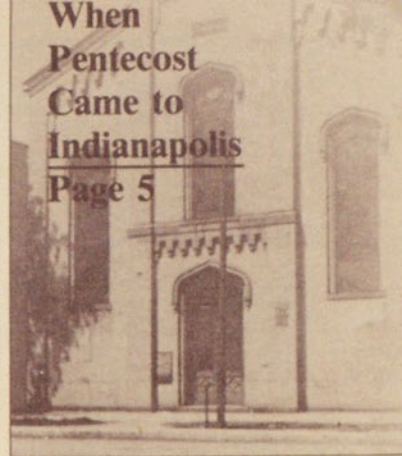


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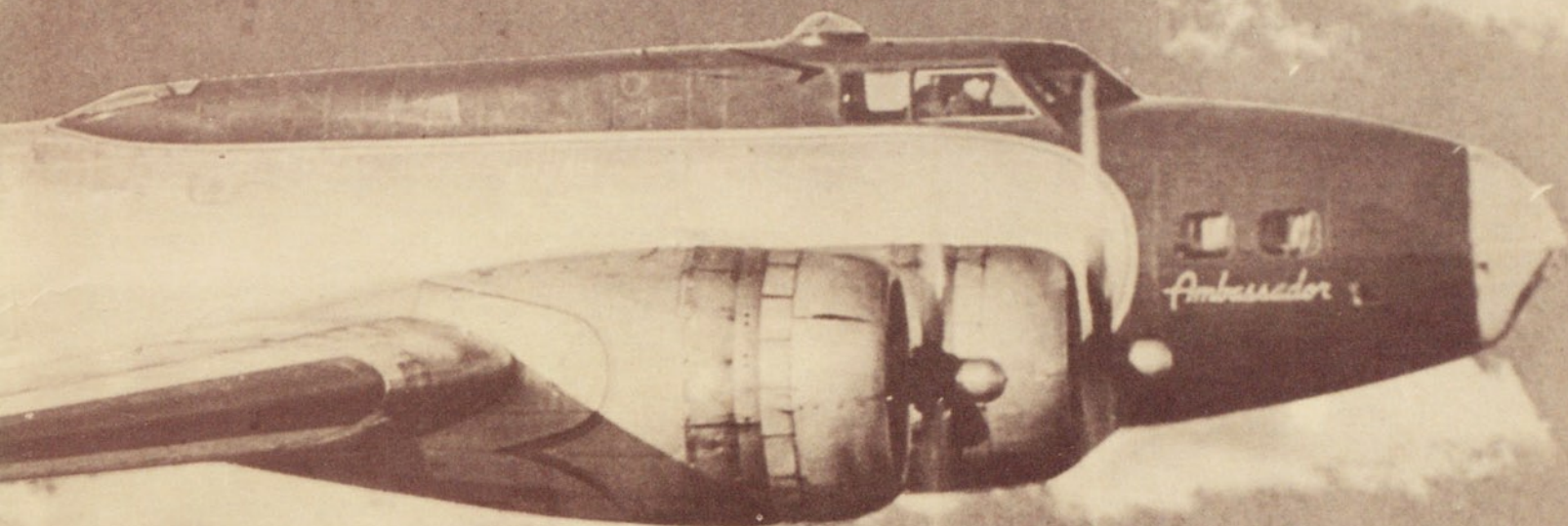
HERITAGE™

When
Pentecost
Came to
Indianapolis
Page 5



Flying *Ambassadors* of Goodwill The Story of Two Converted War Planes

Cover: *Ambassador II*, a modified B-17. Inset, *Ambassador I*, a modified C-46, arrives from Africa on its maiden flight, September 3, 1948.



Vol. 5, No. 4, Winter 1985-86

THE HERITAGE

LETTER Wayne Warner

Flying Ambassadors

Once in a while an event, a movement, a person, or a group will appear on the horizon and remain only for a short time. Then it is gone. But it leaves its mark.

The Pony Express was like that. Started in April 1860 to deliver mail between Missouri and California, the Pony Express was out of business 18 months later--thanks to the telegraph wires.

But who hasn't heard of the Pony Express?

The two *Ambassador* airplanes were like the Pony Express in a way. The trans-oceanic flights with the *Ambassadors* were short-lived, surviving only 3 years.

I hope you'll take the time to read about the *Ambassadors* and their missionary flights between 1948-51. If you were around during that period, you'll remember how much excitement those planes created in such places as Ouagadougou, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Calcutta, and even Springfield, Missouri.

In my research on the *Ambassadors* I have been able to talk with missionaries and others who rode the planes, people who saw the planes at airports in this country, and some of the former crew members.

Seemingly, everybody wants to talk about the *Ambassadors*.

One of the former crew members I talked with by telephone is Herman Revis. Herman, who is now retired and living in Florida, was captain of the flights except the first.

After the *Ambassador II* was sold in 1951, Herman went into the printing business in Texas. But before long he was back in the air, this time flying Evangelist Clifton Erickson to his meetings around the country. Later he was involved in real estate and piloted a company plane for the Dutch Pantry Restaurants along the east coast.

But he'll never forget the ministry with the *Ambassador* program. "I learned so much," he told me the other day, "and received so much inspiration.

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



Another crew member who would climb back in an *Ambassador* cockpit tomorrow if he could is Gene Callentine, Springfield. "That experience was one of the biggest blessings of my life," he told me one afternoon as we talked about the *Ambassador* era. Callentine, who served as a mechanic and co-pilot, later worked with airplanes in Central America.

E. L. Mason, a missionary-aviator, served as a crew member on the first missionary flight in August 1948. He is now 76 but still flies and is an instructor.

Bert Webb walked into my office one day and saw a photograph of the *Ambassador I* hanging on my wall. He was soon regaling me with anecdotes about the *Ambassador* years. He remembers the positive influence the planes made for the Assemblies of God worldwide. And he remembers with appreciation the man responsible for the venture. "The planes really promoted our missions efforts, and Brother Perkin was a godly man, a sharp administrator."

In 1950 the Foreign Missions Department offered a free trip to West Africa aboard the B-17 *Ambassador* to the person who sold the most subscriptions to *The Missionary Challenge*. The winner was Stanford Lee, a 30-year-old truck driver in Russellville, Arkansas.

I found Lee a few days ago, still in Russellville and still a member of First Assembly there. It didn't take much prompting to get Lee to reminisce about that flight to Africa almost 35 years ago. Lee has been the Pope County assessor for 20 years.

Lee and about 25 others could squeeze

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LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Appreciates Heritage

I just wanted to write and tell you how much your fine paper is appreciated. Having been raised in the Assemblies of God, I find it to be very enjoyable to study its history and, in so doing, understand better the Fellowship that I love so much.

Thanks for your desire to share our great heritage with as many as possible.

Cliff Kornmueller
Corporate Secretary
Rocky Mountain District
Englewood, Colorado

The Importance of Archival Work

Thank you for sending recent issues of *Heritage*. It is an encouragement to see your serious archival work. From my casual contacts with the archives at

the Billy Graham Center it is increasingly clear how important archival diligence is, but also how easy it is for essential sources to be lost if someone does not pay close heed to the task.

I enjoyed perusing the issues [*Heritage*]. There are lively stories of personal interest, but these also touch on matters more foundational to the Christian task. Keep up the good work.

Mark A. Noll
Prof. of History
Wheaton College
Wheaton, Illinois

Los Banos Story Appreciated

Recently one of our Sisters passed on to our Archives the summer 1985 issue of *Heritage* which she had received from a friend. An excellent article in the issue was Part Two of the Philippine Liberation story.

Because a large number of our Maryknoll Sisters were among the missionaries interned in the Los Banos Camp and rescued dramatically by the U.S. Army 11th Airborne Division, this archivist was very happy to have this well written account of history to add to our files on Los Banos. It was well illustrated, also.

We are interested in having Part One of the account which appeared in the spring issue. Will you please send us a copy of that issue?

Thank you for your attention to this request. Our prayerful good wishes for your continued fine work.

Sister Dolores A. Rosso
Archivist
Maryknoll Sisters Archives
Maryknoll, New York

The spring issue of Heritage has been sent to Sister Dolores A. Rosso.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD HERITAGE

Heritage is published quarterly by the Assemblies of God Archives, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802. Phone (417) 862-2781. This paper is free to members of the Assemblies of God Heritage Society. Yearly memberships are available for \$10; lifetime memberships are \$100.

Persons wishing to donate historical materials such as correspondence, photographs, tapes, films, magazines, books, minutes, etc., are urged to write to the Archives at the above address.

Wayne E. Warner, Editor

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Flying Ambassadors of Goodwill

The Story of Two Converted World War II Planes

By Wayne Warner

At first there was only a dot against the afternoon sky, but it increased in size with each passing second. Then a cheer went up from the crowd pressed against the fence at the Springfield Municipal Airport. They had just heard the PA announcer give the word that the 40-passenger silver-winged *Ambassador* was making its final descent for landing.

The big twin-engine Curtiss-Wright C-46 Commando touched the landing strip and then after what seemed like hours rolled to a stop, dramatically completing a 19,080-mile round-trip flight to Africa.

The next day Springfield's *Leader and Press* ran a front-page story and photograph of the crew and passengers with the caption: "From Africa to Springfield."

That historic day was September 3, 1948, and it ushered in what was termed a new era in missionary transportation for the Assemblies of God. Missionary Secretary Noel Perkin looked at the missionary plane as a dream come true.

Another missionary leader, George Carmichael got caught up in the excitement and added more superlatives: "The Assemblies of God has given wings to its missionary enterprise. The heavens have become a highway linking the mission fields of the world."¹

The Division of Foreign Missions of the Assemblies of God demonstrated in the late 1940s that it aimed to redouble its efforts to win the world for Christ. World War II had hampered all missionary activities in most parts of the

**"The heavens have become
a highway linking the
mission fields of the world."**

—George Carmichael

world. Wherever he went Noel Perkin stressed the importance of getting missionaries back to their fields of service and training others to take the gospel to even more countries than they had reached before the war.

One of the more visible efforts to increase their effectiveness was to buy a trans-oceanic type airplane. A big plane capable of flying great distances and



Above, missionaries leaving for India, February 15, 1949. Mattie Personeus is on top step with brief case; the next couple is Emery and Mabel Snyder; Melvin and Evelyn Snyder are standing in the doorway; Evelyn Withers McCabe is below the Snyders (dark hat and coat). Inset, pilot Herman Revis and flight engineer. Below, return of maiden flight of *Ambassador I*, September 3, 1948.

carrying 30-40 passengers would cut down on the time needed to get missionaries and cargo to the fields.

Following World War II, commercial flights were not readily available. Obtaining passage on boats meant long waiting time and then a long boat ride. The *Ambassador* missionary flights solved the problem.

The first *Ambassador* was a modified army surplus C-46. It had been converted from a cargo plane and could hold 40 passengers. Later, realizing that four motors are better than two—especially when there is nothing below except the ocean—the C-46 was sold, and a converted B-17 bomber was bought.

Although the air service lasted only 3 years (1948-51), the two *Ambassadors* brought prestige and glamour to the missionary efforts—or as George Carmichael described it, "The heavens have become a highway."²

Converting the C-46 cargo plane was no small task. The original surplus cost of \$5,000 quickly jumped to an investment of \$20,000. But still the *Ambassador* was considered a bargain because the plane had cost the government more than \$200,000.²

Paying for it was not so hard either. Assemblies of God youth caught the spirit of the project and helped pay for



the *Ambassador* through Speed-the-Light projects.

The Missions Department worked out an agreement with two other missionary organizations which were operating large planes. These were the Scandinavian Missionary Flights of Stockholm and the Lutheran World Federation of Shanghai. During the 3 years the *Ambassadors* were in service, missionaries from other societies rode whenever there was room.

That first historic flight of the

Ambassador originated in Springfield, August 12, 1948.³ Aboard were several missionaries, including H. B. Garlock who was in charge of the flight.

Overseas flights nearly 40 years ago were hardly non-stop. In fact, today's missionaries who are used to traveling to and from their place of ministry in 8 hours or less would consider the service of the late 1940s pretty primitive.

For example, it took 10 days for the *Ambassador* to reach Africa on the first flight! Because the *Ambassador's* range

Young people helped buy the planes through Speed-the-Light projects.

was limited, the longer northern route was selected. The passengers spent the first weekend in New Jersey. Then they drew a bead on Ireland by the circuitous route of Newfoundland, Labrador, Greenland, and Iceland. It was August 21 before the *Ambassador's* wheels touched African soil.

Even at that, flying the *Ambassador* was much faster than by boat. Noel Perkin estimated that a missionary going to Africa on the *Ambassador* could save as much as 5 weeks over traveling by boat. When the *Ambassador* carried 20 missionaries, Perkin continued, it would mean a savings of 100 weeks of travel one way—or the equivalent of 2 years.⁴

Nobody seemed to complain too much about the flights, even though that first one was pretty cold and there was concern they might run out of gas before they arrived in Labrador on the return trip.

E. L. Mason, a missionary pilot in Liberia at the time, helped modify the C-46. And then he was assigned the task of getting a Republic Seebie plane to Africa aboard the first flight of the *Ambassador*.

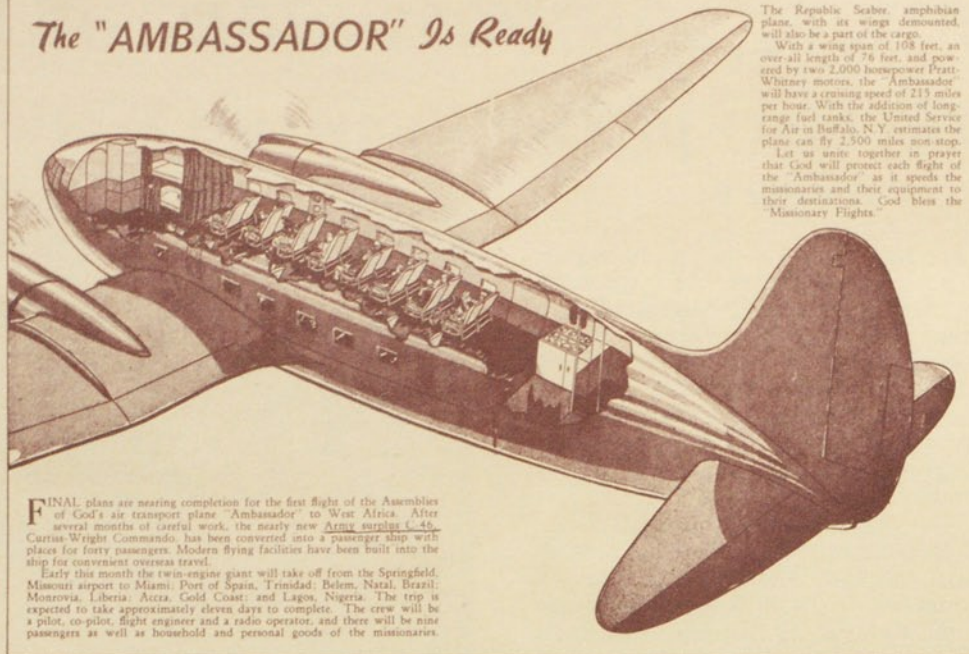
Mason, who is now 76 years old and still flying around Kountze, Texas, said recently that they took the wings off of the Seebie and stored it in the cargo compartment. When the *Ambassador* arrived in Liberia, Mason supervised the reassembling of the Seebie and then turned it over to another missionary.

Enroute to Africa on the first trip, the missionary party stopped overnight at Casablanca. While the missionaries and other crew members slept, Mason and Walter Kornelson—another missionary crew member—changed the sparkplugs on one of the big 18-cylinder Pratt & Whitney engines.

One of the highlights of the Liberian visit was being entertained in the home of William Tubman, president of

Continued on page 13

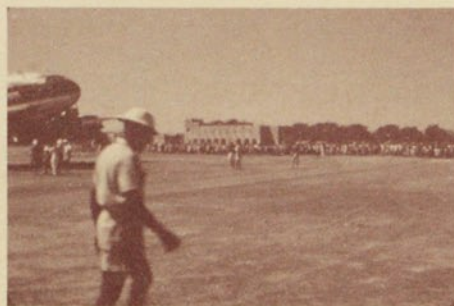
The "AMBASSADOR" Is Ready



The Republic Seebie amphibian plane, with its wings demounted, will also be a part of the cargo. With a wing span of 108 feet, an overall length of 78 feet, and powered by two 2,000 horsepower Pratt-Whitney motors, the "Ambassador" will have a cruising speed of 213 miles per hour. With the addition of long-range fuel tanks, the United Service for Air in Buffalo, N.Y. estimates the plane can fly 2,500 miles non-stop. Let us unite together in prayer that God will protect each flight of the "Ambassador" as it speeds the missionaries and their equipment to their destinations. God bless the "Missionary Flights."

FINAL plans are nearing completion for the first flight of the Assemblies of God's air transport plane "Ambassador" to West Africa. After several months of careful work, the nearly new Army surplus C-46 Curtiss-Wright Commando has been converted into a passenger ship with places for forty passengers. Modern flying facilities have been built into the ship for convenient overseas travel. Early this month the twin-engine giant will take off from the Springfield, Missouri airport to Miami, Port of Spain, Trinidad, Belem, Natal, Brazil, Monrovia, Liberia, Accra, Gold Coast, and Lagos, Nigeria. The trip is expected to take approximately eleven days to complete. The crew will be a pilot, co-pilot, flight engineer and a radio operator, and there will be nine passengers as well as household and personal goods of the missionaries.

Promotion of first *Ambassador* in *The Missionary Challenge*, August 1948.



Ambassador I on dirt runway at Ouagadougou, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), 1948. Notice crowd in background waiting to examine plane.



W. R. Steelberg, Sr., took this photo of the *Ambassador I* after it had slid off the runway in Trinidad while enroute to Africa. Steelberg captioned the photo, "The bird becomes a mud hen."

Missionaries returning on maiden flight of first *Ambassador*, September 1948. The couple in the front on the left is Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Wilson; behind them is Florence Steidel; the man behind Miss Steidel is H. B. Garlock.





Glen A. Cook on the platform of the old Murphy Hall, Indianapolis, in 1907. Cook brought the Pentecostal message to the city from Los Angeles. Inset, the author about 1903. Photos courtesy of author.

When Pentecost Came to Indianapolis

A First-hand Report of the Revival Which Began in 1907

By Alice Reynolds Flower

At the turn of the century the Christian and Missionary Alliance branch in Indianapolis was called the Gospel Tabernacle. It was on East Street, just north of Massachusetts Avenue, and was under the able leadership of George and Anna Eldridge.

The main meeting was held Sunday afternoon. People from various denominational churches all over the city attended for spiritual food and refreshing. The church became known as the "Power House" of Indianapolis.



Alice Reynolds Flower celebrated her 95th birthday in November. Her late husband, J. Roswell Flower, was the general secretary of the Assemblies of God for a total of 27 years.

Previous to the opening of the Gospel Tabernacle there had been a prayer circle consisting of earnest believers who met in various homes. My mother had been one of the leaders of this prayer circle.¹

George N. Eldridge had pastored the Methodist Church at Anderson, one of the largest churches in the Northern Indiana Conference. After Mrs. Eldridge was miraculously healed in answer to prayer, Eldridge took his stand for the deeper truths of the gospel message.

But it would bring trouble from his conference leaders. They sent him a letter ordering him not to preach on these truths.²

For several months the Eldridges had been attending the monthly all-day meeting which the prayer circle sponsored in Indianapolis. After the Methodist leaders pressured Eldridge, he and his wife stepped out on faith and moved

their family of six children to Indianapolis to establish an Alliance church.³

God provided a home for them in Irvington, then a suburb of Indianapolis. Friends began to support the work financially. The sick were healed, souls were saved, and believers were sanctified.

I have rich memories of Brother Eldridge fervently declaring the Word. He

In January 1907 word about the revival in Los Angeles reached our church in Indianapolis.

and his wife sang well together, and I can remember his bass voice coming in on "It Means Just What It Says," one of A. B. Simpson's hymns.

Following the regular afternoon service an "after meeting" would be conducted, with the time given to testimonies and special prayer for the sick. It was in this service one Sunday in January 1907 that we heard for the first time what was happening at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles.

Glen A. Cook, formerly of Indianapolis, was given an opportunity to speak about the Pentecostal outpouring. He told us that he had been attending the meetings at the Azusa Street Mission and had received the baptism in the Holy Spirit—which was commonly called the Latter Rain baptism. His face was aglow, and my heart was moved with the conviction that the experience was truly real. It so happened that at this time the Eldridges were out of the city.⁵

As another girl and I were leaving the church, I said, "I intend to have the same experience myself." Others felt likewise, and the following week tarrying services were held in the home of M. H. Stephens. Stephens was a deacon who was in charge of the services while Brother and Sister Eldridge were out of the city.

Before Cook had left Indianapolis he and Stephens had had a disagreement. When Cook returned he made things right with Stephens and made restitution with others which strengthened the testimony of his recent Pentecostal experience.

The first person to receive the Baptism and speak in tongues at the tarrying meetings was Grace Harrison who was related to Mrs. Stephens. This happened the first Tuesday after Cook gave his testimony at the Gospel Tabernacle.

A number of the church members, my mother included, were tarrying to receive the outpouring when an unfortunate thing happened. Tarrying meet-

ings were banned as well as any acceptance of the Spirit's outpouring by the Gospel Tabernacle as a church body.

But the light had come; the truth had been quickened; and the hunger grew deeper. Those who were interested in the Pentecostal revival began to meet in a vacant black church building. Some neutral observers said the "cream of the Alliance" joined the maligned Pentecostals.

The fire of God began to fall in Indianapolis. In a few weeks an upstairs hall was found at Fountain Square where meetings continued until Easter Sunday, March 31, 1907.

Glen Cook arrived in January and then returned to Los Angeles several weeks later.⁶ After Cook left the city, a party arrived from Azusa Street, including Tom Hezmalhalch (a former Wesleyan Methodist minister from Leeds, England), Fred Dexheimer, Celia Smock (a former resident of Indianapolis and matron of the Door of Hope), and Lenora Hall. God used them in their varied ministries.

Mother faithfully attended the meetings, but I did not—perhaps because of my school work. (I was 16 at this time and attending high school.)

On Easter Sunday God definitely spoke to me as I was making plans to visit my grandmother: "Go with your mother today and you will receive a blessing." I took my hat and coat downstairs and announced to Mother and my sister Zella that I was going with them to the Fountain Square Mission. It was a complete surprise to them, and their hearts rejoiced for they feared I had become indifferent to the meetings.

Murphy Hall, Indianapolis. The Pentecostal congregation moved into this building which formerly housed a Spiritist church. It became so crowded that services were held simultaneously on the first and second floors. Photo courtesy of author.



That evening—78 years ago last Easter—I was filled with the Holy Spirit, and for the first time in my life I felt the mighty surging of God's power as I was laid prostrate on the floor. During this time I spoke in other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance. Friends present at the mission understood several of the languages which I spoke.

One of the people who understood a language I spoke was Louie Schneiderman. He was a Jewish tailor who had attended Nyack Bible Training Institute and who came into the mission to investigate this new moving of the Spirit. For

*That evening—78 years ago last
Easter—I was filled with
the Holy Spirit.*

him there was a message in German. Later he received the Baptism and went to South Africa as a missionary.

Jacob Lehman, a returned missionary to Africa, understood Zulu as the Spirit spoke through me.

So God testified through the speaking in tongues as a sign to the unbeliever. For me it was the day of Pentecost fully come, and my hungry heart reveled in the glorious, satisfying reality of my risen Lord.

The very next week the mission was moved from Fountain Square to the north side where the lower floor of the old vacant Spiritualist Church (Murphy Hall) at the corner of New York and Alabama streets was rented. Later we had possession of the whole building, sometimes holding meetings both upstairs and downstairs simultaneously to accommodate the crowds.

The people poured into the mission because the news of the revival was widely circulated. People came from all over the state and even from adjoining states to witness God's moving and to receive their portion. Out-of-towners could take one of the 26 interurban lines which made getting in and out of the city very easy.

On the Sunday following the night I received the Baptism J. Roswell Flower, my future husband—whom I had not met as yet—came to the service. He had been taking photographs for the claim agent of the interurban railways. One of his jobs was to take photographs of interurban wrecks or related events which would be used in court. He was studying law at the time and working in the office of Lawyer Coley Kinney.

On this particular Sunday night—our first in the new quarters—God gave a wonderful demonstration of the heavenly choir.

While the testimony meeting was in progress, Tom Hezmalhalch sensed the undercurrent of God's moving. Twice he asked a man who was testifying to keep quiet and let God have His way. When the brother finally understood, he stopped speaking. There was a low murmur of sound from several directions in the congregation. This grew in volume until six people, including me, stood and began to sing in rich harmony a song in the Spirit. Our eyes were closed, but without any confusion we moved from our various locations to the front of the hall where we stood together and sang in beautiful unison. Then we harmonized parts.

The sensation was like being a pipe from which poured fourth the wonderful melody from deep within my being. Without effort the heavenly music flowed freely, reminding us of the words of Jesus when he said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). This was one of the rivers.

Roswell, who had been a backslider for some years, stood at the rear of the crowded hall and listened in amazement. His heart was moved and afterward he testified that he knew it was God. He returned to the hall for services the following week and was shortly reclaimed.

Then God began to deal with him about future ministry. He gave up his study of law and began to minister with three other young men, Fred Vogler, Harry Bowley, and Bennett Lawrence. Later Roswell started a paper *The Pentecost*. After Roswell and I were married we began the *Christian Evangel* which later became the *Pentecostal Evangel*.

Incidentally, the night I received the baptism in the Spirit, Roswell's mother and father were kneeling with me at the altar. Afterwards they said, "We wish God would give Roswell a girl like that for a wife." We were yet to meet, but evidently this is how God had it planned.

A large group of earnest young people attended the meetings at the mission, and soon I had the burden of leadership pressed upon me for the services we held among ourselves. We met for prayer and worship on Saturday afternoons. Sometimes an older saint met with us and gave the Word. Usually one of our number gave whatever message God had laid on his or her heart.

One of our outreach ministries was to hold a gospel meeting on the court house steps once a week. I well remember my first participation in one of the meetings. In the crowd gathered to listen to our service were high school classmates of mine, and a sudden wave of self-consciousness swept over me.

When it came time for me to speak, I closed my eyes, stepped into the circle, and lifted my voice in testimony. God's Spirit came upon me, and I opened my eyes to continue speaking without fear or hesitation. The same people were still there, but God had lifted me above the earlier fear.

Mayor Bookwalter attended a service and told reporters it was like services he had attended when he was a boy. "The meetings should not be stopped," he said.

Something should be said of our leader, Tom Hezmalhalch, and his unusual perception of the Spirit's moving in the services. He encouraged expectancy on the part of us all—the desire for God to come forth in freshness, and His dependency on our response to His prompting. It was not seeking for spectacular things. Rather it was a cooperation of faith and obedience with whatever God's purpose might be in each meeting.

We learned to recognize God in our midst and yielded ourselves as instruments of righteousness unto Him. As a result, there were miracles of healing and blessing, and there were times of earnest prayer and real Holy Ghost intercession.

The presence of a number of solid Alliance saints was a stabilizing force in the work of the mission in the early days. As in every revival there were various happenings that needed to be dealt with by the Word and the strong prayer warriors that were in our midst.

Naturally when the tide of blessing was at its fullest there was much persecution. For a time there was a daily report in the *Indianapolis Morning Star* which exaggerated some of the unusual occurrences.⁷

Certain prejudiced but possibly well-meaning people (in some cases relatives of those attending the meetings) resented the fact that so many young people and children were attending the nightly meetings.

These people appealed to Mayor Bookwalter to stop the meetings. Mayor Bookwalter responded by attending a service so he could check out the charges first hand. The mayor was pleased to witness a service which reminded him of services he attended with his mother when he was a boy. The next day the newspaper carried a story that quoted the mayor's report that the meetings should continue.

Several servants of God went out from our mission to various foreign fields: India, Japan, China, Africa, and other places around the world. One of these was my sister Zella who served as a missionary to China.

And to our congregation came interesting and consecrated visitors. One of these was W. J. Seymour, the black minister so graciously used of God in the Azusa outpouring. With him came the Cummings family, a dedicated black family on their way to Africa.

From Zion City, Illinois, where another gracious outpouring had occurred, various friends visited, including Fred Vogler, Harry Bowley, William Wallis, and others.

Bennett F. Lawrence, who wrote two of our earliest books *How Thou Oughtest to Behave Thyself in the House of God* and *The Apostolic Faith Restored*, also came by occasionally.

Another favorite was Daniel Awrey, who in 1890 received the Pentecostal experience. His valuable message on "Telling the Lord's Secrets" and other practical words blessed our congregation.

Louise Rodenberg, a school teacher, and a friend came to our mission one weekend. During a Sunday afternoon service Miss Rodenberg stood and began to speak in tongues, having received the fullness of the Spirit just then. Two

GEORGE N. ELDRIDGE

"He Was Straight Inside and Out."

George N. Eldridge was pastor of the Christian and Missionary Alliance congregation in Indianapolis at the time Glen Cook brought the Pentecostal message in January 1907. Eldridge, however, rejected the teaching and banned it in the Alliance church.

Later the Eldridge family moved to Los Angeles where he and his wife both received the Pentecostal experience in 1910. They founded Bethel Temple in Los Angeles and joined the Assemblies of God. When the Southern California District was formed in 1919, Eldridge was elected superintendent.

Eldridge was the 11th child born to John and Caroline Eldridge in Orrington, Maine, in 1847. His father was a part-time Methodist preacher, but George never remembered much about him because he died when George was only 3 years old. Minutes before John Eldridge died he took his young son George into his arms and dedicated him to the Lord.

At a very young age George believed that he would someday preach the gospel. He would practice his preaching in the woods and with his friends.



G. N. Eldridge

Continued on page 15

Today nearly 80 years later that fountain of living water is still flowing.

dear Alliance women knelt at opposite ends of the altar and were baptized in the Spirit almost simultaneously.

We always appreciated the ministry of Dr. and Mrs. D. Wesley Myland, former Christian and Missionary Alliance ministers. They later opened Gibeah Bible School in Plainfield, near Indianapolis.

For a while John G. Lake pastored the church. He and his family left Indianapolis with the Hezmalhalches for South Africa where God gave them a remarkable ministry.

There were many others who came through to minister and to receive their portion, for Indianapolis was a convenient stopover, and the church had become well known throughout the Midwest.

Many hungry hearts were filled as they sought God in those early years in Indianapolis. And it all began that Sunday in January 1907 when Glen A. Cook brought the message from the Azusa Street Mission. Today nearly 80 years later that fountain of living water is still flowing from Pentecostal believers throughout the city of Indianapolis.⁸

Notes

1. See the spring 1983 issue of *Heritage* (p. 2) for a story on Mary Alice Reynolds, the mother of the author.

2. According to the *Appointment Record* of the Indiana Methodist Episcopal Church (1897), Eldridge began his career as a Methodist minister in Maine in 1870 and withdrew in 1898.

3. One of the daughters, Josephine, married Louis Turnbull. They served as Alliance missionaries in India and then pastored Bethel Temple, Los Angeles. Hulda, another daughter, was the wife of Harold K. Needham; she died in India in 1921 while she and her husband were visiting mission fields.

4. The Christian and Missionary Alliance teach a sanctification experience subsequent to salvation—which includes a crisis and progressive work. They do not accept speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of the Baptism in the Spirit.

5. See accompanying story for more on George N. Eldridge.

6. Ironically, the same Glen Cook who brought the Pentecostal message to Indianapolis from Los Angeles in 1907 brought the Oneness message to Indianapolis from Los Angeles in 1915.

7. Copies of the newspaper stories from the *Star* which were published during April 1907 are in the Assemblies of God Archives.

8. There are now 12 Assemblies of God congregations in the greater Indianapolis area plus many other Pentecostal churches. Indianapolis will host the 1989 General Council, which will mark the 75th anniversary of the Assemblies of God.

Ten Days in a Lifeboat

How a Missionary and His Son Survived When Their Ship Was Torpedoed in 1942

By Paul L. Kitch

My 8-year-old son Paul and I had just concluded our evening devotions in our cabin aboard the *West Keybar*, a British cargo ship bound from Africa to America. Without warning a great explosion rocked the ship. The lights immediately went out.

This was 1942 and we were at war with Germany. It didn't take an expert to know that we had been hit by a German torpedo and that we had no time to lose.

I quickly took a flashlight, found Paul, and grabbed our life preservers. We had drilled for such a disaster but hoped and prayed that we would never have the real thing.

Paul asked, "Daddy, are we having another lifeboat drill?"

I said, "Yes, Son, we're having a real lifeboat drill; come, let's find the lifeboats."

We had left America in 1938 as appointed missionaries to Africa. After studying French in France for several months, we went to French West Africa to labor for the Lord among the Mossi tribes. We took up our assignment in Tenkodogo, Upper Ivory Coast.

In 1941 we laid to rest our 2-year-old girl. Seven months later my wife died of typhus. I was so low with the same disease at the time that they kept the news of my wife's death from me for a month. Paul was also sick with typhus.

As soon as I was strong enough I packed our furniture, straightened our business affairs, and moved to Ouagadougou where I convalesced for several weeks.

In October 1942 we left Africa aboard the *West Keybar* with some 80

people aboard—nine passengers and the crew. It would be the last trip for the *West Keybar*, for within 3 weeks it would be at the bottom of the South Atlantic.

After the torpedo hit the ship, Paul and I hurried to the deck where we met about 12 others searching for the lifeboats. We learned that the explosion had blown both lifeboats from that side into the water.

We were then ordered to the other side of the ship. There we saw a lifeboat with about 15 persons pulling away from the ship. Another boat, with nearly as many in it, was still there, so we hurriedly climbed down the "spider web" rope ladder to it.

Thirty-five of us crowded in this 28-foot boat. I wanted to go back to save a few valuables, but the officer ordered me to get in the boat immediately. Later he explained that if the ship went down while our little boat was within 50-75 yards, the suction would pull us under.

Paul lost his shoes climbing down the ladder, and all of our other possessions were lost except our passports, billfold, and the clothes we were wearing.

Soon after we pulled away from the

ship, we saw a red flash through the darkness. Our wireless operator signaled back with a flashlight. A shout came in answer, and by means of our signaling and his shouting we were able to locate and rescue a man. He was alone in a half-sunken lifeboat. Although we were overcrowded already we took him into our lifeboat, and from the sinking lifeboat we salvaged a keg of drinking water (about 30 gallons) and a little store of food to add to our own

One night without warning a great explosion rocked the ship... we had been hit by a German torpedo.

meager stock.

At about this time a second torpedo hit the ship right in the middle. There was a big gush of fire and the ship broke in two. The entire ship was under water within about 60 seconds.

Shortly after this we sighted a life raft on which were about eight navy gunners

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Kitch and son Paul, first row on the right, leaving for Africa in 1938. The other missionaries are the Harold Jones family and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Moore. Courtesy of author.



*Paul L. Kitch served as an Assemblies of God missionary to Africa between 1938-42. While on the field in 1941 his 2-year-old daughter died. Seven months later his wife died of typhus. The story beginning on this page happened in November 1942 when Kitch and his 8-year-old son Paul were returning to America aboard the British cargo ship *West Keybar*. This story was originally published in the Pentecostal Evangel, March 13, 1943, and was condensed for Heritage. Kitch has pastored a church in Springfield, Missouri, where he now makes his home.*

from our ship. We could not take them into our lifeboat because we were already too overcrowded, so we tied their raft to our lifeboat with a 30-foot rope.

Suddenly we heard a very peculiar noise, and a ghostlike figure came up out of the dark blue ocean. It was the German submarine!

A few minutes later we heard a voice say in broken English, "How are you all?" Then the voice called for our captain and our radio operator. We had to



The Paul Kitch family in Africa about 1939. Mrs. Kitch and her daughter died in Africa. Courtesy of author.

pull alongside the submarine, and in order to do that it was necessary to cut the life raft loose again. We were at the enemy's mercy, so our captain and wireless operator went aboard the submarine. Our lifeboat drifted off while these two men were questioned. After about 20 minutes we were called back to the submarine and our captain and wireless operator got back in with us. Then the spectral figure disappeared.

All that night we tossed about in our little lifeboat. One moment we were up on the crest of a mighty wave and the next we were plunging down into the trough. We had prided ourselves upon being pretty good sailors by this time, but we found that the tossing of the little lifeboat was quite different from the rolling of a big ship.

For a day and a half we waited, looking for the life raft and for the other lifeboat that had pulled away from the ship. We failed to see anything of either, so the captain said, "After all, we are eight souls and a crew of 27"—adding, with a laugh, "since we sailors are not souls." So we prepared to depart. All the ship's passengers were in our lifeboat except another missionary we had met on the ship.

We hoisted a sail, arranged the compass on the stern of the lifeboat, and steered for land. Our rudder had been broken when the waves dashed us

Continued next page

Paul Kitch, Jr., Returning to Africa

After More Than 40 Years Receives Missionary Call

As the "Ten Days in a Lifeboat" was being prepared for reprinting in this issue, *Heritage* learned of an extremely interesting continuation of the story.

Paul A. Kitch, the 8-year-old boy in this story, is now preparing to return to Africa under missionary appointment. The 50-year-old Paul—who has been working in the savings and loan field and other businesses in Lebanon, Missouri—and his wife Delma will be going to Togo as first-term missionaries. They hope to be ready to leave in about a year.

In Togo Kitch will be working with John Weidman in literature translation and distribution.

Another interesting part of the story is that Weidman and Kitch were boyhood friends while their parents served together in French West Africa more than 40 years ago.

Kitch's mother and little sister are buried in Africa, both victims of diseases that claimed their lives during their only term on the field.

Kitch's storybook return to Africa started when Weidman told him of the need for someone who was experienced in computers and management.

"We prayed about it," Kitch said, "and applied for license with the Southern Missouri District." The special category credentials were granted last spring and things have been falling into place ever since.

Paul and Delma Kitch



Morris Williams, retiring field secretary for Africa, is impressed with Kitch's abilities and told *Heritage*, "We need him on that field."

Kitch has served on church boards at both Northside Assembly and Evangel Temple in Springfield.

Now as he prepares to return to Africa after being away for 43 years, Kitch is looking forward to a long-term investment of their lives. It will mean several tough adjustments, including being separated from their daughter Debra, her husband, and their grandchild.

But they are anxiously awaiting the African challenge, as sure as God's calling Paul's father was nearly 50 years ago.

Paul Kitch, Jr., is third from the right in this VBS picture taken at Ouagadougou, Upper Volta, in about 1940. From the left are Virginia Jones (now Mrs. Don Corbin, former missionary to Ivory Coast and whose husband is now field director for Africa); Evelyn Hall (now Mrs. John Looper, former minister in Tulsa); John Weidman (missionary to Togo); Kitch (who is a missionary candidate to Togo), Ernest Jones (missionary to Zaire-Isiro); and Peggy Jones (former missionary to Togo).



□ Lifeboat/ from page 9

against the submarine, so we rigged up a rudder by means of an oar and rope fastened to the stern. The captain knew our approximate location, and by means of maps and compass he was able to chart a course which he hoped would take us to land.

Rations were handed out twice a day. Each morning, we were given 2 ounces of water, two small crackers, and one third of a can of pemmican per person. Pemmican is a compound of concentrated food prepared for emergency use, consisting of raisins, coconuts, apples, dextrose, fat, oil, vanilla, and salt. The cans contain 3½ ounces each.) Each evening we received 2 ounces of water, two graham crackers, and a half-inch square of sweet chocolate per person. Once every 3 days we were given a small package of malted milk tablets about the size of Lifesavers.

We were so crowded that it was impossible for one to relax properly. Hour after hour we would sit until we were cramped and aching. Any sleeping we did was in a sitting position. However, I managed to make room for Paul to be quite comfortable most of the time. He was the only child in the lifeboat.

Paul had been reading the story of Robinson Crusoe, so I said, "Now Paul, we are going to play Robinson Crusoe and look for land, and the Lord will see us through." I told him how the Lord Jesus calmed the storm on the sea for the disciples and how He would take care of us too. He did ask whether the submarine would come and shoot a torpedo at us again, but I told him the submarine wouldn't waste a torpedo on a little lifeboat.

The officers were respectful and reverent. They were thankful to God for sparing their lives through this disaster. Others, however, were cursing God because He permitted them to be torpedoed—as though they merited better fortune!

We ran into strong rains, but these were a blessing. By dropping the sail and fixing it so as to catch the rainwater, we were able to add to our precious supply of drinking water. However, the rains brought a little hardship. We had to stand up and huddle together in the center of the boat. There were only about four blankets among 35 of us and very few coats. We had to sit in sopping wet clothes, our bodies shivering and teeth chattering, until the sun would come out the next day. As we were in the tropics, it was warm in the day, even in November, but at night it grew chilly, and when it was wet we were quite cold. Sometimes the waves washed over the bow, and the crew had to pump the

water out of the lifeboat. We do thank the Lord for graciously preserving our little lifeboat through those 10 days of tossing about with such a large load of occupants.

On the 8th day a ship passed by. When we were on the crest of a wave we would catch sight of the top of it; then when we sank into the trough of the waves it was out of sight. But ours was such a small boat and we were so far away that the ship did not sight us, and we drifted on.

On the morning of the 9th day we sighted land. For quite a while we feared it was only clouds, but when it didn't appear to move away the captain announced that it was land. We were all very happy, as you might know, and to celebrate we had a double ration of water that day—4 ounces instead of 2, in the morning and in the evening.

On the morning of the 10th day a plane spotted us and, as we later learned, reported us to the coast patrol. A rescue committee of ladies was notified to get warm things ready for us. An hour after we were spotted a sub chaser

*On the morning of the 10th day
a plane spotted the lifeboat.
They were 2 miles from the island
of Barbados.*

came out and met us 2 miles from land. At first the sub chaser was just a dot; then it loomed up as quite a large boat. It was with joy that we crawled out of the lifeboat, up the spider-web ladders, and into the sub chaser. We sped toward land, which we learned was the island of Barbados.

After a good bath and a change into some clean clothes we felt much better. The trousers bore a label on which was printed British and American flags and the words, "British War Relief Society—sincere good wishes from a friend in the U.S.A." You can guess how we felt at seeing the grand old Stars and Stripes again! The gracious hand of God was upon us in all this experience.

We were very grateful to the many friends who told us after we returned, that they had been praying for us. I am sure God heard and answered. That is why we are alive today. Out of about 80 persons on board, only 35 of us were saved according to our present knowledge.

Jesus has certainly been a wonderful Pilot to me. We had to trust the captain and other officers of the ship and lifeboat, but our faith went beyond them to the Lord Jesus Christ, and He did not fail us. ❖

THE HERITAGE

LETTER Wayne Warner

Two Converted War Planes

Continued from page 2

into the *Ambassador II* (about 40 in the *Ambassador I*), which seems pretty small compared with a Boeing 747 and its nearly 500 capacity. And the 747 can take its passengers more than twice as fast and in the comfort of pressurized cabins—something neither *Ambassador* had.

Seems kind of puny and primitive in comparison, doesn't it? But like the Pony Express, the *Ambassador* filled a need at a strategic time. When times changed and a better system came along, Noel Perkin was quick to make a change.

By the way, the *Ambassador II* was sold to Leeward Aviation, Ft. Wayne, Indiana, in 1951. When I asked James Leeward if he remembered the B-17, he answered, "Do you mean the *Ambassador*?"

Leeward agreed with Herman Revis and others that it was a great plane. Now living in Ocala, Florida, Leeward told me that his company sold the plane to the French government. Leeward delivered the plane to Paris in 1952, and he even has movies of the trip!

Give me a call if you know what the French government did with our *Ambassador*.

The *Ambassador* research has brought back some very pleasant memories. Now all we need is to call for a reunion of people who rode one of the planes or served as crew members. Anybody want to "start your motor" on that one?

I hope you will also take the time to read the other stories we have in this issue. Alice Reynolds Flower, who just turned 95 in November, has a story on the 1907 Pentecostal revival in Indianapolis. She knows about it because she was there.

Then Paul Kitch's story on being torpedoed isn't the type of missionary adventure story you'll read every day. Paul, Jr., has an interesting story too. He was on that cargo ship which was sunk during World War II. Now he is returning to Africa as a first-term missionary—43 years later. Better late than never, Paul.

The other major story in this issue is about Elva Hoover, the retiring secretary of the Women's Ministries Department. This is an interview on Elva's early ministry in the Kentucky Mountains. ❖

A Woman Ministering in the Kentucky Mountains

Elva Hoover Tells of First Ministry Beginning in 1939

This interview was adapted from a video tape produced by the Assemblies of God Theological School, January 22, 1981. The interviewer is Wayne Warner, director of the Assemblies of God Archives.

WAYNE: We want to go back to your very first ministry which took place in the Kentucky mountains. But even before we talk about Kentucky, we want to go back to Kansas. Coffeyville, Kansas. You were the eldest of seven children, I believe, and your mother died at a very young age, and you were a very important part in the rearing of those children.

ELVA: My Mother died when I was 13 and the youngest child was less than a year old. My Father was very antagonistic toward the church. The day my mother died she asked my father to kneel, the only time I saw him kneel up to that time. He knelt by her bed, and she put her hand on his head and prayed for him and for us children that we would all meet her in heaven. But after that he was still very bitter toward the church and very antagonistic. The Lord never did let us miss church. We didn't miss prayer meeting or Sunday services. I walked a mile each way and carried my baby brother, and the other children would tag along with me.

WAYNE: Was your Father saved eventually?

ELVA: Yes, eventually he was saved. We did a lot of praying for him. We requested prayer for him a lot of times,



Elva Johnson Hoover will retire December 31 and close her nearly 30-year ministry at the Assemblies of God headquarters. For the past 10 years she has served as secretary of the Women's Ministries Department.

and dear Brother V.G. Greisen was such a wonderful pastor and such a good man to the little Johnson kids. And one night—my father always went to the first night of every revival to see if the evangelist was fit for us to hear—he went, and he liked the evangelist, Carl Barnes. And the next night he came back and was saved. And then we really had a radical change at our house because we had to have family devotions three times a day. He really went overboard.

WAYNE: He wanted to make up for lost time.

ELVA: I think that was it.

WAYNE: Then you wanted to prepare yourself for ministry, so you selected a college. Central Bible Institute, I believe!

ELVA: I was going to go to Central Bible Institute, and then on August 17, 1937, just before I was to go, I had an emergency appendectomy, and it took all my money that I had planned to use for Bible school. So I had to stay home that year. And then the next year I felt the Lord led me to go to Southwestern in Enid, Oklahoma, instead of CBI.

WAYNE: The president at that time was P.C. Nelson. Who were some of the other people on the faculty at that time?

ELVA: Mother Banford was our dean of women and she was also on the faculty. Some of the teachers were Bob McCutcheon, Cecil Lowry, Lottie Lee Flowers, Delilah Ann Howard, and Klaude Kendrick. Tremendous people of God. Wonderful teachers. I appreciated them so much.

WAYNE: How did you hear about the mission in Kentucky?

ELVA: I had been in Bible school two weeks when in chapel Delilah Ann Howard just requested prayer for the missionaries—some missionary friends of hers—in Kentucky. And at that moment it was as if God just laid it on me,...the people's need. At that time it was more of a burden than it was a call, and I prayed, I sought the Lord for those people. I had such an intercessory burden which went on and on. And finally one day I was working in a home

in the afternoon, I said, "Lord, if it would do any good, I'd go." I didn't think that I was worthy to go, so I didn't suppose He would ever send me. But it was like He said then, "Go. That's what I've been trying to get through to you."

WAYNE: You felt that was a call?

ELVA: That was the moment. And it never left me.

WAYNE: When did you talk to somebody about the call that was on your heart?

ELVA: I waited all year long, and I kept wondering, how do you go? And finally at the end of the year, during graduation week I talked with Ann Howard (later Ahlf). She'd been in the mountains the summer before, and so I went to her and I said, "Miss Howard, how do you get to go to the mountains?" And she said, "Do you want to go?" And I said, "Yes." And she said, "Well, I need a co-worker." And all of a sudden it just opened up. And so within a few weeks we were able to go together to Kentucky.

WAYNE: So this was the summer of 1939?

ELVA: That's the first summer I went. Yes.

WAYNE: On the way to Kentucky you went via Cincinnati and you met a man there who started the mission in Kentucky, O.E. Nash. Tell us about O.E. Nash.

ELVA: I met him in his home. He was to see whether I was fit to go to the mountains, and so I passed inspection, I guess. He and his wife were very lovely people, and they made us so welcome, were so gracious to us in their home. He was a humble but mighty man of God, and a very intelligent man, an under-

Elva Johnson Hoover, standing on right, with her family in Coffeyville, Kansas in 1939. Courtesy of Elva Hoover.





Above, a neighbor rows Elva across a river, 1943. Above right, children and a Kentucky hog near Devil's Creek. Right, Elva, standing on the left, with Jeffersonville, Kentucky, congregation she pastored with Mary Benigas in 1944. Courtesy of Elva Hoover.



standing, perceptive type of person. The mountain people really liked him, and of course the missionaries held him in great reverence and honor because he really was the guiding force behind the mountain ministry.

WAYNE: He pastored in Cincinnati, but he had a burden for the mountains of Kentucky. Did he assign you to a position or a place of service? How did this happen?

ELVA: He worked with the missionaries, and since Brother and Sister M.A. Mangold were at Bloody Creek and they had had Ann Ahlf with them the year before, they had asked her to come back and to bring a co-worker. So, Brother Nash worked with the missionaries like that; where there was a need he would help locate workers.

WAYNE: Bloody Creek would scare me away from Kentucky. There must be a story behind Bloody Creek.

ELVA: Yes, the people there told us that there were many feuds. There were still feuds going on when I was there. They said the feuds were so bad that the creek ran blood for a quarter of a mile one time, and that's why they called it Bloody Creek.

WAYNE: Where is Bloody Creek located?

ELVA: Breffett County or Bloody Breffett.

WAYNE: Tell us what happened after you left Cincinnati and made your way into Kentucky and Bloody Creek. Tell us about your first day there.

ELVA: One of the big surprises for me was that I didn't suddenly love everybody. They weren't as friendly as I thought they were going to be, and they were terribly, terribly poor. I wasn't surprised about that, and that didn't bother me because I was poor too, but I wasn't that poor. After I had been there about two weeks I got on my knees in a service, and while I was kneeling I heard something hit the floor. I looked up through the benches to see that an old man had spat a wad of tobacco on the floor. I said, "Lord, I don't love these people." But he helped me to love them. He helped me to come to a point where it wasn't hard to love them.

WAYNE: These people were deprived financially, educationally, socially, spiritually, in every way?

ELVA: Yes. I don't think they thought they were deprived. They had a culture of their own. It was just different and I came to appreciate the fact that it was just a different culture. But one of the big problems was lack of communication and contact with the outside world. I can't remember that they had radios. We had a radio, but I can't remember that they did. And the roads were so bad that lots of times I've walked miles in a creek bed as a road, just wading the creek to get out to town. And just mud paths.

WAYNE: You told me about a woman who lived at Bloody Creek who had never been outside, never been to town; and that's hard to believe, just 9 miles away.

ELVA: Yes, Susie Fletcher. She could have very easily gone wherever she wanted to go. She was an active person, but she asked me, "What would you go to town for?" There was no use going out there. There was just a bunch of "fereigners" out there. I imagine there were others, but I particularly remember Susie.

WAYNE: You mentioned that somebody was out to get the preacher, and it happened to be your turn to preach that night.

ELVA: Harry Falk, who was one of the old men in the church, came to see Ann and me before the service. We took turns preaching and he said, "Now, which one of you preaches tonight?" And I said, "Well, it's my turn." He said, "Now just don't worry about it. I'll take care of you. You see this club." He put it by his feet on the floor, and he said, "They're coming to get the preacher tonight." The women, except about two, stayed home that night. The house was full of men. The women had gotten wind of the trouble, and they didn't want to get into that. I said, "All right, Lord, I just put this in your hands." When the time came, I got up to preach. I read my Scripture and began to preach. Then the screen door squeaked open and three men walked in. I paused because I thought, "Well if you are coming, come on." Harry reached for his club, but nothing happened. They stood there and looked at me. I figured I would preach as long as I could. And then they turned and looked at each other and just turned and walked out. The screen door squeaked one more time. I didn't even hear any noise outside. Usually there was a lot of noise outside but they just left.

WAYNE: Did you ever hear why they left? Was it an answer to prayer?

ELVA: Yes, I think it was an answer to prayer.

WAYNE: You were there during the summer of 1939, and I imagine you were very anxious to get back to Enid.

ELVA: No, I wasn't. I wanted to stay. I really wanted to stay. By the end of that summer I loved them and I wanted to stay. But Ann very wisely got me to go back. She said, "You have to go back and finish school." During those next two years I never heard a train (I went on a train, you know) that I didn't pray, "God, I want to go back." That stayed with me the whole time. When I graduated I was able to go back.

WAYNE: In 1941 you were anxiously waiting to get back?

ELVA: Yes. I wanted to go back so badly as soon as school was out. But I owed \$100 on my school bill, and to me it was so much. But God hemmed me in and He made it so strong to me that I must go back. I had a job offer, and everything would have worked out for

me to work; but God laid it on me so heavy. I was going to wait 4 months and then go, but Albert Ott of Dallas preached at our baccalaureate. He preached on, "Say not ye, there are 4 months and then cometh harvest." And I still remember sitting there and counting those 4 months and saying, "All right, God." I just gave up, because I felt like God was hemming me in. He took care of it in miraculous ways so that within 26 days I was able to go to the mountains.

WAYNE: So, in 1941 you found yourself back in the mountains ministering to your people?

ELVA: Yes. Back there.

WAYNE: There were some dangers, and you mentioned some already—family feuds. Did you get involved in any of these? Did you try to be a peacemaker in any of the family feuds?

ELVA: We didn't get involved in any; but I saw some, and it was better if you stayed out of the way.

WAYNE: Now, we've talked about some of the dangers and desperados up there. You did have conversions? Tell us about some of these. You told me about a 3-hour altar call.

ELVA: It was hand-picked fruit all the way. It just seemed like the Holy Spirit began to zero in on one person or another in the community. The Christian community would begin to pray, and we prayed and sought God. It was like just picking ripe fruit. A man by the name of Graham didn't believe much in God; but his wife believed that God was dealing with him, so we began to pray for him. He still wouldn't come to church. One night we went to a cottage prayer meeting. As I prayed I thought the Lord wanted me to preach to this little handful of people on the verse: "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." But when I got there, the yard was full of sinners. Here sat Mr. Graham along with the others. So I began to preach to this group of people, and about 9:00 o'clock we began to wind down; but I sensed the Holy Spirit was there in a special way and I knew He had brought this crowd together for a special purpose. It was like a magnetism of the Holy Spirit that would not let us close that meeting. I'm not one to just hang onto a meeting and hold things together, but the Holy Spirit held it together while the people one by one, slipped away until there were just a few left—a few Christians and this man Graham—and they sat there. His face got white and his fists were clenched, and he just seemed to be in the throes of decision. Later I wrote a story about it for Scripture Press. I called it "Decision at Midnight," because it was just about midnight when we finally saw him yield himself to the Lord and fall on his knees, with tears rolling. God drew him in. He was a changed man after that.

One after another were brought in like that. You didn't have these great mass meetings, but it was handpicked fruit. It was so beautiful.

WAYNE: You left Kentucky in late 1940s, after spending five years in the mountains.

ELVA: I left the mountains in about 1946 and went out to a coal mining town—Earlington, Kentucky. We built a church and pastored there.

WAYNE: Have you been back to the mountains since those days?

ELVA: Yes, in 1975 my husband and I went, and I was so glad. We went back to two places where I had pastored and built. One of them was Jeffersonville, Kentucky, where the Mangolds were. They are still there. They are in their 70s

and they are still loving the Lord. Mary Benigas and I built the church building during the war. People thought we were spies. They thought all missionaries were spies. The rumor went that missionaries were spies. We had some rough times there but God blessed.

WAYNE: If you had it to do over again, would you go out there in the summer of 1939?

ELVA: Oh, sure, I would. I'd do whatever God wanted me to do.

WAYNE: God called you and you wanted to go.

ELVA: Sure. I wouldn't have gone anywhere else. I thought I went there for life when I went. It was only gradually that He led me out. I take most of His assignments for life. ✠

□ Flying *Ambassadors*/from page 4

Liberia. He and E. L. Mason were close friends, and the president took the opportunity to welcome the new Assemblies of God missionaries who had flown to Liberia on the *Ambassador*.

On the return trip 37 persons flew across the Atlantic and into New York. Several of the passengers got off in New York, and then the *Ambassador* returned to Springfield. Arriving in Springfield on the maiden flight were H. B. Garlock; Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Van Dalen, Paul and Rebecca; Mr. and Mrs. V. H. Shumway, Harry, David, and Thomas; Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Wilson; Florence Steidel; Martha Jacobson; Edna Peterson; and Matilda Birkland. The crew members were Roy Taylor, W. M. Wood, and E. L. Mason.⁵

Not everything that happened on the maiden flight of the *Ambassador* would appear in the *Pentecostal Evangel* or *The Missionary Challenge*. There were some minor plane problems, but a personnel clash was the greatest concern of the missionary leaders.

As a result, a new pilot was hired, and he would remain with the missionary flights until the program ended 3 years later. Even today people who were around during the *Ambassador* era remember that the pilot was the likeable Herman Revis.

Revis was a Missouri boy whose family had moved to Dallas. When World War II came along he found himself in the U. S. Navy, flying and training others. Following his discharge from the navy, Herman attended Maplewood Assembly in Dallas and was converted. His pastor, Ray Soper, saw that Revis wanted to use his training for Christian service, so he took him to Springfield where he met Noel Perkin and others in-

olved with the *Ambassador* program.

Revis liked what he saw, and the missions committee felt likewise. And so the *Ambassador* had a new pilot.

Now retired in Florida, Revis said recently that the 3 years he spent with the missionary flight program gave him some of the most enjoyable experiences of his life. "I was a new Christian," he recalled, "and being around the missionaries and other leaders at Springfield helped me greatly."⁶

His first flight with the *Ambassador*,

"The *Ambassador* is a tool in the hands of God to speed His message and His name to the uttermost corners of the earth." Reporter Paul Glynn

however, made him wonder if he should be doing something else. A new spare gasoline tank had been installed, but someone had forgotten to hook it up. The crew discovered the error when they tried to fill it before they left Springfield.

When they stopped over in Trinidad on the way to Africa, Revis had the misfortune of hitting a rain-slick runway and the big C-46 buried a wheel in the mud. The late Wesley R. Steelberg, Sr., who was in charge of the flight, jokingly captioned a picture he took of the stuck plane as the "Mudhen."⁷

And when they arrived in Brazil, they experienced more trouble. Customs officials held the plane for several days, and then more mechanical problems caused additional delays.

Missionaries bound for Africa were forced to take a commercial flight from Brazil where the *Ambassador* sat at the

airport. Later, after the mechanical problems were taken care of, the *Ambassador* cleared customs and went on to Africa.⁸

One policy was changed after the second trip. Steelberg suggested to the executives in Springfield that the *Ambassador* should be a passenger plane—not a passenger-cargo plane. When the committee learned that a ton of the cargo which the *Ambassador* was carrying was left in Trinidad, they agreed to discontinue hauling heavy cargo.⁹

Through the first year of operation interest in the missionary flights seemed to increase with every flight. Enthusiastic crowds gathered at the airport every time the *Ambassador* took off or returned on one of its international flights.

The third flight, beginning on February 15, 1949, was an ambitious trip to India which took 6 weeks to complete. More than half of the time was spent in India, transporting passengers to and from conferences. Gayle F. Lewis, an assistant general superintendent, and Noel Perkin were already in India when the *Ambassador* arrived. They returned on the plane which received another thunderous welcome in Springfield.

After the *Ambassador* had made four overseas flights, it was decided that crossing oceans with a twin-engine plane was too risky. So in 1949 the Assemblies of God shopped for a four-engined *Ambassador*. They found it in the hands of an aviation company in Washington, D. C.

It was a B-17 bomber which had been in the Philippines but had never seen action. General Douglas MacArthur had given the plane to the president of the Philippine Airlines. He had converted the plane to an executive craft, which former *Ambassador* crew member Gene Callentine called a “flying motel.”

Revis and Callentine were given instructions to fly the C-46 to Washington and inspect the B-17. Neither had flown a B-17, but they checked it out and recommended that the Assemblies of God buy it. The cost was about \$90,000. Again the youth of the Assemblies of God began to wash cars, sell candy, and use other means to raise money to buy the *Ambassador II*.

The B-17 was a big improvement over the C-46, which was sold to a Brazilian airlines. With its four 1,200-horsepower engines it had a top speed of 302 miles per hour and a cruising speed of 160.

During World War II the B-17 was considered by many experts as the best combat plane in the world. They could sustain severe battle damage and still remain in the air.

Revis had a chance to test that durability on a trip to Africa. One of the

engines gave them trouble in Africa, so Revis was given permission to fly the plane to Tulsa—without passengers—on three engines. Revis recalled recently that they had no trouble getting home with one of their engines gone.

On more than one airport—from Caribou, Maine to Ouagadougou, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso)—the *Ambassador II* was the first four-engine plane to land.

And did it ever create excitement!

When word got out that a big plane was to land at Ouagadougou, nationals came from all over to see the unusual sight. Naturally, the missionaries were proud to let nationals know that this was “our” *Ambassador*.

The first flight for the new *Ambassador* was to Mexico City in January 1950. Adele Flower Dalton, a former missionary and now a writer for the Division of Foreign Missions, remembers that trip because she acted as a Spanish interpreter, both in the airport

**Although the air service
lasted only 3 years (1948-51),
the two *Ambassadors* brought
prestige and glamour to
the missionary efforts.**

and in a church service for Perkin.

Other trips which kept the *Ambassador* busy were made to Africa, Europe, Israel, India, and many stops in between. Painted on the nose were the names of 38 countries which the *Ambassador* had visited in the first year of operation. Other B-17s had their “kill” record or a movie star painted in that area of the plane, but the *Ambassador* advertised the countries it had visited for the Kingdom.

One of the plush features of the B-17 was a lounge in the nose of the plane. Originally designed for a machine gun, the space had been modified to give passengers an unparalleled view of the earth through the plexiglass enclosure.

Paul Glynn, a KWTO radio station reporter in Springfield, took a flight to India aboard the B-17. And he was impressed. He wrote that he had been skeptical about the plane’s value but changed his mind, describing the roar of the *Ambassador*’s engines as “the clarion call of Christianity.” He added that the plane was a tool “in the hands of God to speed His message and His name to the uttermost corners of the earth.”¹⁰

The big converted bomber continued to generate excitement into 1950, but some of the leaders—including Noel Perkin—began to think that it was be-

coming impractical to operate.

By the summer of 1950 the North Koreans had launched an invasion of the South, and the French were involved in fighting insurgents in French Indochina.

Insurance companies were becoming nervous about insuring planes and ships going into foreign waters. Rates went up, and it appeared that the move would force the Assemblies of God out of the airline business.

In a General Presbytery meeting a few weeks after the Korean War started, Perkin recommended that “in view of world conditions” the Assemblies of God consider selling the *Ambassador*.¹¹

And so an old friend was put on the market. When the Executive Presbytery met in July 1951, they approved the sale of the *Ambassador* to Leeward Aviation in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. Leeward later resold the plane to the French government.

It was the end of an era. The transoceanic flights sponsored by the Assemblies of God had lasted about 3 years, but there would be no more. Missionaries would go back to the high seas or take commercial flights which were becoming more common by 1951.

More than a few missionaries who rode one of the *Ambassadors*—and several former crew members—sense a little nostalgia whenever they think of that grand era.

It is a slice of Assemblies of God history that will live for a long time.

NOTES

1. George Carmichael, “The *Ambassador*’s Plans,” *The Missionary Challenge*, Nov. 1948, pg. 17.

2. Some C-46s are thought to be operating yet in South America according to a spokesman at the U. S. Air Force Museum, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

3. “The *Ambassador* Is Ready,” *The Missionary Challenge*, Aug. 1948, pp. 18, 19.

4. Noel Perkin, “Home on the *Ambassador*,” *The Pentecostal Evangel*, Mar. 4, 1950, p. 10.

5. Garlock reported that they had traveled 19,080 miles; used 17,500 gallons of gasoline and 390 gallons of oil; spent \$1,332.62 for port landing fees, \$1,703.47 for food and lodgings, and \$247.36 miscellaneous expenses. Despite the above costs, Perkin estimated they saved \$5,000 on this trip by operating their own plane.

6. Telephone call with author, Nov. 5, 1985.

7. Lester Sumrall, *All for Jesus* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1955), p. 219.

8. One former crew member, who should remain unnamed in this story for obvious reasons, told the author he gave cigarettes to custom officials to clear customs in Brazil on one of the *Ambassador* flights. It was not an approved practice of the Foreign Missions Department.

9. Foreign Missions Committee minutes, Dec. 23, 1948.

10. Paul Glynn, “A Reporter Travels on the *Ambassador*,” *The Missionary Challenge*, pp. 11, 12.

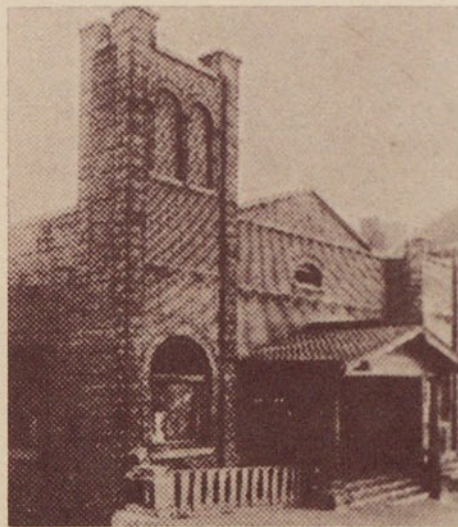
11. General Presbytery Minutes, Aug. 30, 1950.

□ George Eldridge/from page 7

After the Civil War George did become a preacher with the Methodist East Main Conference. His burden to win converts was widely known. He described the inner motivation as being "on fire with a Holy Ghost passion." During his first 10 years of ministry he averaged a service a day.

From Maine he moved to Wyoming and then to Colorado, successfully pastoring Methodist churches. In 1891 he transferred to Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he served for the next 4 years. At Anderson, his next pastorate, he began to pray for the sick, a practice which caused trouble in the conference. His wife and others had been healed, and he was faced with a dilemma. Finally, however, in 1898 he decided to leave the Methodist church in which he had served for 30 years.

About this time he met A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary



The first Bethel Temple, Los Angeles

Alliance, and became associated with the Alliance work in Indianapolis. Here he would also serve the Alliance as superintendent over several Midwestern states.

After he moved to Los Angeles where he ministered for the Alliance, he and his wife became acquainted with the ministry of the Azusa Street Mission. They left the Alliance after they received the Pentecostal experience and founded Bethel Temple at Temple and Broadway. (The Los Angeles Hall of Justice is now at this location.) His daughter Josephine and her husband Louis Turnbull, former missionaries to India, were later pastors of this great church.

After Eldridge died in 1930, a boyhood friend wrote: "I always think of him as a General; he was straight inside and out."

His 53 years of ministry was probably summed up best from the scripture verse he selected for what would be his last sermon: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16).

A copy of George N. Eldridge's Personal Reminiscences (published about 1930) is in the Assemblies of God Archives.

TIME FRAME

A QUICK LOOK INTO THE PAST

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

10 Years Ago—1975

Eleven Assemblies of God churches received awards as the fastest growing Sunday schools in their states during the Mid-America Sunday School Convention held in Detroit.

L. O. Waldon, superintendent of the Louisiana District since 1967, died January 8 in Houston, Texas. Cecil Janway is the new district superintendent.

20 Years Ago—1965

Curtis W. Ringness, secretary of the Department of Benevolences, has succeeded R. L. Brandt as national secretary of Home Missions. Brandt is now the pastor of First Assembly, Billings, Montana.

New officers of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America are Howard P. Courtney, chairman; R. B. Mitchell, vice-chairman; T. F. Zimmerman, second vice-chairman; William McIntyre, treasurer; and Herbert Carter, secretary.

30 Years Ago—1955

Alice E. Luce, 82, veteran missionary to India, leader in the Hispanic ministry, and founder of the Latin American Bible Institute in San Diego, died October 22 in Los Angeles.

Atwood Foster, superintendent of the Oregon District, was appointed general treasurer of the Assemblies of God, succeeding Wilfred A. Brown who died last September.

40 Years Ago—1945

After 28 years of ministry at Bethel Temple, Dayton, Ohio, A. B. Cox has retired and moved to California.

Sermons in Song, a new national radio program, will be launched January 6, 1946, over 60 radio stations.

50 Years Ago—1935

Believers watching Mussolini's powerful dictatorship are wondering if he will be the Anti-Christ. Some point out that his title, "Vv Il Duce," can be interpreted "Long live our God—666," in Roman equations.

Reports from Stockholm state that the Philadelphia Assembly is the largest Pentecostal Church in the world. Lewi Pethrus pastors this 5,310-member church.

60 Years Ago—1925

A Missions convention at Stone Church, Chicago, has raised cash offerings and pledges in the amount of \$10,000.

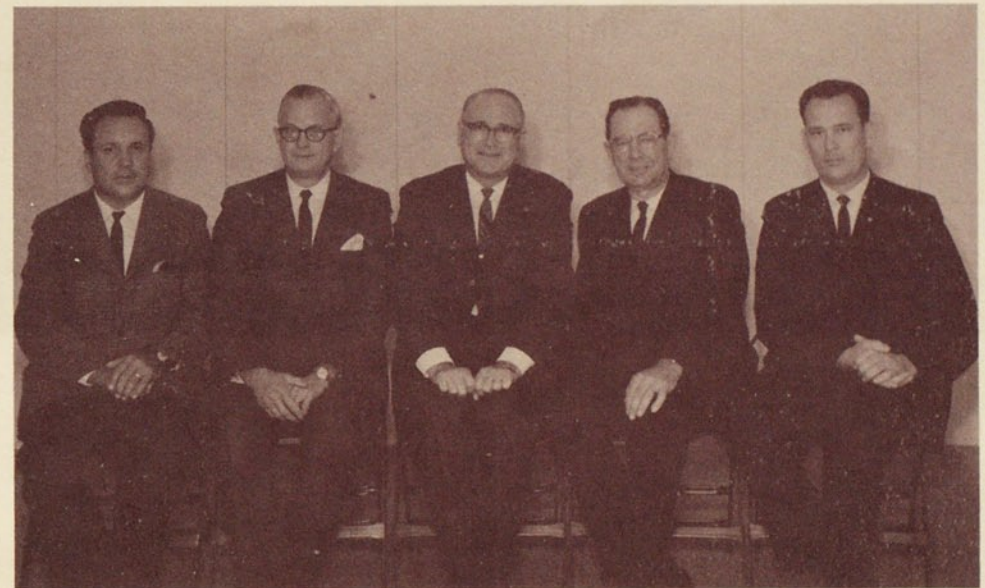
The Glad Tidings Mission, Sioux City, Iowa, is looking for a pastor who has musical talent, a small family, and is "free from hobbies."

70 Years Ago—1915

President Wilson addressed Congress on the necessity of "preparedness" in view of the events in Europe.

The "New Issue" in the Assemblies of God—the Oneness-Trinitarian debate—threatens to split the new fellowship. Several leaders have been re-baptized in the name of Jesus.

1965 PFNA officers (see above), left to right, W. D. McIntyre, T. F. Zimmerman, Howard P. Courtney, R. Bryant Mitchell, and Herbert Carter.



Assemblies of God
HERITAGE

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Above, *Ambassador II*, modified B-17. Below, *Ambassador* routes 1948-50.

