoeing cotton at 15¢ an hour.

A telephone call came from Walnut Springs, from a sizable church which had twenty-nine musicians in the orchestra, a product of the 1932 outpouring of the Holy Ghost there. "Why, I haven't been preaching long enough to take a church like that!" protested Brother Martin humbly. But the church persisted, and he accepted the pastorate in 1935. A second son, Elroy, was born here.

Two older "sisters" in the church informed Brother Martin that he was too young to pastor, so he "up and left" the thriving church the following year—a grave mistake—and returned to Blum. But again he stayed for only a short period of time in this town. Despondency set in.

Out of work, he decided to go to Walnut Springs to attend a fellowship meeting. One of the saints offered to keep young Elroy. When the child inadvertently drank kerosene, she ran several blocks with the lifeless child in her arms to intercept the parents. Someone called the doctor, who took one look at the baby and said, "There's nothing I can do," and left.

Sister Martin placed the child on the bed and prayed

submissively, "Lord, You know what is best." Elroy started breathing again, and "up came the kerosene."

In 1938, Brother Blankenship, Chairman of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ, told them about a church in East Texas in need of a pastor. Brother Martin borrowed $5 from his brother and started out in the 1931 vehicle. The trip was a waterhaul; two other names were already in the "pot." Brother Martin was at the lowest ebb of his lifetime. "I don't know if I'll ever preach again," he told his faithful companion.

He returned to Suez, which had no pastor, and agreed to "preach as long as I'm here." He pastored there for the next four years, quite successfully. While there, he built a three-room rock parsonage completely by hand, and the adjoining outhouse "a stone's throw away." The years of building had begun. Many received the Holy Ghost here, including Sister Bessie Pugh, (Mrs. J. T. Pugh).

In 1942, they were invited by Brother G. W. Hamilton to start a work in Dumas, fifty miles north of Amarillo. The 450 miles from home was "like going to Africa" to Sister Martin and the boys.

While Brother Martin was in the process of constructing the church there, a tornado took the building off its blocks, another "blow" to the builder, but visiting ministers and saints rallied around him, and the church was completed in 1945, the same year that a daughter, Rachel, was added to the family.

He spent the year of 1946 in Waco, and relates an embarrassing incident of baptising a young lady and forgetting to say anything at all. She was changing into dry clothes when she was called back to be rebaptized!

In 1947, he returned to Dumas, where his "real work"

for God now began unfolding. He and Sister Martin became "foundation stones" in the infant Texico District. Sister Martin served as District Ladies Auxiliary President for eight years, accomplishing formidable tasks; she was also an excellent preacher. Brother Martin was a presbyter for ten years.

Many cities in this pioneer area were in need of a church building, and the laborers were few. The Home Missions Director refused to "turn a tap" on a building project unless "Frank Martin goes along." With his trusty hammer, Frank Martin helped to build churches over the states of New Mexico, Colorado, and the Panhandle of Texas at Farmington, Silver City, Gallop, and Tohachi on the Indian Reservation, and Pueblo, Fort Collins, and Boulder in Colorado, to name but a few. His life was miraculously spared at Demming, New Mexico, where he was injured when he fell and was pinned to the wall by a jagged board.

He served as District Home Missions Director for two years, but he was much more "at home" with his carpenter overalls and nail apron. The hands that were once shaped to hold the plow, were now reshaped to hold God's animated sixteen ounce plumb hammer.

He built a church in Plainview and pastored it for four years. On many occasions, his son Elroy would meet him at the church site with a glass of iced tea and a sandwich after a hard day of work on a public job to support his family. Together, father and son would work until long past midnight on "God's House." He established a congregation, then moved on to Hobbs, New Mexico, where he labored for an additional eight and a half years.

In Hobbs, he laid brick on the unfinished church

building, mixed his own mortar, built his own scaffolding, carrying and laying 15,000 brick single-handed, without a "thanks" and only one soft drink offered him during the entire building program. It seemed no one cared, but Frank Debs Martin never thought of it that way; he knew Jesus cared. He was "Fighting the Good Fight of Faith."

It was at Hobbs that he had the dream. He dreamed that he was pushing a wheelbarrow when he saw the Lord sitting on a cloud, approximately fifty feet above him. Looking up steadfastly, he began to clap his hands, then rub them together in anticipation. He would lift first one foot, then the other. "I wanted to go so badly!" he recalls. But the Lord looked at him and said, "You can't come now." Resolutely, Frank reached down and picked up the wheelbarrow and started pushing it again. "And I'm still a-pushin'. . . ." he concludes modestly. "I guess the Lord called me to the menial tasks as well as to the ministry."

It seems he could not stay away from Dumas. Seven more very successful years and many souls later, Brother and Sister Frank Martin returned to DeLeon, where they pastored for their last seven years, retiring in 1977. But to this day, if he hears of a church building in need of repair or construction, Brother Martin reaches for the old plumb hammer. His joints are stiff and his hearing almost gone, but he can still outwork men half his age.

The many churches he has helped to build will live long after he has gone to his well-earned reward. It would not be surprising if he tries to smuggle that sixteen ounce plumb hammer into heaven, right past Peter at the gate, to lay it lovingly at the feet of the Carpenter of Nazareth. One thing for certain, he refuses to lay it down *until* then!



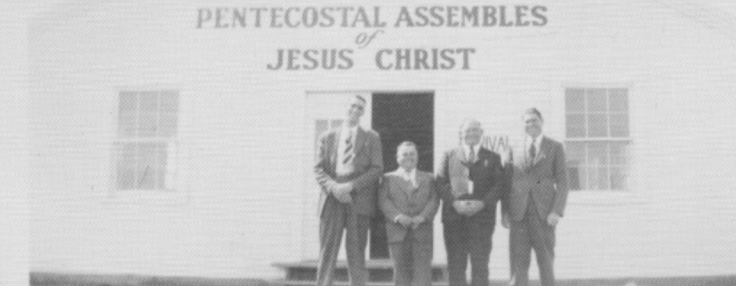
Golden Wedding Day! December 1, 1982



"A happy crowd" photo, taken in 1921, the Suez revival where Frank and Fay Martin received the Holy Ghost, along with 114 others.



The baptizing at Coppers Creek in 1921 where Fay Gressett, 8, was baptized.



Rt. to Lt.: Bros. Martin, Jerry Osborne, Phillips, and Floyd Berry, 1944, at the new Dumas Church.



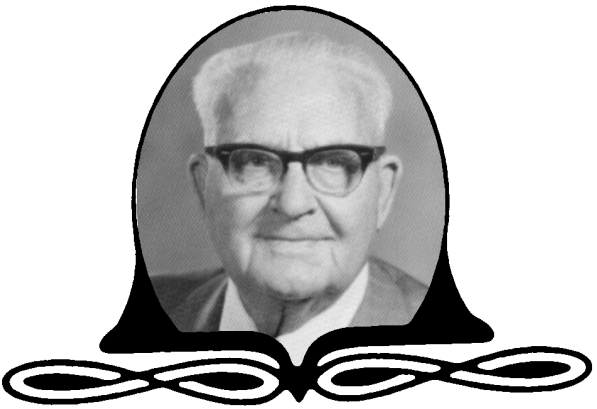
Fay Gressett



Before moving to Dumas, TX—1942.



A Home Missions church goes up at Plainview, Texas 1951.



UEL ALVIN MASSEY

By Jean Massey Bowman

Uel Alvin Massey was born December 12, 1900, to Dock and Ada (Hulsey) Massey in Lequire, Oklahoma. He was the great-grandson of a survivor of the Trail of Tears, the move of the Cherokee Indians to Oklahoma when they were driven from their homes in the Carolinas. Forced to walk the long, long round-about way into the Oklahoma Territory many died along the way; thus it is called The Trail of Tears. But Brother Massey also reflected his Irish ancestors in that he was a tall rudy-faced man with blue eyes, auburn hair and high cheekbones.

When he was at the age of five, God spoke very clearly to young Uel that he should prepare to be a preacher. For ten years the youngster prayed and thought about this. At fifteen he gave his heart to God in the Missionary Baptist Church. God spoke to him the second

time, "Prepare for the ministry." From the summer of 1915 until December 1923, he dedicated his talents to assisting the Baptist youth programs and to teaching Sunday school.

After completion of his education, Brother Massey taught in the public school system. He also served in the military from 1919 to 1920.

In 1923, a revival began at New Light Church. This was the first church in Morris, Oklahoma, to preach the Oneness message. Brother Massey went to a revival service to see what was going on. The first night he was there God spoke to him again: "This is the true apostolic message." Soon he was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. On the night of July 26, 1924, he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He immediately announced his call to the ministry of the gospel.

The revival continued for more than two months and around one hundred were saved. From this revival came many of our well known ministers.

Brother Massey's new-found life was not a bed of roses. His father told him that he would rather they had told him that his son was dead than be told he was going to the New Light Church. Later, however, Brother Massey baptized both his mother and father in the name of Jesus.

For five years Brother Massey worked in the home church under his pastor. He served as youth leader, Sunday school teacher, Sunday school superintendent, church board member, assistant pastor, and chorister.

At the church in Morris he met his wife to be, Gladys Carnelison. They were married July 3, 1925. Their first child was a girl, Loretta Jean, born August 26, 1926.

Brother Massey was ordained in the Pentecostal

Ministerial Alliance on Christmas day, 1927, by his pastor, Wallace Willburn; district superintendent, W. H. Lyons; and other ministers. As the organizations merged, he was a member of the Emmanuel Church of Jesus Christ, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ, and finally the United Pentecostal Church.

Starting out on his ministry, he brought the revelation of the Oneness message to the hills of Oklahoma, where there was much hostility to this truth in those days. He traveled with a group that included Brother and Sister Massey; their six-month-old daughter, Jean; and Ila Vaughn (Ashcraft). They preached in school houses, brush arbors or any place that they could find. When it came time for the preaching of God's Word, the feelings were so hostile against the Oneness message that Sister Massey and Aunt Ila would go behind the old upright piano to pray.

One night while Brother Massey was preaching, a man much under the influence of strong drink came to the open window and pointed a gun at the preacher. When Brother Massey heard the man cock the gun, his blood almost stopped in his veins. Suddenly from behind the upright piano came the message, "Be not afraid; I am with you." Immediately, his fear was gone. God had spoken and all was well.

Things like this happened repeatedly as the message of the name of Jesus was spread across these hills of Oklahoma.

All was not glory and shouting. There were times when sickness and sorrow overshadowed the great joy of bringing light to a very dark land. One of those trying times for Brother Massey was when his wife Gladys

became very ill. Although she was expecting her second child, she began to lose weight, and became so weak that Brother Massey had to carry her from place to place. He prayed, but it seemed to be of no avail. At one place when he had carried her into the house where they would be staying while preaching in that community, the people asked how his "daughter" was doing. Sister Massey was with child, yet she was so small that she was mistaken for a child.

Her sickness continued until one night Brother Massey left his wife sleeping and went out under the stars to pray until he had an answer. When he returned, he brought the answer with him. It had been determined that Sister Massey had tuberculosis. However, the child was born in good health, and she was restored to perfect health. Later when she had X-rays taken, the doctor could not find one scar on her lungs. God had spoken, and all had been made well.

On one of their return trips to Morris, to visit family and friends and to be refreshed, the Masseys and the Voar Shoemakes felt the call to the big state of California. The Masseys, Uel, Gladys, Jean, and Harold, and the Shoemakes, Voar, Blanche and their children, all piled into one big old car. Off they went happy as they could be. All went well until they got to within seventy-five miles of Yuma, Arizona. The car threw a rod.

There they were, a broken-down car and very little cash between them. The ladies and the girls slept in the car that night and the men and boys slept outside. Needless to say, much prayer was made that night. Upon awakening the next morning they discovered another car parked nearby. The people were from Oklahoma also.

Their problem was a flat tire. The man had caught a bus to go into town to buy a new tire. On his return, he offered to pull the Masseys' car to the nearest town—Somerton, Arizona. He left them at a campground, which was also used by others with car trouble.

The children gathered sticks to make a fire to cook beans. While the ladies made dinner the men walked to a nearby house. Much to their surprise, this was a Pentecostal family from Oklahoma, who had been praying for God to send Brother Massey to them to get their church on its feet. Again God had spoken and all was well.

The Masseys stayed in Somerton, and the Shoemakes went on to California.

While in Somerton, Brother Massey worked nights at a cotton gin; during the days he worked on the old car; and in the evenings he was at the church.

When all was well with the church and before the baby was born, the Masseys went back to Oklahoma. These times in Morris were times of refreshing and waiting upon God.

Next the Masseys went to Rising Star, Texas. Here a son, Donald Wayne was born. Later God spoke, "Move on." Taking God at His Word, they made preparation to move, not a penny to their name. But God had never failed; if He said go, they knew that He would make the way. Packing up the car, they got in for the trip, but still with no money to travel. Brother Massey had to stop downtown on the way out. Someone on the street handed him just enough money to buy gas to get them to the new place. Living by faith became a way of life for the Masseys.

It seemed that a lot of Brother Massey's work was

either going into a place that needed a church and building one or taking churches that were having trouble, getting them back on their feet and moving on to something else. He also taught night singing schools, and he stopped a year now and then to teach in Tulsa, Oklahoma, at the Apostolic Bible College.

In the early 1940s while teaching at the Bible college in Tulsa, he felt the call to a place called Odessa, Texas. Not knowing a thing about Odessa, he took a bus there, arriving at night. The wind blew trash all over the deserted streets. He was not impressed with the place at all. But it was there that God used him perhaps most of all. All the Massey family fell in love with the people and with Odessa.

Once on the way back to Odessa from Midland, the devil tried to stop the Masseys. They were involved in a wreck that totaled their car. Don, the youngest, was in the back seat and he remembers diving down between the seats. He was not hurt. Brother and Sister Massey did not fare as well, however. He walked around the crumbled car, picked up his wife, and set her back on the seat.

As he stood dazed and weak, a man came up behind, put his arm around his shoulders, and prayed with him. When Brother Massey opened his eyes, the man was gone. No one else had even seen the man. It seemed apparent that God had not only spoken again but had also come to him in the form of a man.

As Brother Massey was helping to put his wife into the ambulance, the attendants noticed his condition. They discovered that he was nearly bleeding to death but had kept going on pure grit.

His church and the Baptist Church down the street

soon filled with people praying. The report from the hospital was not good: if they did live, Brother Massey would never preach again and Sister Massey would never sing again. This was on a Saturday. A week from the next day, Brother Massey was in his pulpit. Sister Massey, who did not leave the hospital for some time, recovered completely.

While in Odessa, Brother Massey served as the secretary-treasurer of the Texico District. Brother Massey considered it a great privilege to serve on the resolution committee during the merger in 1945. He also served on the Board of Christian Education.

After leaving Odessa, Brother Massey returned to Tulsa to teach in the Bible school and to pastor a small church in Sperry, Oklahoma.

Leaving Tulsa, Brother Massey pastored churches in Dallas and Longview, Texas. Then it was back to teaching in a Bible school. This time it was International Bible College in San Antonio. It was here that their oldest child, Jean, met and married Vernon Bowman, from Indiana. By now Harold, the second child, was in the army. Leaving San Antonio, they took the church in Kerrville, Texas. Harold came home on leave and met and married Mordaline Dieke.

It was back to Oklahoma and another small church in Holdenville for the Masseys. Feeling the need for a church in East Tulsa, the Masseys moved again to build another new church.

In East Tulsa, the church first met in a storefront. With a small group of people the Masseys went on to build their own place of worship on Denver Street. It was while they were in the storefront that Don, the youngest

child, met Faye McCutchen, who he later married.

Just after completing the new church, Sister Massey was found to have cancer. She departed this life to be with the God, who had always watched over her through both the good and the bad times. On May 11, 1957, Sister Ila (Vaughn) Ashcraft, her dear friend, who had worked with them when they first started out, officiated at Sister Massey's funeral; it was the day before Mother's Day. At the time of her death, the Masseys had five grandchildren: Jean, two (later another daughter); Harold one; and Don, two children, one of whom was born premature in the same hospital the night before Sister Massey's death.

While pastoring the church in Tulsa, Brother Massey served as a presbyter of the Oklahoma-Kansas District.

Since Brother and Sister Massey were so close, he felt lost and he soon gave up the pastorate of the church. For a time he taught at Stockton Bible College. But then he returned to the southwest where he traveled from church to church teaching and preaching. Many friends asked him to write a church history and not let all his knowledge go to the grave with him.

While teaching in Louisiana, he met Sister Fannie Gilcrease, and they were married. This marriage gave him four more children whom he came to love as his own: Arthur, Oliver, Archie and Joyce. They later lost Archie with a heart attack. Since the new Sister Massey was a minister also, their paths only crossed now and then when they both would come home to Leesville, Louisiana. Later they both had the opportunity to work together in Jackson, Mississippi, at the Jackson College of Ministries. This was a good time for them. However, after a year of teaching they were back on the road, one going one way

the other the other way, always looking forward to the times together back at home in Leesville.

Brother Massey started working on his book. For the next four years he spent much time on the book along with teaching. The dream of a life was fulfilled when his book, *A Panaromic View of Church History*, was published. He enjoyed much success with his book.

Late in 1979 in Leesville, his station wagon packed with suitcases, and his overhead projector, ready for him to go to Houston, Texas, to teach on a weekend, Brother Massey suffered a stroke. He was not expected to live through the night but the morning found him much improved. Upon his return home a week later, he suffered a heart attack. This time it was much longer before he returned home.

The next three years Brother and Sister Massey had together. Sister Massey for the first two years gave herself to taking care of her husband. When he was able to be up longer at a time and to get out some, she took the Louisiana Camp Church. This church, which had been closed, soon increased and a good work was established. Brother Massey could again take part in church work.

On April 14, 1982, knowing his departure was at hand, Brother Massey talked to his wife concerning his burial. The next morning he arose, went out to water the flowers he loved so much, came back into the house to help his wife with the household chores, and sang "Coming Home, Coming Home, Never More To Roam." Then he fell. He was lifted up in the arms of his stepson, Oliver. He opened his eyes and gave him one of his famous smiles before he slipped away to glory to be with the One who had led him through life with a still small Voice.

God had spoken, again, and all was well.

A recap of Uel Alvin Massey's work in the ministry of the church.

66 years in the service of the Lord.

58 years in Pentecost.

54 years an ordained minister.

5 years in his home church under his pastor.

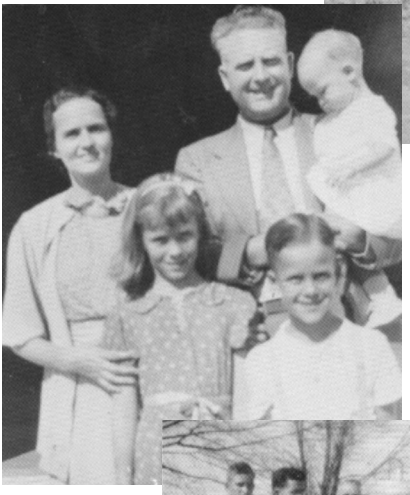
35 years in pastoral work; built four churches; 6 years teaching in Pentecostal Bible schools; 8 years as a traveling evangelist and Bible teacher; taught singing schools for twenty years in connection with his ministry. At age eighty-two his life was still dedicated to the work of God.



Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree PBI. 1972.



Uel Massey in the Cavalry, 1918.



Bro. and Sis. Massey, Jean, Harold and Dow, 1973.



Dinner on the ground at Odessa, TX.



San Antonio,TX International Bible College, 1950. Bro. Massey sitting 3rd from left Sister Massey—top.



On the faculty at Jackson College of Ministries, Jackson, MS. 1976.



Oklahoma campmeeting, 1954, Brother Massey 3rd from left 1954.



A. A. MATNEY

Reprinted From Past Pentecostal Herald.

This faithful pioneer of the gospel came into Pentecost in its early days. In 1921 he received the revelation of the oneness of God and baptism in the name of Jesus.

He was first a member of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. Later he became affiliated with the Pentecostal Ministerial Alliance. He continued with this organization until it became known as the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated. As a member of this latter organization, he was automatically affiliated with the United Pentecostal Church at the time of the merger in 1945.

During his early ministry, he was associated with such well known pioneers as D. C. O. Opperman, Andrew Urshan and G. T. Haywood.

Brother and Sister Matney, along with Brother and Sister Frank Manning, founded the first Jesus Name church in Houston, Texas, in 1922. Brother Manning did not preach, but Brother Matney and Sister Manning alternated in preaching during the revival services.

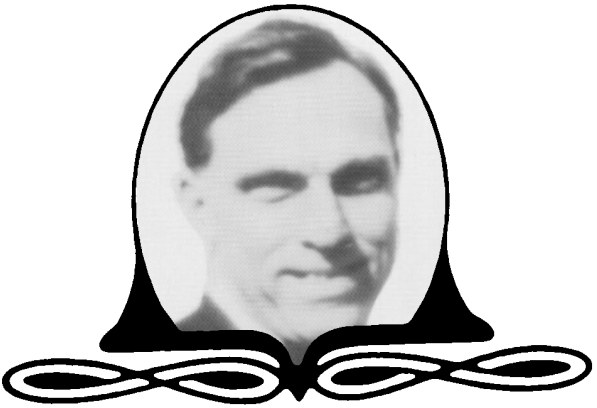
The work began under a 30' X 20' tent at the corner of Harrisburg and 79th Street. After several months of preaching repentance, baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, God gave them a harvest of souls.

In 1923 Brother and Sister Matney moved to Galveston, Texas, to establish a church. The work in Houston was left in charge of Brother C. W. Dowden.

In that same year Brother and Sister Manning went to Nederland (near Houston) to conduct revival services. They slept in a small tent adjoining the revival tent. One night while they were asleep, someone poured oil on this small tent, and set it afire. Brother Manning escaped with their youngest child. Sister Manning and their two older children perished in the fire. Thus they became latter-day martyrs for the name of Jesus Christ.

The work of God in Houston, begun by Brother and Sister Matney, along with the Mannings, has grown tremendously. Now, in the greater Houston area, there are approximately thirty Oneness Pentecostal churches. Houston has perhaps the greatest concentration of Oneness Pentecostals of any city in the world.

We are happy to honor Brother A. A. Matney for his contribution to this great work.



HARRY MORSE

By Jewel Yadon Dillon

The Big Downtown Mission on Ninth and Broadway, in the heart of Oakland, California, was the western crossroads of early Pentecost. Its pastor and founder, Brother Harry Morse, with his wife Maude, stood as beacons of strength and love. They welcomed all who were experiencing the fresh outpouring of Pentecost.

Harry Morse and his twin sister, Hariette, were born December 3, 1879, in Appleton, Wisconsin. The family moved to Michigan. Very little is known of Brother Morse's early life. He moved to Stockton, California, at age nineteen. There he married Maude. Maude had been crippled in her youth but the Lord healed her before they were married. Brother Morse worked with the Penile Mission group, a holiness fellowship, and later pastored a church in San Pedro.

Brother Morse heard about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street. Frank Bartleman, from the Azusa Street Mission, visited him at the Penile Mission in San Pedro. In 1906, Brother Morse visited Azusa Street to see if the things he had heard were true. When he saw how the Holy Spirit was being poured out, he began to seek the experience.

He was such a good man that everyone expected him to receive the Spirit immediately. Maude received the Holy Spirit very soon but it was some six months later that he received his baptism. It was during this time that he became acquainted with Brother Seymore, Glen Cook, Dr. Charles Price and Smith Wigglesworth. Herbert Buffum, the songwriter, became his life-long friend.

Brother Morse, along with his friend from Los Angeles, Pastor Frank Ewart, was among the first to receive the revelation of the oneness of God and to baptize in Jesus' name.

He and a group of workers from Stockton started the church in Oakland. The first work was located near Lake Merritt. It then moved downtown to the corner of Ninth and Broadway.

When they were looking for a place to relocate, the Lord told Brother Morse that it would be a place with marble steps. And true enough, the place that opened up had marble steps, not ascending into a fine building, but descending into a huge basement under a tavern. This is where the big downtown mission was established. It was a large hall, accommodating five to six hundred people and was well filled most of the time. It was the largest Pentecostal church on the west coast. Every night except Monday, there was a church service.

The heartbeat of the church was missions. Brother Morse was global in his perspective. Many missionaries went from Oakland to China, India, and the uttermost parts of the earth. Brother Morse could raise thousands of dollars, even in the heart of the Depression. He was so honest and open, yet he exercised such good spiritual judgment that people responded to him willingly. In his very low-key way he would lean toward the pulpit and address the audience. "Dear ones, we have a need here tonight." And the people responded.

The life of the church was infused by prayer and fasting and characterized by freedom of the Spirit. There was great freedom to testify and strength to set down those who were out of order. When it was time to minister the Word, Brother Morse would read his text, carefully fold his glasses, and drop them in his pocket. He would begin, "Dear ones, let us look at the Word of the Lord."

In addition to the large auditorium, there were a big prayer room and a special room for intercessors. Only those who had a recognized ministry of intercession were allowed to go in. Even the Bible students, who came in later years, could not enter. Some of the faithful intercessors were Sisters Cassey, LaFavour, Aunt Mae Keeley, Mother Hagin, Louise Olsen and Brother Morse's wife, Maude, who had a very keen and fervent spirit.

Brother Morse felt strongly that "this church is God's church" and fully believed that nothing could come against it that could not be overcome by fighting in the Spirit through travail and intercessory prayer. He ministered in power and with sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, often encouraging his audience to "lean into the Spirit."

The mission, located as it was in the heart of the city

and under a tavern, never lacked for excitement. The stories from the old Ninth Street Mission are action packed and colorful. Old timers recall with rollicking good humor the drunks who fell down the stairs and the bouncers that grabbed the noisy ones by the scruff of the neck and cast them out in the name of Jesus. Haskell Yadon reflects, "I saw more of God and more of the devil in Oakland than I've ever seen anywhere."

After the mission was established, Brother and Sister Morse opened their home to young ministers. The large two-story house at 3370 62nd Avenue was in a fine section of Oakland. It was donated to them for this cause by the owner, Ida Thompson.

Mrs. Thompson's husband had built the house just before he died. He had built another, smaller house on the back of the long piece of property. "Thompsie," as she was affectionately known to the students, moved into the small house.

Everyone who remembers Thompsie remembers her cats and the canned catfood she kept in the refrigerator. Two of the young students, Ellis Scism and Paul Yadon, mistook the cat food for potted meat and enjoyed their sandwich until Thompsie came looking for her cat food.

The Morses had a private apartment in the home. The other rooms were filled with students. The students, or "workers" as they were known, were assigned turns to do the cooking and household chores. Sister Morse bought the groceries. Everyone was expected to help. The students ate two meals a day, breakfast and a late afternoon dinner.

A typical experience in coming to the school was related by C. Haskell Yadon. The Yadons had been invited

to a conference in Fresno by their former pastor, Brother Stallones. The young couple came from Idaho to the special meeting and Brother Stallones introduced them to Brother Morse.

Before the conference was over, Brother Morse approached Brother Yadon and told him that he felt led to invite them to the workers' training home. He explained that the house was full but there was a little shed out in back of the house that could be made livable if the Yadons were interested in doing so. Haskell accepted the challenge.

Samuel Jensen, a worker at the home and later a missionary to Africa, was an interior decorator. With his help and a little paint and wallpaper the place was made quite suitable. This was later known as the "lambing shed" because two babies were born while their parents were in residence there, Jewel Yadon Dillon and Harry Scism, the son of Ellis and Marjorie Scism.

No tuition or room and board was charged for the school. The students were expected to devote full time to their studies and trust the Lord for their personal needs. This was a faith venture by Brother Morse and he expected the students to learn to live by faith. When there was a need for food or money, the whole group was expected to fast and pray until the need was met. An offering was taken up at the mission once a week and distributed to the students. This usually amounted to seventy-five cents to a dollar fifty cents per worker. The Lord did provide faithfully and often miraculously.

Brother F. P. Anderson recalls a time when Brother Morse stood in the kitchen holding a packet of margarine that had not been mixed with the food coloring. Brother

Morse remarked, "I have been so hungry for real butter. I wish the Lord would send us some real butter."

It wasn't but a few minutes before a knock came at the door. It was Doe Haney, a veterinarian from Modesto. He stood at the door weeping. "I was passing through town and the Lord impressed me to bring you some butter." He had brought them a good supply of butter and a box of large navel oranges. "The best I've ever eaten" recalls Sister Mary Lita Anderson.

A typical day at the school begins with Brother Morse reading from *Streams In The Desert* before the breakfast meal. Regular Bible classes were held on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings. Brother Morse was very thorough in his teaching of the Word. He often used the Weymouth and Moffet translations. He loved the study of the Word and imprinted this love on his pupils. Thursday was prayer and fasting. The students went to the church in the afternoon and ate their supper, usually a large, one dish meal like hash, in the workers' room. This room was set aside for the workers because they spent so much time at the mission, especially on the weekends.

Weekend services began at 2:00 PM on both Saturday and Sunday. Since Brother Morse observed the Sabbath; there was Sabbath school at 2:00 PM followed by the worship service at three. Following the worship service everyone was welcome to bring his lunch and eat with the students before street meeting and prayer meeting which preceded the evening service at seven.

Since there was a church service every night of the week except on Mondays, and since services were held three times on Saturday and Sunday, Monday was the

workers day of rest. This was the day to catch up on the chores and do the laundry.

Sometimes Brother Morse took the students down to Santa Cruz for an outing. He liked to play baseball. He never had much money or owned any property but all he had was freely shared with the students.

The outstanding characteristic of his personality was gentleness. Yet he was very firm in insisting that the students cooperate in all aspects. They were expected to attend all services, including street and jail services which were held before the evening services. It was said he had hands of iron in kid gloves. The title "worker" was not a misnomer.

Brother Morse instructed the young preachers, "If you don't have the victory, stay off the platform. We don't want to see sad faces." The workers were to look at the preacher at all times, and there was to be no whispering, gum chewing or carrying on as it would distract the audience from the ministry of the Word. He taught them, "Block the man that seeks an office. Let the office seek the man." He was confident that a man's gift will make room for him.

He answered the spirit of "I can't" with the quote, "Strong men come from opposition. Like kites, they go up against the wind." One of his favorite Bible passages was II Corinthians 4:18: "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." In connection with this he would quote, "Thrice blessed is he to whom is given the instinct to tell that God is in the field, when He is most invisible."

He believed in young people and the work of God in their lives. His faith in them built faith in the heart of his pupils.

The home was disbanded at the beginning of World War II. The young men were being called off to war. Brother Carl Adams was one of the last in the home.

The mission had continued in the same location for twenty-five years. In 1941 the building was sold and they had to relocate within thirty days. A building across the street was up for sale. After fasting and prayer, the funds to purchase this building were miraculously provided. The address was still the same, Ninth and Broadway.

The ministry of the work changed from a mission to a church. Brother Morse served as Missionary Secretary for the Pentecostal Church, Incorporated for several years. Ruby Martin was his personal secretary at this time. The location in Oakland exposed the church to a flow of missionaries coming and going to India, China, Japan, Africa and all the countries of the Far East.

Sister Louise Olson formed the Forget-Me-Not Missionary Society. As she was praying, she felt a missionary's heart crying out, "Pray, work and send but forget me not." This society raised thousands of dollars for missionaries and provided lodging for missionaries returning from the field.

Brother Morse and "My Maude," as he called her, celebrated sixty-four years of marriage and sixty years of ministry in Oakland before he passed away October 23, 1963, at the age of eighty-three. Brothers F. P. Anderson, John Opperman, and Arthur Smith officiated at the funeral. He was buried at Evergreen Cemetery, Oakland. His wife, Maude, survived him by six years. John

Opperman, who was his active assistant, pastored the church.

Some names of men who passed through the training home were Carl Adams, F. P. Anderson and his wife Mary Lita Locklear, David Gray, Clyde Haney, Eleanor Leonard, Ruby Martin, Vernon Nepstead, Ellis Scism, Odell Thornton, Oscar Vouga, George White, and the brothers, C. Haskell and Paul Yadon.

If a man is to be measured by the depth of the imprint he leaves in the lives of others, then surely Harry Morse measures among the giants.

RULES FOR PEOPLE IN THIS HOME

That they give their entire time and energy to the Lord's work to which they are called. That they willingly bear their share of responsibility in the house work, the apprentice workers doing more of the house work, thus freeing the more experienced workers for missionary work when such necessities arise.

Miss Elsie G. King and Miss Ruby Martin are on my staff of Senior Assistants.

That they do not plan extra work on their cook day. When something unexpected arises so you cannot take your shift, change with the cook before or after you. Be fair. Do not shift responsibilities. Cooperate together.

That they faithfully attend the Bible Classes in the

home and at the hall. Plan to have time for prayer and meditation before meeting, being prompt at all meeting. Also be present at all of the regular meetings at the assembly. Monday night is your rest night. Workers are requested to stay and help at the altar service where seekers need help in prayer and advice.

Workers are exempt from these responsibilities when sick or when a necessary cause arises.

Take your rest day or night for yourself. The other six days and nights are to be devoted to Mission work. Exceptions will be made when making pastoral calls in the interest of the work or in going places and doing things that necessitate breaking in on this rule; but first consult Mrs. Morse or myself.

Workers are requested to avoid loud or unnecessary noise upon returning home from meeting, and thus respect the neighbors. Beware of levity and jesting—it kills spirituality. Try and retire as soon as possible, so as to get your rest.

Courtship cannot be carried on while in training. You must postpone it until training is completed. It destroys the spirit of study and it also destroys interest in carrying on the daily duties.

AVOID familiarity with one another; it breeds trouble.

Don't carry tales one to another; it creates strife.

Men, keep out of the ladies' rooms because of talk.

KNOCK before entering anybody's room; not to do so is vulgar and discourteous.

Be wise in not telling all that you know concerning our family affairs as a home. It gives the gossiper material to hurt the work of the Lord.

Avoid slackness. Always be on time. Study economy.

Workers will get their board and room free, but must trust the Lord for other personal necessities. When in need come to me and I will gladly unite in faith for your needs.

New workers must settle down and plan to stay six to twelve months and are not to request a vacation period until here one year.

Respect authority in that it is a PRIVATE home. Being a Sabbath keeping home, all are asked to respect the Sabbath in the home whether they believe in it or not.

When you become dissatisfied, it is my desire that you leave immediately. It breeds discontent.

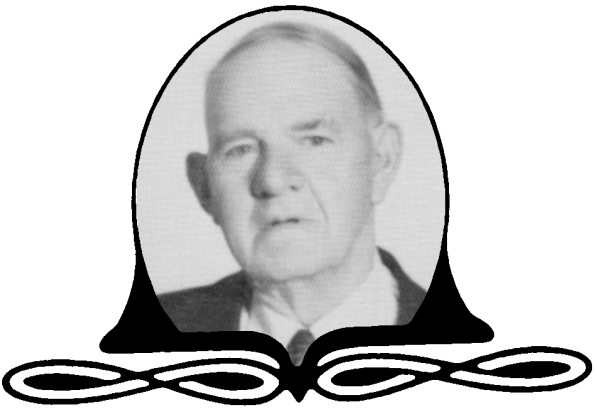
Harry Morse



Rev. and Mrs. Harry Morse



Harry Morse and Jewel Yadon Dillon.



CHARLES PETER NELSON

1881-1952

By Jacob P. Nelson

My father, Charles Peter Nelson, was born in the country of Sweden in 1881. He was reared by parents who taught him the principles of Christianity and morality as they knew it.

In spite of this upbringing, however, the pull of the world and the attraction of the port city of Stockholm caused him to run away from home at the age of fourteen. He enlisted on a sailing vessel docked at the port of Stockholm and thus began a life as a rough sailor. He completely disregarded his proper upbringing. He served two enlistments in the Swedish Merchant Marines and three enlistments in the Swedish Navy.

On one particular voyage in 1905 his ship, one of the last of the old sailing vessels, was sailing from a

Mediterranean port across the Atlantic Ocean enroute to the west side of the United States. It was during the winter months of November and December, which is an especially dangerous time of year to sail the Atlantic.

During the midst of this voyage, a severe and vicious storm fell upon the ship, and as the winds grew very fierce, the captain became alarmed. Calling all the men who could be spared from their duties to muster on deck, the captain, speaking above the deafening howl of the wind and the crashing of the waves across the front deck, told the men that in order for the ship to be saved, the sails would have to be brought down.

Fear struck the heart of every man on board since to climb the high mast in the raging storm would mean almost certain death. The captain pointed to two men, one of whom was my father. He told them they must climb the foremast to the top, inch their way out the yardarms, loosen the sails, and bring them down.

There was no choice but to obey, so the two men fought their way through the strong wind and the icy spray to the foremast. As they began their fearsome climb, they realized that the seaspray tossed by the wind had frozen on the rungs of the mast, completely covering them with ice. However, since the safety of the entire ship depended upon their bringing down the sails successfully, they began their difficult and dangerous climb.

The wind tore at their clothes, and all they could do was cling in desperation to the frozen mast as they crept higher and higher. The ship below them tossed and rolled in the angry sea. When they dared to look down, they could at times see the deck below but then as the ship pitched with the wind, they hung at a crazy angle over the

murky, boiling depths of the sea. After many torturous minutes, the two men reached the yardarm, and each man inched his way out to loosen the lines holding the sails.

My father had just finished loosening the ropes on his side and was making his way back to the mainmast when he heard a hideous scream. He watched the falling body of his fellow sailor plunge into the raging sea below. All depended upon him now, and panic seized his heart. His hands were so cold that they had completely lost their feeling; he believed that he would never make it back down to the deck alive. Clinging desperately to the icy foremast in the midst of the fierce and angry wind, he cried out, "Lord, if You will help me to get down from here, I'll serve You the rest of my life."

Slowly he inched his way back to the mainmast and then out the other yardarm to loosen the sails that his comrade had not been able to reach. As the sailors below watched in grim silence, he loosened the other sail and gradually brought it in to the mainmast. Then he began his laborious descent, holding with all his might as the ship lurched and rolled with the wind. After several more agonizing minutes, his feet touched the deck once again. He immediately fell to his knees in front of all the men and cried out in gratitude to the Lord who had spared him from what he believed to be certain death.

The storm abated in a day or two. The ship sailed westward into the Pacific Ocean, and then north to San Pedro, California, a small port just south of Los Angeles. Since there were no docks for large ships, they anchored out in the bay.

At the first opportunity for liberty, my father made the trip to shore in a small boat. This was the first time he had

been in this area of the world, and not knowing where to go, he boarded a streetcar that took him into the city of Los Angeles. On his previous shore leaves he had sought out the haunts of the rough and sinful sailors, but his experience at sea had changed his heart. He wanted to find a church where he could attend a service.

For a long time he walked up one unfamiliar street and down another. At one corner he read the street sign that said "Azusa." A short distance ahead he heard singing. As he drew closer, he realized that hymns were being sung, so he quickened his pace. The singing was coming from a building that had been used for other purposes, for the old lettering on the side of the building read "Livery Stable." As he entered the building he was met by the Spirit of the Lord. He said later that the Spirit was so thick one could almost literally reach out and touch Him.

My father took a seat on a "pew" which was just wooden planks placed across nail kegs. When he looked toward the front of the room, he noticed that a platform had been crudely made and in the center several nail kegs had been nailed on top of each other to serve as a pulpit.

Behind the pulpit stood a black brother preaching. His message was frequently interrupted by waves of the Spirit of God that moved through the auditorium among the people. At each wave of God's Spirit, the preacher, Brother Seymour, fell on his knees behind the pulpit and hid his face until the Spirit subsided; then he continued to preach.

The people sat with hands raised and tears of joy coursing down their faces. Some received their healing while others received this "new experience"—the baptism of the Holy Ghost evidenced by speaking in other tongues.

Just a few minutes after he arrived, my father was

suddenly and unexpectedly slain by the presence of the Lord for a period of about three hours. When he came to himself, he was speaking in other tongues and magnifying the Lord.

After spending a period of only about two weeks at the Azusa Street Mission, my father started out with a Bible in hand to tell to whomever would listen what the Lord had done for him. He traveled north, stopping in town after town in the states of California, Oregon, and Washington. He preached on courthouse steps, in village squares, in storefronts, or wherever he could, telling about his new experience.

In telling of the services held at the Azusa Street Missions, he said that those meetings continued unabated for several years almost round the clock with several services being held each day. Missionaries of many faiths heard the reports of these meetings, and many returned to the United States to see this phenomenon. Many missionaries received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and went back to their fields of labor to tell their congregations about their experiences. Many people were healed, and many other signs and miracles took place. The gifts of the Spirit were manifested mightily. And there was a spirit of friendship and love that ignored racial and social boundaries. All felt equally at home in this spiritual atmosphere.

The story of my father's experience at sea and his subsequent infilling at the Azusa Street Mission has often reminded me of Psalm 107:23-31:

> *"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the* LORD*, and his wonders in the deep.*

For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifeth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the LORD *in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"*

As my father traveled northward from Los Angeles, he came into San Francisco. He rented a small room in a boarding house. Every day he preached on street corners, in city parks, or in small storefronts where various denominational groups were holding services.

One significant feature characterized his preaching in San Francisco. It seemed that the Lord gave him messages only of judgment. My father would begin his messages along the lines of grace and mercy but before he was through, he preached of impending judgment. This troubled him, for his messages had been of faith, hope, and the promise of the Holy Ghost.

About two weeks after he arrived in San Francisco, he was in his room for a short period of rest before the evening service. Suddenly his bed moved crazily back and forth. Hearing loud screams from people in the same building, he leaped from the bed and hurried to the door.

He joined a stream of frightened people shoving their way down the stairway and through the lobby to the outside. As the crowd surged downward, the building was shaken again. When he reached the middle of the street, he noticed that the traffic had come to a halt. He watched tall buildings sway to and fro. One shock wave followed another. The ground heaved and oscillated beneath him. This was the terrible San Francisco earthquake of 1906.

Before the worst was over, the streets gapped open, gas lines caught fire, water lines broke loose and spewed water everywhere. He later stated that this city that had feasted itself on the profits from the gold and silver mines of past days experienced the outpouring of God's wrath. To him it was no wonder that he had been able to preach only messages of judgment.

After leaving San Francisco, he traveled north into Oregon and Washington, and then turned his direction eastward. After several years, he came to Minneapolis, Minnesota. One Sunday afternoon he found a small trinity Pentecostal mission, met some of the people, and joined those praying around the altar. Several had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in this afternoon service.

While this group was praying at the mission, another group went to the Mississippi River for a baptism service. A short time later, my father's attention was attracted by the sounds of the group returning from the baptism service. As the group came in, he noticed an attractive, dark-haired young woman. He said to himself, "This is the woman I am going to marry!" He told us later that he felt the Lord showed this to him. The marriage did take place a short time after he met my mother.

My parents settled in the Midway District of St. Paul

where they lived for more than thirty years. My brother and I were reared in this area.

During the early years of this century, there were not many Pentecostal church organizations, and the few that came into existence were not strong. Dad continued to be an itinerant preacher, entirely on his own. There was no financial backing available from any source. He was away from home much of the time, traveling and evangelizing throughout Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. The offerings were very small, but his main concern and joy was in being used by the Lord to bring souls into the kingdom of heaven. When the gospel doors opened, he was glad to walk through them; when the opportunity did not manifest itself, he returned home and worked at various secular jobs until a door for preaching opened once again.

Of course, this meant that Mother could not count on any kind of fixed income, but she did not complain. When Dad returned to the family, it was usually with glowing reports of the workings of the Lord in the services. Perhaps our family did not have as much as other families, but we all felt that we were rich in the wealth of God's blessings and Spirit. Once in a while our whole family visited Dad in his meetings, and that was always a wonderful experience.

In later years my brother David and I were privileged to have Mother and Dad with us while we attended Bible college. When we began to evangelize, Mother and Dad went with us for a while.

In 1951 my brother and I attended for one year the Bible Baptism Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. After graduating, we accepted the pastorate of the First United Pentecostal Church of Fort Worth as co-pastors. Since

there were two of us, there was often the opportunity for one of us to preach elsewhere while the other took care of the pastorate.

In the winter of 1951-52 my father became ill. Gradually he became weaker until finally he took to his bed and was not able to get up. About the last of February of 1952 I was scheduled to preach for the weekend at the church in Waco, Texas, pastored by Brother Lonnie Hosch. Before leaving the housetrailer, which was parked behind our church, I went into the little bedroom to be with Dad.

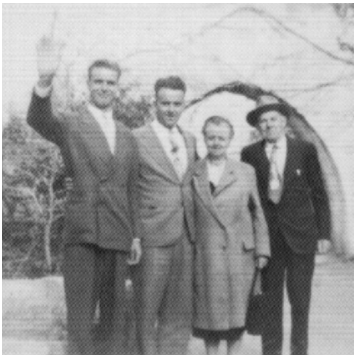
Our family knelt together in prayer for Dad, and I said to him, "Dad, if you say the word I will not go away this weekend; I'll stay right here with you." His quick reply, though he was weak in body, was "No, Jacob, I want you to go; preach the Word and preach it just like it is. I'll be all right."

With tears streaming down my face, I hurriedly kissed him and left. I was reminded of my dad's favorite Bible character, the apostle Paul, who had told Timothy, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season. . . ." (See II Timothy 4:2.)

Not long after this my dad passed from this life into the presence of the King of kings. At his funeral service, we sang, "Like a mighty sea, like a mighty sea, comes the love of Jesus sweeping over me. . . ." Although he has gone from us physically, his influence remains with us. He was one of those early pioneers who "worked the road, making it easier for those behind."



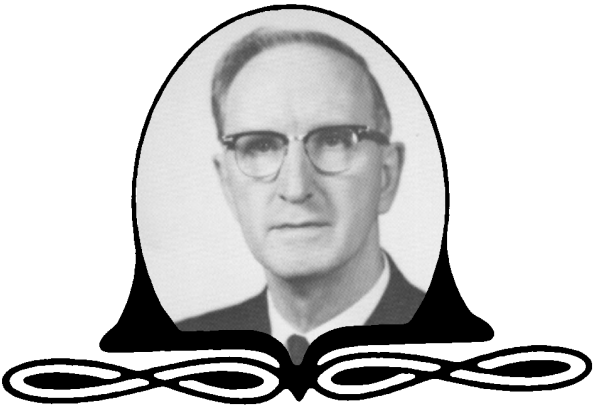
The Nelsons evangelize



The Nelsons standing near entrance to the cave near Marble Halls, TX, 1950.



Brother and Sister Nelson and two sons, 1922.



ALLISON W. POST

By J. M. Morehouse

"It's a fourteen-pound boy!"

Brother A. W. Post declares, "That was the most unusual thing about my birth." Perhaps truer words were never spoken, for it is a rather rare occasion when a fourteen-pound baby comes into the world.

The date was August 5, 1912, and George and Minnie Post named the big baby boy "Allison." Somehow, he ended up with the nickname "Buddy," which was tagged on in early childhood and stuck.

Buddy was born in the Port City of Saint John, New Brunswick, into a family of three brothers and two sisters. He went to Alexander School near his home, then transferred to the Saint John Vocational School where he was later forced to withdraw due to the difficulties brought on by depression years.

From his earliest days, he desired to know God but did not know how to find Him. As Buddy grew older, he decided to be a preacher in order to be assured of going to heaven. To his disappointment, he later learned that it required more than being a preacher; so he tried being baptized at the age of thirteen. As he soon discovered this made no great change in his life, he became so filled with disillusion that he quit going to church by the time he was sixteen. Then he became deeply involved with sports.

"When Pentecost came our way," he said, "I tried my best to find out what it was all about. Someone told me it was a form of self-imposed hypnosis, so I got in front of the looking glass and tried to hypnotize myself. But it didn't work! The next step was to go see what was going on.

"The Davis' sisters church in Saint John had an 'Amen Corner' and I figured the best way to find out what they were doing was to join them in that corner. As I sat there, Brother Bailey, a great old man of God, got up and went past me into the aisle; he was reeling, laughing, shouting and shaking. Well, I thought, he's sure acting like a drunk man! When he came back in I crowded him to see if he was really drinking and did my best to smell liquor on his breath. But there was none, and it left me completely puzzled.

"Someone said, 'They put people under the *power* down there at their prayer meetings,' I decided I'd go to a prayer meeting and find out. I made up my mind I wouldn't really go under, but I'd let them start, then get up and leave and expose what they were doing."

When Brother Post got to the meetings, he was amazed at the joy these people had. He could not understand it, for he felt nothing. However he got down on his

knees and they began to pray with him, placing hands on his head. It occurred to him that they thought they had a convert, but he waited in vain for the *power*! When nothing happened, he went away greatly puzzled.

Three weeks later, he was sick in bed. As he contemplated his life and regretted his sinfulness, the ceiling suddenly disappeared and a set of golden stairs took its place. He beheld angels on the stairs and Jesus came down and took him by the hand.

"He led me toward a great gulf filled with people whose faces were filled with misery. I put my hand on them and prayed and the misery was replaced by joy.

"As the vision left (though I knew not what it was), I was extremely happy but couldn't understand why I was crying. A few days before this vision, a man had come in to talk to me about the things of the Lord. He was cross-eyed and had a stuttering problem and I could hardly wait for him to leave so I could finish a book I had been reading. The day after the vision, he returned and this time, I was fascinated by what he had to say. I couldn't understand the change in him."

Following this experience, Buddy started going back to church again even though his mother forbade it. Since he was nineteen years old, he went anyway. But one night he came home to get a good tongue-lashing. He listened for about twenty minutes before he lost his temper and threw his hands up in despair. He quit going to church and things suddenly began going backwards for him.

He continued to read his Bible and was still curious about what was happening with the Pentecostals.

His mother cooked and cleaned for a social club. One night they were having a dance. His brother showed up

with a Sunday school teacher from a prominent denomination whom he thought would be able to straighten Buddy out in his thinking. Strangely enough, Buddy found he did not know about Pentecostals well enough to argue with her. All he could do was point out the Scriptures with which he was familiar. He referred to Jesus' words, "Ye must be born again," and went from there to the Book of Acts, chapter two. She immediately said, "That's Holy Roller talk!" But his brother later said, "All I heard was Scripture, so I began to think that maybe these Pentecostals did have something."

While talking to them, Brother Post mentioned, "The Spirit of God will not always strive with man." His brother went to bed that night deeply troubled. He soon gave his heart to God, was baptized in Jesus' name and received the Holy Ghost. In spite of this, Buddy was still backslidden. He began to despair. One night as he walked home, he stopped at an arena and watched people skate around in circles. He thought, "That's just the way life is; always going in circles."

He started on home. When he got down to the foot of Main Street, he stopped and looked at the cold, dark waters. Althought he was afraid of hell, he began to contemplate what he would do next when God spoke to him.

"Give me a chance."

Buddy went back to church. For five nights he was the last one at the altar. On that fifth night, he started home and got down to Charlotte Street when the glory of God struck him. He was almost in front of the theater when this took place. He began to shout and praise God at the top of his lungs, meanwhile bumping into the exiting patrons who gazed in bewilderment.

"My brother was always stronger than I was," he relates, "and when we had a job to do, he got behind me and drove me. But the next day we had a big ceiling job to get done for a clubhouse, and I was the one in the lead. We placed planking between two ladders and I was jumping back and forth on the planking, working well ahead of my brother."

A few days later, he lost his temper a second time, but this time, instead of backsliding, he went to the Lord in prayer and God graciously heard his cry. In January or February of 1935, he received the Holy Ghost having been baptized in Lily Lake in August. He had entered Bible school in the fall of that school year. Once he had the Holy Ghost, he felt his walk with God would be more complete.

During the second year, however, he had a severe time of trial and for a period of six months, failed to feel God's touch. While his friend was conducting a service, Brother Post sat back and criticized until suddenly the thought struck him; "What am I doing? This is my friend. I should be helping him out!" With that he put up his hands and began to praise God and immediately felt a strong wind blowing against him. He lowered his hands and leaned into the wind which was so strong that it swept him backwards. Hands gripped his and raised them into the air.

The enemy had been telling him that God was not able to move on him because he was preventing it, but now God spoke, saying that no matter what the devil did, he could not stop God from giving him anything he wanted.

As he finished his second year of school, God spoke to him by prophecy: "I have enlarged the place of your feet and I am going to thrust you out."

His plans to go back to Bible school were thwarted as authorities would not let him back across the border. By the time that situation was remedied, his mother had a nervous breakdown and felt he must stay home to help her out in the clubhouse where she catered. He was finally forced to give it up and she went to the United States with her daughter.

Buddy now found himself in Saint John without food or a job. It so happened that Charlie Flewelling and his wife were on their way to the Foreign Missions field. They had their furniture already aboard ship when authorities told Charlie that they might not be going for two more months. He began to look for a small flat to wait out the time.

The Davis sisters were helping him look. When they returned from apartment hunting without any luck, Buddy Post was there. As they talked it over, God said, "Invite them to your house." Brother Post relates: "At first I argued, for there was no food at my house, but then I told God if it was really His will, to let Sister Davis say, 'What about your house?'"

"What about your house?" It was Sister Davis.

I told her in amazement that God had been dealing with me about it. She answered, "That's it!" and it was settled.

The Flewellings spent Christmas with Brother Post, "And," he adds, "There was lots of food, but I got only one gift . . . a pair of socks from Brother and Sister Flewelling."

While they were there, a brother, Harvey, came up from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, to visit and look for a young man to help in the work.

"Here's Brother Post. He's been to Bible school. Get him!"

Brother Post confirmed his willingness to go along with Charlie's proposal, but made it clear that he could not preach.

"I'll do anything; scrub floors, wash dishes, tend fires, cook, clean, whatever; but I am not a preacher."

They left for Yarmouth on January 1, 1937.

One night, without any prior warning whatsoever, Harvey got up and said, "We're going to have Brother Post come and give us what's on his heart tonight."

From that point on, he preached three or four times a week, in addition to working to help keep support coming in for the work of God. Three months from the time he went, his work there was completed. He was asked to go to Lockport, Nova Scotia, to fill in for a pastor who had to be away for awhile. He was reinbursed for the work he had done while there with the sum of one dollar and twenty-five cents, and that would pay his way to Lockport.

Although he had no interest in taking a wife in such uncertain circumstances, God spoke to him and showed him a girl by the name of Annie Marie Thompson. She was a pretty young lady who had been going with another Pentecostal boy. But she told the boy how she felt about Brother Post. Although the young man was heartbroken, he said God had also shown him she was meant for Brother Post.

There was a conference going on in the Trinity Pentecostal organization. Brother Post left Lockport for the conference with two dollars in his pocket.

Some of the preachers told about a very sick man who

was in dire need, and God spoke to Brother Post to give him the two dollars.

"In return," he said, "I got a million dollar blessing! Furthermore the man (whom I believe had cancer) was marvellously healed and sent me ten dollars by Annie. This paid my conference expense."

While there a question came up.

"What about these Jesus Name people? If they came to your church, what would you do?"

The conference speaker, who had been baptized in Jesus' name and forsook it for convenience sake, got up and exclaimed in a very harsh tone, "We'll put a wall around us. If any of those Jesus Name preachers come near, we'll turn our guns on them and blast them off the face of the earth!"

"One brave preacher's wife impressed me by saying, I don't know anything about these Jesus Name people. I don't know if they're right or wrong, but I do know that if they're wrong we'll never win them with a spirit like that."

Before leaving Lockport for the convention, Brother Post and Annie had made an agreement to wait until he was more stabilized in his ministry before they married. Annie was only eighteen years old. The responsibility of looking after her younger brother and sisters fell on her as her mother had died the previous year and her father was working to care for his family. It seemed the reasonable thing to postpone marriage until they were better prepared. However, as soon as the convention was over, God spoke to Brother Post to marry and then return to New Brunswick.

"Annie," he said, "I have no money and if you marry

me now it will have to be by faith. We'll have to live by faith. Pray about it and see if you feel it's the will of God."

After spending the next two days in prayer about it, Annie consented. Brother Post says: "I just had enough money for the license and wedding ring. I couldn't afford shoes, so I put cardboard in them for the wedding." However, folks took an offering for them the night of the wedding. They got enough to pay their fare back to his home in Saint John.

Brother Post felt to go to the convention at Newcastle Bridge, but he had no money to get there. As he walked downtown, a man stepped out of an alley and said that God told him to give him money to go to Newcastle Bridge. Brother Post went and as soon as the convention was over, Brother Burns approached him to accompany him to Sussex. However, he again had no money to go. Instead, he went to visit Brother Steeves, the pastor at the Bridge, and learned that he was going away with Brother McConaghy. His assistant pastor, Brother Peter Cosman, had already gone away. Brother Steeves was looking for someone to fill in for him. He asked Brother Post, who gladly stayed until the next Sunday night. Brother Cosman returned and took an offering for him. It was enough for fare to Sussex, where Brother and Sister Post stayed until the next spring.

While in Sussex, Brother Post and Brother Burns traveled some distance to an outreach work by car, then walked an additional five miles. They lived, meanwhile, on bread and sugar in the mornings and fried potatoes for lunch and supper. When they left, they were given an offering of sixteen cents. Brother Burns commented in his wry fashion; "That must be all God thinks we're worth."

With Brother Hatt, Brother Post went into tent work, baptized about forty people and built a church from hand-cut logs. Not long after this, Brother Hatt approached him about the Middlesex church. At this point, Brother Post still did not believe in the Oneness of God. While teaching Sunday school there, he mentioned the trinity. There was a pastor's wife in the audience. After church she came to him.

"You made a trinity statement."

"Yes. I'm trinity."

"Then what are you doing pastoring a Oneness church?"

"I don't know. God sent me here, but I don't believe that Oneness foolishness!"

She just walked away. Brother Post went to the parsonage, got on his knees to pray: "Lord, You sent me here. This is a Oneness church and I don't believe that nonsense! It's nothing but a lot of foolishness! I won't listen to them preach or teach. I won't read their literature. What am I going to do?"

Right there on his knees, God gave him an understanding of the Godhead. He adds: "It was such a wonderful revelation to me that I felt like going out and running up and down the road, jumping as high as I could jump, and shouting as loud as I could, 'I know who Jesus is!'"

From Middlesex, God called him to pastor several other churches and eventually led him to Ceylon, where he saw numerous miracles. People came from all over to be healed. One night, almost in a state of panic, he confronted a crowd of people waiting to be prayed for. His own prayer was, "Oh, Lord, if only Brother Burns or Brother Dudley were here to pray for these folk!" But God

said, "They're not, but *you* are!" The Spirit of God came on him with many resulting miracles and healings that night.

While in Ceylon, Brother Post became severely ill with thrombosis, or blood clots, in both lungs. Doctors felt that they might have been able to do something had it been one lung, but with both, it appeared to be a lost cause. One day a brother came into his room and offered the prayer of faith. Brother Post immediately began to recover.

The Posts had a family of six children, three boys and three girls. Three of them are presently in the ministry while the youngest son, Clayton, is going to Bible school. Brother Post likes to relate a story involving Clayton. He recounts: "After my oldest son, Howard, had gone in the ministry, I took a church at the age of fifty-five. There was sin in the church. Until it was freed, I couldn't get inspiration. I was terribly tied up as I preached one Sunday morning. I came home and said, 'I'm all washed up. I guess the Lord is through with me.' The next Sunday morning I got quite an anointing. When I came home, Clayton, who was twelve at the time, looked at me and said, 'Daddy, you're not all washed up. You can preach almost as good as Howard.' I got quite a laugh at that."

He goes on to tell about Howard, who at the time of the following story was a little fellow of two.

"I went away for two weeks of meetings. When I came back, Howard climbed onto my lap and told me how much he missed me. When he was through talking, I told him how much I missed him. He looked at me surprised and said, 'Why, Daddy, I wasn't away!'"

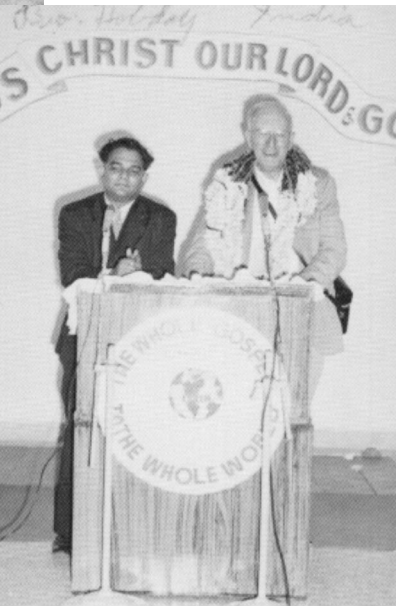
Brother Post is presently with the Chipman church as Bible teacher, working with Pastor Winston McGillan. He is on the Board of the Atlantic District, and is also a Regional Executive Presbyter for the Northeast area. He has just finished his sixth year as a teacher at United Pentecostal Bible Institite. God has certainly blessed him with a long and fruitful ministry.



Tent meeting days!



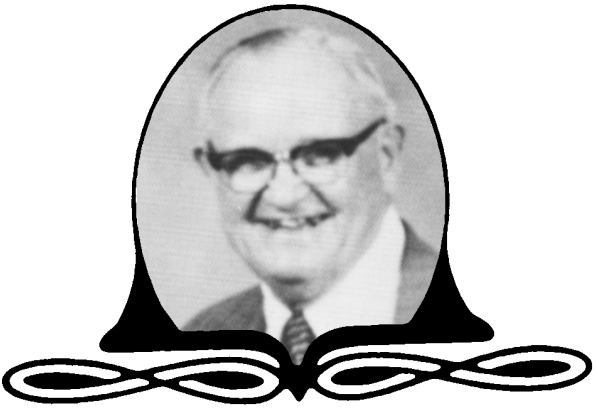
Sister Post



Brother Post and Brother Hobday in India.



Rev. and Mrs. A. W. Post



LEROY WILLARD RAGON

By Cynthia Ragon Gibson

"Small but mighty" is a fitting way to describe Leroy Willard Ragon. He was born February 13, 1905, in Tonawanda, New York, the first of four children, to George and Minnie Ragon. No one thought this small, yellow-jaundiced baby would live, but God had a mighty purpose for his life!

Because Brother Ragon is slightly built and small of stature, many teasingly introduce him as the "Zaccheus of Pentecost." He replies in his jovial way, "I feel sort of like a dime amongst a bunch of pennies." Brother Ragon's sense of humor has always helped to carry him through. Even though he is small of stature, he has always been mighty in faithfulness and steadfastness for his God!

While Roy was still a babe, his family moved to Marion, Indiana, where he grew up. At a young age he

was baptized by a Methodist minister who predicted, "Some day this boy will become a preacher." As a young man, Roy did feel the call of God to preach, and finally said "yes" down under the old bridge!

To help support his family, Mom, Dad, brother Ralph, and sisters Lela and Etta, Roy left school after the eighth grade. But five years later, feeling his call to preach, he again entered high school.

"Since you are so small and look so young, no one will know the difference," the principal commented. In high school he met Nora Winfred Nall. It was not just a coincidence. God had it all planned!

Roy decided to go to Marion College. As he was already an accomplished artist, he took a few art courses along with his Bible studies.

After just one year of Marion college, Roy was offered a small Methodist circuit, consisting of four churches. Roy and Nora were married October 20, 1929. For their honeymoon they moved into the Methodist parsonage, in Albany, Indiana. The house was very primitive and couldn't even boast of electricity. Thus they began their life together and their work for God. They were following God in all the light they knew!

To Roy and Nora were born four children—three daughters: Janice, Cynthia, and Pamela; and one son, John Porter. All their children are still living for God today—one of the greatest compliments of a successful man of God.

Sister Ragon proved to be a real helper. She was never too busy with her family to lend a helping hand, whether cooking for preachers, making extra beds for missionaries or evangelists, teaching Sunday school, direct-

ing Christmas programs, playing the piano, singing, working in the altar, directing young people's services, or visiting the sick. Roy and Nora were a team working together for the Lord.

For seven years they pastored Methodist churches. Most of these were circuit churches—a circuit-rider preacher, not on a horse, but in an old Model T or sometimes a bicycle. Roy laughingly called it his four ring circus!

Once they had a twelve-week revival. The power of God fell and many were slain under His Spirit. One girl was in sort of a trance for so long, that the evangelist and others were afraid. How many times Brother Ragon has wished he had known the truth, as he does now, so he could have guided these precious people!

These experiences moved the Ragons to want a deeper walk with God and more answers. Feeling restless, they resigned the Methodist ministry and moved back to Marion, Indiana, where Roy went back to his old job at the shoe factory.

They just happened—I'm sure it was God's leading—to move in a house across from a Pentecostal church. Brother N. J. Bibbs was the pastor. Everyone called it the Bibb's Church. Janice began to go to Sunday school there because it was convenient. When the Ragons were visited by a Methodist minister, the minister told them he wouldn't send a dog to a Pentecostal church. Roy had noticed that they were a bit noisy. "Probably clapped their hands to the 'Old Rugged Cross,'" he commented. But Janice liked the church. Finally Roy and Nora went to see her in a Christmas program and to find out what kind of a place they were sending her to.

In June, 1938, Brother Glen Bogue, missionary to Australia, held a revival for Brother Bibbs. He promised his car to anyone finding in the Scriptures where someone was baptized in the titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Of course Roy thought he had found it in Matthew 28:19. This was just what Brother Bogue wanted—a chance to talk the Scriptures. Soon Brother and Sister Ragon were baptized in Jesus' Name.

When Brother Ragon sought for the Holy Ghost, he knelt primly—hands folded—in his stiff, starchy Methodist manner. "Brother Ragon, let go!" someone advised him and he finally did. He shouted, he rolled, and he even rooted with his nose behind the step until his face was smudged with dirt. Sister Ragon went home in disgust. But not too long after that she also received the wonderful gift of the Holy Ghost, speaking with other tongues.

Brother and Sister Ragon helped Brother Bibbs in the church all they could, as Sunday school superintendent, youth leaders, and children workers. Then Brother Ragon again begin to feel the call of the Lord, but he rebelled against it. By this time he had the best job he had ever had, at the Andaconda, and for the first time they were paying on their own home.

But when the time came that he felt he was losing his salvation, he promised God if someone would ask him to take a church without him even trying, he would go! Within a few months, at a youth rally, he was approached by someone he didn't even know, Brother Carl Frazie, and asked to take the church in Ohio City, Ohio.

In the spring of 1945, Brother Ragon borrowed a car—he had been riding a bicycle to work—to go to Ohio

City on Sundays. There were several near accidents as old tires blew out. Several times he went by bus through Fort Wayne, Indiana. Finally Brother Ragon bought a car that drove beautifully in town, but threw a rod through the engine out on the open road. "God, are You sure this is Your will?" Brother Ragon prayed.

Even Sister Ragon fought against giving up her home and the steady-income job. But God appeared to her in a dream and then she was willing.

Everything began to move rather fast, and by October they were renting a big old house in Ohio City. They had an old coal stove again and no inside plumbing. Sister Ragon cried when the money from the Indiana home was used to buy a car to use in the ministry in Ohio.

There were thirty-eight in Sunday school that first Sunday and very little in the offering plate. The church building was a very small frame building across the tracks in the poor section of town. Looks a lot like a chicken coop, thought Sister Ragon, but God began to bless. Soon the Sunday school board boasted 106.

Brother Ragon became the Sunday School Director for the state of Ohio. He was a pioneer in organizing the Sunday School Conferences and Sunday School Contests. He traveled around to the different Sunday schools promoting with his art work and his song, "I'm So Happy." He painted many baptistry scenes in Ohio, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and other states. Sometimes he held Sunday school revivals (painting baptistries during the day), preaching and drawing beautiful chalk pictures each night and promising to give them away to those bringing people to Sunday school, or to the revival. Many people came to see an "artist" draw and went home full of the

Holy Ghost. His artwork always proved to be a great blessing in every church and many homes still boast one of his beautiful pictures.

Then one night something happened that made Brother and Sister Ragon forget about art, Sunday school and everything else. The little church in Ohio City caught fire and burned. It was a cold Sunday morning. The night before the church had been packed for a fellowship meeting. Brother Stanley Hanby was the speaker for "Three Great Nights," as the sign said on the front of the church. The church had looked its very best that last night. Money had been borrowed for new asbestos shingles for the outside, new windows, new seats, and new carpet. A small insurance policy had been taken out for the first time.

Brother Bibbs was the Master of Ceremonies at the fellowship meeting. "Probably the next time we come here they'll have a new church," he prophesied. "Better give tonight," he quipped, taking the offering, "there might not be a church here tomorrow!"

Brother Ragon loved to go to fires—something about a fire fascinated him ever since he was a small boy—and fires in Ohio City were sometimes a bit amusing. The fire truck consisted of two-wheeled trailer on which the hose was wound on a large spool. It was pulled by a car or truck, or if nothing arrived in time a volunteer firefighter would pull it down the road by hand.

Nevertheless, the fire siren was loud and no matter what time it blew, day or night, Brother Ragon would pull on his clothes and was off to the fire! But that night, one o'clock in the morning, it was so cold and icy that he decided not to go. Oh, he was up, had his clothes on, but he told Sister Ragon, "This is one fire I don't believe I'll

go to! It's just too cold!"

Just then a car came sliding down the street trying to make it over the railroad tracks. When the car couldn't make it over the tracks, a lady jumped from the car and ran cross the tracks crying, "Brother Ragon, Brother Ragon, It's the church! The church is on fire!"

How the hearts of Brother and Sister Ragon fell as they looked toward the direction of the church. The sky was red and glowing.

"Wait," cried Brother Hanby. "Wait, Brother Ragon, I'll come help you!"

"From the look of that sky, it's too late for help," Brother Ragon answered sadly.

Together Brother Ragon and Brother Hanby slid to the church. The rest of the family huddled by the window rubbing the ice on the window with their fingers trying to see.

The poor fire equipment was no match for such a fire. The church burned to the ground. As tears ran down Brother Ragon's face, Brother Hanby kept repeating, "Remember, Brother Ragon, all things work together for them that love the Lord."

When the sun arose that Sunday morning, the new windows were gone, the new seats were gone, the new carpet was completely burned up. All that was left was some of the new asbestos shingles on the front of the church where the little spray of water had been able to reach. The sign still hung there—"Three Great Nights!"

That Sunday was like a funeral. Many had gone to that little church for years. Some even came that morning, through snow and ice. They walked to the front door and opened it to see only ruins.

The saints all met in the Ragon's home. Brother Hanby again quoted, "All things work together for good to them that love the Lord. God didn't set the church on fire," he said. "It must have been some fault in the furnace as we tried to keep a good fire going for Sunday morning. But He can use even this fire to further His kingdom, if you will only let Him!"

"Where can we have church, Brother Ragon?" the saints asked.

Mid-week was held in different homes; on Sunday mornings, the Community room on Main Street was used, after it was cleaned up by Brother and Sister Ragon from the movies the night before. If the Community room was in use on Sunday night, the Methodist minister offered his large church one block down Main Street (they didn't have service on Sunday night). Sometimes the Methodist minister would visit and was impressed. "These walls have never heard such worship," he said.

Yes, the Pentecostals had moved uptown on Main Street. They were no longer "down across the tracks," and evidently God had decided that's where they were going to stay!

Ohio City was only a town of about eight hundred people, a little farming village. The uptown consisted of one block, with business buildings on both sides—the meat lockers, a small bank, the drug store, two groceries, the insurance agency, the appliance store, a general store, the community building, two taverns, and a pool hall. And, oh yes, a large building with two apartments above, two store rooms in front, and a large, high ceilinged room in the back that was used as the city garage. Since no one was using the storefront rooms, Brother Ragon had one

rented for his "artist shop."

Once before the fire Brother Ragon had tried to move the church to Van Wert, a larger town seven miles away. There was a church building for sale there, but it hadn't worked out. I guess Ohio City had not completely had their time of visitation! Now the Pentecostals were the talk of the town!

At first, everyone was sympathetic. "We'll help this small group of people rebuild," they said. Many businessmen came to Brother Ragon with what they felt were generous contributions, $25 to $50. They thought with the little bit of insurance money, and their help, another small building could be built. But Brother Ragon had greater visions.

"We need a larger building with Sunday school rooms," he said. "Room to grow. So we need the lot next door to our church lot." But it was not for sale. It was tied up in an estate. Besides, there was an alley between. So Brother Ragon walked that lot praying to God. "Just as Abraham walked and You gave him land, give us this land also. We need it, God." And God did! The church was able to purchase the lot and close the alley. Plans were drawn and approved for the new, larger church, but they needed money. The $2,500 insurance and the $25 to $50 gifts were not enough.

Then the devil began to work. Two of the four trustees in the church, besides Brother Ragon, decided they didn't like the new plans. They wanted just a small building like before. They told the town bank and lumber companies they were not behind the new building. So the bank wouldn't loan any money; the lumber companies wanted cash; no credit would be extended they said! Time went

on. Nothing seemed to be working out.

"Oh, God, we need a church home," Brother Ragon prayed. "God it's been way over a year! What are we to do?"

That night, Brother Ragon had a dream! Main Street—the building that housed the city garage—where he had his artist shop! The overhead door was gone. Many people were going in the doors. There was a sign on the front. It said, "The United Pentecostal Church."

The next morning, he told Sister Ragon about the dream. She became excited. "With the apartments upstairs it does look like a tabernacle building (tabernacles were popular in Pentecost at this time). Do you suppose?"

But when Brother Ragon called the foreign people in Van Wert who owned the building, the lady replied in broken English, "No, we no sell that building. We keep it for an investment. Many businessmen in Ohio City try to buy that building. But my husband, no sell!"

What a letdown; the dream had seemed so real. But a few days later the telephone rang.

"Reverend Ragon, my husband sell the building. We no sleep! We no eat! If church wants the building, we sell building!"

That night everyone at the church service stood unanimously, voting to buy the building, even the two disgruntled trustees. "It will make a fine church on Main Street," they said.

In order not to go through probate court, Brother Ragon bought the building in his own name and then deeded it to the church for $1.00. But it came out in the little Ohio City newspaper: Reverend L. W. Ragon buys building on Main Street for new United Pentecostal

Church. Then the town went up in smoke!

"We don't want them on Main Street," they cried. "We have heard their carrying on in the Community building. We need that building for a business. How were they able to purchase the building when no one else could? Where will they park? They can't park on Main Street! We won't have it. We won't have a Pentecostal church on Main Street!"

Articles began to appear in the Ohio City newspaper downing the church and pastor for taking away a business place on Main Street and using the very contributions made by businessmen to purchase it. First Brother Ragon went to the newspaper editor to thank him for the free publicity. Then he made his way to every businessman to return their contributions. Only one took back his money, but the controversy continued to rage. A town meeting was called. Meanwhile the church people became frightened!

"That preacher better show up at the meeting," many town people boasted, "or we will come to his home, tar and feather him and run him out of town."

Brother Ragon sat at home all evening. (Sister Ragon jumping at every little noise), but they never came for him. The town meeting was held, however. The two disgruntled church trustees went to the meeting, declaring they knew nothing about the purchase until the preacher took *their* church money and bought *him* a building! Oh, it was a trying time! But Brother Ragon was steadfast, unmoveable and God saw them through!

One day as the townspeople watched, cement trucks lined up in the alley. Windows were opened and the cement funnelled in for the new floor. Prior to that the

whole inside of the building was spray painted a light blue covering all the dirt and grease. Then a large curved platform was built across one whole side. Theater seats were purchased. Brother Ragon painted a huge picture on the wall behind the platform, one of the most beautiful he had ever painted. The overhead door was replaced with arched church doors and a sign on the front declared, "The United Pentecostal Church."

"They will never have their first service," the town mayor boasted. But the first night came—another fellowship meeting. People came from all over Ohio and Indiana. Cars parked all over Main Street.

It was a hot Saturday night. All of the farmers came to town. They stood along the street and alley, looking in the windows.

"Hey, Rev!" one of them shouted. "Where are all these people going to sleep? We don't have room in Ohio City!"

"Oh, they'll all be traveling back home tonight!"

"I can't believe it! Came all that way for one service."

"Where's the mayor?" someone cried. "He said they would never have their first meeting!"

"Oh, he conveniently was called out of town!" replied another.

"Well, they sure are having a meeting tonight." And they were! How the power of God fell! Singing, dancing, shouting, preaching. Ohio City knew there was a Pentecostal church on Main Street that night!

Then the old parsonage was sold and Brother Ragon and his family moved upstairs above the church. A door was placed between the two apartments, making five rooms in all. The family now had inside restrooms—two of them. And a shower! Oh, it was a tiny place off the hall

to accommodate both apartments, but it seemed heavenly to them. There were even a few metal cupboards in the kitchen.

Best of all was the view of Main Street. Brother Ragon's children could see right down into Pollock's Drugstore, where the teenagers hung out. How convenient to go buy something when someone was there they wanted to see!

The fair and all important town events were held on the Main Street. Even though most of the time the preacher's kids weren't allowed to attend, they had a bird's eye view of all that went on. Many times even the ferris wheel went right past their window!

Town events were not all that were held on Main Street. After the church was situated, they held bake sales, rummage sales, and even street meetings on Main Street! No one could stop them! They were in front of their own building! One evangelist even led a victory march out the front doors of the church, down Main Street, down the alley and in the back door. The townspeople fled like rats on a sinking ship.

But the best part of it all was that many people were saved in the old garage tabernacle, especially young people! They probably came out of defiance of their elders, but God filled them with the Holy Ghost. At one time the youth choir, led by Sister Ragon, stretched clear across the big platform!

Brother and Sister Ragon always seemed to have a way with young people. They had patience, humor, and understanding, and a willingness to put up with activities that enthused the youth. They were like a mother and dad to many whose parents were not in the church.

Main Street parking for the church was a problem, however, especially on the nights when the stores were open. There was an empty lot behind the church building. It was owned by Joe Pollock, the operator of the drugstore. The city kept their road equipment on that lot, and many times they had tried to buy it from Joe. But he would not sell. When Brother Ragon approached him, it was the same. "No, I will not sell!"

Brother Ragon then walked over the lot as he had the other one a few months before. "God, we need this lot for parking! God give this lot to the church!"

One night there was a phone call. It was the drugstore owner. "Joe Pollock here, Preacher," he said. "If you still want to buy the lot, I'll sell it to you. Just don't tell the men of the city until the deal is final. It's about time for them to renew their contract with me and they will be pressing me to sell to them. But I feel God wants you to have the lot."

When contract time came for the city, Joe said, "I'm sorry men. I don't own the lot anymore. You'll have to go see the preacher." God had done it again!

Certainly Brother Ragon's faithfulness and steadfastness was demonstrated by the way he was able to hold the church together through all the trouble with the town. Many would have turned and fled, but Brother Ragon stayed even until he had won back the confidence of the townspeople.

Then after ten years, Brother Ragon began to feel his work was done in Ohio City. He kept seeking for God's will. One night at a bonfire consecration service at the Indiana Camp, he promised, "Lord, I'll go where you want me to go." When he opened his eyes there stood Brother

Carlos Grant. "Brother Ragon, when are you going to make up your mind to come to Dayton, Ohio?" he asked.

Feeling it was the will of God, the Ragons moved to Dayton, Ohio, in July, 1956. Brother Ragon became the pastor of the Apostolic Lighthouse Church. The first Sunday he used his favorite verse of Scripture: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God" (Romans 8:28).

Brother and Sister Ragon's willingness to work caused the Dayton church to win many Sunday school contests. Every year they came in some place close to the top and collected quite a number of ribbons and plaques. For two different years, they won top place in the nation.

One Sunday there were 104 people in Sunday school. The next Sunday the 54-passenger bus went out and came back packed with 104 people (exactly what had been in Sunday school the week before). There were 307 in attendance that Sunday. Cars had to help take the bus people home after Sunday school. They could not all squeeze back on.

In 1957 Brother Ragon became presbyter of Ohio Section six. He served on the board for over ten years. His faithfulness, understanding, and forgiving spirit were great assets. And for over ten years, Brother and Sister Ragon faithfully pastored the Dayton church. There were some very trying times there, but God blessed and saw them through. Then Sister Ragon became ill and died. She went on to meet her Lord. Brother Ragon continued pastoring without her but it was hard. Then he married a widow, Myrtle Jackson. (She has been his faithful companion for over fifteen years.) They continued to pastor in Dayton for a few more years, until Brother Ragon's

health gave out.

He was in intensive care. His heart stopped beating. But his children in the hall prayed, and doctors were able to revive him. God was not finished with him yet!

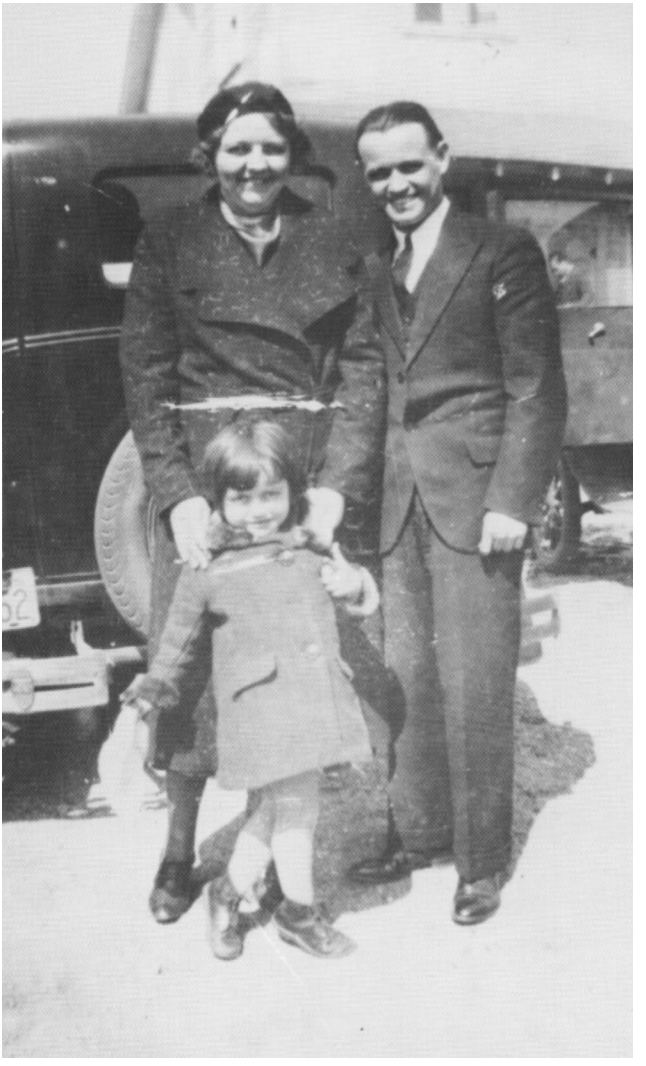
But because of poor health, Brother Ragon resigned the Dayton church and began to hold revival meetings again with his chalk. God blessed and people were saved!

Brother Ragon is now eighty years old, but his steps and his hands are still steady. He still faithfully ministers wherever God leads him, and his pictures are still beautiful for God.

The church in Ohio City has been moved to Van Wert. All of the lots and the building in Ohio City were sold, giving the congregation some money to begin anew in the larger town. The old garage building on Main Street that seemed so important to the businessmen was left to decay and is now torn down.

The church in Dayton has since changed locations, but it is still known as the Apostolic Lighthouse Church.

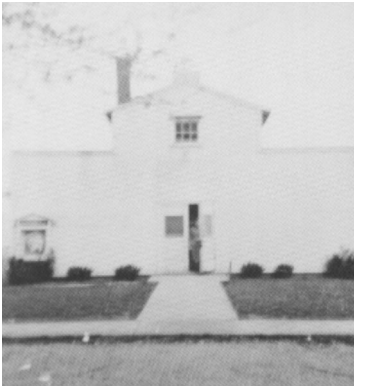
Both churches continue to prosper. Both boast of new large beautiful sanctuaries! God is blessing the pastors there. But somewhere, behind it all, is a "small but mighty" steadfast, faithful man of God by the name of Leroy Willard Ragon, who has proved again and again that "all things *do* work together for good to them that love the Lord, to them who are called according to His purpose!" (See Romans 8:28.)



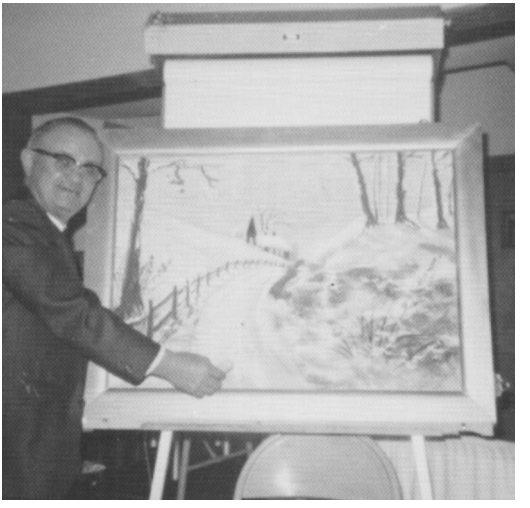
The Ragons as Methodist pastor.



Bro. And Sis. Ragon in front of building on Main St.



The old church



Bro. Ragon, the chalk artist.



JOEL ROY WEIDNER

By Mary Wolfe

In December, 1911, the world stage was being set for the first of the World Wars. War had become inevitable as the nations of Europe one by one "chose sides," and their differences increased and drove them further apart.

In the little town of Beaumont, Texas, the stage was being set for another conflict, much smaller in scale but no less devastating to the people involved (German-born Robert Weidner and the American girl he married, Stella Steele).

Robert was a native of Bremen, Germany, near the North Sea. His father a seaman, Robert knew little else about any other way of life although he received the typically extensive German schooling. When Robert was a small child, his father took a last fateful journey to sea after bidding his three children, little Robert, Fritz, and

baby Maria farewell. A terrible storm arose and Robert never saw or heard from his "vater" again. Broken pieces of the ship washed ashore days later and told the forlorn family the sad story.

The sea still held a special appeal to Robert and when only fourteen years old he ran away from school and home to join the Merchant Marines. For the next few years Robert Weidner sailed the seas, all the time longing for something better from life. He found it difficult to understand the discontent he had with this way of life, but he blamed his unhappiness upon the lack of esteem in which sailors were held.

Articulate with words, bilingual, and a poet at heart he wrote of this time:

I am a man before the mast and I plough the trackless sea
And on this simple subject will you please enlighten me?
"Common sailors" we are called, please tell the reason why
This sneering adjective to us you so commonly apply?

When speaking of the man on shore, I never heard you say
"He's common this" or "common that," be his calling what it may,
Be he a traveling tinker, a scavenger, or sweep.
Then why term "common" only those who travel in the deep?

For is it not our proudest boast, "We yet shall rule the wave"?
How could we say this much then if none did its dangers brave?
Among the nations of the earth what would Columbia be
But for the laurels dearly won by her children on the sea?

Say! are you not indebted for these things and many more
To the "common" American sailor that sails from shore to shore?
We ask not for your pity, afford to us our due,
Respect us in proportion to the good our labors do.

If ever should a foreign foe try landing on our shore,
These "common" men would man your ships just as they did before.
All you who think so small of us I'd like to have you try
One night to sail the stormy coast when raging winds are high.

In conclusion, friend, I trust the time will soon be past
When folks on shore despise the men that sail before the mast.
And lastly be this wholesome truth by nobody forgot,

With "common" sailors the higher folks must share the "common" lot.

Later Robert, deciding to leave this "common" calling, went from one adventure to another in the "New World" he had adopted. First he delved in land speculation in California. Then he traversed the United States cooking for logging camps; then he cooked for oilfield workers. He then turned back to the sea and became an accomplished deep-sea diver. When he met Stella, he was diving for entertainment, traveling with a vaudeville troupe.

Stella's life paralleled Robert's only in losing her father tragically while she was very young. She had been reared very conservatively by her American mother who could trace her family tree to Revolutionary War times.

A couple with more diverse backgrounds could hardly be found. Sometimes it seemed the nationality differences were the least cause for worry. The very things that had attracted the naive 21-year-old Stella (Robert's adventurous spirit and vast experience) were making it hard for the young German to settle down and be a family man. It seemed that perhaps a major conflict would be averted when on December 1, 1911, a special little boy, Joel Roy, was born to them. Robert and Stella were certainly united in their joy on this occasion.

Robert was trying hard to provide the good things of life for his little family. He was using his diving skills, sometimes diving for pearls, more often diving for more mundane purposes—laying pipe under water, raising dredges, and recovering shipwrecks. At one time he worked at raising an old gunboat that was sunk during the Civil War.

A few months after Roy was born, Robert worked in Hackberry, Louisiana. He wrote for Stella and the baby to join him:

June 7, 1912

Dear little sweetheart,

I received your letter at last and was glad to hear from you. I am sure glad that you and Roy are well. We are on a fine place here. Have a lake here so wide you can't see across. You sure will enjoy yourself here. Could only get a very small house, and it will cost me $10 to have it moved over here. You cannot bring much furniture over here. I will give you a list of what you want. Take all our clothes in the trunks, the bed and bedding, two rocking chairs and the dresser also. The buggy and the carpet you cannot use here. You can put some stuff in the dresser.

Well, Girly, I will let you know in a few days when to start and which way to go but you must be sure and start when I tell you or you will miss the boat.

Well, Sweetheart, get all the rest of the stuff ready to go in storage. I will write the Beaumont Storage Company to take the stuff. Let Mrs. Hazel bring you a little tallow and before you pack up, grease all the knives and forks we been using, also your baking pans and everything that's liable to rust.

Your Loving Bob

Stella joined Robert in Hackberry, and while there she first heard about the very thing that could have made the difference in the future of their family—the gift of the Holy Ghost. Raised very strictly in the Nazarene church, her first reaction was rejection. She wrote her mother:

> "Mama, dear, I think I should not like to hear the holy rollers if they talk in an unknown tongue. I hear enough French here on the Island. When people goes to talking in unknown tongues I will ring off. Me, if I ever get to be a Christian I will join the church we were raised to believe in and not pick up any old Brigham Young just started up."

Robert's lifestyle and his discontent with life led him to drinking. Although he sincerely loved his little family, it seemed he could not change on his own. His drinking and partying became more frequent, and he would sometimes become violent while drinking. After Stella rejected the one thing that could have salvaged their marriage, Stella left him and went to her mother. Little Roy was only two, and Stella was expecting another child. Robert wrote to her after the divorce was final:

> Mrs. Stella Steele:
>
> It is hard on me to address you this way on account of you being the mother of my children, but I guess convention requires so. Hope that you and the children are well. Fritz wrote me that I also have a daughter. What this means to me I cannot

tell, a little baby girl, and mine, and never to see her. That is hard, Stella, nearly unbearable. I have thought so much on Roy and not him alone. How he must have grown. I guess he talks most everything now. You did not learn him to hate me did you, Stella? Let me know that you did not and I will forever be thankful to you. Can we not be friends, Stella? for the children's sake? Let me do something for them, for Roy and my little girl which I never have seen. Does Roy remember me yet? What name did you give the girl? I would give most anything if I could see you all, for I am lonesome.

I am working here in Beaumont again. We got the contract of laying 2 lines of pipe under water. I am working and diving in Brakes Bayou, which is no fun. I am sometimes four to six hours under water and it is very cold. We will finish our contract in 8 to 10 days, but have some more diving to do for the company. Are then going to Port Arthur.

Robert wrote her several times of his love for her and of his desire to make "big money" for the sake of his children:

Stella:

I am glad that you are going to let me do something for the babies and let me hear from them once in a while. I would have written long ago but

was always afraid that you would turn my offer down and later on I did not know if you were still in Oil City, or if you were not married again. I sure would not like to hear that you were married again. It seems strange, but I can't help it. Seems that people love and marry only once. My life has been nothing to me this last year. Was sick sometime and did not care if I worked or not but like a voice from above it said to me you got to pick yourself up, this can't go on. You must try to be a better man, for you have your boy yet (Did not know then about the girl) and some day you might see him again and do something for him.

Now that I heard from you and the babies, I know that life is still worth living. I know now that I can work for my children, that I can do something for their education later on, maybe give them a start in this world. That's all I got to live for. I will never marry again. The second wife can never take the first one's place, and what God has joined cannot be torn out of a person's heart. The picture is there, always a vision, by day or night no matter what has happened, no matter how much we suffer for what wrong we have done. There is always some happy hour to be remembered, some loving words to be remembered, some loving touch or some incident, that can never be forgotten no matter what has happened.

He also wrote her of his desire to go back to Germany:

> I have tried to get to Germany but could not. If I had got there, it probably would be all over by now and you could have said to our children, your "Vater" was good for one thing anyhow; he could at least die for his country, and I wish it were that way, for this is a lonesome life.

And a few weeks later:

> I have bought an interest in the boats, barges, and diving outfit, so I am working on shares now. We are now the Port Arthur Wrecking Company and expect to make big money. I had to come with nothing and buy into an outfit that is worth $5,000 and I have to do it by working every day under water. I had to save and skimp but it will pay me. It will put me in an independent position and when I do get able, I will help you liberally and make up for all these hard times.

And then a poem about his way of life.

THE DEEP SEA DIVER

A dismal life of danger mine,
Down in the dark and murky brine,
Amidst the wrecks of foundered barks
Watched by the hungry eyes of sharks.

I wander around a warship keel,
Through netted mass of riven steel
Through engines, boilers, heaps of coal
And upturned hot sheets death patrol.

Through netted mass of wandering wires,
I gaze upon extinguished fires
And while my eyes in silence gloats
A gruesome corpse before me floats.

Oh horror should this slender thread
That joins me with sweet life o'er head,
Be but entangled midst it all
This diving suit would be my fall.

Of canvas strong and rubber build
To turn the sea and slimy silt
Socks, trousers, shirt in one are made,
My shoes with soles of iron weight.

Upon my head I wear a helm
A knight indeed of Neptune realm
Around my belt I carry lead
To sink me down among the dead.

When all's prepared I backward creep
And slowly sink into the deep.
An awful roaring in my ears
It seems to feel my heart with fears.

Now all is quiet not even breath
Disturbs this awful home of death.
And here I prowl in constant fear
That something dreadful will appear.

Now Mother, sisters, pray for me,
The lonely diver 'neath the sea.

The fears expressed in his poem became a reality, for a few weeks later his oxygen was cut off on one of his stints undersea (some thought perhaps intentionally because of his vocal support of Germany), and he died at the age of thirty-six. Robert never got to see his little girl, Cleo, and his plans for "big money" drowned with him. The only legacies Robert left his children were his indomitable spirit and his German name.

The "so-obvious" German name of Weidner, however, would sometimes prove a handicap to the fatherless children. Because of World War I, feeling was high against anything German. Little Roy was not oblivious to this stigma. His mother was doing her best to feed, clothe, and educate the two with the aid of her mother, Martha Steele.

When they moved from Oil City to another school district in East Texas, Roy thought maybe they could start over and make new friends without anyone knowing that they were German. On the first day at the new school, he took little Cleo aside and admonished her, "Don't you dare tell a soul we are Germans or I'll. . . ." He left the threat to her imagination and little Cleo readily agreed to her big brother's request.

Everything went well until roll call. Mr. Riddle, the teacher in the one-room schoolhouse, looked at his list of new students and called, "Cleo Weidner," and little Cleo raised her hand. The little German boy shrank in his seat when the teacher commented, "Weidner, oh! that's a German name, isn't it?" Little Cleo glanced at her big brother, but her fear of telling a lie was stronger than her fear of reprisal and she muttered, "Yes, Sir."

Roy shrank further in his seat and wished for a hole

to open up. No one knows whether the teacher noticed the shrinking of the little boy or the hesitancy of the little girl's answer, but Mr. Riddle went on to say, "The smartest people in the world are Germans." He then began to tell the class of the many famous doctors and scientists from Germany. The class all looked with interest at the two newcomers, and Roy sat taller in his seat. He never again was ashamed of his German heritage.

One day little Roy came home from school with a broken piece of yellow crayon in his pocket. Stella gave him a stern lecture on honesty and the evils of stealing; then she made him walk miles to the home of the child it belonged to in order to return it and confess. This made such an impression on little Roy that he would have a life-long obsessive respect for honesty.

Stella's mother, Martha Steele, had received the Holy Ghost and had been baptized in Jesus' name. When Stella later saw what the experience had done for her mother, she revised her earlier ideas and accepted the message herself. They had no established church to attend, just an occasional revival and brush arbor meeting.

Although Roy was vigorously taught honesty and morality, his training in the "Apostles Doctrine" was limited and came mostly from his grandmother. Martha Steele was to become one of the most influential people in his life. Very intelligent and strong-willed, she helped forge Roy's character and future.

Stella remarried when Roy was five years of age, and Roy acquired a stepfather, Johnny Hall. The next few years were very difficult for the little boy. His mother bore eight more children only to lose five of them to tragic childhood diseases (whooping cough, pneumonia, dysen-

tery). By the time Roy reached adolescence, he had lost his dad, five brothers and sisters, and an unusual amount of aunts and uncles to tragic deaths. The sensitive little boy purposed in his heart to never have a family of his own so that he would not risk losing more loved ones through death.

During these traumatic years, the typical conflict arose between Roy and his stepfather. Roy began to depend more and more on "Grandma Steele." Roy was her "pet" and she would always come to his rescue. Unhappy and confused, Roy ran away from home several times until 1928; at the age of seventeen he moved with Grandma to Arkansas.

Roy grew to be a handsome young man. Because of his talent with the guitar and mandolin and his great sense of humor, he was in great demand with the young people, and he played for their dances and parties. However, he could never get away completely from what he had learned and the call of God he had felt in the old brush arbor meetings. When he was a young man of twenty-one, God began to deal strongly in his life. The dances that had meant so much to him became a torment as he wrestled with the call of God.

During this period of his life, S. E. Long, who was later to become his father-in-law, began a time of fasting and prayer for Roy's salvation. One lady asked him, "Who did you say you were fasting for?"

Brother Long answered, "Roy Weidner."

She exclaimed, "Oh, he has gone to a dance tonight! There is no need to fast for him!"

Brother Long told her, "That is exactly why he needs my fasting and prayers." And he continued in his travail.

Roy finally surrendered, was baptized by Jake Jacobs, and received the Holy Ghost in the church in Vivian, Louisiana, in 1932. He gave his talents, his spirit of adventure, his quick intelligence and sense of humor to the cause of God. His enthusiasm was now channeled in a new direction. Anything Roy ever decided to do he would put his whole heart into it, and he quickly became in much demand as a musician for "gospel meetings." A favorite song of his during this time went like this:

I one time lived in sin, and did not know the Lord,
With all the worldly things my heart was one accord.
I heard the gospel preached so rugged, stern and true
I turned my back and said, "Old world I'm through with you."

The theatre and the dance all held me by their charm,
I said that cards and such could never do me harm,
I loved the worldly things, I loved the worldly crew,
But I found Christ and said, "Good-bye, old world I'm through."

My old companions sought to turn me from the way.
And fierce temptations wrought, alluring me astray.
My old friends tried in vain my old life to renew,

I shook my head and said, "No more for me I'm through."

Oh, glory, praise the Lord, for God's own chosen few,
Whatever be the cost, I'm surely going through,
For soon the Lord will come, His promise must be true,
Then we shall rise and say, "Old world I'm through with you."

Roy sang it and meant it. He was through with the world whatever the cost.

His "gospel-work" (as it was called back then) took him to DeQuincy, Louisiana, where he met a beautiful girl named Mamie Royer, who was from a Pentecostal family in the church. He quickly forgot his resolution never to love and marry.

With high hopes of working together for the Lord (Roy was now feeling his call to the ministry), they joined hands in marriage in 1934. But their high hopes were short-lived. Mamie's life was already being devoured by cancer. Soon she was in excruciating pain most of the time, and the bridegroom and the DeQuincy church prayed desperately for her healing.

Roy was tormented with doubts, and wondered if somehow he was to blame. The devil took advantage of this tragic situation and sent forth a false prophecy: "If you will go full time in the ministry, your wife will receive her healing!" Willing to do anything, Roy at great personal sacrifice did just that, but Mamie did not get well. Instead she died a painful death after only two years of marriage.

Grief-stricken the young convert wrestled with tormenting doubts. After spending many hours at the cemetery trying to believe for Mamie's resurrection from the dead, he turned to the Scriptures for consolation. He found that "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). The pastors in DeQuincy, Brother and Sister E. L. Cox, assisted him greatly through the worst times, and many church friends rallied to his aid.

As he recovered from his grief he immersed himself in work in the local church and in running a local restaurant. With this busy schedule he grew slack in his prayer life, although faithful otherwise.

He received a call one day while at his prosperous little cafe; "Your mother is very ill. Possibly dying. Come quickly!" He rushed to her home, but when he saw the seriousness of her illness he went to his car to pray. He got down between the seats of the car to cry, "Lord, heal my mother."

But before he could do so, the Spirit reminded him of his neglect and he began to wrestle with feelings of guilt. He repented of his failure to pray and made a commitment that would last a lifetime: prayer would come first the rest of his life. He purposed in his heart, "Never again will I have to repent first when I am faced with a desperate need."

Friends in the church again rallied around him in a new bereavement, but it was during these times of sorrow that his friendship with the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother" really ripened. Shortly after the death of his mother, he wrote a beautiful song expressing what this

friendship meant to him.

Many friends you've had down here as you journeyed far and near
But not a friend as good as He
He's the One who made the way for a bright and better day
He is a Friend who walks with me.

He has promised life to all who upon His name will call
Oh come and seek His blessed grace.
When you hear Him say "well-done,"
And the crown of life is won,
Then you can look upon His face.

He is a Friend who walks with me,
He gave His life to set me free,
Though it took Him to the grave
He was ever true and brave.
He is a Friend who walks with me.

Across the state line in Houston, Texas, events were happening that would play an important role in the future. Brother Oliver Fauss had begun a work in Houston, Texas, (about 1933) and one of his first converts was a young girl named Roberta Williams. A few entries from her diary tells how she was transformed from a fun loving worldly girl to a committed Christian:

12-31-34: Went to Loew's theatre. Saw Clark Gable and Joan Crawford in "Forsaking all

Others." Went to Katy's with Bill. Ate too much.

1-4-35: Went to Majestic with Bill. Saw Warner Bacter and Myra Long in "Broadway Bill."

1-6-35: Went to church in morning. Ate lunch. Louisa, Bill and I saw "Trans-Atlantic Merry-Go-Round." Went to church, then to dance.

1-11-35: Worked in office. Louise, Bill and I went to see "Romance in the Rain."

1-13-35: Went to Sunday school, then to Majestic Theatre with Bill to see "Little Minister" (Katherine Hepburn). Excellent show. Went to church and had wonderful service.

1-15-35: Sick. Brother Starkweather and Sister Fauss came and prayed for me.

1-18-35: Went to Loew's with Bill and saw Ann Harding and Robert Montgomery in "Bachelor Girls."

2-1-35: Went with Bill to see James Cagney and Pat O-Brien in "Devil Dogs of the Air."

2-3-35: Went to Sunday school and to Old Folk's Home with Bro. Starkweather, Sis. Faith and James. Jimmy, Jack and Louise and I went to church and I went to the altar. I am determined. Oh! I want the Holy Ghost!

After this, no more talk of movies. Instead . . .

> 2-7-35: Went to Bible study. Wonderful lesson I learned was "Know what you stand for and stand for it."
>
> 2-14-35: Went to Bible study. Sister Fauss led the service. Subject: "How to Believe."
>
> 3-10-35: Went to Sunday school. Went to Bethel Gospel Tabernacle for church.
>
> Was baptized and received the baptism of the Holy Ghost about 10:30. I also received hearing in my right ear!
>
> 12-31-35: Daddy and I went to watch service at church. I had a wonderful time. Was praying when the old year went out and 1936 came in. This year from March on has been wonderful to me!

Roberta's pastor, Brother Oliver Fauss, was noted for his love and concern for young preachers. When Roy Weidner came to Houston for schooling, it was inevitable that he take an interest in the tragic young man. Roberta had grown close to the Fauss family, living in their home at times, and it was also inevitable that she too take an interest. So it was at 9:30 PM, September 29, 1937, that Brother Fauss joined the two "gospel-workers" as man and wife. Two days later they left for the national convention of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ. Brother Fauss would introduce "Brother Roy" to

the ministers at the conference as "the evangelist to whom I gave a revival, and he stole my sheep."

Roberta kept a diary of their first three months, and it reads typically of the life of J. Roy Weidner. He was always very conscientious about his attendance in church, and the newlyweds in three months time were in service ninety-three times. Roberta faithfully wrote down the titles of every sermon they heard (instead of movies she attended as before). Some of the sermons they heard were Brother Gamblin preaching "Two Dangerous Curves" and "Seven Ducks in a Muddy River"; Brother T. C. Davis, "What Shall I Do To Be Lost"; Brother Fauss, "God's Due Order Demands Plainness of Speech" and "Streams of Eternity."

For a while the young couple evangelized in Texas, Louisiana, and Indiana. Their first revival lasted four weeks in Bay City, Texas, for Pastor R. L. Blankenship. Then they took the pastorate of the church in Humble, Texas, (near Houston). This move allowed Brother Roy to feed his consuming desire to learn more about God and His Word and to be in service more at the same time. He arranged his midweek service on an off-night from Bethel Tabernacle's so that he could always be in Bible study there. Then Brother Fauss would teach at the little church in Humble on their Bible study night. Brother Roy richly gleaned a knowledge of the Word from Brother Fauss and would always consider Brother Fauss his "father in the Lord."

While they were in Humble they were blessed with their first child, a baby girl. They gave her the Bible and family name of "Martha." The next year their second child was born, a little boy—Joel Roy Weidner, Jr. However,

sorrow and death was not through pursuing the young preacher. Little Roy Jr. lived only eight days and died of pneumonia. Brother Roy again stood at the graveside of a loved one and learned another lesson in leaning on his Friend.

Shortly after this, Brother Weidner took the pastorate of the church in Evangeline, Louisiana. If a change in circumstance is advantageous in helping survive grief, Evangeline was the ideal spot. The Weidners found themselves pastoring a church with many "Cajun" saints who could not even speak English (talk about depending on the Spirit!).

The church was in the midst of revival when a second daughter was born in the little parsonage. The evangelist was routed out and sent to some of the saints' home for the occasion. This little girl was named "Mary" (what else?). Shortly after this, Brother Roy left Evangeline to evangelize. Then he took the church in Marshall, Texas, before returning to evangelizing. Another child was born the following year (a boy this time) and all of Roy and Roberta's friends expected him to be named "Lazarus." However, he was named Garland Eugene (after Brother Roy's special friend, Garland Weeks and after his half-brother), Eugene.

In 1944, Brother Weidner accepted the pastorate at McLeod, Texas, near where he had been reared and where he had received the Holy Ghost. God richly blessed his efforts here, and the church grew. He still had the "evangelistic fever" though, and preached several revivals in other churches during this time.

Roberta had her hands full with three small children and service somewhere nearly every night. She began to

tire easily and to feel badly much of the time, but this seemed understandable with her many responsibilities. In April of 1945, Brother Weidner was invited to preach a revival for Brother S. G. Norris in St. Paul, Minnesota, and he left by train for the revival there. Roberta wrote her sister Nettie:

> Dear Nettie:
>
> Love greetings in the name of Jesus our Lord and Saviour.
>
> We are getting along just fine. Garland has a cold. I wish we could be there for the services this week, but Roy left Tuesday for St. Paul, Minnesota, to preach a meeting for Brother S. G. Norris. You know that's where Eugene goes to Bible School. I guess Roy will be up there over two weeks.
>
> Well, it looks like the war in Germany will be over before long. I hope so!
>
> Our Sunday school average was 121. I'm sure you all won, but that is good for here. The first two Sundays it was such bad weather it knocked our attendance. Pray for us and the meeting at St. Paul.

Then a week later:

> Roy is still in St. Paul. My well pump is not working and we have to carry water from next door.

Is that a job and how! Golden is staying with me and Grandma came back from Arkansas Tuesday.

I don't feel well tonight. I've ironed today besides cooking, washing dishes, cleaning house, and what have you, and I've felt bad all day. My left side hurts quite a lot.

Dear, I'm so sleepy I can hardly write. Remember I love you dearly. The devil wants us to think no one loves us, so just don't listen to him.

Hope to hear from you very soon. Lots of love to all.

Roberta and children

Shortly after this was written, Roberta became very ill. On April 18, Brother Weidner got a telegram that Roberta was very sick. He took the long train journey back home, stopping briefly in St. Louis, Missouri, where the merger convention was in progress. He arrived home 2:30 AM, April 21, and was smitten when he saw the familiar look of death already on his wife's face. The next three weeks he spent fasting and praying by her bedside.

Roberta, feeling in the Holy Ghost that it was her time to die, weakly sang and quoted verses of Scripture: "Christ shall be magnified in my body whether it be by life, or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:20-21). A short while before she died on May 17, 1945, she began to sing, "Lord, I'm Coming Home."

Once again the church family rallied around Brother Weidner at the death of a companion. The cards, floral tributes and outpouring of love were overwhelming. All the people reached out in sympathy to the bereaved children. The funeral was a paradoxical time of sorrow and victory, and the most poignant moment perhaps was when little eighteen-month-old Garland tried to make his "sleeping" mom wake up and laugh at him as he sang to her the little tune she had taught him and that always before had brought a smile from her.

All the lessons Brother Weidner had learned over the years helped him walk through this "valley of death." He emerged as a strong, stalwart soldier of the Cross. He wrote in his diary of this time: "A dark day in my life. Roberta passed away at 5:45 AM Sure hard to give her up, but God knows best. She was certainly willing to go. Everyone has certainly been nice in our troubles." Then a day later: "Had funeral 3:00 PM Brother Fauss officiated, assisted by Brother Hosch and Brother Varnado. Came back to house after burial. A hard life ahead of me, but I know God is able." Then two weeks later: "A very dark month in my life. Roberta passed away the 17th. Never knew it would be so lonesome. Everywhere I look and everything seems to remind me of Roberta. The only comfort is she was so willing to go. Don't know what the future holds for me. God knows best. I must look to Him!"

And look to Him he did.

Within a period of eight years, Brother Weidner had buried his mother, two wives, and a child. After this he entered a new era in his life. It was as though he had finally "graduated" from his school of sorrow and his

Friend was saying, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou has not withheld. . . ."

These trials left Brother Weidner an exceptional person with a spirit of consolation always evident in his life. He empathized so much with people in sorrow that he seldom preached a funeral without being sick afterwards. His brush with eternity so many times gave him an awareness few possess, and he had a unique ability to "comfort them which [were] in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith [he himself was] comforted of God" (II Corinthians 1:4). He valued his friends and family in a special way with a realization that he should make the most of every minute, not knowing what the future held.

Assisted by his two sisters, he tried to be both mother and father to his little family and, at the same time, pastor the McLeod church. To his chagrin and amusement, some of the spinsters of the community really rallied in sympathy to the forlorn pastor and began to deluge him with cakes, pies, and meals. However, this slowed considerably when six-year-old Martha met some of them at the door bearing "goodies" and hollered innocently to her daddy, "Hey, daddy, come quick and see what the 'old maids' have brought us."

Then God sent a real helper in the person of Opal Long, a young lady whose family was in the McLeod church. Opal had been in Texarkana working at the munitions plant during the war. When she came home at the close of the war, Brother Weidner began his pursuit of her with his singular wholeheartedness.

Opal (whether bravely or foolishly) after falling in love with the young pastor accepted the challenge of a ready-made family and a church. Bouts with poison ivy,

and whooping cough didn't make the first months easy, and then during the second year the family was joined by another baby boy, Robert Lonnie. God certainly had sent Opal to the bereaved family and given her a heart big enough to accept three children as her own. She became a "real" mother to them all and would later adopt them making them legally hers. She did such a superb job mothering them all that in the future friends and neighbors were hard to convince that she was not the natural mother of Martha, Mary and Garland.

April 20, 1947, Brother Weidner was elected pastor at the First Pentecostal Church in Shreveport, Louisiana, following the death of their pastor, Cullen Haymon. The Lord had prepared him for this move, for he had just completed preaching a revival for Brother Haymon a month prior to this. Brother Weidner moved there with his family. They had to make many temporary sacrifices, for the Shreveport church was much smaller than the church in McLeod. For six months the six Weidners were guests in the home of the Carl Ericksons (members of the Shreveport church) while a three-bedroom house was being constructed.

The following years were happy years of growth and prosperity for him and the church. He reared his family there and spiritually adopted many young people who were forced by circumstances to come to the city for work from the surrounding towns and communities. In fact, he built an apartment building behind his home that was a "home-away-from-home" for one Pentecostal youth after another. Many times one or more were in transient at the parsonage. Many of these young people flourished under his spiritual care and became ministers of the

gospel and stalwart church workers. (Among these were Ruben and Rosalee Sparks, Glenn and Ellon Chance, Sam and Norma Lee Scott).

The Shreveport church and its rapid growth were probably factors in Brother Weidner being elected Sunday School Director for the Louisiana District in 1951. Again he was found throwing himself wholeheartedly into a new endeavor. He began an intensified study of Sunday school techniques, teacher training, and promotions.

He soon became known as "Mr. Sunday School" for his enthusiasm. He taught Sunday school conventions in several states. He served as the District Director of the Sunday School Department from 1951 through 1958, and was elected as the national Sunday School Secretary in 1957. He served in this capacity until 1961. He saw a real need in the church for graded literature (lessons geared with the age of the pupil in mind) and joined E. E. McNatt, and then the J. O. Wallaces in bringing this to pass in the United Pentecostal Church.

Because of his increased traveling during this period of time, he often took the airplane to conserve time. One flight from St. Louis to Shreveport was not "smooth sailing." A terrible storm arose and the plane was buffetted tremendously. They circled the airport in Memphis for over an hour, and then they returned to St. Louis. No one ever talked him into flying again. In fact, when anyone would ask why he did not fly somewhere, he would say with a twinkle in his eye, "The Lord said, 'Lo[w] I am with you always.'"

He enjoyed working in the Sunday School Department, but he did not like being away from his family and church. He wrote his family during this time when he was

away teaching in Tennessee: "My, I know this week will pass slow. I do not like to be away from my honey and family. This is too much for me. I don't see how some men stay away from their family so much, or church either. I miss good ole Shreveport services."

Brother Weidner was constantly educating himself through correspondence courses and books. While at Shreveport, he took advantage of Centenary College nearby, completing several courses in English, writing, speech, and religion.

In one of his classes at Centenary, he was required to write on the subject of his choice. He could not get away from a compulsion to write his paper on "The Plan of Salvation and the Necessity of Jesus Name Baptism." He knew it was not a popular subject, but he submitted to the Spirit and wrote it anyway. As he expected, the profesor knocked off points because "it was not a relevant subject." When a few days later the professor died, Brother Weidner suddenly understood the leading of the Lord and was glad he had been a witness.

In 1958, the course of his life was to change again. He was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the Louisiana District. (God had revealed to him this would happen several months previous). Knowing this to be the will of God, he happily joined Brother C. G. Weeks, who was superintendent of the district, in serving the ministers and saints of Louisiana. He and Brother Weeks had been close friends for many years, sharing good times and bad on the evangelistic field.

With his unique enthusiasm, Brother Weidner began a new study, this time of bookkeeping procedures. He learned the "how-to" for this new venture. The Louisiana

District was growing by leaps and bounds, and the new position became a time-consuming job. It was voted in 1963 by the constituency to make the Secretary-Treasurer a full-time position, so he resigned his pastorate in Shreveport (after sixteen years) and moved to the campgrounds in Tioga, Louisiana.

This was a hard decision for him to make, but he felt very strongly that God was in the move. A new dimension was added to his ministry as he traveled across the state, preaching, assisting troubled pastors, and conducting business meetings. The children were all grown now, and he was always accompanied by Sister Opal Weidner, his faithful wife, whom he cherished and depended upon.

The hours he put into office work and preaching in a week were many, and it was during this time that he took up the hobby of fishing. He loved to get away from it all occasionally, often taking some overburdened pastor with him on the waters to fish a little while.

Brother and Sister Weidner were honored for twenty years of service to the district at a special banquet during the campmeeting of 1978. The banquet was attended by five to six hundred ministers, their wives, relatives and friends. It was a beautiful time of fellowship and love, but it was followed just a few days later with the sudden death of his good friend and mentor, Brother C. G. Weeks. After working with Brother Weeks closely for over twenty years, Brother Weidner felt as though he had lost another family member.

The Lord sustained him again in this transition. When Brother T. F. Tenney was elected to take Brother Weeks' place, he won a very special place in the heart of Brother Weidner as they labored together for God and the

Louisiana District.

In November of 1975, while preaching a Sunday School Training Course at the Whitehall Pentecostal Church (for his son-in-law and daughter, Larry and Mary Wolfe), Brother Weidner suffered a severe heart attack. He was in intensive care for several days, but God brought him out of it, back to a full-time ministry. One year later he was back in intensive care with a gangrenous gallbladder and another heart flareup. He lingered near eternity for several days, but God again saw fit to lengthen his days. He gathered his family around him after his brush with death and told them that he was ready to go whenever God saw fit to take him. "After all," he said, "I have been preparing for death for over forty years. The only reservations I have about leaving would be because of members of my family that I want to see saved and because I would like to make better provisions for my beloved wife."

God added five years to his life. In July, 1981, after a full weekend (a wedding, a church dedication, and lots of office work), he again was back in intensive care from a heart attack. His concern was still for others. As each one visited him, he spent all his time thanking them for coming and asked about their welfare.

As news of his illness spread across the state, many friends and ministers gathered at the hospital, and calls came in by the score.

One volunteer at the hospital answered one of the calls to intensive care, and the caller requested to speak to "one of the Weidner family." The harassed volunteer sharply replied, "You'll have to tell me which one. There are *hundreds* of them." If Brother Weidner could have

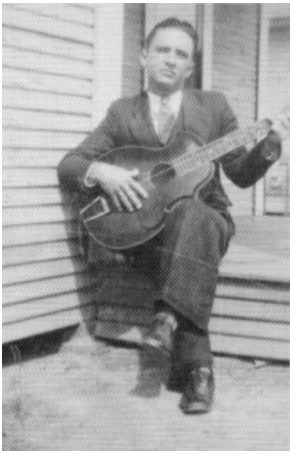
heard this he would have agreed heartily. He felt about the saints and ministers as one great big family, and in return he was called "Pappaw" and "Uncle Roy" by many of them.

Many prayers were offered, but it was God's time for him to go home. His passing left a large vacuum in many lives, particularly those close to him who had leaned heavily on his wisdom and counsel.

One of the grandsons (too small to understand death) kept begging to go to see "Pappaw." Impatient with the explanations that he could not grasp, Bradley cried the sentiment of many, "But I *need* to talk to him."

As hundreds gathered for his farewell services preached by Brother N. A. Urshan, Brother James Kilgore, Brother T. F. Tenney and Brother G. A. Mangun, the spirit of consolation that Brother Weidner had so ably portrayed was almost visible. An old favorite song of his expresses well the sentiment and hope that was present on that day.

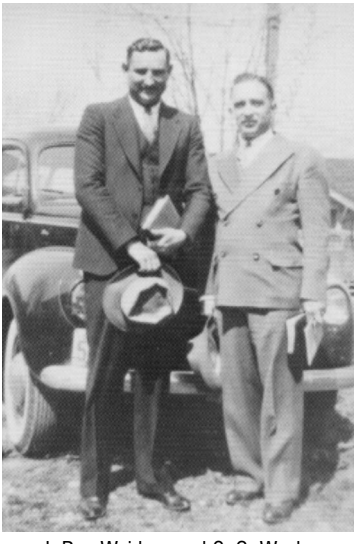
When it's roundup time in Heaven
And all our troubles on earth are o'er,
All the friends that death has severed
Shall gather on that golden shore.
'Twill be sweet when we meet at Jesus' feet
With no heartaches, no pains, no sighs.
When they comb Heaven's plain, will they call
your name
At the great roundup in the skies?



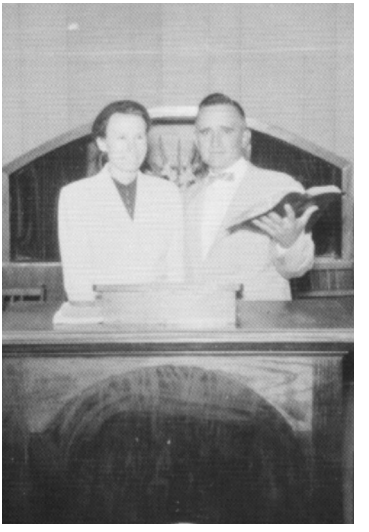
Young evangelist J. Roy Weidner



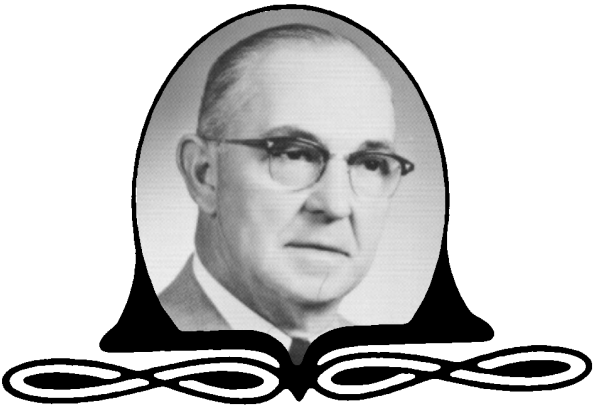
J. Roy Weidner, 1941.



J. Roy Weidner and C. G. Weeks



New church dedication



HOMER WHITE

By Esther White Jay
as told to Yvonne Bevis

As he trudged alone in the deepening twilight, his thoughts cried out. "They must not know! It would break their hearts if they knew how bad I am. I couldn't bear Mother's tears if she could see the bottle under my pillow. I've got to have it! What other meaning is there to life? I'm lost anyway! So empty! Where is God?"

Young Homer White at nineteen left home and went to Pontiac, Michigan, to shield his parents from his sinful life.

Back home in Athens, Ohio, an understanding father and mother missed their eldest son, the second child in their family of seven children.

Fred Parker White, the eleventh child in his own family, loved his son. He had taught young Homer his own

trade—sheet metal, roofing, and heating. He and Mary Elizabeth were trying to prepare their children for life. They were of the Methodist faith, and they had always taken the family to church.

It was a heritage from his dad, Robert White, who had emigrated to America from Yorkshire, England. Homer's grandmother, Mary Etherington, had been schooled in the Church of England, but as a God-fearing wife, she raised her fourteen children in the Methodist faith as her husband wished. Robert White was a "tinner" (sheet metal man) with a strong Yorkshire burr in his speech. He was the first to deliver coal using horses in Athens, Ohio, where he had settled. Robert and Mary were pleased when their son, Fred married Mary Edmundson in 1866. They loved the little grandchildren as each arrived to say, "Grandpa and Grandma."

Little Homer was such a darling! Born on January 8, 1892, he loved church, but his serious little mind was often upset because he was not as good as his teacher said God wanted him to be. At twelve years old, he took violin lessons from the University of Athens. Perhaps his playing would please God. At sixteen he took correspondence courses in drafting and sheet metal. His brilliant mind rose to the challenge making "As" in all his studies. However, that brilliant mind and longing heart were not satisfied. He began to mingle with working friends, sharing their pleasures, hoping to find peace.

"I'm a lost sinner and doomed," he said, and he turned to drink to erase the pain of hunger for something real. In Pontiac he found work in a tin shop and got a room in a boarding house. J. L. Shaul from Findley, Ohio, also roomed there. He and Homer became friends. Something

was different about this man! He'd go to Homer's room, read the Bible, and talk about God as if he knew Him. "Could Shaw be speaking the truth? Can he be real?" After their friendly evenings, J. L. would take a walk. Young Homer followed in the shadows to see if he went places or did things the other guys did. No, he just strolled and went back home. (J. L. Shaul believed the Pentecostal doctrine that had come from California.)

In their evenings of fellowship, Homer began to pray. He quit drinking.

J. L. told him of a conference being held in Findley, Ohio, where Brother T. K. Leonard was pastor. Impatient young Homer decided to check it out, but he went a day early so as not to be caught in something he wasn't sure of. He caught the train and looked up the church. No one seemed to be around, so Homer thought it must be the wrong place. However, a man on his knees suddenly began hollering and gesturing.

Frightened, Homer lit out for the depot. Stuck! No trains until the next day, so Homer went back to investigate the church. He discovered that the man had been working on the wiring and had been yelling instructions down a pipe to his fellow worker. Relieved, Homer relaxed and stayed a few days to attend the conference.

Pastor T. K. Leonard welcomed the good crowd and God blessed Homer's first meeting of Spirit-filled worship. He had repented, but he had not received the Holy Ghost. He was hungry but had not yielded to pray at the altar.

For three days he sought God while seated in his pew. The Lord spoke to Homer, "You do not love Me or you would have confidence in Me!" Homer yelled, "I do love

You!" and ran to the altar. There he received the wonderful experience of the Holy Ghost on April 8, 1912. He felt a call to the ministry then, but he tried to ignore it.

Back in Pontiac he told his drinking buddies, "You needn't look for me!" They "razzed" him as he tried to tell them of this new wonderful life he'd found. He was bubbling over.

"Go to work," said his boss, and he kicked him in the seat of his pants.

"Lord, he can never kick out of me what You put in me!" How long could he endure this severe harrassment? He found God's grace is sufficient.

This wonderful Holy Ghost needed sharing. He resigned his job and went back to Athens to visit his family. The Methodist church was holding praying meetings. Homer thought it was great! He joined right in. The pastor was bothered by Homer's exuberance in prayer, so he insisted that they move the prayer meetings to the basement. The meetings were still too loud, excited, and emotional. Feeling stifled, a few began to hold "sneak" prayer meetings in homes in between the "correct" prayer gatherings in the church basement.

During this time the new church building was completed. The pastor said, "No more prayer meetings in the new church. You don't know how to control yourselves!" (You can sit on the truth, but God will reward all our honest worship.) Homer's father, mother, and four of his brothers and sisters were later baptized and received the Holy Ghost.

Homer left Athens to attend Brother Haywood's convention in Indianapolis. He had met Brother Haywood at the conference in Findley, Ohio. At the Indianapolis con-

vention Homer spent hours in prayer with more new friends—Brothers A. R. Schooler, Manius, and Ziltra. Later Homer returned home, but he was restless in spirit.

In 1914 he felt urged to go back to Indianapolis to live. He attended Oak Hill Tabernacle pastored by Brother L. V. Roberts. Until then he had resisted God's call, but Brother Roberts began having young Homer speak occasionally. This grew until he became the assistant pastor in January 1915.

In February 1915, Brother Glenn Cook came from Los Angeles, California, to preach the first convention in Oak Hill Tabernacle. Everyone waited with eager hearts to hear God's message. God sent a bombshell! Brother Cook preached the first message of baptism in the name of Jesus Christ east of the Mississippi River.

Homer saw this shining revelation of truth right away. Being a true gentleman, he preferred his pastor above himself and waited until Brother Roberts received the revelation and was baptized. Homer was the second person in this eastern portion of the United States to take the precious name of Jesus in baptism in Eagle Creek on March 6, 1915.

Brother Cook wired Brother Frank J. Ewart, who was preaching on the west coast, that Indianapolis had received the message. He came immediately. Brother G. T. Haywood did not receive the revelation or request baptism until several days later. When he did, however, it "electrified the saints of God." Many were baptized at this great time.

Brother Homer White was ordained into the ministry in the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World by Brother Cook and Brother Roberts during the convention on

March 19, 1915. Then his wandering heart knew peace in God's will for his life.

At this time a telegram came from E. N. Bell at the campmeeting in Jackson, Tennessee. "Come, bring the message!" Pastor Roberts went. Sixty-eight were baptized in another outpouring of God's truth.

A minister, J. Roswell Flower was quick to oppose the Jesus' name message that was spreading rapidly through the Pentecostal churches. He reported to Brother Haywood and others that Brother Cook was bringing false doctrine. Brother Haywood replied, "You're too late; I've already been baptized."

In Indianapolis, Brother Homer White received the understanding that baptism in Jesus' name was the "birth of the water" and the baptism of the Holy Ghost was the "birth of the Spirit." When Brother Roberts returned from Tennessee, he was confronted with this new idea. He did not agree at first. Homer stood firm. "I knew I was right!" Rejoicing in his new knowledge, he stayed to assist Brother Roberts for three years.

Somewhere during this glorious upheaval, Brother Homer White noticed a lovely saint in Brother Roberts' church where he assisted. Her sweet ways and love for the gospel Homer loved won his heart. On February 22, 1915, Homer married Bessie Velma Smith.

Wanting to show off his new bride, Homer took her back home to Athens to visit his family. The message was like "fire shut up in his bones," so he began to preach in Athens. Fifty-seven were baptized in the wonderful name of Jesus during the two-week visit.

After this mighty revival at home, Brother and Sister White returned to Indianapolis where he assisted in

Brother Haywood's church, Christ Temple, for a time. He said Brother Haywood was a good man and a good teacher. Here he also learned that Brother Roberts was preaching that the Godhead was not three persons but three manifestations of one person. Glory! God's truth was inching its way into men's hearts.

January 31, 1916, Brother and Sister White held a darling baby girl. They prayed for a name to honor God with their first child. She was called Esther Elizabeth. The little family followed God's leading back to Athens, Ohio. Brother White pastored in his home town for three years. He also pastored in Bucktel, Ohio, a short time.

During his first year of pastoring, Brother White invited Brother Karl Smith for a revival at Brother Haywood's request. Brother Haywood wrote, "I knew you'd start him off right." At this time Brother and Sister White had no car.

One cold day Sister White, who was expecting their second child, pushed little Esther (a year old) in her buggy. "Grandma" (Mary) White was on Homer's other side as they walked to church. Brother Karl Smith walked behind them carrying his Bible, meditating and praying for the service. Up ahead a crowd of people were gathering. Homer said, "Bessie, it looks like there's trouble ahead. If we get parted or whatever, you keep on going. Go to the church and pray." Fearful that some of his saints who were also walking might be hurt, Brother White ran ahead to warn them. Thinking he was running away, the milling crowd grabbed Homer and started away with him

Bessie and Grandma White walked to the church on trembling legs and with fearful hearts. They prayed fervently for God's protection for Homer.

The rowdies took Brother White to the edge of town and dumped him in the horse trough three times ridiculing his stand for baptism by immersion. As they brought him out of the water, a fellow began to hit him in the face. They broke his nose. The pain was unbearable and Homer fainted. The frenzied mob took him up and started back to town.

Like Paul, who watched the stoning of Stephen, two barefoot boys ran with the crowd back to town. They later became saints of God and ministers of the gospel. (Brother G. H. Martin of Athens and Brother Shaeffer from Nelsonville.)

As the crowd neared the business section, a tailor, who had heard the previous commotion, decided to investigate this repeated noise. He closed his shop and hurried to the bridge. There he saw a man, limp and bloody, raised high over the dry rocky creekbed below. Before the mob could push him off the bridge, the tailor called, "Who've you got there?"

Someone answered, "One of the White boys."

The tailor, Homer's uncle, pulled a gun from his pocket and barked, "Put him down and don't another one of you touch him!"

They released him as he was regaining consciousness. He rose and walked away without a word. Wet, cold, bloody, and dirty, he headed for the church. Afraid it might frighten his wife, he stopped on the way and tried to wipe away some of the blood and dirt. When he got to the church, he poured out his soul in thanksgiving to God for sparing his life in spite of the blinding pain from his nose.

The next day the newspaper published a "smear" arti-

cle implying that he was a German spy under the ruse of this "new religion." They required him to publicly salute the American flag. He not only saluted but kissed it. The newspaper then offered to print anything he wished to clear his name. As he took the pen to write, God spoke, "Vengeance is mine. I will repay." He laid the pen down and walked out.

In later years he learned that all the men in the mob had died violent deaths or had dread diseases. "Touch not mine anointed" is not an idle command.

Brother White entertained a roomful of angels that night. He and the Lord had a time! His nose healed and caused no further trouble.

This was during the depression and times were hard. Brother White brought in cow bran from the barn for his wife to make pancakes. She boiled corn cobs for syrup flavoring. Living in the hills, they found it difficult to get to church. Brother White bought a motorcycle with a side car to transport his small family. In spite of their many hardships, God provided this blessing to park among the buggies of the saints.

On June 1, 1917, their second child was born and named Paul Frederick. The next year on October 12, Mary Margarete joined the family. At this time God urged Brother White to return to Indianapolis. They attended Brother Haywood's church again and assisted him in every way they could.

Times were still hard and with a family of five, treats were rare. Brother White, who liked bananas, splurged one evening and bought a whole sack. He hid them in the closet under the stairway, anticipating a future snack. Esther, who was four years old, saw him, crawled into the

closet and had a feast. People thought you would get sick from eating too many bananas at one time. The parents feared the whole sack would kill her. They prayed for God to take care of her.

She was an adventurous little girl. Although they put barbed wire on the fence, Esther would still get away while her mother was busy with the two babies and the mountain of housework. Down the road was an institution, and the inmates soon became acquainted with this mischievous little girl, and they would on occasions bring her home.

On April 26, 1920, Samuel Homer added his voice to the White chorus. Brother White hired a neighbor girl to help with the four small children and the house. Brother and Sister William Mulford lived in the other side of the house, and the two families enjoyed a good fellowship and prayer meetings.

Always busy, little four-year-old Esther took a walk one day while Mother nursed baby Samuel. When Bessie realized her absence, she began to hunt, praying and crying as she went. She called the police. In a few minutes the police called Brother White to the drugstore. Esther had crossed a busy street and gone to watch the alligators in the store window. God had answered a mother's prayer for safety for her child.

Esther had no end of trouble in her little mind. Once when Brother White preached at Oak Hill Tabernacle, she slipped off the bench and sat down and played in the sawdust on the floor. Sister White had her hands full with three babies. Unruffled, Brother White left the pulpit, spanked Esther, set her back on the bench, and continued preaching.

The Whites returned to Athens, Ohio, to visit the family and to hold meetings. On July 8, 1921, James Cleouphus was born. While in Athens, Brother White received a call from Brother Earl Hill, the district elder of the P.A. of W. to preach a meeting in Herrin, Illinois at the First Pentecostal Church on Fourteenth Street. Brother White said his ministry began that first night in Herrin.

After the meeting both he and the church felt he should stay as pastor. He began to look for a house. The meeting grew in power and interest. Sixty-nine received the Holy Ghost and many were baptized. Among those were Brother and Sister W. J. Kenner.

During the revival, Bessie called from Athens to say that floodwaters surrounded their home. She was keeping the five children all in the living room with a chair across the door. She stood in the kitchen alone praying and hearing water in the basement rising to splash against the floor.

Brother White rushed home to help his family. He made arrangments to move them all to Herrin. They pastored those precious people from 1921-1923. Here Brother White enjoyed fellowship with Brother J. H. Reeter of Vandalia, Illinois and Brother Hite of St. Louis, Missouri.

In September 1923, Brother White felt led to go to Decatur, Illinois. As he loaded up the family and "Grandma White," someone gave him an old tent with holes in it. "I don't think we'll need that, but maybe we'd better take it anyway." When they arrived, no one would rent a house or apartment to a family with so many children. They camped ten days in Fairview Park under the old tent. It was chilly sleeping on the ground. Finally they bought an

old house which Brother White remodeled.

Later they rented a house for $35 a month and began meetings in their home. Two blocks away Sister Berge was leading a group of whites in a black church. Brother White invited them to his home for services. Many came and were baptized. One baptismal service was held in such cold weather they had to break ice on the lake. In the house meetings, seven-year-old Esther began to cry with conviction. Brother White baptized his three older children in the bathtub, Esther being the first to be baptized in the city of Decatur. "Praise God! He keeps that which we commit unto him!"

Desperate for a job, Brother White applied at Holland Furnace Company. He was turned down, but he didn't give up. He walked out the back door and got in the employment line again and again. They finally said, "You must be desperate for a job, man."

"I am! I have a wife, five children and a mother to support." They hired him. In a short time the lineman became jealous and caused trouble for Brother White. But the man was fired and Brother White became the boss. He was always a very careful and diligent worker.

They began holding tent meetings. Wind and rain came often and tore the tent down. The women would spread it on the ground and sew it up again. They also had to keep moving it from one area of town to another.

Their first public place to worship was an upstairs room on North Main and Eldorado. They paid high rent for four months and then moved back to the Whites' home. All this time Brother White worked. Any income from the church went back into the church treasury.

On December 14, 1925, David Robert raised the num-

ber to six. They were buying a home. There was always room for one more. Even with the new baby, they took in a new convert whose family forced him to kick coal off railroad cars and bring it home to help with living expenses. Feeling this was dishonest, he left and moved in with the Whites. Another elderly saint, Sister West, was ill with no one to care for her. Sister White made her a bed in the living room and nursed her through the illness.

They worshiped awhile in an "upper room" on Water Street. When the weather warmed up, they went back to having tent meetings in John's Hill Park. The last tent location was two houses from where Mrs. Murray lived. From the streetcar she had read a sign that Brother White placed in his window: "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" It bothered her. She came to the tent, was baptized and received the Holy Ghost. Then another storm came and tore the tent down. A corner building was to be torn down the next day, but Brother White managed to get the building for three months. After this Brother and Sister Parrish, who had been helping, returned to Salem, Illinois. Brother Thoro Harris visited often. He sat by the hours at the White's piano with sparkling eyes as God gave him new songs and choruses.

In 1928 Sister White received local ministerial license. She spent hours helping others. She was a good Bible teacher. Living often under extreme circumstances, she worked hard and shared Homer's dream of eternal life.

In November, 1930, Esther now fourteen, had an appendicitis attack. Her side was swollen and she rolled in pain. Brother White sent a handkerchief to Brother Haywood, who anointed and prayed over it and sent it back. When they laid it on Esther's side with prayer, she was

healed immediately. Praise God!

At this time, Brother White was working in a sheet metal shop days and preaching three nights a week in Decatur, making pastoral calls, and helping churches in the surrounding towns of Sullivan, Camargo, Lovington, Villa Grove, Mattoon and Oakland. Sometimes he received $5.00. Most of the time nothing was given to pay his expenses to these other struggling "baby" churches. God supplied his needs and blessed his labor.

God was moving in other areas too. In May, 1931, Brother White began to build a church at 1275 East Division Street. He did all the overseeing with no contractor. In 1956 Brother White asked his son-in-law, Elden Jay and his wife Esther, to move to Decatur and assist in the work there and to finish building the church. Every few days the city inspector came out to check their progress. One day just before they finished work, the inspector said with a chuckle, "I'm getting a bang out of this! I'm stopping contractors every day, but here's two preachers building a church." Brother White even drew the blueprints, but the officials wouldn't accept it since he was not licensed. A licensed draftsman made one small change and charged him several hundred dollars. To meet this need, Brother White sold his house in the country and lent the money to the church with no interest. They named the church Bethel Temple.

In 1931, ten-year-old James had lockjaw from a splinter in his foot. The neighbors complained because the parents had not taken him to a doctor. Finally after much prayer, Homer could not seem to find healing for his son. He called the doctor. "He must have a tetanus shot or he will die by midnight," was his diagnosis.

Already the boy was growing stiff and could not walk. They had to keep two spoons in his mouth. He soon became completely paralyzed. The doctor mistakenly gave him the 10,000 units in one large dose instead of ten small ones. A practical nurse, who loved God, came to care for him, James died while his exhausted parents slept.

With an aching heart, the nurse told his parents the sad report. "He can't be! God heals! God raises!" Bessie screamed. Brother and Sister White ran, praying and crying, into the room and to the bed where James lay. Bessie couldn't accept it even though the nurse had checked his vital signs and pronounced him dead. "He can't be or we can't preach healing again," the distraught mother sobbed. She and Brother White prayed several hours into the night. Then James opened his eyes and then went to sleep. Rejoicing in God's power, they woke Esther.

James had to learn to walk again. The infection broke out in large boils. He could only eat pigeon broth and jello. It was several weeks before he fully recovered, but God had given his life back.

In 1933, the depression caused such financial hardship that the congregation lost the church building. The Whites were also buying a home. The owners told Brother White to go ahead and live in it and pay when he could. Not Homer White! "I don't want to owe any man!" He gave up their home and they moved to a house on the outskirts of Decatur in Elwin.

They had no car, but Sister Donaldson let them use one of hers. A wheel came off as they drove one day, but God's angels were on duty. God's providence also came through in the form of a chicken in a gunny sack. A dear

saint walked from her home in the country to their home saying God had told her to bring it. Brother White was touched by her sacrifice and gift of love.

Brother White held tent meetings and helped to start works in Moweaqua, Illiopolis, and Macon. He also pastored in Sullivan between pastors, Brother Foster and Sister Nora Baker.

On Esther's eighteenth birthday, January 31, 1934, a baby sister, Ruth Naoma, came to the Whites.

Time passed and conditions improved. In May 1940, they repurchased the contract for the church they had built at 1275 East Division.

Brother White, who had been ordained in PAW, came through the merger, called the Whittington Movement. In October 1941, he took credentials with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ (PAJC). He was secretary of this organization until 1945. In 1943, the Illinois District bought a campground at Murphysboro. Brother White was always there to help. He was elected Chairman of Illinois PAJC.

Once Brother Alexander Schooler had car trouble near the Whites' home. He called and Brother White brought them and their four small grandchildren to his home until the car could be fixed. Homer was tenderhearted, always ready to help those in need. He was a humble man who spent hours on his knees.

He and Bessie named their seven children all Bible names. He prayed that at least one of his sons would preach the gospel. All four worked under him in the sheet metal trade.

Time brought God's blessings. The church became too small. They tore it down and built a large basement

auditorium and classrooms. On March 28, 1951, Brother M. J. Wolff dedicated the new Bethel United Pentecostal Church. They began to build a parsonage. Again when the church needed money, Brother White sold his home to finance the new project. In one year the parsonage was done and the White family then had a permanent home.

Brother White never had a paid vacation. He worked sheet metal by day and built on church projects and pastored nights. At this point Brother White decided it was time to quit working sheet metal and trust the Lord to provide for his family. God did just that. Brother White devoted his full time to winning lost souls and loving his saints.

Several states asked Brother White to preach their campmeetings. He traveled to New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. Brother Elden Jay took care of the church while he was gone.

Later, his son-in-law, Elden Jay, took the pastorate in Paducah, Kentucky. When Brother White became ill, Brother Jay resigned his church and came back to Decatur to assist Brother White.

Many people had borrowed money and taken advantage of Brother White. He just prayed for them.

Now his dream of a lifetime was about to come true! On April 22, 1957, they began construction of a large, new, and beautiful auditorium over their basement sanctuary at 1275 East Division. Brother White, Brother Jay, and the church did most of the work. On March 30, 1958, Brother S. G. Norris and Brother M. J. Wolff dedicated the new sanctuary.

High across the front wall behind the platform was a

life-size picture of Jesus coming in the rapture. Below it was printed, "Behold, He cometh!" It was reflected in the double glass doors at the entrance so that it was the last picture and words a person saw as he left the church. Breathtaking in its beauty, the picture was a summary of the way Brother White had lived since he came to God—always looking for the coming of Jesus. The picture had been on the front of a songbook of Brother G. T. Haywood. Brother White had had a cut made and had commissioned an artist to paint it.

From nothing to 325 in twenty-eight years! This was the Easter report in 1961. All the struggles and hardships paid dividends in souls. In 1962, the church had to have more room. They added more Sunday school rooms, bringing the total to fourteen. On April 5, 1964, Brother White and the church celebrated his forty-first anniversary in Decatur.

Bessie (Sister White) had a stroke. She knew very little the last six months of her life. This wonderful woman, who had stood by him through many trials and raised their seven children, left a heartbreaking gap in Brother White's life when she died. As with every other hardship, Brother White held to God's assurance and love to get him over the rough places.

After the merger in 1945, Brother White was the presbyter of Section 7 of the Illinois District until he resigned because of poor health. The section then made him honorary presbyter until his death.

After fourteen years of assisting Brother White, Brother and Sister Jay (daughter Esther) took the pastorate in Benton, Illinois. By May 1970, Brother White's health was so poor that he was unable to preach any

longer. He moved to Benton to live with Esther and Elden. His body was becoming old, but his spirit burned just as bright as ever. He told Esther, "Send any collectors or salesmen to me." Brother White would tell them of the wonderful God he loved so dearly. Some would "escape" after two hours of powerfully anointed testimony. Those who did not want to hear about God began to mail their correspondence to that home.

Brother White was a kind man with a merry twinkle and a hearty chuckle. He was fun to be around, for he loved life. His faith in God and powerful prayer life carried him through hard times to build his dream of a "tower of salvation" in the city of Decatur. To win a soul was his great ambition. He was the "father" of many hundreds of people who found God under his ministry.

In December, 1971, he went to the Shelbyville Restorium to receive the constant care he needed. His mind became senile, but his love for God never dimmed. Death on September 18, 1973, ended the earthly scene of this great warrior who fought and won his crown of life—Homer White.

His funeral, largely attended by relatives and friends, was a sad but glorious time of victory. Brother Stanley W. Chambers (then General Superintendent) officiated along with Brother Jonathan Urshan of Centralia, Illinois. Brother Edward Lucas sang "Sheltered In the Arms of God." Members of the Illinois District Board were pall bearers. The memorial service was held in Bethel Temple in Decatur, Illinois—the church he had built with his hands and with the dedication in his heart.

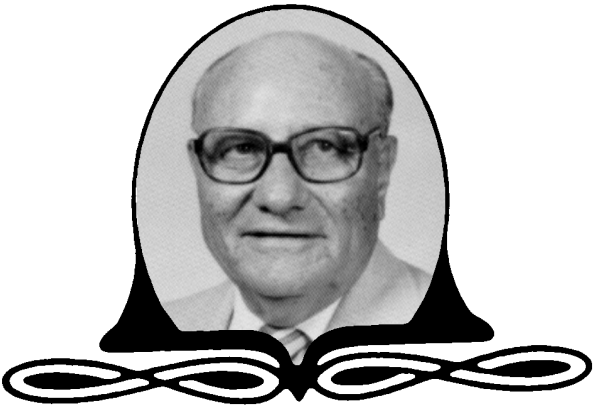
His epitaph was, "He built his life straight and true and broad; He built it for the eye of God."



Brother White and Brother and Sister Jay.



Bethel Temple, 1957.



M. J. WOLFF

By Nettie Kepler

He had built it with his own hands. It was a concrete block construction facing the gravel road, two miles from Dewey School and three or more miles from the bustling little city of Belleville, Illinois. It was his house.

John Wolff was a coal miner, working steadily during the winter and like all miners, eeking out a living however possible in the summer. The mines were closed in the summer. His parents had come from the border of France and Germany to make a new life for themselves in this better land.

He was a quiet mannered man, quite handsome and likeable. He met the happy, easy going Mary Shroeder, 5'4" tall and very pretty. She was a German girl from Lebanon, Illinois. They fell in love. Together they put down roots at 120 39th Street.

There was always a garden and chickens—sometimes rabbits, and six children as time passed. The firstborn was a boy, whom they named William. The next four children were girls: Iva, Kathlene, Margaret and Althea. It was a peaceful home where each enjoyed the other. Adding to the already happy climate of this atmosphere was the addition of a second son.

On April 29, 1908, Melvin John joined the John Wolff family. He was to say of himself in his later years, "I was never a star. I knew my ability was limited and tried to stay within the bounds of what I could do." It doesn't take but one look at what God has accomplished in M. J. Wolff's life to see he really is one of God's stars.

Although not very Christ-conscious in their living, John and Mary took their children to the German Evangelical Church. It was there that M. J. Wolff was christened. On Easter Sunday 1921, he was confirmed as a member of the church.

His first introduction to God's Word came through the three months of Catechism school he attended in preparation for confirmation. Although he planned to be indoctrinated for church membership, he remembers that course as being purely a study of the Bible.

The Wolff house rang with the sounds of children and young people. There was hardly a time when there was not someone visiting. It was a good growing-up place where one learned to work, but also enjoyed play.

The children walked the two miles each way to and from Dewey School.

When Iva was married, she moved near the school. She had a neighbor who was a lay preacher lady, a Sister Sowman. When Iva became critically ill with pneumonia,

Sister Sowman visited frequently. She prayed for Iva and had others also to pray for her.

Sister Sowman was of the Jesus Name Pentecostal persuasion, and she believed in healing. When Iva was well, she invited her to church.

Sister Sowman asked Brother Hite to preach an outdoor meeting from the steps of her house. Brother Wolff says, "That was my first hearing and seeing of Pentecost and I was really scared. You just didn't accept Pentecost. It was looked down upon. I stood outside the picket fence with one foot ready to go if he headed toward me, and listened to Brother Hite preach. I was in my mid-teens."

It wasn't long until Iva received the Holy Ghost. The seed was planted.

Eventually Brother J. O. Underwood started a church in Belleville. Margaret and her husband, Jim Gardner, began to go to church with Iva. They, too, were filled with the Spirit.

M. J. had to quit school after two years of high school and go to work to help the family. He took a job at the shirt factory. He was called the belt boy since he repaired the belts on the machines. Among the 250 employees was a pretty, petite, brown haired girl named Goldie Collins. She had her eye on "Bud" (the nickname M. J. was to carry all his life). She kicked the belt off her machine to get Bud's attention. As he repaired the belt, they got acquainted and they started dating.

Bud did not have a car but Jim Gardner did. Arrangements were made for Bud to ride as far as town where Goldie lived. He planned to take her to the show, walk her home, and Jim would pick him up after church. When they arrived downtown, Jim said, "I'm not letting you out.

I'm going to take you to church." So Bud and Goldie went to church.

The movie they had planned to see was "Lost World." They found a new world and a new life at the Pentecostal church that night. They both repented and Brother Underwood baptized them in Jesus' name. The very next night Goldie received the Holy Ghost and two weeks later Bud was filled also. It was November, 1925.

They soon became involved in the work of God. Brother Wolff was made Sunday school secretary. The church grew to about fifty. It had started in a tent with a pot-bellied stove for warmth in the winter. There were very few cars and the roads were often muddy, but people came anyway. Removing shoes and socks and wading through the mud they came to church.

Brother Underwood started a young preachers' night. M. J. acknowledged his call and started being a part of that preaching group.

On November 23, 1927, he and Goldie were married. There was a reception downstairs with beans and potatoes served to all who came. There was no honeymoon. Brother Wolff took his new bride home to Dad's house.

A group from the Belleville church started going to Lebanon for street services. The new converts from those services wanted to start a church of their own, and Brother Wolff was asked to come as pastor. He had purchased his first car, a Star car, while working at the Roesch Enamel Shop.

He quit his job and moved by faith to Lebanon. Their first home was an abandoned house where they were to live and also have church services. Later, they rented a duplex. The Wolffs had two daughters at that time. The

Gardners and their two children moved in also. Nobody had work and there were no jobs to be found.

The John Harris family was large, but Brother and Sister Harris adopted the Wolffs and Gardners with their whole heart and treated them as though they were their own children. Everybody was on relief. It was the time of the market crash. The people tithed their relief orders. They could not afford coal, so they cut wood for the stove in their homes and the church.

The Wolffs had been buying furniture on time payment. He could no longer meet the payments, so he went to the store and asked them to come and pick it up. They slept on the floor that night. The church picked up what they could for them. That which they did not have, they did without. There was no money for literature, so the Bible was the Sunday school quarterly. One woman in the church baked bread and sold it; others quilted and sold the quilts. In this way the women of the church paid the rent and utilities.

For a little while Brother Wolff was able to work driving a batch truck laying hard road. He worked sixteen hours a day at 30¢ an hour.

Brother Carl Harris and his wife Esther had been baptized by Brother Wolff and loved the work of God. By this time the church had moved into a frame building on the square in Lebanon. God was leading Brother Wolff to Tiskilwa, Illinois, a small town with 1100 lost souls.

In 1935 he left the Lebanon church and took the work in Tiskilwa. Here he painted and papered houses to support his family. God blessed the church and it grew, but Brother Wolff's vision began reaching beyond its boundaries. The large metropolis of Peoria, only fifty miles

from Tiskilwa began to pull at his heartstrings.

He rented a lot, a tent, and chairs to have a meeting there. Brother T. J. Miller and his wife, Lorine, came to help in the evangelistic thrust. He played the guitar, they sang and preached. One night the tomato throwers spotted Sister Miller's lovely white dress, but she sang on.

They moved into a house with a barn. The barn became the church and they called it the "Glory Barn." The Gardners had moved to Peoria to help along with others—Sister Baris, Sister Rippert, Brother and Sister Dave Williams and the Earl Kinny family. They were able later to move into a place on the corner with even a bathroom. That seemed like real luxury.

The Peoria church became self-supporting. Brother Wolff was able to become more involved with district ministries, and he became the youth leader for the Central District of the Pentecostal Church, Inc. He had belonged to the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, but had joined the Pentecostal Church, Inc. for the greater organizational structure he saw there. He was ordained by that group in 1934 at Brother Hite's church.

By the time of the merger, he had become a presbyter of the Pentecostal Church, Inc. At that time there were eight states involved in the Central District: Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, Michigan, Kentucky, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. Brother B. H. Hite was the superintendent and Brother Harry Branding was the secretary.

The state of Missouri wanted to form its own district. Brother Hite resigned at the 1943 conference in order to help form the new district. Brother Melvin John Wolff was elected superintendent of the Illinois District in 1943 at a

district conference in Villa Grove, Illinois. He served in that capacity while pastoring the Peoria church until 1945.

At the time of the merger the Illinois district of the newly formed United Pentecostal Church asked him to serve as full-time superintendent. He resigned his pastoral duties in Peoria and became the first person in the Illinois district to devote full time to this office. He served thirty-eight continuous years in this capacity, having twice been elected unanimously on the nomination ballot.

Throughout the years he has served many offices. He was a member of the foreign missions board and as a member of the presbyter body of the Pentecostal Church, Inc., which helped presbyter the merger of the United Pentecostal Church in 1945. He has served continuously as a member of the General Board of the United Pentecostal Church since 1945. He was a strong supporter of the need for a home for homeless children from the beginning of plans for the Tupelo Children's Mansion in Tupelo, Mississippi. He still serves as President of the Board of Directors and Trustees of the Mansion after having filled that office for many years.

He was the founder of the Illinois District Federal Credit Union, an organization created to help "bear one another's burdens" and served as its president for many years. He served as principal of the Illinois Youth Camps, held annually all the years of his superintendency—staying on the campgrounds close to all that was happening. He is deeply loved and respected by all Pentecostal youth of the district. He has been a strong advocate of Christian education and an effectual supporter of our Pentecostal Bible schools.

In 1958, Apostolic Bible Institute presented Brother Wolff an honorary diploma in recognition of his spiritual and scholarly leadership during his many years of service. The College of Bible, Ghana, West Africa, also made such a presentation to Brother Wolff on April 1, 1972.

He was editor of the *Pentecostal Herald* for a term and published the paper, "Good News," while pastoring in Peoria. He is co-author of the book *Magnifying the Ministry.* He is the author of many tracts and has both written and edited much Sunday school literature.

While listing the structural outline of the many things the Lord has accomplished through Brother Wolff's life, one might wonder how he ever found time to live a life of his own. All who know him feel his giving friendship. However, he and Goldie are parents of three lovely daughters: Alice Lorene, the wife of Marion Kellogg; Mary Ruth, the wife of Miller Reeter; and Leah Joy, the wife of James McCain. They have eight grandchildren and eleven great grandchildren. One of the grandsons, John Kellogg, has recently acknowledge his call to the ministry.

Of her father's love for his children, Mary writes, "He not only is my dad, but a very special friend and counselor. It was through my dad's love that I realized what the love of God must be like. He loved me, cared for me, provided my needs and guided my footsteps as I grew up."

In John Wolff's household on that April day 1908, a star arose. It still shines brightly for our Lord—even in retirement. There have been many requests that he compile a book of the favorite poems and sayings for which he is so well known, and another of his early sermons. With God's help these desires will be fulfilled in the near future.

We salute you Melvin John Wolff—one of God's steadily shining stars.



Bro. Wolff baptizing in the Illinois, Mississippi canal, Tiskilwa.



Campground Dedication, special pulpit—tree trunk.



Rev. and Mrs. M. J. Wolff.



Retirement banquet—38 years—May, 1981.