

Assemblies of God

# HERITAGE



## Early Pentecostalism in Springfield, Missouri

2017-18

- Bible Quiz
- Alexander Vazakas
- D. W. Kerr
- Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center

Volumes 37 & 38

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Published annually by  
The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center  
1445 N. Boonville Ave.  
Springfield, MO 65802-1894 USA  
Phone: 417-862-1447, ext. 4400  
Fax: 417-862-8558  
Toll Free: 877-840-5200  
Email: archives@ag.org  
Website: www.iFPHC.org

ISSN 0896-4395

# Assemblies of God HERITAGE

2017-18

Vol. 37 & 38

PUBLISHED BY THE FLOWER PENTECOSTAL HERITAGE CENTER

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Price: \$8.00

Heritage is indexed in the ATLA Religion Database, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Dr., 16th Fl., Chicago, IL 60606  
E-mail: atla@atla.com  
Web: www.atla.com

ATLA Religion Database (RDB) is available on CD-ROM and US MARC format directly from ATLA, as well as online through five aggregators: OCLC's FirstSearch, EBSCO Information Services, SilverPlatter, Ovid Technologies, and Cambridge Scientific Abstracts. Microfilm of Heritage is available from Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN), P.O. Box 30183, 5420 N. E. Glisan, Portland, OR 97294-3183. Heritage on CD is available from the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

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Gospel Publishing House,  
1445 N. Boonville Ave.,  
Springfield, MO 65802-1894

POSTMASTER: Send address  
change to *Heritage*, 1445 N. Boonville  
Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894



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# From the Editor: Celebrating the Hispanic Assemblies of God Centennial

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By Darrin J. Rodgers

**The Assemblies of God marked one hundred years of ministry in 2014. Another important anniversary will be celebrated August 1-3, 2018, in Houston—the centennial of the 1918 organizational convention of Hispanic Assemblies of God churches and ministers.**

The Assemblies of God ministry among Hispanics emerged in the midst of the Mexican Revolution, a decade-long civil war that began in 1910 and changed the North American social landscape. Thousands of displaced people fled the armed conflict and social disruption in Mexico and sought refuge along the borderlands in the United States. These refugees, uprooted from their families and their native land, often lived in squalid conditions. They had an uncertain legal status and, in the eyes of many observers, not much of a future.

While the broader American society often rejected the Mexican refugees, Pentecostals reacted differently. Countless Assemblies of God ministers fanned out, offering food, shelter, and medical assistance to those who were hurting. Anglo missionaries Henry C. Ball, Felix Hale,

John Preston, Dr. Florence Murcutt, Alice Luce, and others joined Hispanic ministers such as Isabel Flores, Antonio Ríos Morin, and Arnulfo López. Together, they ministered among the 300,000 refugees from the Mexican Revolution who lived along the borderlands in Texas.

These Pentecostal pioneers viewed the refugees as a heaven-sent opportunity to share the gospel, which they did in both word and deed. Many Mexican refugees were receptive to the gospel, and Spanish-language Pentecostal congregations started forming in refugee camps and elsewhere.

## **1918 Convention and Arrests**

One hundred years ago, an organizational convention was held for Hispanic Assemblies of God churches and ministers in the United States.

Isabel Flores (a male Mexican-American pastor) and Henry C. Ball (an Anglo missionary) spearheaded the January 1918 convention, which was held in Kingsville, Texas.

At the time, the Pentecostal movement among Hispanics was in its infancy and consisted primarily of scattered, unorganized missions along the U.S.-Mexican border. The convention united Hispanic Pentecostals and laid the foundation for one of the largest and fastest growing segments of the Assemblies of God.

The first superintendent of the newly organized Hispanic work was Ball—probably chosen because as an Anglo he was able to navigate the difficult legal and cultural challenges facing the Mexican refugees.

In one such challenging circumstance, Isabel Flores was arrested in May 1918 and incarcerated in the Jackson County jail in Edna, Texas. The reason for the arrest is unknown. An account published in 1966 in *La Luz Apostolica* simply stated, “It was wartime, and the officer did not speak Spanish and Isabel did not speak English.” Ball came to the aid of Flores and traveled to Edna, where he spoke with the authorities and se-

cured the prisoner's release.<sup>1</sup>

Ball's status as a native-born American, however, did not prevent him from also encountering problems. The Assemblies of God, like many other premillennial American evangelicals, took a pacifist position during World War I. Ball's work with Mexican refugees and his church's pacifism caused government officials to view him with suspicion. Ball was arrested in Brownsville, Texas, on suspicion of being a German spy, but he was soon released.<sup>2</sup>

### Development of Hispanic Leaders

Despite legal, political, and economic tensions, Ball maintained his focus on helping the Pentecostal movement among Hispanics to mature and grow. He stressed the importance of developing indigenous leaders who could serve as pastors, evangelists, and missionaries to Hispanics in the United States and across Latin America.<sup>3</sup>

This vision for indigenous leader-

ship was more fully realized in 1939, when Demetrio Bazan succeeded Ball as the first Hispanic leader of the Latin American District Council of the Assemblies of God.

Hispanics forged their own Assemblies of God identity—developing indigenous leaders, schools, and governance structures—which gave believers a voice in a society where they were often marginalized.

Today, nearly one quarter of Assemblies of God adherents in the United States are Hispanic. In the last ten years, from 2006 to 2016, the number of Hispanic adherents increased from 540,431 (19.1% of all adherents) to 718,785 (22.2% of all adherents). Hispanics accounted for 44% of the growth during that period. The rest of the growth came from whites (11%) and other ethnic minorities (45%).

The vision to bring the gospel to suffering Mexican refugees ultimately helped to transform the American church. Those refugees became the seeds from which a resilient His-

panic Pentecostal movement was birthed. Today, Hispanics and other ethnic minorities are helping to fuel the continuing growth of the Assemblies of God in the United States. ✞

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### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>“Historia de los Primeros 50 Años de las Asambleas de Dios Latinos,” *La Luz Apostolica* 50:8 (April 1966): 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ball promoted an indigenous missions theory as early as 1918, when he wrote that Hispanic AG churches in the U.S. aimed to be self-supporting and to ultimately send missionaries to their countries of origin. H. C. Ball, “A Report of the Spanish Pentecostal Convention,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, December 28, 1918, 7.

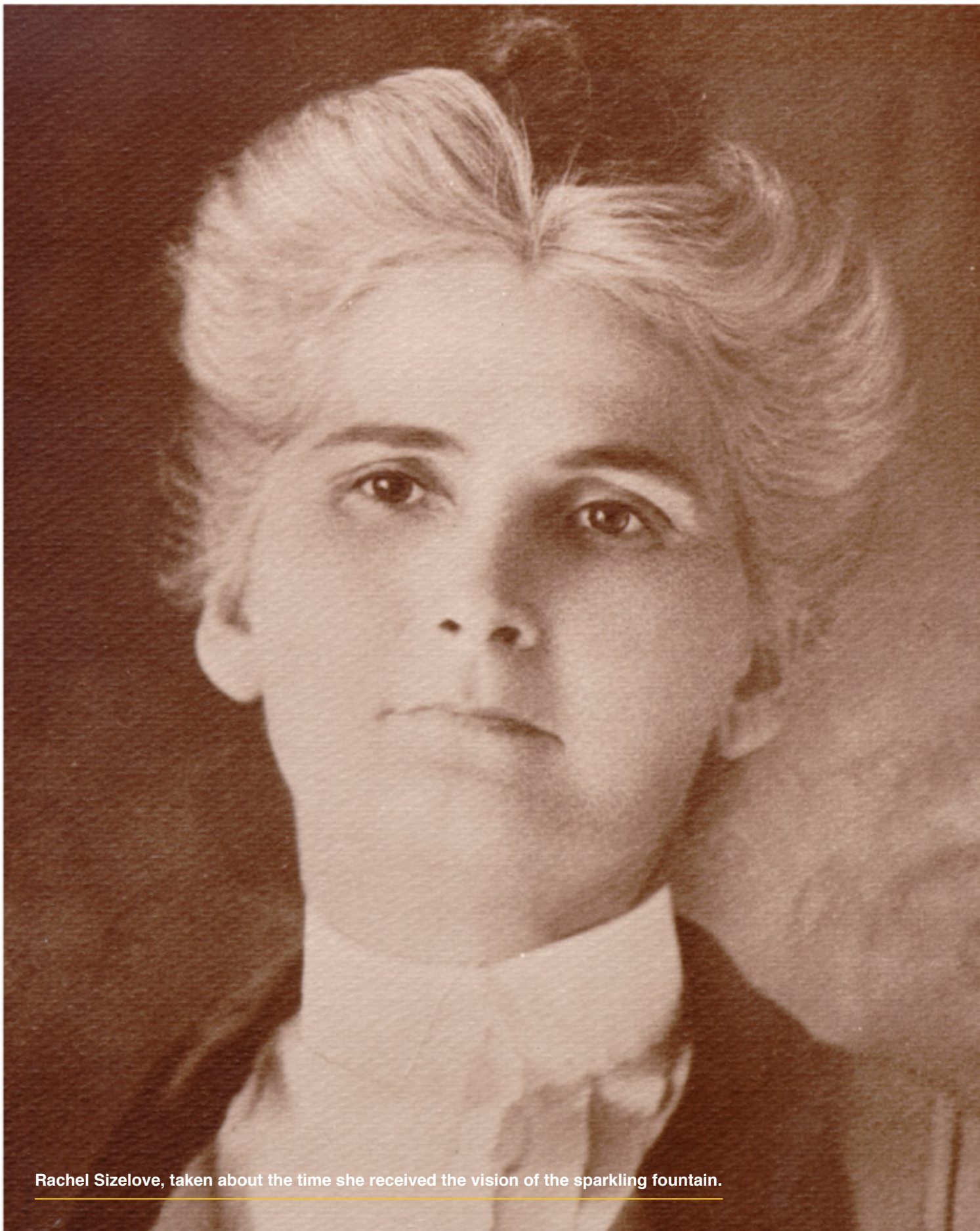
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Rachel Sizelove, taken about the time she received the vision of the sparkling fountain.



# The Sparkling Fountain: Early Pentecostalism in Springfield, Missouri

By Glenn W. Gohr and Darrin J. Rodgers

One hundred years ago, the Assemblies of God (AG) relocated its national office and publishing house to Springfield, Missouri. Could this have been a fulfillment of a vision from God? Five years earlier, in 1913, Pentecostal evangelist Rachel Sizelove had a vision of a “sparkling fountain” in the heart of Springfield. At the time, Pentecostals in the Ozarks city were struggling to establish a church, but Sizelove’s vision foresaw rivers of living water that would flow from Springfield and bless all the earth.

The decision in 1918 to purchase the former meat market on 434 West Pacific Street to house the national ministries of the AG resulted in Springfield becoming a ministry hub within the Fellowship. Numerous national ministries developed, including educational institutions, missions agencies, a retirement community, and various church and para-church ministries. The city’s first Pentecostal congregation, Central Assembly of God, flourished and dozens of new churches were planted. As of 2018, 36 AG congregations exist in the city, with many more in neighboring communities.

Looking back at the history of the Pentecostal movement in Springfield, early AG leaders could see the hand of God. They sensed that the history unfolding before them would be important to future generations. They carefully documented the history in various published and unpublished forms, and these stories have been told and retold over the generations.<sup>1</sup>

The following pages provide an overview of the events and people that shaped the development of the Pentecostal movement in Springfield from 1907 to 1918, starting when Rachel Sizelove brought the Pentecostal message from the Azusa Street revival and concluding with the arrival of the national offices of the AG. The stories reveal the vibrant spiritual life

and worldview of early Pentecostals and will hopefully inspire future generations to likewise follow God whole-heartedly and to believe God for great things.

## From Azusa Street to the Ozarks

Like many revivals throughout Christian history, the Pentecostal movement in Springfield did not originate with prominent people or in gilded edifices, but with humble, devout people who desired to be fully committed to Christ and His mission. James and Lillie Corum and their family were such people.<sup>2</sup>

The Corum family moved from Fort Sill, Oklahoma, to Springfield in 1905. They lived in a white clapboard farmhouse, located on East Division Street, which, at the time, was outside the city limits. James initially worked as a telegraph operator for the Frisco railroad and later as a freight office supervisor. Lillie cared for their four children—Hazel (Bakewell), Artemus, Fred, and Paul.<sup>3</sup>

The Corum family had their first taste of Pentecost on a rainy day in late May 1907. Fred and Hazel were playing on the front porch when they saw their aunt, Rachel Sizelove, pull up to the house in a taxi. Rachel and her husband, Joseph, lived in California and had become active in the interracial Azusa Street Mission, which was a focal point in the emerging Pentecostal revival.<sup>4</sup>

What happened next was burned into young Fred’s memory: “From behind Mother’s apron, I saw Aunt Rachel step through our doorway. Her face was aglow and her countenance was radiant. Her hands were uplifted, and she was speaking in a heavenly language.”<sup>5</sup>

Sizelove and the other family members sat down in the parlor. Fred remembered that they talked about a single topic: “What was God doing in Los Angeles at Azusa Street?”<sup>6</sup>

**Sizelove’s vision foresaw rivers of living water that would flow from Springfield and bless all the earth.**



**Leaders of the Azusa Street Mission, 1907. Seated in front (l-r): Sister Evans, Hiram W. Smith, William Seymour, Clara Lum. Second row, standing (l-r): unidentified woman, Brother Evans (reportedly the first man to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street), Jennie Moore (later Mrs. William Seymour), Glenn A. Cook, Florence Crawford, unidentified man, and Sister Prince. Florence Crawford's daughter, Mildred, is seated in the front on Hiram Smith's lap. Inset: Rachel Sizelove, who brought the Pentecostal message from Azusa Street to Springfield, Missouri.**

The Sizeloves were baptized in the Holy Spirit at the Azusa Street Mission in July 1906. They had served as Free Methodist evangelists since the 1890s. However, this Pentecostal experience changed their lives and ministries. At Azusa Street, they joined black and white Pentecostals who tarried at the makeshift altar and prayed for each other. An intense sense of God's presence and love prevailed. Rachel described how the baptism in the Holy Spirit gave her a new sense of "the holy presence of God" and how the voice of the Lord grew clearer while the voices of the world grew distant. The Sizeloves found spiritual depth and vitality, and they encouraged others to likewise seek all that God had for them.<sup>7</sup>

In May 1907, Rachel sensed God call her to visit her siblings and mother in the

Midwest and tell them about her experience. Rachel was only in Springfield for a brief time before she returned to Los Angeles, where she had committed to work at an upcoming camp meeting. But she succeeded in sowing a Pentecostal seed. Early in the morning, on June 1, 1907, in an all-night prayer meeting, Lillie Corum became the first known person to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Springfield.<sup>8</sup>

### **Early Years**

The Corum family formed the nucleus of what became the first Pentecostal congregation in Springfield (now Central Assembly of God). When Lillie Corum received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, she discovered that she had a newfound empowerment to share her Christian faith. She wanted to tell ev-

eryone about her experience, and one of the first people she told was her pastor. The Corums were members of a Baptist church, where James served as Sunday School superintendent. Lillie expected her pastor to rejoice with her, but instead he scoffed at her. James and Lillie were baffled and felt hurt, so they resigned their membership at the Baptist church.<sup>9</sup>

Lillie told her neighbors and friends about her Pentecostal experience and, one by one, others also received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. For the next several years the small but growing band of Pentecostals held cottage meetings in the Corum home and, on occasion, held special evangelistic meetings in tents and rented halls. They did not have an official pastor and had not formally organized a church.<sup>10</sup>

The new Pentecostal flock was, at



times, mocked and threatened. They held their first tent meeting in the summer of 1907 on Center (now Central) Street, near the Courthouse, attracting large crowds of curious onlookers, including local ministers and students from Drury College. Lillie Corum recalled that a group of men who visited the tent meeting said, “Why this is a terrible thing to be doing in the name of religion. That’s no religion.” They threatened to organize a posse and run the Pentecostals out of town. Such threats by vigilantes had to be taken seriously, as the previous year a large mob had lynched three African-American men in Springfield. Tom Thomas, a man from First Baptist Church, defended the Pentecostals, saying, “No. Let them alone. If it’s not of God, it will soon fall through, but if it is of God, it will stand.” Thomas’s argument won the day, and the Pentecostals were left alone.<sup>11</sup>

The Pentecostal group grew slowly and struggled to establish a church in Springfield. At times, some of the Pentecostals worshipped with Holiness congregations that welcomed them despite their doctrinal differences.<sup>12</sup> But the Pentecostals had a persistent desire to establish a more permanent presence in the town.

In April 1911, the group erected a tent on the northeast corner of Campbell and Calhoun and began holding services. Local boys repeatedly interrupted the services and damaged the tent, which left it in tatters. The evangelistic efforts seemed to make little impact, which demoralized believers.<sup>13</sup>

Pentecostals from varied places and backgrounds sent reinforcements to the city. “Mother” Leonore Barnes, the leader of an influential Pentecostal mission in St. Louis, visited Springfield several times between 1910 and 1912 with her evangelistic team.<sup>14</sup> Lula France and others from Joplin, Missouri, made frequent ministry trips to Springfield.<sup>15</sup> James L. Delk, a white evangelist connected with Charles H. Mason’s mostly African-American Church of God in Christ, also



**J. J. Corum and Lillie with their two oldest children, Hazel (center) and Artemus (baby), in 1900.**

held meetings in Springfield in 1908.<sup>16</sup>

The greatest assistance was provided by Pentecostals from the small town of Thayer, Missouri, located 140 miles southeast of Springfield. A remarkable revival stirred Thayer in 1909, and the town became one of the most important early Pentecostal revival centers in the region. Fred Corum visited the Thayer revival as a boy. He recalled that Mother Barnes, who was preaching in Thayer at the time, had an “Irish wit” and “would have the crowds bursting at the seams with laughter one minute and weeping the next.” After Barnes finished her sermons at the meetings, Harry Bowley gave the altar calls and, in Fred’s estimation, was speaking directly from the Lord. Numerous people ran to the altar and repented of their sins, including a band of horse thieves and a woman who operated a local brothel.<sup>17</sup>

Three preachers from Thayer—Joe French, John Davis, and Joe Duke—began making ministry trips to Springfield around 1910. In 1911 or 1912, French moved to Springfield, opened a restaurant, and became one of the lay preachers in the congregation. A hardened former sailor, he frequently testified that he had been very sick and died, but that God raised him from the dead during the Thayer revival. The experience of being raised from the dead prompted French to completely dedicate his life to God.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, in 1912, the congregation secured a regular meeting place—Woodman Hall on Prospect Avenue.<sup>19</sup> On No-

vember 13, 1913, members elected Lillie Corum and Gerry W. Martin to oversee the congregation. Prior to the vote, Corum had served as the informal leader. In early 1914, the congregation elected a female to serve as its first pastor—a Sister Sloan (her first name has been lost to history). She served a short time, and later that year James S. “Sig” Eaton was elected to serve as the congregation’s second pastor.<sup>20</sup>

## **Vision of a Sparkling Fountain**

Toward the middle of August 1913, Rachel Sizelove returned to visit the Corum family, staying for several months. By this time she reported “there was quite a good sized assembly of baptized saints”<sup>21</sup> at the Pentecostal church in Springfield.

While in prayer one afternoon, she saw a vision of a “beautiful, bubbling, sparkling fountain in the heart of the City of Springfield.”<sup>22</sup> The fountain sprang up gradually and began to flow to the east, west, north, and south until soon “the whole land was deluged with living water.”<sup>23</sup>

Afterwards, she came into the dining room, and the Corum children later recalled seeing “a holy glow upon her countenance.”<sup>24</sup> “I’ve been in the presence of the Lord,” she declared, “and I saw the Lord sounding a bugle for the angels of heaven to go and do battle for the city of Springfield.” She reported that she then saw the angels come down

to battle and conquer. She said the Lord spoke to her: “I’m going to do a mighty work in Springfield that will astound the world.”<sup>25</sup>

This vision occurred a year before the brethren met together in Hot Springs, Arkansas, to form the AG in April 1914, and five years before the AG moved to Springfield.

After Rachel Sizelove identified with the Pentecostal movement, she initially was opposed to church structure and organization such as was found in the AG. Her views changed as she saw the fulfillment of this vision: “But when I think of the vision the Lord brought before me of the waters flowing out from Springfield I have to say surely the General Council at Springfield, Missouri, is of God.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Amanda Benedict: Prayer Warrior**

One unsung hero in the history of Pentecostalism in Springfield is Amanda Benedict. She was not a part of the original group when the Holy Spirit fell at the Corum farmhouse on June 1, 1907,<sup>27</sup> but she came along soon after, and is remembered as a mighty prayer warrior.

Educated in New York, her home state, she later conducted a rescue home for girls in Chicago and was connected with a faith home for children in Iowa.<sup>28</sup> She had a burden for lost souls.

She moved to Springfield sometime before 1910 and met Lillie Corum while working as a door-to-door salesperson. Amanda began praying together regularly with Mrs. Corum, and soon she also received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.<sup>29</sup> A circle of three women—Lillie Corum, Birdie Hoy, and Amanda Benedict—steadfastly joined together in prayer and evangelism to build up the small group of believers that became Central Assembly of God.<sup>30</sup>

Amanda Benedict would fast and pray for days on end, until a burden was lifted or victory came. At one point she felt led to fast and pray for Springfield for one entire year—living only on bread and water.<sup>31</sup>

During the tent meetings held in 1911, Benedict would go to a nearby grove of trees and pray all night. The grove of trees where she prayed ended up being the same spot where the choir, pulpit, and altar rail of Central Assembly were located when a newer sanctuary was built in 1957.<sup>32</sup>

In 1915 Amanda Benedict moved to Aurora, Missouri, where she started a Pentecostal church and passed away ten years later.<sup>33</sup>

At her funeral, held at Central Assembly of God, a lady arose and told of the early days of the Pentecostal outpouring in Springfield, when a tent was set up on the very site where the first sanctuary



**Amanda Benedict**

was later erected. She testified that Sister Benedict “was under a tremendous burden night and day. The Lord put it on her heart to pray for mighty things in Springfield, that would make it a center from which His blessings should radiate to the ends of the earth.” She said, “I believe this present assembly, the Gospel Publishing House and the Central Bible Institute, are all here as a result of that praying in the Holy Ghost on the part of Sister Benedict.”<sup>34</sup>

Buried in Eastlawn Cemetery, Amanda’s grave remained unmarked for 82 years. When Central Assembly held its centennial in 2007, a marker was erected in her memory that includes the inscrip-

tion: “She prayed and fasted for the city of Springfield.”<sup>35</sup>

Amanda’s prayers laid the groundwork for further advancement of God’s work. In a letter to Lillie Corum she wrote:

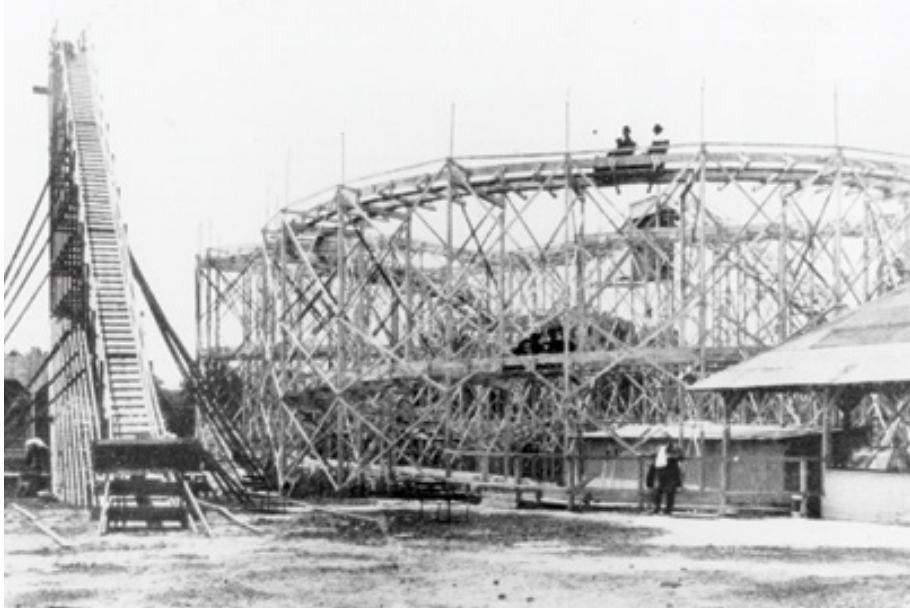
... Pray, fight, hold, till hell gives way, till the real power, the power of His might, of our real God shall fall with such invincible force, that sin shall go down before it and the Christ that saves from sin shall be lifted up ... Our fighting force is small, but it’s gaining ground. Every forward step is hotly contended, but our flag is flying, our bugle is sounding an advance to our forces; a retreat to the foe ...<sup>36</sup>

### **Five Boys Claimed Property for God**

Another fascinating development in the advancement of Pentecost in Springfield centers around the prayers of five boys who claimed two blocks of property for God.

After a New Year’s Eve watchnight service that concluded on January 1, 1915, Fred and Paul Corum, their cousin Laurel Taliaferro, and probably Claude Martin and Leonard Hoy (son of Birdie Hoy)<sup>37</sup> started walking home toward the Corum farmhouse on East Division Street, a distance of about three miles. One boy suggested they could save time if they took a shortcut and went across White City Park.

White City Park was a large, fenced-in amusement park that took up one city block, bounded by Boonville and Campbell Avenues and Lynn and Division Streets. Some of the boards were loose, so they would be able to crawl inside. It was similar to a carnival and included a large roller coaster and was not being used at the time. It had a bad reputation because of burlesque performances, vaudeville acts, a pool hall, and ballroom dancing. The boys knew it was a wicked place, and they felt like they were cross-



**The roller coaster at White City amusement park.**

ing into the devil's territory.

Fred Corum recounted the following narrative:

One of the boys in the group said, "This place is unclean."

Another asked, "Do you suppose it could ever belong to God?"

Then Laurel Taliaferro, the oldest of the boys, said in faith, "Let's claim it for the Lord."

So the boys agreed, and there beneath the stars, they knelt and started praying.

One boy said, "How much shall we claim?" Another said, "Let's claim the whole block."

Paul Corum said, "Let's claim the other block too—from Boonville to Campbell and from Division to Calhoun."

Fred Corum spoke up and said, "We shouldn't take the greenhouse at the corner of Boonville and Calhoun. We sold peaches to the people living there, and they are nice people."

Laurel said, "Why not? God will take care of them. Let's claim it all."<sup>38</sup>

In the early morning hours of the New Year, the boys prayed fervently that the two blocks of land would be used for

God's purposes. One of the boys looked up at the bright stars overhead and remarked, "Just think, when the Lord told Abraham to look up and see if he could count the stars, they were the same stars we can see tonight." Another boy said, "Let's pray that the gospel will spread over all the earth and reach as many people as there are stars."<sup>39</sup>

The property did not change hands overnight. Several years later the first property was turned into a baseball park called White City Park. During the 1930s and early 1940s, White City Park was the scene of minor league baseball. Some of baseball's greats such as Joe Garagiola, Stan Musial, and Mickey Owen played on this field.<sup>40</sup> The home team, the Springfield Cardinals, was a minor league team owned by the St. Louis Cardinals. White City Park closed during World War II since eligible men were needed for the war cause.

At the 1945 General Council, the AG fellowship, recognizing the growing needs of the national office, unanimously authorized the construction of a new publishing plant and an office building to house administrative offices.<sup>41</sup> As it turned out, the old White City Park, a choice site of five acres on Boonville Avenue, was available, and the AG purchased it for \$35,000.<sup>42</sup>

New printing facilities for the Gospel Publishing House were erected on

the former White City Park property with the construction completed in 1949. A new four-story administration building, almost as long as a city block, attached to the printing facilities and facing Boonville Avenue, was completed in January 1962.<sup>43</sup> A six-story distribution center was added to the Campbell side of the complex in 1972, followed by a shipping warehouse in 1980. For a period of time, the Southern Missouri District Council office also was located in that same block on a building at the northeast corner of Campbell and Boonville.

## Central Assembly

On the second block that the boys claimed, Central Assembly erected its first frame building at the northeast corner of Campbell and Lynn in 1920. As Central grew, its third sanctuary, built in 1957, occupied the place where Amanda Benedict prayed in a grove of trees and where the Koeppen Greenhouse once stood. Central built an even larger sanctuary in 1992.

The last portion of the two-block area to come into the possession of the AG was the former National Auto Supply at the southwest corner of Boonville and Lynn, where the AG ran a bookstore for many years.

And God did take care of the family who owned the greenhouse. Louisa Koeppen, and her husband, Rudolph, established the Koeppen Greenhouse at the northwest corner of Boonville and Calhoun in the 1890s. (The greenhouse was just east of the grove of trees where Amanda Benedict prayed.) By 1915, Louisa was a widow, and her daughter, Clara, and son-in-law, Russell Tuttle, were assisting her with the greenhouse. Clara Tuttle and another daughter, Augusta Smith, became members of Central Assembly and descendants still attend the church.<sup>44</sup>

When Fred Corum and his wife visited Springfield in 1972, they saw the transformation which had taken place on the land that he and his young friends had claimed in the new year's prayer



meeting sixty years earlier.

Fred Corum wrote,

When I look on this area now and see the General Council headquarters complex, Central Assembly, and the district headquarters all on this property, I am overwhelmed. When I see the presses turning out the printed word, and the missionaries being commissioned, and the radio programs going to the ends of the earth, I know there is a God who hears our sincere prayers. How insignificant one feels to behold His mighty works that are exceedingly and abundantly above all the five teenage boys—or grown folk either—could ask Him to do.<sup>45</sup>

## Race and Revival

The Azusa Street revival is often noted for its interracial character. Participant Frank Bartleman famously exulted that at Azusa Street “the ‘color line’ was washed away in the blood.”<sup>46</sup> This was in marked contrast to the broader American culture at the turn of the twen-

tieth century, when racial discord often dominated news headlines. One frightening manifestation of this discord was the deadly melding of racism and vigilantism, where white lynch mobs killed thousands of people—mostly African-Americans, Hispanics, and other ethnic minorities—in the United States between 1880 and 1940.<sup>47</sup>

Springfield was not immune to lynchings. On April 14, 1906, three African-American men were killed by a mob on the town square. The lynchings of Horace Duncan, Fred Coker, and Fred Allen led to the exodus of hundreds of blacks from Springfield to less hostile areas. The ethnic makeup of Springfield, to this day, reflects that horrific event. The African-American community in Springfield remembers the event much like Jews remember the Holocaust.<sup>48</sup>

Amazingly, on the same day as the Springfield lynchings, on the Saturday before Easter, William Seymour began holding services at the run-down mission at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles. It was an incredible contrast—heaven came down in Los Angeles, while all hell broke loose in Springfield. That day was witness to both the darkness of hu-

manity and the light of God.

The lynchings were a topic of conversation in Springfield for years to come. How did Pentecostals in Springfield respond to the lynchings? Did they reflect the values of Azusa Street, or did they accommodate the racism of the surrounding society? Over one thousand people had been caught up in the mob hysteria, chanting, “Hang him, hang him!” It was a sensitive issue, as many in town participated in the lynchings. Perhaps it would have been easier to ignore the issue rather than confront it.

Fred Corum and Hazel Bakewell, in *The Sparkling Fountain*, devoted a section to the story of Brother Geisler, who participated in the Springfield lynching. At the time, Geisler was an unsaved alcoholic. Afterward, in about 1907, he visited Joplin, where he encountered a Pentecostal street preacher confronting people and asking if they had participated in the lynching. The preacher said, “Everybody that gave their consent for killing these Negroes was a murderer and has committed murder.”<sup>49</sup>

Geisler followed the preacher into a small Pentecostal mission, intending to tell him that he was not a murderer. The preacher, however, convinced Geisler otherwise, and he repented of his sins, accepted Christ as his savior, and was baptized in the Holy Spirit. Geisler returned to Springfield and became a faithful member of the small Pentecostal group that became Central Assembly. Geisler’s testimony, including his repentance for participation in the lynching, became an often-repeated story in Central Assembly. It presumably reflected the congregation’s belief that if someone is genuinely full of God’s Spirit, there should be no room in their heart for racial hatred.<sup>50</sup>

## Charles Parham’s Influence

Early Springfield Pentecostals traced their roots to Azusa Street through Rachel Sizelove. There was an earlier unsuccessful effort to establish a Pente-



Central Assembly’s first building at the corner of Campbell and Calhoun.

costal church in Springfield, however, made in 1906 by Henry G. Tuthill, a leader in Charles Parham's Apostolic Faith Movement.

Tuthill held a series of revival meetings in the hall over the Brooks Furniture Store. The services began on March 26, 1906, less than a month before the Azusa Street revival would start in Los Angeles. The meetings, Tuthill wrote in a local newspaper article, "are noted for the power of God manifested in them in pentecostal showers."<sup>51</sup> Tuthill failed to attract a following in Springfield. Corum and Bakewell, in *The Sparkling Fountain*, stated that Sizelove held "the first Pentecostal meeting in Springfield" in 1907.<sup>52</sup> They were apparently unaware of Tuthill's earlier efforts.

It should not be surprising that Parham's group attempted to start a church in Springfield. Parham played a significant role in Pentecostal history and was the earliest and most prominent Pentecostal pioneer in the region. In 1901, students at his Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, began speaking in tongues, which he identified as the "Bible evidence" of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Parham, through his Apostolic Faith Movement, had between 8,000 and 10,000 followers in 1906. The bulk of his followers were in Kansas, Arkansas, Missouri, and Texas.<sup>53</sup>

Several possible reasons exist why Parham's group did not make an impact on Springfield. First, Parham held to several controversial doctrines, including annihilationism (the belief that God will destroy the wicked rather than allow them to endure eternal conscious torment) and British Israelism (the belief that the lost tribes of Israel migrated to Europe). These positions marginalized Parham among other evangelicals and Pentecostals.

Second, in October 1906 Parham repudiated the Azusa Street revival and its leader, William Seymour, who was a former student of Parham. Parham's critique included theological, racial, and power issues. This repudiation would



**Gospel Publishing House employees, including executive officers, shortly after the move to Springfield in 1918. (L-r): Walter Loomis, Mrs. Warren, Delpha Henegar, Anna Crumbie (E. N. Bell's stepdaughter), Cecile Knox, Nellie Rowlands, J. W. Welch (general chairman), E. N. Bell (editor of the *Christian Evangel*), Harry Thaw, Stanley Frodsham (general secretary and associate editor), Mr. Brown (son), and Mr. Brown (father).**

have alienated Springfield Pentecostals who were positively impacted by Rachel Sizelove and the Azusa Street revival.<sup>54</sup> Third, Parham allegedly had a moral failing and, by the summer of 1907, most of his followers had left him.<sup>55</sup>

It is significant that Springfield Pentecostals, in their historical self-understanding, largely ignored Parham and traced their lineage directly to Azusa Street. In a 1934 article, Fred Corum wrote extensively about Azusa Street and its place in Pentecostal history but omitted any reference to Parham. While Parham claimed to be the founder or "projector" of the Pentecostal movement,<sup>56</sup> Corum undercut Parham's claim: "It cannot be said that anyone person is the founder" of the Pentecostal movement.<sup>57</sup> When Church of God in Christ evangelist James L. Delk ministered in Springfield in 1908, he also distanced himself from Parham, noting in a local newspaper that he "was not connected to the apostolic faith."<sup>58</sup> Early Springfield Pentecostals emphasized their roots in the interracial and doctrinally orthodox

revival at Azusa Street and did not want to be identified with the controversies surrounding Parham.

## **The Move to Springfield in 1918**

As World War I came to a close, the small band of Pentecostals in Springfield remained united in purpose, yet without a permanent church building of their own. All this changed in 1918 when reinforcements came. The national office of the AG, then located in downtown St. Louis, needed a larger place for its ministries and printing operation.

After outgrowing earlier facilities in Findlay, Ohio, and St. Louis, Missouri, AG leaders began looking for a new location. Having received a gift of about \$3,600 for expansion purposes in the spring of 1918, AG leaders searched for a building in St. Louis but found nothing suitable.<sup>59</sup>

Having learned of low real estate values in Springfield, Chairman J. W. Welch and E. N. Bell went to investigate the possibilities. With the assistance of a



## The Assemblies of God National Leadership and Resource Center.

local police officer, Harley A. Hinkley, they found several buildings which had promise for future development. Officer Hinkley personally escorted the men as they looked at several buildings on or near Commercial Street. “Finally the men settled on a building at the southeast corner of Pacific and Lyon, which then housed a wholesale grocery company.”<sup>60</sup>

Welch and Bell were impressed with the building, and the policeman referred them to the owner, C. O. Sperry, who offered the building for sale for \$3200—which was \$200 more than the men were willing to pay. They were adamant that they would not pay more, and the owner stayed firm on his offer. Amazingly, when members of the Commercial Club heard about the situation, a number of the local businessmen pitched in money to help the AG be able to purchase the building.<sup>61</sup> It was obvious they wanted the AG to move to Springfield. After Welch and Bell conferred with the Executive Presbytery, J. Roswell Flower was authorized to oversee the move which was completed in June 1918.<sup>62</sup>

The original two-story building had 45 by 65 feet of floor space. The ground floor was used for the printing operation. Rooms on the second floor were readily adapted for offices without the need for remodeling. Adjoining property was purchased later to permit expansion of the plant. Growth came so rapidly that additions were made to the original building on five occasions until by the late 1940s it became apparent that larger facilities were needed.<sup>63</sup> The printing operation moved to 1445 Boonville

Avenue in 1949, and the offices moved to a new administration building adjoining the printing plant in 1962. Since that time, the Assemblies of God national office has continued to expand.

### Lessons from History

Several themes emerge from these vignettes about the early Pentecostal movement in Springfield. First, the Holy Spirit empowered women to serve in leadership roles. Rachel Sizelove brought the Pentecostal message from Azusa Street to Springfield. The first person to be Spirit-baptized in Springfield under her ministry, Lillie Corum, gathered a flock and served as the first unofficial pastor of what became Central Assembly of God. The first elected

pastor was also a woman, Sister Sloan, although little is known about her.

Second, there were strong voices seeking to bridge racial divides within early Pentecostalism. The Pentecostal message emerged from an interracial revival at Azusa Street, during an era of racial discord, and came to Springfield, a city that had been rocked by the lynchings of three black men. Springfield Pentecostals embraced their roots in an interracial revival at a time when racial separation was expected. They desired to follow God’s will more than they desired to be popular.

Third, early Pentecostals in Springfield sensed that they were part of God’s unfolding divine plan. They witnessed the fulfillment of two highly improbable visions—that a sparkling fountain of living water would flow from Springfield to the ends of the earth, and that White City Park would be dedicated to God’s work.

Fourth, the intensity of the spiritual lives of the early Springfield Pentecostals set them apart from the world and from other Christians. They encouraged full consecration to Christ and His mission, they practiced biblical spiritual gifts in a way that pointed people to Christ, they viewed prayer as an essential part of their lives, and they learned to become dependent on God.

When Rachel Sizelove visited the Corum family in 1907, she knew that she was following God’s leading. However, she could not have imagined that she was helping to lay the foundation for the national offices, schools, and countless ministries of the Assemblies of God, a



**The June 1934 issue of *Word and Work* which told about Rachel Sizelove’s vision of the sparkling fountain.**



fellowship that would play a significant role in spreading the gospel to the ends of the earth. ✨



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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The most significant account of the early Pentecostal revival in Springfield is: Fred T. Corum and Hazel E. Bakewell, *The Sparkling Fountain* (Windsor, OH: Corum & Associates, 1989). The account, authored by two participants in the revival, siblings Fred Corum and Hazel Corum Bakewell, was largely based on earlier writings. Fred Corum (1900-1982) was a graduate of Drury College (A.B., 1922) and Harvard Law School (L.L.B., 1926; J.D., 1969). He had a law practice in the Boston area for over 55 years. Hazel Bakewell (1897-1990) was a graduate of Central Bible Institute (1926) and Southwest Missouri State Teacher's College (1932). She lived in Springfield for most of her life and taught piano.

<sup>2</sup>*Windows into Central's 100 Years of Ministry* (Springfield, MO: Central Assembly, 2007), 8.

<sup>3</sup>Corum and Bakewell, 1-2.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup>Rachel Sizelove, "Autobiography: A Sketch of My Life," unpublished manuscript, 1925; Corum and Bakewell, 1-2, 54-63.

<sup>8</sup>Rachel Sizelove, "A Sparkling Fountain for the Whole Earth" N.p.: n.p. [193?], tract; Corum and Bakewell, 2, 113-121.

<sup>9</sup>Corum and Bakewell, 122.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, 122-127.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 124-125; *Windows into Central's 100 Years of Ministry*.

<sup>12</sup>Corum and Bakewell, 126.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.*, 158-159.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 168-169.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 124, 143.

<sup>16</sup>"Show Boy Evangelist to Conduct Meetings," *Springfield Daily Republican*, March 29, 1908, 4.

<sup>17</sup>Corum and Bakewell, 128-133; Harry E. Bowley, "The Great Ozark Mountains Revival," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 2:2 (Summer 1982): 1, 3.

<sup>18</sup>Corum and Bakewell, 134-140, 169-170.

<sup>19</sup>L. F. Martin, undated history of Central Assembly of God, 2-3.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, 4. Gerard J. Flokstra, Jr., "The History of Central Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri," 1983.

<sup>21</sup>Fred Corum, "A Sparkling Fountain for the Whole Earth," *Word and Work* 56:6 (June 1934): 12; Sizelove, "A Sparkling Fountain for the Whole Earth."

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>Corum and Bakewell, 179.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup>Corum, "A Sparkling Fountain for the Whole Earth," 12; Sizelove, "A Sparkling Fountain for the Whole Earth."

<sup>27</sup>Corum and Bakewell, 113.

<sup>28</sup>Lillie Corum, "How a Handmaiden of the Lord Kept the Army in Rank," *Word and Work* 56:7 (July 1934): 2.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>30</sup>Corum and Bakewell, 164.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>32</sup>George O. Wood, "Assemblies of God Springfield History," video, accessed March 5, 2018, <https://vimeo.com/102969428>. The grove of trees where Amanda Benedict prayed is also the spot where a young George O. Wood (who later became general superintendent and also served for a time as interim pastor of Central), after finishing his paper route, would practice preaching when the sanctuary was under construction.

<sup>33</sup>*The Daily Advertiser* (Aurora, MO), April 25, 1925; *The Daily Advertiser* (Aurora, MO), April 27, 1925; Amanda Elizabeth Benedict, certificate of death #12224. Missouri State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, 1925.

<sup>34</sup>Stanley H. Frodsham, "The Romance of the Gospel Publishing House," *Pentecostal Evangel*, April 9, 1927, 3.

<sup>35</sup>Linda Leicht, "Prayer Warrior's Testimony Leads Man on a Mission," *Springfield News-Leader*, June 9, 2007, 2C.

<sup>36</sup>Corum and Bakewell, 166.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, 190-191.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>40</sup>Susan Atteberry, "Memories from Baseball's Past," *Springfield Leader & Press*, June 9, 1983, 1C.

<sup>41</sup>Menzies, 261; *General Council Minutes*, 1945, 27-29.

<sup>42</sup>Menzies, 261.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup>Dorothy Watson, telephone interview by Glenn Gohr, March 7, 2015.

<sup>45</sup>Robert C. Cunningham, "An Unforgettable New Year's Prayer Meeting," *Pentecostal Evangel*, December 31, 1978, 10-11.

<sup>46</sup>Frank Bartleman, *How Pentecost Came to Los Angeles: The Story Behind the Azusa Street Revival* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 2017), 94.

<sup>47</sup>Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>48</sup>Kimberly Harper, *White Man's Heaven: The Lynching and Expulsion of Blacks in the Southern Ozarks, 1894-1909* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 2010).

<sup>49</sup>Corum and Bakewell, 125-126. The identity of the street preacher in Joplin is unknown. However, street preaching was a common method of evangelism used by Parham's Apostolic Faith Movement. Parham himself was reported to have preached to hundreds of people on the streets of Joplin. *The Apostolic Faith* (Houston, TX), December 1905, 13.

<sup>50</sup>Corum and Bakewell, 125-126.

<sup>51</sup>Henry G. Tuthill, "Apostolic Faith Revival," *Springfield Daily Republican*, March 28, 1906, 5.

<sup>52</sup>Corum and Bakewell, 111.

<sup>53</sup>James Goff, *Fields White Unto Harvest: Charles F. Parham and the Missionary Origins of Pentecostalism* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1988), 169-170. Parham had many followers along the Kansas-Missouri border, with churches in Joplin, Missouri, and Galena, Baxter Springs, and Keelville, Kansas.

<sup>54</sup>Goff, 101-104, 153. Parham regularly distinguished himself from other Pentecostals by repudiating Azusa Street and emphasizing his doctrine of annihilation. See, for instance: *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, July 7, 1912, 2.

<sup>55</sup>Howard A. Goss and W. Fay Carothers gathered many former Parham supporters into their new organization, which carried the Apostolic Faith name until 1910 or 1911, when it was renamed Church of God in Christ. The group apparently disbanded in 1914 when most of its leaders joined the AG.

<sup>56</sup>Goff, 106.

<sup>57</sup>Corum, "A Sparkling Fountain for the Whole Earth," 1.

<sup>58</sup>"Show Boy Evangelist to Conduct Meetings."

<sup>59</sup>William W. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1971), 122.

<sup>60</sup>"Unsung 'Builder' of City Reaches End of Long Trail," *The Daily News* (Springfield, MO), June 19, 1949, D-1.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup>Edith L. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the History of American Pentecostalism, Volume 1* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1989), 239.

<sup>63</sup>Menzies, 123.





# A History of Bible Quiz in the Assemblies of God

By Robert Carter and Ruthie Edgerly Oberg

For over 50 years, teenagers in countless Assemblies of God (AG) congregations have hit buzzers, lit lights, and dug deep into their memory banks for answers in a true battle of brains. Unlike many quiz or game shows, the focus is on Scripture.

Bible Quiz has been a part of AG Christian education since the early 1960s. Teams of quizzers strive to memorize portions of the New Testament each year, and then recall answers based on those verses under pressure of time and competition. Teen Bible Quiz became a national Assemblies of God ministry in 1963, followed in 1975 by Junior Bible Quiz for elementary school children.

Bible memorization has always been a core discipline in Assemblies of God Christian education. Children and youth have frequently memorized Bible verses in Sunday school, vacation Bible school, children's church, Christ's Ambassadors (now National Youth Ministries), Missionettes (now National Girls Ministries), and Royal Rangers. This commitment to planting Scripture in the hearts and minds of young people arises from the conviction that the Word is God is divinely inspired and authoritative in faith and life.

## Teen Bible Quiz

### Origins

Assemblies of God Bible Quiz has its roots in a similar effort by Youth for Christ (YFC), an evangelical ministry to young people.<sup>1</sup> YFC had been holding local, regional, and national teen talent and Bible quiz competitions since about 1949 when Youth for Christ leader Jack Hamilton started a high school "Bible Club" in Kansas City.<sup>2</sup> That competition, in turn, was based in large part on popular television quiz shows from the 1950s and 1960s. The game format is similar to the program, *G.E. College Bowl*, which ran for many years on CBS

and NBC television networks with Allen Ludden (later of *Password* fame) and Robert Earle as the quizmasters.<sup>3</sup> That show spawned dozens of local television quiz programs for high schools, some of which continue to this day. "Quiz bowl" or "scholar's bowl" is widely played as a school activity much like sports teams.

Owing to the popularity of quiz programs in the broader culture, many church youth groups began having their own informal quiz matches as aids in gaining biblical knowledge.

Ralph Harris, first director of the National Christ's Ambassadors (C.A.) Department, recalled that district youth leaders requested formulation of a standard for the Bible quiz competitions that were springing up among local churches.<sup>4</sup> In 1960, responding to these appeals, the C.A. Department published a standard rule book and study guide for use in local churches, *Action in Acts*. The study guide, which included suggested questions and a chapter-by-chapter analysis of the book of Acts,

was written by Nicholas Nikoloff, chairman of the Department of Bible at Central Bible Institute and former general superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Bulgaria. This early rule book allowed for participation by quizzers between the ages of 12 and 19 and encouraged competition between local churches in sections, culminating in a final quiz at the district level.<sup>5</sup>

The C.A. Department noted positive responses to the release of *Action in Acts* in its report to the 1961 General Council and began making plans to expand the program.<sup>6</sup> When Owen Carr became the national secretary of the C.A. Department in 1962, it fell to him to begin the process. In an interview, he recalled,

I was the district youth director—they called them D-CAP [District Christ's Ambassadors President] back then—in Kansas from 1953 to 1958, and a number of the districts had Bible Quiz. Then in 1962 I became head of [what became known as] the National Youth

**Bible Quiz is a proven, effective means to instill God's Word into the next generation.**

—Doug Clay



Department, and I said, “This should be a national program.” Before that, each district picked their own book of the Bible and wrote their own questions, had their own rules, and it was not organized at all.<sup>7</sup>

In 1963 the C.A. Department received permission from the executive presbytery to take quizzing beyond the district level and conduct national competitions.<sup>8</sup> The first book chosen for study was *Luke*, and the first national

sion of the General Council, during a night when youth ministries were featured at the biennial convention.

A large electronic scoreboard stood behind the quiz teams, and a crowd of about 5,000 looked on as Lee Shultz—who later became the announcer and producer of the “Revivaltime” radio broadcast—presided as the quizmaster.

Carr recalled that Shultz unwittingly became the person that the crowd sided against—thanks to an incident early in the championship game.

“Early in the game, the moderator

the generation coming of age in the 1960s was experiencing pressure to accommodate to the values of the surrounding society. In addition, leaders were aware that other revival movements that started strong seemed to fall back into spiritual complacency and worldliness—something that Assemblies of God leaders wanted to avoid.

In 1963, the C.A. Department called for a national youth convention, something that had not been done in almost twenty years. This youth convention would include anointed preaching, prayer, a Teen Talent search, and the national Bible Quiz tournament. The stated purpose of the convention was to

Strike at the heart of our youth with a challenge to perpetuate Pentecost by a personal experience—to challenge them to a life of dedication, a life of self-sacrifice, and seeing the work of God carried forward with Pentecostal fervor.<sup>15</sup>

A primary goal of the Bible Quiz program from its beginning was “the revitalization of the next generation of leaders within the Assemblies of God.”<sup>16</sup> Believing firmly in the power of Scripture to transform lives, C.A. leaders sought to implant the Word of God in the coming generation of students. Bible Quiz was one of the tools they used to accomplish this goal.

### ***Early Writers, Buzzers, and Books***

In the early years, the challenge of writing questions for official competitions fell to several different writers. During the 1960s and 1970s, writers included Donald F. Johns, Kermit Jeffrey, G. Raymond Carlson, Anthony Palma, Verne MacKinney, George O. Wood, George Edgerly, and Brenton Osgood. Several of these writers also prepared the study guides for teams to use in their personal study and church practice. Edgerly began writing the individual quizzer study guides in 1975, and he continued



**Contestants, quizmaster and judges are in place for the final competition of the national C.A. Teen Bible Quiz teams, August 1965.**

quiz tournament, using questions from writer Stan Walters, took place at the 1963 General Council in Memphis, Tennessee.<sup>9</sup> Initially the ministry’s name was Teen C.A. Bible Quiz. It has also been called Bible Quiz and Teen Bible Quiz (TBQ).

The first national championship tournament included eight teams, each of which had won its regional championship.<sup>10</sup> It was strictly a single-elimination bracket playoff, or sudden-death tournament, where each team is immediately eliminated from the competition after one loss.<sup>11</sup> Most of the quiz matches these players had experienced prior to the national competition took place before a handful of spectators in a Sunday school room. Now they were competing for the opportunity to quiz in the final match, to be held during a plenary ses-

ruled one of the students incorrect, and the young man said, ‘I’d like to challenge that.’ The crowd hushed, and the judges then ruled that he was correct. Everybody cheered, and from then on they were all cheering for the kids against that mean old quizmaster,” Carr said.<sup>12</sup>

The first national champions were from Bouldercrest Assembly in Atlanta, Georgia.<sup>13</sup> The congregation went on to win the title two more times in the 1970s and continues to be active in Bible Quiz as Evangel Community Church in Snellville, Georgia.<sup>14</sup>

### ***The Motivation Behind the Ministry***

As the Assemblies of God looked toward its fiftieth anniversary in 1964, there was concern that the church’s growth was beginning to slow and that

to do so until 1999. Students of that era associated Edgerly's name with national Bible Quiz, which earned him the title "Father of Bible Quiz," although he was not directly involved in its beginnings.

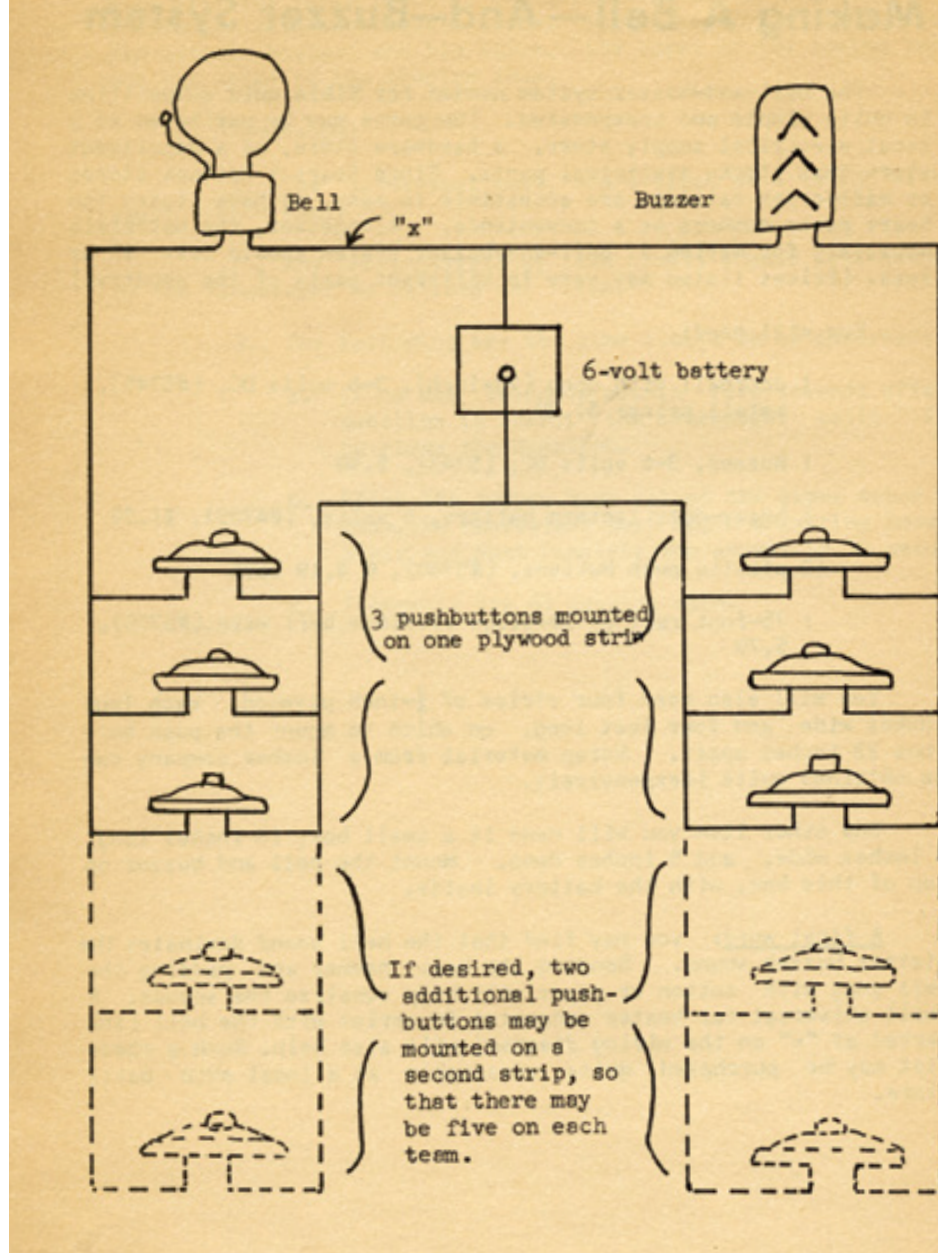
Electronic buzzer systems were not readily available in an affordable, portable form in the 1960s. To assist churches in determining which quizzier was first in responding to a question, in the 1960 *Action in Acts* study guide, the national C.A. Department included hand-drawn instructions for creating a simple bell/buzzer device using materials roughly totaling \$7.00 from Sears & Roebuck stores.<sup>17</sup> In this system, quizzers raised their hands (covered with a colored glove) when they pressed a manual buzzer. The task of determining which quizzier was first to the buzzer fell to a specific judge. In 1970, a portable device called "The Judge" became widely popular among quiz teams. "The Judge" was a briefcase with red and green lights on the front and cables attached to buzzer pads coming out either end. The device became synonymous with Bible Quiz itself.

Except for the replacement of the Gospel of Luke with the Gospel of Mark, the Scripture material has remained relatively consistent for more than 30 years—a Gospel or Acts in one year, alternating with two or more epistles in the next, over a nine-year cycle.<sup>18</sup> Books covered in the current nine-year cycle are: 1) Acts; 2) Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon; 3) Mark; 4) I and II Corinthians; 5) John; 6) Hebrews, I and II Peter, Jude; 7) Matthew; 8) I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, Titus, I, II, and III John; and 9) Romans and James.

With this schedule, it is not unusual for a quizzier to finish his or her quizzing career having memorized thirteen to fifteen books of the Bible in their entirety.

### Competitions

The National Bible Quiz tournament and Teen Talent continued to be held in conjunction with General Council meet-



**In the beginning years of Bible Quiz the C. A. Department distributed this diagram for creating a simple handmade bell/buzzer device for Bible quizzing.**

ings in odd-numbered years and met separately in even-numbered years. In 1986, when Teen Talent became Fine Arts Festival, the festival played host to both events. However, both ministries experienced such growth that by the mid-1990s they returned to their original practice of holding separate events on different dates.<sup>19</sup> The 1997 national Bible Quiz finals in Indianapolis was the last to be held in conjunction with General Council. It was located at suburban Lakeview Temple, several miles away from the main Council site at the RCA

Dome. National quiz meets have been held across the country from California to Maryland.

Quizzers experience their first taste of competition in their local church among members of their own team. They then have opportunity to hone their skills against other teams in their section as each team prepares for the annual district quiz tournament. Teams then advance from district competition to regionals. The top four teams in each of the eight regions are invited to the national tournament, in addition to eight wild-card





**Members of the 1963 Bible Quiz championship team from Bouldercrest AG, Atlanta, Georgia (l-r): Ronnie Pruett, Pastor Eugene Gustafson and Mrs. Gustafson (coaches), Rusty Laurens (in front), Scott Laurens, Mrs. Brenda Gregg, Barbara Gregg, and George Bates.**

teams from across the entire nation, leading to the event's unofficial nickname of "The Final 40." The national tournament now runs for five days, with several additional events such as a "quoting bee," where contestants must quote a verse (in later stages, two or three) perfectly in a set time span that decreases as the event moves toward its end.

While the Scripture portions have remained largely the same, the questions for competition have become increasingly difficult.<sup>20</sup> In the early days, an answer which came from two consecutive verses was considered quite challenging. Today, a question which requires a quizzier to perfectly quote a seven-verse section is not unheard of at Nationals, and it is usually answered correctly by a handful of elite quizzers—though it is done at a high speed which tests the ability of judges to clearly hear each word as quizzers attempt to finish within the 30-second time limit. It is a feat which still inspires huge applause from fans gathered to watch two teams battle it out for the championship, even as easier questions did in that first 1963 title match in Memphis.

Participation increased through the years, with more than 1,000 teams in-

volved at the ministry's peak in the 1990s, according to Bernie Elliot, who has been involved in the Bible Quiz ministry since coaching his first team in 1977 at a small church near Syracuse, New York. He has served as the Bible Quiz National Coordinator since 1999.<sup>21</sup>

Bible Quiz now numbers more than 600 teams. While an increasing number of extracurricular activities have cut into participation from the ministry's peak, that trend has reversed in recent years. Bible Quiz leaders have been working to promote the ministry by holding coach seminars at youth conventions, Bible Quiz retreats, and outreaches at camps across the nation. Elliot also guest lectures in AG colleges and universities to promote biblical literacy through the ministry of Bible Quiz.<sup>22</sup> This outreach has been an important means of promoting the ministry, as many AG youth ministers are unfamiliar with Bible Quiz.

In an effort to increase participation and to get as much thorough Bible knowledge to as many teens as possible, National Youth Ministries has added competition levels specifically for middle-school students, with less material covered at a time. Likewise, a new "Experience League" has been established

which covers roughly a single chapter each month of the season, with no review of the previous month's material, easier questions, and no end-of-season playoffs. The new league, first used nationally in 2014, has already resulted in new teams in many churches.

During almost all of its history, Bible Quiz eligibility rules restricted teams from churches outside the AG. While non-AG churches were allowed to quiz in local and sectional meets, they could advance only as far as district playoffs. They were later allowed to go to regional finals tournaments. That policy ended in 2016 when Atlanta Tamil Church (Norcross, Georgia) became the first non-AG team to compete at the national finals.

### ***Recognition and Awards***

Over the years, several Assemblies of God colleges and universities began to offer scholarships to top quizzers at the district, regional, and national levels. An endowment fund was established to provide additional scholarships for top teams at the national Bible Quiz finals; those scholarships can be applied to any institution of higher learning and may accumulate over multiple years. Quizzers with multiple appearances at the na-



tional finals have earned scholarships ranging from \$4,000 to \$5,000. The total amount awarded to quizzers in 2017 was \$30,000.<sup>23</sup>

Bible Quiz also introduced new challenges designed to take quizzers' memorization efforts to the next level. In the 2000s, a National Memorization Award was introduced, which requires that the Scripture portion in use that season be quoted a full chapter at a time, with four mistakes or fewer per chapter.

When that award was achieved by many quizzers (and even some coaches and adult officials), an even tougher level—the Master Memorization Award—was introduced. It requires the entire Scripture portion to be quoted at one sitting within a specified time limit and fewer than a set number of errors. For instance, the 2016/2017 award for quoting the entirety of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon had a 45-minute limit with no more than five mistakes. Thirty-eight quizzers achieved this distinction in 2017.<sup>24</sup>

The Discipleship Award provides balance to the competitive aspects of Bible Quiz by encouraging quizzers to develop their Christian walk. Rather than focusing on memorization or points scored during quiz matches, recipients of this award must read the AG position paper on the baptism in the Holy Spirit, perform community service, write an essay on spiritual disciplines, and incorporate fasting and prayer into their regular schedules, among other requirements.

## Junior Bible Quiz

### *Beginnings*

The Bible Quiz ministry grew greatly in the 1970s with the advent of an elementary school version called Junior Bible Quiz (JBQ). In the fall of 1972, Bob Brechtel, an Evangelical Covenant Church layman, came to George Edgerly in the office where he served as Iowa D-CAP to ask him about Bible Quiz. Edgerly told him what the Assemblies of God had been doing since 1963. Edgerly

remembered Brechtel interrupting him and saying, “I don’t want something for teens. And I don’t want it over just one book of the Bible. I want a ministry that will help children learn the names of the books of the Bible, how the Bible came to be, and what it teaches. And it should be written to the child’s level of ability to understand its great truths.” Edgerly recalled responding, “That’s a great idea. When I find time I’ll try to develop your concept.”<sup>25</sup>

Just a few months later, Edgerly was invited to join the National Sunday School Department in Springfield, Mis-



**George Edgerly, circa 1970.**

souri. In a brief hallway conversation, Edgerly discovered that Ralph Harris, editor-in-chief of Church School Literature, had been tossing around a similar idea. Together they brainstormed ways to adapt the Teen Bible Quiz program for quizzers in second through sixth grades. Their goal was to choose a broad range of material that would serve as a “Pentecostal catechism” and would reinforce what the children were already learning in Sunday school, children’s church, Missionettes (now National Girls Ministries), Royal Rangers, and vacation Bible school. They also wanted to make it accessible for parents to use for Bible teaching at home.

The idea was presented to the joint committee of Church School Literature editors and Sunday School Department consultants, which expressed several concerns. Would promoting competition among elementary age students introduce a “little league syndrome” to Bible study? Would memorization be accompanied by an emphasis on application? Would participation in quizzing isolate students from other ministries of the church?

With these concerns in mind, the committee approved the preparation of a set of questions with the understanding that competitive quizzing between churches would not be promoted by the national office. JBQ was designed to supplement the basic biblical concepts and doctrines taught in other children’s ministry programs rather than competing with them.<sup>26</sup>

### *Developing a Pentecostal Catechism*

The questions and answers for the Bible Fact-Pak, the source of JBQ match questions to this day, was developed by Edgerly, along with Ralph Harris and Children’s Ministries Consultant Ron Clark. The trio wrote more than 800 questions, covering important events, persons, and places in the Bible, and the major doctrines of Christianity and the Pentecostal movement. The doctrinal questions were based on concepts from the Statement of Fundamental Truths, *Knowing the Doctrines of the Bible* by Myer Pearlman, and *Bible Doctrines* by P. C. Nelson.<sup>27</sup> The Fact-Pak also included 84 quotation questions requiring perfect recitation of Bible verses in the King James Version (KJV). From these submitted questions, 576 were chosen—a number based on how many 1½ by 3 inch cards could fit on 24 sheets of cardstock for printing. Checking the questions for doctrinal issues was assigned to then-Assistant General Superintendent G. Raymond Carlson, who later became general superintendent.<sup>28</sup>

Questions and answers were inten-

tionally structured to aid in understanding biblical concepts. Rather than using a question that stated, “Quote the seventh commandment,” the question asked, “Which commandment protects the sacredness of marriage,” helping the quizzier to understand the concept of adultery. Even the numerical order of the questions was intentional. The questions about Bible stories were arranged in biblical order, and questions about Bible doctrines were often followed by a question about a Bible story that illustrated the concept.<sup>29</sup> The writers chose

nations also made use of the Fact-Pak, it continued to be printed in both KJV and NIV for several years. By 2010 the demand for KJV became low enough that further production was discontinued.<sup>33</sup>

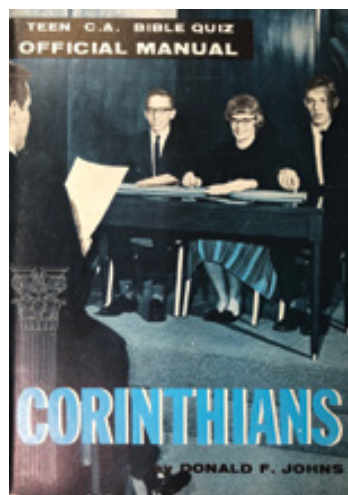
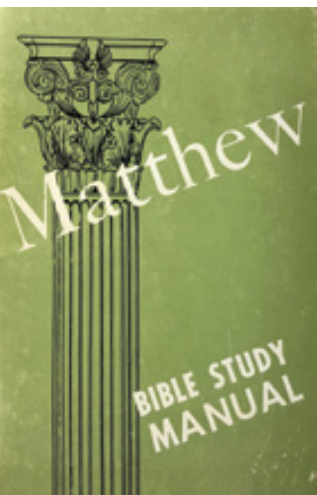
The questions have seen a few minor changes—mostly the updating of language (for example, “Holy Ghost” was changed to “Holy Spirit”) and adjusting questions due to the change from KJV to NIV—but the vast majority of the original questions by Edgerly, Harris, and Clark are still used today.

Instead of a box of red, white, and

ing difficulty: Discoverer, Searcher, Achiever and Master seals. The Master seal required 59 out of 60 correctly-answered, randomly-selected questions from the Bible Fact-Pak. In succeeding years, two more levels of difficulty were added: Bible Quoter, which required perfect quotation of the 95 Quotation Questions (increased from the original 84), and Bible Excellence, requiring 571 out of 576 correct answers completed in one sitting without a break. As of 2017, more than 5,000 people have completed the Master Award.<sup>36</sup> The Master Seal program made participation possible for children who did not attend a church with a JBQ program or who did not enjoy or learn well in a competitive environment.

JBQ has also been able to achieve its goal of complementing other children’s ministries. JBQ questions are included in the AG’s Radiant Life Sunday School curriculum, from Primary through Pre-Teen levels. The *Fact-Pak* is used in children’s church gatherings and vacation Bible schools, separate from the official JBQ program. National Girls Ministries and Royal Rangers award JBQ and Bible Quiz merit badges for participation in the program. Requirements for the badges include competing on a team, scoring 500 points over a quiz career, three quiz-outs (accomplished by answering six correct questions in a given match), and earning the Searcher seal in the Master Award program.<sup>37</sup> The Children’s Ministries Department also included JBQ questions in its Fire Bible for Kids devotional books.<sup>38</sup>

While it was agreed that the national offices in Springfield would not promote JBQ quizzing between churches, nothing prevented districts from doing so. In March 1978, five teams from Minnesota, Illinois, and Iowa met at First Assembly of God in Des Moines for an informal quiz meet. After that meet, Dan Rector of Minnesota and John Crabtree of Illinois were asked by their districts to organize JBQ on a district level; both district programs began in 1979.<sup>39</sup> Many other districts followed suit, with each



easily-understood language and defined terms like “redemption,” “justification,” “sanctification,” and “vicarious atonement” on a third-grade reading level.<sup>30</sup>

The first printing was completed in November 1975, with question cards of graded difficulty in red, white, and blue to correspond with the American Bicentennial.<sup>31</sup> To keep costs low, Edgerly printed the question cards, which came to be known as the “Bible Fact-Pak,” on a printing press in his garage. It was introduced to the District Sunday School Directors in the March 1976 conference.<sup>32</sup>

In the late 1980s, as other Assemblies of God ministry programs were making the switch in publication from the KJV to the New International Version (NIV), it became necessary for JBQ to also make the change. Because other denomi-

blue (later changed to white, yellow, and green) cards, spiral-bound books are typically used today (although cards are still available), and sets of questions for practice or for competition can be generated online at a dedicated website, [biblefactpak.com](http://biblefactpak.com). The Bible Fact-Pak has also been translated into numerous languages,<sup>34</sup> it is used for Bible quizzing in other countries,<sup>35</sup> and it has become part of the Bible curriculum for many homeschooling families.

### Competitions

To curtail concerns about competitions, JBQ questions were initially promoted as an aid for individuals to memorize Scripture. JBQ participants could work toward Master Seal goals (now known as the Bible Master Award), progressing through four levels of increas-



**Quiz team from Bethel Assembly, Quincy, Illinois at a special quiz meet in Des Moines, Iowa, March 1978.**

district writing its own rules based on Teen Bible Quiz. In 1980, George Edgerly and Dan Rector wrote the first set of guidelines that began the process of standardizing JBQ meets.<sup>40</sup>

In 1981, Dan Rector and Ken Devoe of Wisconsin—both from the North Central Region—organized the first regional meet. Other districts and regions wanted more interaction for their teams, leading to the first National JBQ Festival in 1986, held in Rockford, Illinois. The team from Forest Edge Church of Columbus, Ohio, won the first national championship. The National Festival is still led by an independent committee today, although the executive presbytery of the General Council gave official blessing to the festival in the mid-1990s.<sup>41</sup> The National Festival has led to additional cooperation between local, district, and national leadership and has set a standard for excellence in the JBQ ministry. Approximately 80 teams attend the annual festival, which was held at Calvary Church in Naperville, Illinois, for most of the 1980s and 1990s. It has since been held in various locations. Barry Jorris has served as coordinator of the festival since 2007.

Junior Bible Quiz has also led to fellowship with churches outside the Assemblies of God. Because of its unique-

ness in providing a basic introduction to Bible doctrine in a fun and easily accessible format, many non-AG churches have made it available and have participated in quiz meets with Assemblies of God churches at the local, district, regional, and national levels, including First Baptist Church of Bowling Green, Kentucky, which finished second at the National Festival in 2001.<sup>42</sup>

Since its introduction, Junior Bible Quiz has gone on to surpass Teen Quiz in the number of participants. While records of participation are incomplete, JBQ is estimated to have more than 2,000 teams with as many adult coaches and quiz officials, and nearly 10,000 quizzers in its official program. That is at least triple the current number of those taking part in Teen Bible Quiz.<sup>43</sup> From sales of the Bible Fact-Pak in the United States, it is estimated that over 300,000 children have had the chance to learn the Bible in this question and answer format.<sup>44</sup>

### ***Benefits of Bible Quiz***

Now that Bible Quiz is approaching its 55th anniversary, we can look back on its history and see some of the benefits for those who have been involved in Teen Bible Quiz and Junior Bible Quiz. The greatest benefit, perhaps, is that the Word of God has been implanted

into the minds and hearts of countless young people. Quizzers who are now in their 60s testify that much of what they learned in their quiz experience has stuck with them throughout life. For many, the lessons learned in Bible Quiz solidified their commitment to God and to the church.

Bible Quiz also gives young people an opportunity to develop a positive attitude during stressful times. They learn how to handle both victory and defeat in a supportive environment. Quizzers must learn how to process emotions and persist through difficulty, often using their own anxiety and the tension of competition to their benefit. Learning to be gracious to a winning opponent in a match or to a quizmaster who has ruled an answer incorrect helps to build positive behaviors in other areas of life. The confidence gained from attempting something difficult and seeing it through to completion prepares young people for later success as they see tasks that seem larger than their abilities.

The teamwork encouraged by Bible Quiz helps youth to see the value of others. A single quizzer cannot answer all questions for a team; members must learn to share the spotlight in order to maximize the team's score. Social skills gained in tedious practice sessions, on the long trips to meets, and in the matches themselves are invaluable for life. Quizzers often establish lifelong friendships with those from their own team and from other churches.

The memorization skills gained in Bible Quiz are also a major benefit. Training the brain to memorize and to think quickly and critically has led to success outside of Bible Quiz. Quiz experience lessens test anxiety and gives confidence in mental abilities. Quizzers who perfect the art of "contesting" (presenting an argument as to why a judge's ruling is correct or incorrect) develop rhetorical skills that serve them well in public speaking and debate.

Bible Quiz also provides opportunities for adults to mentor quizzers. The



time invested by parents and coaches into their quizzers pays long-term dividends, especially when the coach is able to come alongside the parents and reinforce the values being taught at home.

### ***Life After Bible Quiz***

Bible Quiz participants frequently go on to success in ministry and other careers, and many top quizzers from the early years have become Bible Quiz coaches, officials, and question writers, continuing their involvement by mentoring other quizzers. David Boyd was a bus kid in Huron, South Dakota, who joined a Bible Quiz team that went to the national finals. He now promotes JBQ in his role as the director of Children's Ministries and Boys and Girls Missionary Challenge (BGMC).<sup>45</sup>

Bible Quiz is often a family affair, with parents serving as either coaches or officials. Outside of the AG, perhaps the most broadly known quizzing family is the Wagner clan, Canadian natives who emigrated to Oklahoma. Competing for First Assembly of Owasso, the Wagner brothers, Joshua, Jesse, and Daniel, won three national championships over four years and finished second in the fourth. But they are known outside of the Bible Quiz ministry for their successful run on the Game Show Network program, "The American Bible Challenge,"<sup>46</sup> in which they won the championship of the second season in 2013. The family took their winnings—\$140,000—and staged crusades and missions throughout Central and South America.<sup>47</sup>

Many other former quizzers and coaches are involved in ministry all over the world, including at least four current members of the Executive Leadership Team of the Assemblies of God: Doug Clay, Greg Mundis, Rick Dubose, and Jim Bradford, who was a two-time Minnesota state champion. Many are missionaries, pastors, teachers, homemakers, and serve in scores of churches around the globe. Others have gone on to successful careers in secular fields, including Rhett Laurens, an attorney grad-

uating from Yale University and Harvard Law School,<sup>48</sup> Rob Moore, member of the Canadian parliament,<sup>49</sup> and John Porter, former quizzer and coach who is now a vice president for IBM.<sup>50</sup>

Although winning tournaments is a goal of the coach, National Bible Quiz Coordinator Bernie Elliot is quick to state that the most successful coaches are those who have "a high percentage of students still in a strong relationship with Jesus years later."<sup>51</sup> Edgerly recalled in 1989 that his first team in Gray, Iowa, never won a district meet. However, he noted, "their efforts have come to shake the world for Christ. One team member is a missionary to South Africa, another to Tanzania. Two are married to pastors, and one is the wife of an Army chaplain. Another is Office Coordinator for the Africa field office in the Division of Foreign Missions [now known as Assemblies of God World Missions]. No, they never had a winner—but they are winners." Edgerly also mentioned a 1969 letter from a helicopter pilot in Vietnam that he carried in his briefcase for many years. The pilot wrote, "Thank you for all the hours you spend with the quiz team. If it hadn't been for my grasp of the Bible, particularly the book of Romans, I would have messed up my life a couple of years ago."<sup>52</sup>

### ***Bible Quiz in a Post-Christian Age***

Bible Quiz is perhaps more important now than ever as biblical knowledge is decreasing in America's post-Christian culture. General Superintendent Doug Clay believes the ministry is one of the best ways to promote biblical literacy among young people. "I am concerned that our children are growing up in a culture that undermines biblical values," Clay notes. "I encourage every church to provide opportunities for young people to learn the Word of God and to develop a healthy, biblical worldview. Bible Quiz is a proven, effective means to instill God's Word into the next generation."<sup>53</sup>

Bible Quiz is not merely a competition or a program—it is a mentor-based

ministry. For both Junior Bible Quiz and Teen Bible Quiz, the importance of the coach relationship is vital to the growth of the quizzer. As George Edgerly was fond of saying, "Most spiritual truth is better 'caught' than 'taught'"<sup>54</sup> and "It isn't enough to teach the lyrics of Christianity, we must also model how to carry the tune." Bible Quiz gives the opportunity for youth to become very close to an adult mentor who has a personal interest in their spiritual and intellectual development.

At George Edgerly's funeral in 2016, more than a dozen former quizzers, ranging in age from late teens to mid-60s, took the microphone to share the lasting impact of their Bible Quiz coach on their lives. Similar testimonies have arisen from quizzing programs across the Assemblies of God. For over 50 years, Bible Quiz has helped to develop discipline and biblical literacy in countless Assemblies of God youth—an investment in the future which has yielded eternal dividends. ✝



**Robert Carter, a semi-retired newspaper reporter, has served in various capacities in the Teen and Junior Bible Quiz ministries since**

**1986; he's been the chief statistician for Teen Bible Quiz national finals since 1998. He attends Garywood Assembly (Hueytown, Alabama).**



**Ruthie Edgerly Oberg, an Assemblies of God minister, is on staff at the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center. She is the niece of**

**Bible Quiz pioneer George Edgerly.**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Art Deyo, "Celebrating 70 Years of Youth For Christ," accessed January 29, 2018, [https://www.yfc.net/images/.../YFCs\\_History\\_by\\_Dr\\_Art\\_Deyo\\_-\\_Final\\_Version.pdf](https://www.yfc.net/images/.../YFCs_History_by_Dr_Art_Deyo_-_Final_Version.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>Steve Asmuth, "Fine Arts, 'Teen Talent'—A History," July 24, 2009. Typed manuscript.

<sup>3</sup>"GE College Bowl' Set for 10th Season on TV," *Schenectady (NY) Gazette*, August 8, 1967, TV Section, 12.

<sup>4</sup>Ralph W. Harris, "History of the National C.A. Department," [197?]. Typed manuscript.

<sup>5</sup>*Action in Acts*.

<sup>6</sup>"Report of the Christ's Ambassadors Committee," *General Council Minutes*, 1961, 74.

<sup>7</sup>Owen Carr, telephone interview by Robert Carter, April 25, 2017.

<sup>8</sup>"Notes For Our D-CAP's," October 1962; *Capsule*, August 1963.

<sup>9</sup>"National Bible Quiz Finals - Official Question Writers," accessed January 31, 2018, [http://www.biblequiz.com/history/nationals/question\\_writer.htm](http://www.biblequiz.com/history/nationals/question_writer.htm).

<sup>10</sup>Leland G. Shultz, "Teen Quiz Tournaments Encourage Bible Study," *Pentecostal Evangel*, March 1, 1964, 16.

<sup>11</sup>"Nationals, 1963," accessed February 1, 2018, <http://biblequiz.com/history/nationals/1963/main.htm>

<sup>12</sup>Owen Carr interview.

<sup>13</sup>"The Winners," *C.A. Herald*, November 1963, 8.

<sup>14</sup>"National Champions," Biblequiz.com, accessed April 21, 2017, [http://biblequiz.com/history/nationals/team\\_champions.htm](http://biblequiz.com/history/nationals/team_champions.htm).

<sup>15</sup>*C.A. Day Committee Minutes*, [196? (pre-1963)].

<sup>16</sup>*C.A. Day Committee Minutes*, [196?]; "National Youth Conference," *C.A. Herald*, December 1963, 28.

<sup>17</sup>*Action in Acts*.

<sup>18</sup>This was originally an eight-year cycle before the additional books were included.

<sup>19</sup>Jesse Segrist, "Fine Arts Festival: Fifty Years of the Arts in Ministry," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 33 (2013): 52.

<sup>20</sup>Bernie Elliot, telephone interview by Robert Carter, March 30, 2017. TBQ used the King James Version until the 1994-1995 season, when it switched to the New International Version. TBQ and JBQ currently use the 2011 New International Version.

<sup>21</sup>For several years, the national coordinator of Bible Quiz was a full-time staff member of National Youth Ministries in Springfield, Missouri. When Elliot took the post, he based his work out of his suburban Pittsburgh home, though he does not see much of it. Appearances at invitational tournaments, speaking opportunities at churches and ministerial meetings, and numerous other efforts keep him on the road as he promotes both the teen and Junior Bible Quiz ministry. Elliot, with his wife Jeannie alongside to serve as a *de facto* assistant director, has now served longer than any other national Bible Quiz director. Bernie Elliot, telephone interview by Robert Carter, March 30, 2017.

<sup>22</sup>Bernie Elliot, e-mail to Ruthie Oberg, January 17, 2018.

<sup>23</sup>Bernie Elliot, telephone interview by Ruthie Oberg, January 16, 2018.

<sup>24</sup>*2017 Bible Quiz Nationals* [program] (Springfield, MO: National Youth Ministries, 2017).

<sup>25</sup>George Edgerly, "The Beginnings of Junior Bible Quiz." Typed manuscript, [ca. 2012]. Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>George Edgerly, oral history interview by Ruthie Oberg, February 29, 2016.

<sup>28</sup>George Edgerly, "The Beginnings of Junior Bible Quiz."

<sup>29</sup>George Edgerly, "Feedback on JBQ to Wayne Murray," no date.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>George Edgerly interview.

<sup>32</sup>Edgerly, "Feedback on JBQ to Wayne Murray."

<sup>33</sup>Edgerly, "The Beginnings of Junior Bible Quiz." The remaining stock of KJV materials were given free to missionaries requesting them, with the cost of shipping being paid by Boys and Girls Missionary Challenge (BGMC).

<sup>34</sup>Edgerly, "The Beginnings of Junior Bible Quiz." The Fact-Pak has been translated into French, Russian, Swahili, Spanish, Portuguese, Mandarin Chinese, Lithuanian, and Braille, among others.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>"Bible Master Awards," AGKIDMIN Junior Bible Quiz, accessed January 31, 2018, <http://kidmin.ag.org/ministries/juniorbiblequiz/jbqbiblemaster>. The Master Award does not have an age limit. Many adults have earned the award alongside their children.

<sup>37</sup>"Girls Ministries Merit Requirements," accessed January 31, 2018, <http://rmdc.org/files/Missionettes/Reviews/Merit%20Badges%20Combined.pdf>

<sup>38</sup>"Resources," AGKIDMIN Junior Bible Quiz, accessed January 31, 2018, <https://biblefactpak.com/Home/About#resource>.

<sup>39</sup>Dan Rector, "The History of the Junior Bible Quiz Festival." Essay, [ca. 2015]. Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Edgerly, "The Beginnings of Junior Bible Quiz."

<sup>42</sup>Larry Mullins, telephone interview by Ruthie Oberg, January 17, 2018.

<sup>43</sup>Bernie Elliot, telephone interview, March 30, 2017.

<sup>44</sup>"The Buzz," Friday, June 12, 2015. Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

<sup>45</sup>David Boyd, e-mail to Ruthie Oberg, February, 14, 2018

<sup>46</sup>Rita Sherrow, "Owasso Brothers on 'American Bible Challenge' Well-prepared for Game Show Thursday," *Tulsa (Okla.) World*, April 30, 2013, accessed April 26, 2017, [http://www.tulsaworld.com/scene/tv/owasso-brothers-on-american-bible-challenge-well-prepared-for-game/article\\_d7b2d3ef-9990-5874-8ed9-f7d65b921384.html](http://www.tulsaworld.com/scene/tv/owasso-brothers-on-american-bible-challenge-well-prepared-for-game/article_d7b2d3ef-9990-5874-8ed9-f7d65b921384.html).

<sup>47</sup>Tyler O'Neil, "Okla. Brothers Win American Bible Challenge; to Donate \$140,000 Winnings to Missions," *The Christian Post*, May 24, 2013, accessed April 26, 2017, <http://www.christianpost.com/news/okla-brothers-wins-american-bible-challenge-to-donate-140000-winnings-to-missions-96626/>.

<sup>48</sup>"Rhett H. Laurens," accessed January 26, 2018, <http://www.lawyerdb.org/Lawyer/Rhett-Laurens/>.

<sup>49</sup>"The Honourable Rob Moore," Members of Parliament, accessed May 25, 2017, [http://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members/Rob-Moore\(17210\)/Roles](http://www.ourcommons.ca/Parliamentarians/en/members/Rob-Moore(17210)/Roles); "Harper Moves 10 in Cabinet Shakeup," CBC News, January 19, 2010, accessed April 25, 2017, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/harper-moves-10-in-cabinet-shakeup-1.761446>.

<sup>50</sup>Bernie Elliot, telephone interview, March 30, 2017.

<sup>51</sup>Chuck Goldberg, *The BQ Interviews: Top Coaches Reveal Their Secrets for Getting Teens Into the Word!* (Springfield, MO: National Youth Department, A/G Teen Quiz, 1997), 23; Bernie Elliot, e-mail to Ruthie Oberg, January 19, 2018.

<sup>52</sup>George Edgerly, "Quizzers Shaking the World for Christ," *Pentecostal Evangel*, April 16, 1989, 19-20.

<sup>53</sup>Doug Clay, e-mail to Darrin Rodgers, January 30, 2018.

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Alexander Vazakas portrait, circa 1940s.



# From Macedonia to Missouri: The Journey of Alexander Vazakas

By Matthew A. Paugh

When Pentecostals look for inspiration from their history, they usually turn to the stories of the preachers, evangelists, and revivalists who have shaped their character. The movement has often neglected the impact of educators upon its identity, but these men and women have had a long-lasting influence. Dr. Alexander Vazakas represents one such teacher whose legacy continues to reverberate among leaders of the Assemblies of God (AG).

Vazakas's remarkable journey led him from Macedonia and, ultimately, to Springfield, Missouri, where he served as a professor at Evangel College. In his full life of ninety-one years, Vazakas served as a linguist, publisher, missionary, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) secretary, mentor, philosopher, and college professor. He spoke no less than a dozen languages and taught college courses in at least eight of them.

Vazakas's story connects with the AG on several levels. His Spirit baptism experience in the early 1890s predates the Topeka and Azusa Street revivals by at least a decade. After immigrating to the United States, Vazakas ministered and mentored among pastors in the Greek Original Apostolic Church, which the AG recognized as its Greek Branch in 1953. Finally, in his later years, he became a member of the AG and taught at Evangel where he influenced AG laity and clergy, including a young man named George O. Wood, now the former general superintendent of the AG. From prison cells to the classroom, from the Ignatian Way to the hallways of the academy, Alexander Vazakas lived a life that combined a commitment to Spirit-led living and academic rigor.

## Early Life in the Ottoman Empire: Father's Conversion and Its Aftermath

Alexander Aristides Vazakas was born March 19, 1873, in Monastir, Turkey, to Aristides and Argyri Jeanellis Vazakas.<sup>1</sup> Located in southwestern Macedonia, Monastir existed as a city of "competing nationalisms." Its populace consisted of numerous overlapping ethnic groups, including Albanians, Bulgarians, Serbs, Slavs, Turks, Vlachs, and, of course, Greeks, such as Vazakas and his family. Totalling approximately 50,000 people in the late nineteenth century, Monastir's population encompassed about 11,000 Muslims and 5,200 Jews.<sup>2</sup> The young Vazakas thus received exposure to numerous cultures and languages during his formative years.

Vazakas's ethnically diverse home city thrived in the late 1800s as part of the Ottoman Empire. Due to the construction of roads and railways, it became an economic, cultural, and administrative center in the Balkans, and European countries began to open their diplomatic offices there. Twelve consuls resided in Monastir between 1878 and 1913, and it took on the moniker "city of consuls."<sup>3</sup>

One of these consuls changed the course of the Vazakas family's life. Alexander's father Aristides practiced medicine in Monastir, and the British general consul became his patient. The elder Vazakas developed a friendship with the consul. One day, the consul, a member of the Church of Scotland, asked Aristides if he had read the New Testament. Alexander recalled that the question caused his father embarrassment because "he had studied almost everything else except that." Aristides went home and began reading the New Testament.<sup>4</sup>

**Vazakas served as a linguist, publisher, missionary, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) secretary, mentor, philosopher, and college professor.**

Reading the biblical text kindled an excitement in Vazakas's father, and he could not keep it to himself. He began talking to his patients about the insights he gleaned from Scripture. The family home that doubled as his medical office became a gathering place on Sundays for those who wanted to hear about "the wonders of the New Testament." The Sunday lectures attracted Greek-speaking individuals from various nationalities.<sup>5</sup>

With Aristides Vazakas's fervor for the New Testament came persecution. As the authorities gained awareness of the meetings at the Vazakas household, they became suspicious. Even owning a New Testament outside the official Orthodox Church channels could be deemed illegal. Vazakas's father found himself in and out of prison for his Christian proselytizing.<sup>6</sup>

On at least one occasion, Alexander became a target of mistreatment due to his father's activities. Near Alexander's schoolhouse lived two Turkish bandits who opposed Christianity. As Alexander and a friend walked home from school, one of the bandits began throwing stones and yelling insults at them. Alexander and his friend ran to a nearby Christian's home and hid themselves in a trunk until they deemed the threat had passed.<sup>7</sup>

Shortly after this altercation, Alexander's mother appeared at the school and made a dreadful announcement to her eight-year-old son: "We must leave at once and go to Prilep, where your father is dying." On his way to settle an estate following an uncle's death, Alexander's father encountered brigands who attacked him and left him naked and wounded in the snow. A shepherd discovered him and somehow sent word to Alexander's mother. Mother and children made the thirty-mile trek to Prilep where they found their husband and father battling pneumonia. His condition deteriorated quickly, and a recent imprisonment exacerbated his decline. Looking at his wife, Aristides cried out, "My lioness, take care of the children."

Then, he died.<sup>8</sup>

As a result of legal complexities, Alexander's mother proved unable to secure claims to Vazakas family estates, and the government reportedly took possession of the properties. With inheritances gone, Mrs. Vazakas attempted to take over her husband's medical practice. She saw patients in his office for four years before another appropriately licensed physician moved to the area.<sup>9</sup>

Now that the family lacked an income source, Alexander inherited the burden to provide for his mother and siblings. "Being left destitute," Vazakas wrote, "I started my teaching career at twelve [years old] in the Vardar Valley." Vazakas moved to an isolated area outside the town of Struminitza and became a tutor for the children of a German stationmaster named George Metzger. He sent his earnings back home to Monastir to support his mother and siblings.

Although he missed his family, Vazakas developed a friendship with his employer. Metzger had studied archeology and linguistics. Between the two of them, Metzger and Vazakas realized they knew ten different languages. Together they traveled the countryside, discussed the nuances of languages, and even dreamed of writing a dictionary with ten different columns for their ten different languages.<sup>10</sup>

During his time tutoring the Metzger children, Vazakas received word that an American family had moved to Monastir to continue the Christian work his father had started. This news provoked Vazakas's interest in the English language. He read daily from the English New Testament and found the meaning of the words in his Greek Bible. Metzger opined that reading "that book" amounted to a waste of time. He even warned Vazakas that the small print would ruin his eyesight. Later in life, Vazakas reflected on his use of the New Testament: "I have found it valuable linguistically not only for the study of English, but for every other language. It has been my basic study all these years." He added,

"And my eyes are still going strong."<sup>11</sup>

## **"Formative Experiences": Conversion and Acts 2:4 Outpouring**

Vazakas completed his contract with Metzger around the same time his sister Eugenia graduated from high school. She accepted a position as a teacher and undertook responsibility for supporting the family. This allowed Alexander to continue his own education. He moved to Thessalonica, Greece, and enrolled in high school. During these years, Vazakas had what he called the "formative experiences" of his life.<sup>12</sup>

In Thessalonica, Vazakas connected with the British general consul who had introduced his father to the Greek New Testament. After attending the consul's church, Vazakas remarked, "For the first time, I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit in a public meeting."<sup>13</sup> When he went back to his room at the high school, Vazakas felt a "heavy conviction." The overwhelming realization of his sinfulness drove him to despair. He began to beat his head against the stone wall and longed to die. Then, Vazakas declared, "Christ revealed himself to me as the one who died for sinners, even the worst of sinners, and therefore for me. I saw a vision of Jesus who said to me, 'My boy I love you. I died for you.'"<sup>14</sup>

This conversion experience, his first formative experience, changed Vazakas's perspective on the New Testament. Prior to his conversion, Scripture functioned as a useful tool for learning new languages, but now he felt compelled to share it with others. Vazakas recalled going "up and down" Thessalonica's portion of the Via Egnatia, the road that the Apostle Paul traveled on his second missionary journey (Acts 16-17).<sup>15</sup> He told business owners and anyone else who would listen about his salvation experience.

Within days, Vazakas had his second formative experience. Proprietors who heard Vazakas's conversion story shared the account with a monk named

Barnabas. Barnabas lived in Giannitsa, a city about thirty miles from Thessalonica. Intrigued by the teenager's testimony, Barnabas sent for Vazakas and invited him to Giannitsa to tell about his conversion. Vazakas readily accepted the invitation.<sup>16</sup>

When he arrived, Vazakas discovered that Barnabas had assembled a large crowd of apprentices and business owners. Vazakas related his conversion story, and when he finished, he prayed the words of Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (KJV).

According to Vazakas, as soon as he spoke those words, "the power fell like bolts of lightning." Barnabas began to "shout at the top of his lungs, 'Eureka! I have found it!'" Young apprentices started "to weep and cry and ask for help to get saved." Business owners who had not spoken to each other in years offered forgiveness to their enemies and "vowed loyalty to Christ." For his part, Vazakas "found himself unable to speak except as the Spirit gave utterance."<sup>17</sup>

The commotion became so loud that townspeople gathered to see what had transpired. Vazakas went to the balcony and addressed the crowd. The "words flowed like the water of a fountain" with "no effort or thought," Vazakas recalled. For "several hours" he expounded God's word and explained the "whole plan of salvation." The next day Barnabas took to the streets. The priest read from Acts 2:4 and announced, "This is what happened to us last night!"<sup>18</sup>

In the days following the events at Giannitsa, Vazakas began to suffer ridicule. The derision arose from "that group who called themselves evangelicals." The evangelicals in Thessalonica disparaged his conversion testimony, but after his Acts 2:4 experience in Giannitsa, they became his "avowed enemies." Amid "the bitter persecution" at the hand of evangelicals, Vazakas determined to travel to the United States in order to dis-



**The Vazakas family, circa 1908. Standing (l-r): George(?) Theodoroff (son of Eugenia), Eugenia Theodoroff (sister), and Alexander Vazakas. Sitting in front (l-r): Aristides (father) and Argyri (mother) Vazakas, and a sister (either Aphrodite or Chryssa).**

cover if "any such thing ever happened in this country!"<sup>19</sup>

### **Initial Journey to America: Early Education and "Faith Adventure"**

Traveling from Thessalonica through France and England, Vazakas eventually boarded a boat for North America.<sup>20</sup> He disembarked in Canada and took a train to Chicago, arriving around September 15, 1892. In Chicago, he sought out Paul Theodoroff, his future brother-in-law, who was enrolled at McCormick Theological Seminary.<sup>21</sup> Theodoroff and Vazakas's sister Eugenia married and became naturalized citizens in 1893.<sup>22</sup> At Theodoroff's urging, Vazakas decided to matriculate at Tabor College in Tabor, Iowa.

Graduates of Oberlin College founded Tabor College in 1853.<sup>23</sup> Vazakas spent three years at the coed school which was associated with the Congregational Church. He paid his tuition by teaching French and German classes,

and he covered his room and board expenses by sawing wood for the college furnace, pitching hay, milking cows, and gardening.<sup>24</sup> During the summers, he traveled to classmates's hometowns to preach and share experiences from his homeland.<sup>25</sup>

In his third year at Tabor, Vazakas underwent "a spiritual upheaval." Vazakas originally came to the United States with the goal of ascertaining if people in America had spiritual experiences like those he had at his conversion and with Barnabas in Giannitsa. However, he realized that his ambitions had changed. He now desired to "get all the degrees possible." Then "a crushing burden" came upon him. He sensed God summoning him to abandon his ambitions and go to "some obscure place" to help people find God. In his journal, Vazakas wrote, "*Nil nisi te, Domine*" (i.e., "Nothing but you, O Lord"). Nevertheless, he had a heavy heart when he considered leaving the place he had grown to love. Many years later, Vazakas declared, "I have not for-





**Alexander Vazakas (center) sitting outside with two priests from the Greek Orthodox Church during the time he worked with the YMCA in the early 1920s.**

gotten the pain of that surrender to go where? I did not know. To do what? I did not know. Like Paul's call to Macedonia, I heard, 'Come over and help us!'"<sup>26</sup>

So Vazakas left behind his ambitions of obtaining further degrees and his dreams of becoming a college teacher, and he departed for Greece. Before leaving, he preached in Topeka and Chicago and acquired enough funds to pay his fare to New York, where he attended a Christian and Missionary Alliance Convention conducted by A. B. Simpson. An "old lady" at the convention offered him sufficient money for his trip to Greece.<sup>27</sup>

Back in Greece, Vazakas devoted himself to pastoral and evangelistic work in Athens and Piraeus for two years.<sup>28</sup> He returned to the United States for a brief period and became a naturalized citizen on June 26, 1899, in Sidney, Iowa.<sup>29</sup> Then, he departed again for Europe, where he continued his ministry as an evangelist.

A trip to minister in Constantinople almost ended tragically. When Vazakas arrived in the city, Turkish officials discovered his passport and citizenship papers. Authorities had recently uncovered an Armenian plan to revolt. Evidently, the Armenians awaited a leader from

America to help initiate their rebellion. The Turks determined that Vazakas "was the big shot," and despite his protest, they took him into custody. According to Vazakas, they pledged to release him if he would surrender his American citizenship, but Vazakas refused. As a result, Vazakas recounted, "I was sentenced to die."

While in prison, he befriended an Armenian. A boy would occasionally come to provide food for Vazakas's friend and other Armenian prisoners. The Armenian friend instructed the boy to go straightaway to the American consul and tell them that an American had mistakenly been imprisoned. "Almost immediately," Vazakas remembered, "the consul arrived," and after forcing the Turks to admit their mistake, the consul secured Vazakas's release and helped him board a boat direct to Piraeus, where he continued his "faith adventure" for two more years.<sup>30</sup>

### **Back to America: Scholastic Endeavors and YMCA Work**

Vazakas felt God calling him to go back to the United States, so in 1902, he traveled to New York City. For one year,

Vazakas ministered to Greek immigrants through A. B. Simpson's Gospel Tabernacle. He provided the immigrants with lessons in the English language and gospel messages in the Greek language. The church basement served as Vazakas's living quarters.<sup>31</sup>

While in New York, Vazakas applied and received acceptance to New York University (NYU). After reviewing his Tabor coursework, NYU allowed him to continue his studies exactly where he had left off before starting his "faith adventure." He completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1904.<sup>32</sup> Vazakas then continued his education and graduated from Union Theological Seminary in 1906.<sup>33</sup>

Vazakas desired to go even further in his scholastic pursuits and enrolled in a graduate program at Columbia University. During these years, one of the more bizarre episodes in Vazakas's personal life unfolded. On March 6, 1908, Vazakas appeared before New York Supreme Court Justice Frederick E. Crane with a petition for a marriage annulment. Evidently, while ministering in Athens in 1898, Vazakas married Luise Zenia, a woman "twice his age." According to Vazakas's testimony, Zenia offered to teach him German. After a few lessons, Zenia hypnotized him, and five days later he realized he had married her. Vazakas attested that he escaped his new wife's influence by coming to the United States and that he had not seen her until she unexpectedly appeared in New York the prior year. She urged Vazakas to return to Greece with her, but when he declined, she departed alone.<sup>34</sup> In the end, the judge refused to decree an annulment due to insufficient evidence.<sup>35</sup>

Although he did not realize his hopes for receiving an annulment, Vazakas continued to seek God, and during that same year, he associated with a Christian group operating a Manhattan Bible training school. Attending one of the group's prayer meetings, Vazakas felt "transported to another realm." "Suddenly," narrated Vazakas, "my vocal chords were under the impulse of the blessed

Holy Spirit and words—wonderful words—poured from my lips. They were unknown and unintelligible to me, but I knew they were words which glorified God.” Others at the meeting told Vazakas that he had experienced “the baptism with the Holy Spirit.” Vazakas now had a name for the phenomenon that he had encountered more than a decade earlier with Barnabas the monk back in Giannitsa, Greece.<sup>36</sup>

Vazakas’s spiritual fervor did not detract from his academic studies, and he graduated with his Master of Arts in Philosophy from Columbia in 1911. His master’s thesis explored “the will to live.” He compared solutions offered by German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, and the Apostle Paul. He concluded that Paul offers the most helpful solution with his emphasis on “the denial of self and the embodiment of that which represents the highest type of love, the love of Christ.”<sup>37</sup>

During his time in New York, Vazakas established a language school to teach English to immigrants and other languages to English speakers. At the same time, his brother Alfred instituted a similar school in Chicago. Following the completion of his thesis, the brothers switched locations. Alfred came to New York, and Alexander headed to Chicago. In addition to running the school in Chicago, Vazakas established a printing press. He published language textbooks and printed Christian tracts in Greek.<sup>38</sup> At one point, Vazakas himself wrote and published a textbook called *Greek-English Grammar and Conversational Methods*.<sup>39</sup>

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Vazakas put his teaching and publishing endeavors on hold. He joined the YMCA and served as an international secretary for France. His charge included ministering to service personnel west of Paris. After the war, Vazakas became a secretary in Greece.<sup>40</sup>

One of Vazakas’s most memorable recollections as YMCA secretary in-

involved an exchange with Greek Orthodox Archbishop Chrysostomos of Smyrna. The Archbishop sought to minister to the Greek army during the Occupation of Smyrna between 1919 and 1922. In a meeting with the Archbishop, Vazakas suggested that they distribute Greek New Testaments to the soldiers. Vazakas recalled, “That really started something! ... The Greek Orthodox Bishop and the Greek Protestant preacher were working together.”<sup>41</sup>

As he helped with reconstruction efforts in Greece following the War, Vazakas suffered an injury that resulted in a punctured lung. Because of his rebuilding work and his wound, the Greek government purportedly knighted Vazakas, and he became “Sir Alexander.”<sup>42</sup> While recuperating from his injuries, Vazakas traveled to southern France, and in Nice, he met Ida Alleman. Vazakas married Alleman on March 26, 1925, in Paris before returning to the United States.<sup>43</sup> Vazakas arrived in New York on April 21, 1925.<sup>44</sup>

Vazakas made his way to Chicago, where his first order of business involved completing his doctoral studies. He submitted his dissertation entitled “The Greek of Acts 1:1-15:25” to the New Testament Department at the University of Chicago in September 1927.<sup>45</sup> The project combined his passion for languages and for Scripture. The faculty approved the dissertation, and Vazakas graduated with his Doctor of Philosophy degree the following spring. He had now obtained all the degrees that had filled his ambitions at Tabor. He thought he had surrendered all those aspirations when he followed God’s call to Macedonia, but “God gave me the desires of my heart,” observed Vazakas.<sup>46</sup>

### **Professor Vazakas: Teaching Around the Country**

With his dissertation completed, the fifty-four-year-old Vazakas accepted a position as Professor and Chair of the Department of Modern Languages at

Willamette University, a private liberal arts college in Salem, Oregon. On his way to commence his new teaching assignment, Vazakas passed through San Francisco and met “some Greeks who regularly in a private house had religious meetings intended for a deeper spiritual life.” Vazakas wrote, “Of course, such things appeal to me so strongly.”

Thus, during his years at Willamette, Vazakas spent several vacations “near these Greeks who were seeking a deeper spiritual life.” He prayed and studied the Bible with them, but he also mentored their leaders and encouraged them to pursue education. Vazakas referred to these San Francisco Greeks as “Primitives” because they incorporated “in the early thirties” as the “so-called ‘Primitive’ plus another word ‘Apostolic’ church.”<sup>47</sup> In fact, this association of Greeks became known as the Hellenic Protogonos Apostolic Ecclesia, or the Greek Original Apostolic Church.<sup>48</sup>

Once he arrived at Willamette, Vazakas began teaching in September 1927, and his wife Ida joined him in January 1928.<sup>49</sup> He taught an array of courses. For example, his schedule for the Fall 1941 semester included nine classes with sections in Latin, German, French, Spanish, Greek, and Comparative Literature.<sup>50</sup> He later added courses in Russian.<sup>51</sup> Just as he learned to read English by comparing it to his Greek New Testament, Vazakas continued to use the New Testament as a textbook for student translation exercises.<sup>52</sup>

Vazakas also focused on extracurricular and spiritual activities on campus. He sponsored the Spanish Club and the International Club, and he moderated debates. In addition, Mrs. Vazakas became active as a regular participant at social events and sponsor of the French Club. The college community sought out Vazakas for his opinion on European political developments due to his wide travels and knowledge of cultures and languages. Along with regularly speaking in chapel, Vazakas served as a faculty mentor for the Devotional Club, the Col-

lege Wesleyans, and Intervarsity Fellowship. Moreover, he preached frequently in numerous Salem, Oregon, churches, especially among the Methodists.<sup>53</sup>

His reputation as a scholar and student supporter helped Vazakas become a well-respected professor at Willamette. "In Dr. Vazakas," a school newspaper article began, "the student body has a genuine friend." The writer went on to describe Vazakas as "understanding, sympathetic, gentle, and very polite with a sense of humor, subtle and philosophical." The professor walked briskly across campus wearing a Panama hat and kindly greeting passersby. The write-up ended with the conclusion that "Dr. Vazakas may rightly be considered a perfect gentleman."<sup>54</sup>

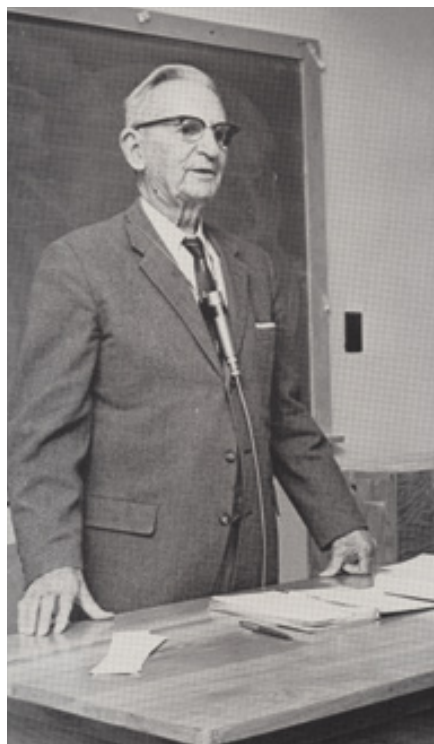
After seventeen years teaching in Oregon, Vazakas sensed God beckoning him to return to Greece. Just as he had helped after the First World War, Vazakas desired to assist the rebuilding efforts in the aftermath of World War II. Vazakas retired from Willamette at the end of the 1943-1944 academic year, and he set out for Greece. He preached there for one year, but when civil war erupted between the Greek government army and communist insurgents in 1946, Vazakas returned to the United States.<sup>55</sup>

He could not help but go back to teaching. In 1946, at age seventy-three, Vazakas joined the faculty of Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, as a Professor of Modern Languages.<sup>56</sup> An affiliate of the Swedish Lutheran Church, Bethany promoted a large missions department in which Vazakas took particular pride. He called their missions program "magnificent" and "world famous." In order to prepare missionaries, Vazakas added Italian to his teaching repertoire.<sup>57</sup>

Vazakas taught at Bethany for six years, and then, he departed Kansas to become dean of a small holiness institute in Intercession City, Florida. Opened in 1939 by the Household of Faith Mission, a Wesleyan Holiness denomination founded by Osie England, the school

went by various names including Intercession Bible Training School, Intercession City Biblical College, and Southern Wesleyan Biblical College.<sup>58</sup> Vazakas served the institute for one year, and during that time, his wife Ida died after an extended illness on October 26, 1953.<sup>59</sup>

Following his wife's death and his one-year stint in Florida, Vazakas relocated to Overland Park, Kansas. Beginning the fall semester of 1954, he held a wide-ranging post as Professor of Philosophy, Philology, Theology, and Languages at Kansas City College



**Dr. Alexander Vazakas addressing a philosophy class at Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri, circa 1963.**

and Bible School (KCCBS), an institution associated with the Church of God (Holiness). Vazakas expressed frustration with ministry students at KCCBS who would show up late or miss class altogether. They claimed that "doing the Lord's work" or "a burden of prayer" prevented them from coming to class. The seasoned professor called such excuses "flimsy." These preachers, Vazakas asserted, thought they would "shine

as a star" simply because they "stand thundering behind a pulpit," but without proper study, they would proclaim "empty words and perform empty deeds from an empty head."<sup>60</sup> As always, Vazakas emphasized both the head and the heart. Spiritual fervency and academic rigor could function together.

## **Later Years: Interactions with the AG**

While on his first Christmas break at KCCBS, Vazakas traveled to San Francisco, California, where he had spent many past vacations. Over the past year, he had regularly corresponded with Nelle Reeder, one of his former students. A 1942 graduate of Willamette, Nelle studied Spanish under Vazakas and worked as a high school teacher in Rainier, Oregon. Nelle met Vazakas in California, and they wed on December 23, 1954.

Rev. Nick A. Tounger performed the wedding ceremony at the Hellenic Protogonos Apostolic Ecclesia (the Original Greek Apostolic Church) in San Francisco. This church represented the outgrowth of the Greek home gatherings designed "to seek a deeper spiritual life" that Vazakas first encountered on his way to Willamette in the late 1920s. By this time, however, the network of churches to which Tounger's congregation belonged had received recognition as the Greek Branch of the AG by General Secretary J. Roswell Flower on August 14, 1953. Rev. Tounger held credentials with the AG, and his congregation identified as an AG church.<sup>61</sup> Thus, his nuptials to Nelle represent Vazakas's first verifiable encounter with the AG.<sup>62</sup>

After the wedding, Vazakas's bride, who was thirty-eight years younger than him, returned to Oregon to finish her teaching contract, and the groom resumed his instructional duties at KCCBS. The newlyweds reconnected in July of 1955 in Overland Park and embarked on a three-month honeymoon to Europe. Upon their return to Kansas, Vazakas served at KCCBS until May 1957.<sup>63</sup>



The summer gave rise to another interaction between Vazakas and the AG. The Greek Branch of the AG invited the professor to join them for their annual convention from June 30 to July 7, 1957, in San Jose, California. Vazakas served as the evening speaker for their gathering. Gust A. Harbas, Secretary of the Greek Branch, reported, "Because of his broad education and anointing of the Holy Spirit, the convention was greatly blessed."<sup>64</sup>

Vazakas brought his combination of scholarship and anointing to Evangel College (EC) in the fall of 1958 when, at age eighty-five, Vazakas came to the fledgling AG liberal arts school as Assistant Professor of German and Philosophy.<sup>65</sup> Dr. Thurman Vanzant, who served as head of the EC Department of Religion and Philosophy, remembers "excitement among the small, close-knit faculty and students that a new faculty member with a *Ph.D.* had been added."<sup>66</sup> At that time, EC, which opened in 1955, struggled "to attract persons with advanced degrees" to its faculty.<sup>67</sup>

Because of his advancing age, Vazakas did not participate in faculty meetings nor attend extracurricular activities. He focused on teaching.<sup>68</sup> He and his wife Nelle lived on the EC campus, and she assisted him in the classroom. Nelle had obtained her bachelor's degree from Willamette and a master's degree from Drury College, and she received certification to teach French, German, and Spanish in Oregon. As a result, Vazakas joked that EC benefitted from "two for the price of one."<sup>69</sup>

As in his prior appointments, the campus community sought Vazakas's wisdom regarding world events. In his later years, Vazakas enjoyed listening to Russian broadcasts on his shortwave radio. After hearing speeches from Soviet Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev, Vazakas used a student newspaper interview to encourage Evangelites to know other's "language, history, and anthropology" in order to "understand them." "The greatest risk in the world now is

with atomic armaments," Vazakas observed, "but what will save humanity is love, confidence, and faith."<sup>70</sup>

In his old age, Vazakas inspired younger faculty members. As a twenty-two year old, Dr. Stanley M. Burgess was just beginning his career when he became a Professor of History at EC. He quips that Vazakas turned "aging into saging" as he invested in future generations. Burgess retains fond memories of Vazakas as a "kind and gentle man" upon whom one could "deeply sense the Spirit of God." A "high caliber teacher," Vazakas combined academia and spirituality and did not sacrifice one for the other. Because of this, Burgess declares, "Students adored him."<sup>71</sup>

Among the EC students that Vazakas impacted was Dr. George O. Wood, the former general superintendent of the AG and 1962 EC graduate. Wood took Vazakas for several philosophy courses and two years of German. Fifty-five years later, Wood still quotes Vazakas in sermons and articles. One of Wood's "take-aways" from studying under Vazakas includes the differentiation between "'informational' or cognitive knowledge and 'relational' or affective knowledge."<sup>72</sup> Vazakas helped Wood to understand that "the doorway to the Kingdom is through relationship" and that "cognitive knowledge is worthless in the Christian realm without affective knowledge."<sup>73</sup>

When Vazakas died in his home on the EC campus at age ninety-one on February 25, 1965, he left behind a legacy that has important lessons for Pentecostals. First, the narrative of his conversion and Spirit baptism in the early 1890s demonstrates that, although the classical Pentecostal movement is rooted in the early-twentieth-century Topeka and Los Angeles revivals, the spiritual gifts and manifestations associated with Pentecostals, including speaking in tongues, never fully "lapsed" in Christian history.<sup>74</sup> Second, warranted or not, Pentecostalism has developed a reputation for espousing an "anti-intellectual ethos."<sup>75</sup> Vazakas stands as an early example of a

Pentecostal who welded the life of the mind with the life of the Spirit and challenged others to do the same.<sup>76</sup> For these reasons and more, Alexander Vazakas's story in all of its complexity deserves to be heard and retold among Pentecostals today. ✨

*Images provided courtesy of the Albright College Archives.*



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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Monastir is the present-day city of Bitola, the Republic of Macedonia.

<sup>2</sup>Dimitar Bechev, *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Macedonia* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2009), 26-27; Stevan K. Pavlowitch, *A History of the Balkans, 1804-1945* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 146.

<sup>3</sup>Dalibor Jovanovski, "Redrawing State Borders: Prosperity to Poverty in Ottoman and Post-Ottoman Bitola (Monastir)," in *Wealth in the Ottoman and Post Ottoman Balkans: A Socio-Economic History*, ed. Evguenia Davidova (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 202.

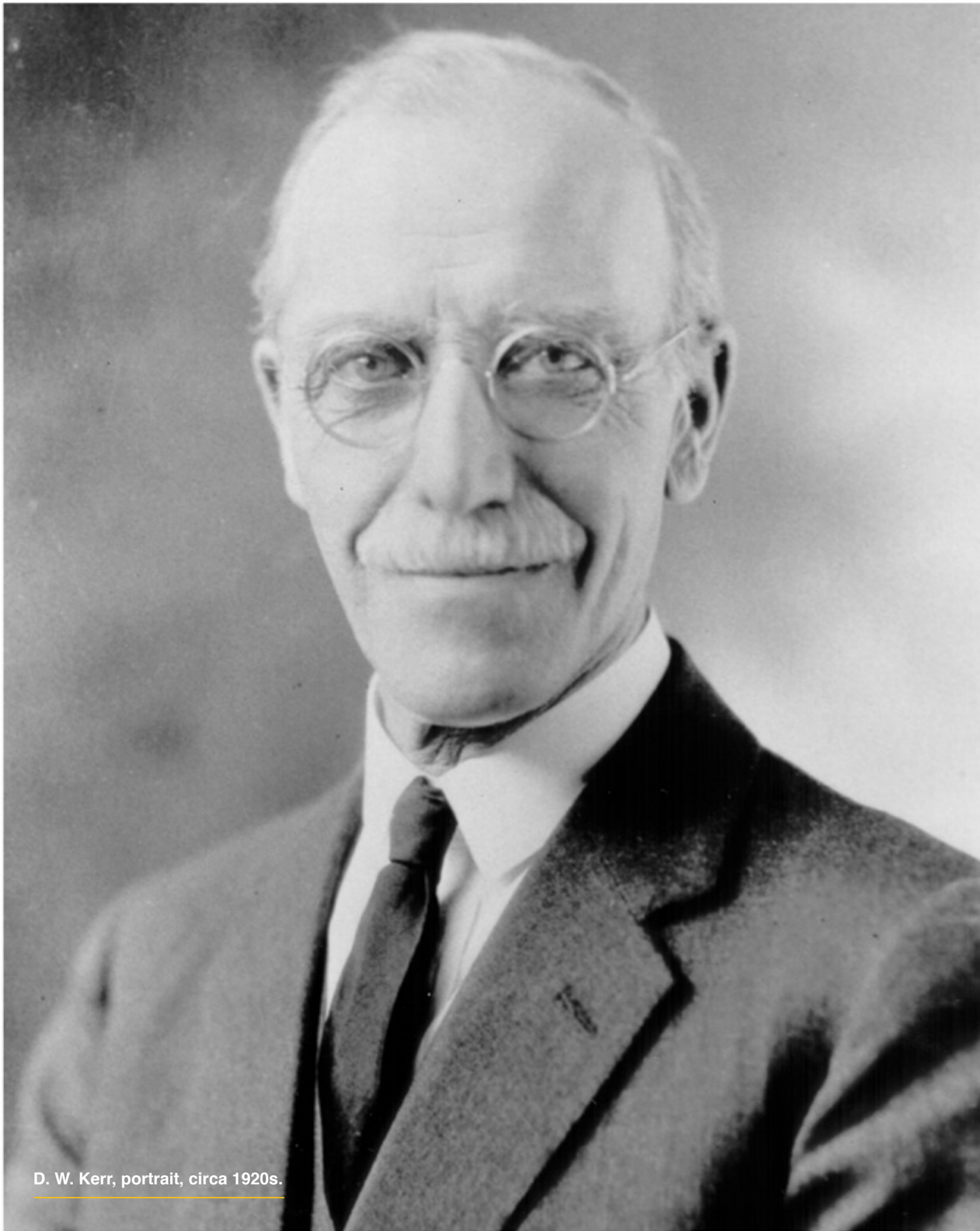
<sup>4</sup>In this article, I rely heavily upon Alexander A. Vazakas' unpublished autobiography, which is preserved at the Albright College archives in the personal papers of his nephew, Byron Vazakas, who was a nominee for the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry, 1947. Alexander Aristides Vazakas, planned autobiography, folder 32, Byron Vazakas Papers, Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania. Vazakas wrote, "The introduction of this marvelous book into my father's life through this Scottish gentleman was revolutionary."

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. Alexander remembers that his father would often say, "Just think! Other nations who have studied the translation of this book which was written originally in Greek have become great, prosperous, and wonderful, and we to whom these treasures of heaven were originally revealed know nothing of it."

<sup>6</sup>"The Pentecostal Professor from Thessalonica," *Pentecostal Evangel*, September 2, 1962, 6.

<sup>7</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 32.

*Continued on page 51*



D. W. Kerr, portrait, circa 1920s.

# Daniel Warren Kerr: Thinking, Speaking and Acting Scripturally

By P. Douglas Chapman

**D**aniel Warren Kerr (1856-1927) possessed an indomitable ministry spirit.<sup>1</sup> He was slight in stature and rather shy, a man of few words who seldom indulged in laughter, yet he stood as a giant among early Pentecostal leaders.<sup>2</sup> Kerr may be best-remembered for his pioneering leadership in the Assemblies of God, including his work in drafting the Statement of Fundamental Truths. However, in his lifetime, Pastor Kerr served the Lord within four evangelical denominations. He functioned as a pastor, teacher, church planter, educator, conference coordinator, musician, administrator, missionary ambassador, fund-raiser, theologian, and apologist. Despite these enormous contributions, very little has been written about the life and ministry of this humble man who did so much for the cause of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

## Ministry in the Evangelical Association

Daniel Warren Kerr was born May 13, 1856 in Potter Township, Centre County, Pennsylvania. He was the youngest of nine children born to Daniel (1802-1871) and Rebecca Rishell Kerr (1809-1865).<sup>4</sup> His family was devoted to the Lord, with a long history of ministry in the Evangelical Association, a small Wesleyan denomination with German-American roots, beginning in 1806.<sup>5</sup>

In 1874, Kerr graduated from the Cumberland Valley State Normal School.<sup>6</sup> By 1880, he was living and working on a farm in Florence, Illinois with his sister Susan Kerr Reifsnnyder and her family.<sup>7</sup> In March 1883, D. W. enrolled at North-Western College in Naperville, Illinois, where he studied for the ministry and met his future wife.<sup>8</sup>

Matilda “Mattie” Zeller was born in July 1860, in Union

Township, Hancock County, Ohio. She was the youngest of nine children born to Paul Frederick Zeller (1820-1903) and Christina Barbara Koener Zeller (1819-1896). Her family was also active in the Evangelical Association. For more than forty years, her father preached in German language congregations

throughout Ohio and Michigan.<sup>9</sup> D. W. and Mattie were married on February 4, 1886.<sup>10</sup> To this union were born two children, Jesse Zeller Kerr (1887-1970) and Christine Idele Kerr (1891-1975).

Kerr was licensed by the Illinois Conference of the Evangelical Association in 1886,

spending the next four years ministering in rural Illinois.<sup>11</sup> In the early 1890s the Evangelical Association experienced a denominational split over the office of the bishop. Rather than join sides in the dispute, the Kerrs withdrew from ministry in early 1891, departed Illinois and returned to Mt. Cory, Ohio, Mattie’s hometown.<sup>12</sup>

**Kerr may be best-remembered for his pioneering leadership in the Assemblies of God, including his work in drafting the Statement of Fundamental Truths.**

## Ministry in the Christian And Missionary Alliance

In 1894, the Kerrs began an eighteen-year partnership with A. B. Simpson and the Christian and Missionary Alliance (CMA) to promote the speedy evangelization of the world, where D. W. served as a pastor, evangelist, and conference speaker. Their association with the CMA proved to be a beneficial relationship for all parties—the Kerrs’ ministry flourished in ways previously unimaginable, and the scope of the CMA was greatly expanded. Formerly, the Kerrs’ ministry was confined largely to the western wilderness and central farmlands of Illinois; now they would be engaged in ministry across the industrial heartland of America. Formerly, they were employed



in circuit ministry among small isolated congregations; now they would minister before thousands. Formerly, they labored in relative obscurity; now they would serve side-by-side with national church leaders.

### ***Ministry at Beulah Park***

The focal point of the Kerrs' ministry within the CMA was Beulah Park, in Cleveland, Ohio, located on the shores of Lake Erie. For at least sixteen summers, "Father" and "Mother" Kerr were fixtures there and served in a variety of leadership roles. D. W. was a frequent speaker, Bible teacher, leader of prayer meetings, and a beloved member of the renowned "Ohio Quartette."<sup>13</sup> Mattie taught women's Bible studies, led worker's meetings, conducted testimony services, coordinated children's classes, ministered to young people and led prayer meetings.<sup>14</sup> And of course, each convention concluded with a great missionary service, in which thousands of dollars were raised for global missions.<sup>15</sup>

Another important component of

their Beulah Park ministry was the Summer Home and Bible School, which was conducted over a three-month period. "Designed as a retreat for rest, Christian fellowship, Bible study and spiritual help," the school offered three daily lectures on important Bible topics.<sup>16</sup> The Kerrs took an active role in this Bible school, teaching Bible classes and training in practical ministry.<sup>17</sup>

### ***Regional Ministry***

As a result of his ministry at Beulah Park, D. W. was invited to minister in some of the largest CMA conventions across the Northeast and Midwest. He was a featured speaker and frequently sang with the Ohio Quartette in New York City,<sup>18</sup> Pittsburgh,<sup>19</sup> Cleveland,<sup>20</sup> Columbus,<sup>21</sup> Indianapolis,<sup>22</sup> Chicago,<sup>23</sup> and the premier CMA convention conducted annually in Old Orchard, Maine.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, he routinely participated in convention tours throughout Pennsylvania,<sup>25</sup> Ohio,<sup>26</sup> Indiana,<sup>27</sup> and Kentucky.<sup>28</sup> As an example of his travel schedule, Kerr participated in "a series of twenty-

five official conventions" throughout Ohio in 1902.<sup>29</sup>

### ***The Missionary Church Association***

Though no longer affiliated with the Evangelical Association, Kerr retained a passion for ministry within the German-American community. He joined thirteen other men, all of German extraction, to establish The Missionary Church Association, in 1898.<sup>30</sup> Kerr had an active, fourteen-year association with the Missionary Church, speaking at their conventions and services, dedicating their churches, and joining them in ministry at Beulah Park.<sup>31</sup>

### ***Pastoral Ministry***

Amid all these activities, Kerr also served as a pastor of several CMA congregations and mission stations. From 1894 to 1899, he led the Alliance Mission in Findlay, Ohio and hosted several Alliance conferences.<sup>32</sup> The Kerrs then moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana to assume leadership of that mission.<sup>33</sup> They faith-



**Alliance leaders and workers at Old Orchard, Maine, August 1900. Members of the Ohio Quartette are seated together in the second row from the top, on the right (l-r): E. L. Bowyer, James M. Kirk, D. W. Kerr, and D. W. Myland.**

fully led Sunday services, Friday prayer meetings, hosted Alliance meetings, and participated in a county-wide Sunday School conference.<sup>34</sup>

In 1901, the Kerrs moved to Dayton, Ohio to pastor the Alliance Tabernacle.<sup>35</sup> “Brother and Sister Kerr have been hard at work,” their state superintendent wrote. “New people, hungry hearts from many of the churches here are fed. Drunkards and harlots have been brought into the kingdom.”<sup>36</sup> In the autumn of 1908, D. W. and Mattie relinquished their duties in Dayton and moved back to Findlay, Ohio.

### ***The Baptism in the Holy Spirit***

Reports of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the Apostolic Faith Mission on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, stirred the hearts of many within the CMA. The annual convention at Beulah Park in the summer of 1907 was a scene of great expectancy and anticipation. As the Kerrs were side-by-side in the prayer room, seeking more of God, they “came through to a beautiful baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking and singing in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”<sup>37</sup>

For the next five years, the Kerrs proclaimed the message of Holy Spirit baptism and empowerment in many cities, including Chicago, Cleveland and Toronto.<sup>38</sup> In early 1911, D. W. conducted an evangelistic tour of the West Coast. There he participated in Pentecostal ministry with William H. Durham, Frank Bartleman, George and Carrie Judd Montgomery, and George B. Studd.<sup>39</sup>

Embracing the Pentecostal experience led to a separation from the CMA.<sup>40</sup> “Some of our friends who had stood by us threatened to starve us out,” Mattie later wrote, “because we had dared to accept the Pentecostal Baptism ... we were soon dropped from the conventions, and were compelled to seek other places of ministry.”<sup>41</sup> However, their ministry was far from over. “Many larger places of ministry were opened to us,” Mattie wrote, “a larger ministry than we had



**The Ohio Quartette. (L-r): E. L. Bowyer, Prof. James M. Kirk, Rev. D. W. Myland, and Rev. D. W. Kerr, circa 1900.**

ever known before we had received this glorious Baptism.”<sup>42</sup> That ministry would be found within the Pentecostal community.

### **Ministry in the Assemblies of God**

The springboard for the Kerr’s “larger places of ministry” was found in Cleveland, Ohio, when the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church elected D. W. Kerr as its pastor in October 1911.<sup>43</sup> The congregation eagerly desired the work of the Holy Spirit, and many received the baptism, accompanied with speaking in other tongues. The following year, 100 voting members of the Cleveland congregation unanimously adopted a doctrinal position in favor of the Pentecostal experience as described in Acts 2:4 and changed their name to The Pentecostal Church of Cleveland. Pastor Kerr subsequently resigned from the CMA.<sup>44</sup>

When the Pentecostal delegates met in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and organized the General Council of the Assemblies of

God, the Kerrs did not attend.<sup>45</sup> Having experienced the pain of separation from two religious affiliations, Kerr questioned whether “spiritual liberty could be maintained with another group.”<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, the quality of his reputation was well-known within the newly-formed General Council, and Kerr was invited to join the Executive Presbytery, a position he held through 1925.<sup>47</sup>

### ***General Council Ministry***

As a member of the Executive Presbytery, Kerr served on several committees for the General Council: the Conference committee, November 1914<sup>48</sup>; the Resolutions committee, 1916, 1917, 1918 and 1920<sup>49</sup>; the Nomination committee, 1917 and 1919<sup>50</sup>; the Foreign Missions Committee, 1920 and 1921<sup>51</sup>; the Home Missions Committee, 1921<sup>52</sup>; a committee on business regulations in 1918<sup>53</sup>; and the Doctrinal Committee for the Gospel Publishing House in 1921.<sup>54</sup> It was also reported in 1923 that he “made a trip of 17,000 miles and had visited seven different District Councils” while





**General Presbytery standing on the steps of the Stone Church, Chicago, Illinois, September 1919. First row (l-r): J. Roswell Flower, S. A. Jamieson, E. N. Bell, J. W. Welch, J. T. Boddy, Stanley H. Frodsham, Ellis Banta. Second row (l-r): Frank Gray, J. R. Kline, John Goben, David McDowell, Robert A. Brown, Joseph Tunmore, F. A. Hale. Third row (l-r): O. P. Brann, E. R. Fitzgerald, E. N. Richey, John Coxe, D. W. Kerr, R. J. Craig, C. O. Benham, A. P. Collins, and T. K. Leonard.**

doing deputational work for the General Council at the request of the Chairman.<sup>55</sup>

Perhaps his most significant contribution came in 1916, when he served on the committee that drafted the Statement of Fundamental Truths.<sup>56</sup> Although the committee also included E. N. Bell, S. A. Jamieson, T. K. Leonard, and Stanley H. Frodsham, William Menzies indicates that Kerr was the primary drafter of this document: “Each member of the committee contributed to the eventual committee report, but the greatest contribution came from D. W. Kerr, pastor in Cleveland, Ohio.”<sup>57</sup> Kerr had spent much of the time during the previous year “poring over his Greek Testament” and had even wavered somewhat at one point on the question of the Oneness issue.

Menzies further expounds on Kerr’s

contribution to the Statement of Fundamental Truths:

This shy, somewhat retiring individual, hardly the image of a great contender for the faith, had already compiled a quantity of notes, and was well prepared for his assignment even before he arrived at the Council. Because of his careful preparation, the committee was enabled to furnish the Council with a statement of faith in a relatively brief span of time.<sup>58</sup>

During the 1918 Council, Kerr played a central role in defending the “distinctive testimony” that tongues operates as the “initial physical sign” of the “Bap-

tism in the Holy Ghost.”<sup>59</sup> And because of his important role in defining these doctrines, his other theological writings are helpful in interpreting the original version of the Fundamental Truths.<sup>60</sup>

### *National Speaker*

Numerous ministry opportunities abounded for D. W. Kerr within the Pentecostal community. Between 1914 and 1925, Kerr crisscrossed the continent, preaching at camp meetings, missionary conventions, district councils and revival services. He ministered in twelve states and four Canadian provinces, speaking in many of the most prominent Pentecostal congregations of his day.<sup>61</sup> At several General Councils, the national leadership looked to him for biblical wisdom and pastoral guid-



ance on a wide range of topics.<sup>62</sup>

### ***The Pentecostal Missionary Conferences***

In 1918, Pastor Kerr was elected chairman of the Second Annual World-Wide Missionary Conference, an interdenominational Pentecostal event that attracted broad support.<sup>63</sup> The *Latter Rain Evangel*, described Kerr's sterling credentials in the following manner:

The new chairman ... is a world-wide missionary from his innermost being to his very finger tips. The church of which he is pastor is without doubt the foremost church in Pentecost in sacrificing for missions. He touched the keynote of their success when he made this statement: "That church will become a missionary church whose pastor is a missionary, and I am a missionary at home, but I live my life in the world around, and am glad to devote all my energies in that direction."<sup>64</sup>

One of the conference attendees was equally enthusiastic over Kerr's selection, noting that he was pastor of the "Banner Missionary Church of the Pentecostal movement," a church where, as he himself says, they make "a business of missions."<sup>65</sup>

Over the next five years, Kerr would serve as the chairman of this annual Missionary Conference, introducing some innovations to the Pentecostal missionary movement.<sup>66</sup> He developed a missionary prayer calendar containing daily prayer suggestions, a daily list of countries to pray for, a complete list of Pentecostal missionaries, maps of the various continents, and a variety of Scriptures, poems, and pithy comments.<sup>67</sup> Drawing upon his experiences in the CMA, Kerr introduced the missionary pledge offering concept to Pentecostals in the early 1920s.<sup>68</sup> Conference participants were encouraged to complete a pledge card,

listing their future missionary offerings. In 1923, Kerr was appointed by the General Council's executive presbytery to the post of Missionary Field Secretary and assigned the task of conducting mis-

Lectures" at the Gospel School (Findlay, OH) and the Mount Tabor Bible Training School (Chicago, IL).<sup>66</sup> Late in life he had administrative duties at the Gospel School and Winnipeg's Central Ca-



**Students and faculty of Southern California Bible and Missionary Training School, Los Angeles, California, circa 1920. Identified are: D. W. Kerr (2nd row, 5th from left); Mattie Kerr (2nd row, 6th from left); Wesley Steelberg (back row, 2nd from left); Willard Peirce (back row, 6th from left); and Christine Kerr Peirce (back row, 7th from left).**

sonary conventions across the country.<sup>69</sup> According to E. N. Bell, "[Kerr] is at his best in a Missionary Convention, since his heart is in missions and since he is an experienced hand at holding such conventions."<sup>70</sup>

### ***The Bible Schools***

Training and equipping persons for ministry was a passion for D. W. Kerr.<sup>71</sup> He was a fixture at the Beulah Park Summer Home and Bible School.<sup>72</sup> For a time, he served the CMA as a member of the Committee on the Missionary Institute.<sup>73</sup> He taught short-term classes at the Bluffton Bible School (OH) and the Fort Wayne Bible School (IN).<sup>74</sup> Once he experienced his personal Pentecost, teaching opportunities opened for him at the Rochester Bible Training School (Rochester, NY) and the Beulah Heights Missionary Training School (North Bergen, NJ).<sup>75</sup> He presented "Special Bible

nadian Bible Institute.<sup>77</sup>

In 1919, he resigned the pastorate of The Pentecostal Church to teach full-time at the Pacific Bible and Missionary Training School in San Francisco.<sup>78</sup> In addition to his ministry among the thirty-five daily students and a much larger class of evening students,<sup>79</sup> Kerr also taught a Sunday afternoon Bible class at Glad Tidings Pentecostal Assembly in Oakland, where his son-in-law, Willard Peirce, was the pastor.<sup>80</sup>

Upon completion of the winter term in San Francisco, the Kerrs and Peirces moved to Los Angeles in May 1920 to assume leadership of the Southern California Bible and Missionary Training School where they served for the next two years.<sup>81</sup> About fifty students were enrolled that first year; they engaged in significant "practical work" by conducting services in churches, missions, hospitals and on street corners; distributing



**First faculty and student body of Central Bible Institute in front of Central Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri; 1923. Front (l-r): unidentified woman with a baby, unidentified, Miss Ruth Campbell, D. W. and Mattie Kerr, Willard Peirce, Mother Josephine Peirce, and Miss Helen Atkinson. Second row (l-r): three unidentified, Mrs. Arthur Graves, Hazel Corum (Bakewell), two unidentified, and Carolyn Larsen (Unruh). Third row (l-r): two unidentified, Billie Mahaney (Long), four unidentified, Dr. Lilian Yeomans, Adele Boatwright (Carmichael), and Mrs. Lily Babcock. Fourth row (l-r): four unidentified, Mary Watkins (Blanch), Myer Pearlman, and Richard Babcock. Fifth row (l-r): four unidentified and Finis Dake. Sixth row (l-r): unidentified, Arthur and Jenny Wilson. Seventh row (l-r): unidentified, Roy Smuland, and four unidentified. Eighth row (l-r): five unidentified.**

tracts; and engaging in soul winning.<sup>82</sup>

In 1922, Kerr helped to establish Central Bible Institute (CBI) in Springfield, Missouri. He wrote a series of articles published in the *Pentecostal Evangel* which carefully outlined the biblical justification for a centrally located Bible school.<sup>83</sup> “The purpose of Pentecostal Bible schools,” Kerr wrote, was “to cause people to get God’s viewpoint of things and to impart the same to others.”<sup>84</sup> Kerr served as CBI’s principal for its first two years.<sup>85</sup>

In the remaining four years of his life, despite declining health, Kerr did not slow down. He continued as a faculty member at CBI and resumed his work on the Missionary Committee.<sup>86</sup> He wrote a book and had many of his

sermons published.<sup>87</sup>

On April 2, 1927, the strain of his many labors overtook him and D. W. Kerr died at the age of 70 in Springfield, Missouri. His wife Mattie moved to Cleveland, Ohio, and continued to advance their life’s work—preaching<sup>88</sup> and writing,<sup>89</sup> until her death on February 2, 1946. Both are buried in the Riverside Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio, where their bodies await the resurrection of the saints.

From this distance, it is impossible to calculate the full influence and impact of the life and ministry of Daniel Warren Kerr and his beloved wife, Mattie Zeller Kerr. This much is known: The churches they faithfully shepherded in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio were soul-saving sta-

tions where hundreds found Christ and grew in faith. The missionary conferences which they planned, promoted, and preached, introduced thousands of people to the worldwide work of Christ and raised untold thousands of dollars for missionary evangelism at home and around the world. The Bible schools they established have trained tens of thousands of students for a life of service in the church and the world. And as primary drafter of the Statement of Fundamental Truths, D. W. Kerr helped to lay the theological foundation for the Assemblies of God. Brother Kerr once wrote that Spirit-filled Christians should “learn to think, speak, live, work and die scripturally.”<sup>90</sup> He was the living embodiment of this Pentecostal philosophy. ❖





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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Daniel W. Kerr was affectionately called D.W. or Brother Kerr by his ministerial associates. In the interest of conserving space, I shall from time to time use this appellation, with the same respect they accorded him.

<sup>2</sup>Carl Brumback, *Suddenly... From Heaven: A History of the Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1961): 205.

<sup>3</sup>Edith L. Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: A Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism, Volume 1 - To 1941* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1989): 204, 209, 235-236, 316-318; Brumback, 78, 80, 90, 94, 178, 194, 204-205, 220, 222-223, 234, 235; C. E. Jones, "Kerr, Daniel Warren," in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley M. Burgess and Eduard M. van der Maas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 820; Paul L. King, *Genuine Gold: The Cautiously Charismatic Story of the Early Christian and Missionary Alliance* (Tulsa, OK: Word & Spirit Press, 2006): 61, 68, 71, 90-92, 112-113, 129, 133, 157, 168-169, 272, 318, 327; Gary B. McGee, "This Gospel Shall be Preached": *A History and Theology of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions to 1959* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1986): 63-67, 118-121; William W. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve: The Story of the Assemblies of God* (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1971): 70, 108, 118-119, 129, 139-141, 173; Lewis Wilson, "The Kerr-Peirce Role in A/G Education," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 10:1 (Spring 1990): 6-8, 21-22.

<sup>4</sup>Early sources from the nineteenth century use the Germanic spelling of the surname, which is rendered as Kehr, rather than the Anglicized

spelling, which is Kerr. In the 1860 Census and on the tombstones for D. W. Kerr's parents, the spelling is Kerr. So far as I can ascertain, D.W. always spelled his surname Kerr.

<sup>5</sup>Sylvester C. Breyfogel, *Landmarks of the Evangelical Association* (Reading, PA: Eagle Book, 1888): 62-63, 67; Ammon Stapleton, *Annals of the Evangelical Association of North America and History of the United Evangelical Church* (Harrisburg, PA: Publishing House of the United Evangelical Church, 1900): 65, 71-72, 86, 90, 95, 244-245, 249-250, 252, 263, 277-278, 280, 286, 289-290, 301, 303. Kerr's father and two uncles, Jacob Kehr (1805-1861) and David Rishel (1817-1847), were ministers. Two of his mother's sisters were married to Evangelical ministers of prominence: Susan Rishell (1811-1900), to Bishop William W. Orwig (1810-1889) and Sarah Rishell (1816-1892), to John Kreamer (1817-1886).

<sup>6</sup>*Catalog, Cumberland Valley State Normal School, 1873-1874* (Philadelphia: Charles A. Dixon, 1873): 14.

<sup>7</sup>1880 United State Census, Florence, Stephenson County, Illinois (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880): 20.

<sup>8</sup>Kimberly Butler, Archivist, North Central College (Naperville, IL), E-mail to the author, June 17, 2014.

<sup>9</sup>"Obituaries," *Bluffton News*, November 14, 1896; "Union Township's Octogenarian Pioneer Passes Away," *Bluffton News*, September 17, 1903.

<sup>10</sup>"Boys and Girls Abroad," *North-Western College Chronicle*, February 1, 1886, 9; *Hancock County Marriage Records*, February 4, 1886, 98.

<sup>11</sup>John George Schwab, *History of the Illinois Conference of the Evangelical Church 1837-1937* (Harrisburg, PA: Evangelical Press, 1937): 55-56, 62, 244; "Boys and Girls Abroad," *North-Western College Chronicle*, 9; Stapleton, *Annals of the Evangelical Association*, 575; Mattie Z. Kerr, "Valleys and Mountain Peaks," *Pentecostal Evangel*, June 20, 1931, 1, 7.

<sup>12</sup>Schwab, 66.

<sup>13</sup>"Report of the Convention at Beulah Park, Ohio," *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* XVII:11 (September 11, 1896): 229; D. W. Kerr, "The Bible," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XIX:9 (August 25, 1897): 201; "Beulah Park Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXI:2 (July 13, 1898): 40; A. B. Simpson, "Beulah Park Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXIII:12 (August 9, 1899): 189-190; "The Ohio Convention," *Christian and*

*Missionary Alliance* XXXI:14 (September 5, 1903): 193; "Beulah Park Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXX:17 (July 25, 1908): 282; *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXXVI:23 (September 2, 1911): 360; "Report of the Beulah Park Convention," *Alliance Weekly* XXXVII:2 (October 14, 1911): 27; Donna Stratton, "Beulah Park Convention," *Alliance Weekly* XXXVIII:24 (September 14, 1912): 398; Carrie Judd Montgomery, *Under His Wings: The Story of My Life* (Oakland, California: Office of Triumphs of Faith, 1936), 187.

<sup>14</sup>"Report of the Beulah Park Convention," *Alliance Weekly*, 27; Montgomery, *Under His Wings*, 187; Carrie Judd Montgomery, "Days of Service and Blessing," *Triumphs of Faith* 30:9 (September 1910): 194; "Report of the Convention at Beulah Park, Ohio," *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly*, 229; "The Ohio Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, 193.

<sup>15</sup>A. B. Simpson, "The Beulah Park Convention," *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* XV:9 (August 28, 1895): 136; "The Ohio Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXI:7 (August 17, 1898): 156; "Beulah Park Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXIII:12 (August 19, 1899): 189-190; "The Ohio Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, 193.

<sup>16</sup>D. W. Myland, "Ohio Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXXI:3 (June 20, 1902): 39.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*; "Beulah Park," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXVIII:3 (July 20, 1907): 34; "Beulah Park Home and Bible School," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXXIV:10 (June 4, 1910): 464.

<sup>18</sup>"The New York Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XX:11 (March 16, 1898): 252; "Convention Reports from Nyack Heights," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXI:10 (September 7, 1898): 223, 225; *President's Report of the Christian & Missionary Alliance for the Year 1905-6* (New York: Christian and Missionary Alliance, 1906): 135.

<sup>19</sup>F. H. Senft, "Pennsylvania State Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XX:24 (June 16, 1898): 568; F. H. Senft, "Conventions in Western Pennsylvania," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXVIII:9 (March 1, 1902): 125.

<sup>20</sup>George B. Alldridge, "Cleveland Correspondence," *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* XII:23 (June 8, 1894): 630-631; "Conventions in Ohio,"



*Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXV:1 (January 6, 1906): 12.

<sup>21</sup>D. W. Myland, "Convention Notes," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XIX:22 (November 24, 1897): 161; I. H. Patterson, "Convention in Columbus," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXIV:13 (March 31, 1900): 208.

<sup>22</sup>G. N. Eldridge, "Indiana and Kentucky," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXIII:1 (June 3, 1899): 12; D. W. Kerr, "Report of The Pine Lake Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXIII:9 (July 29, 1899): 140-141; "Linn Grove," *Decatur (IN) Democrat* XLIII:27 (September 14, 1899): 8.

<sup>23</sup>"The Alliance Work in Chicago," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXI:20 (November 19, 1898): 468; "The Chicago Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXIII:9 (November 11, 1899): 380; "Chicago Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXX:16 (July 18, 1908): 267.

<sup>24</sup>A. B. Simpson, "Editorial Correspondence," *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* XIII:8 (August 24, 1894): 170; "Old Orchard," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXI:7 (August 17, 1898): 156.

<sup>25</sup>F. H. Senft, "Pennsylvania State Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XX:24 (June 16, 1898): 568; "Conventions in Pennsylvania," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXII:4 (March 1, 1899): 113; Senft, "Conventions in Western Pennsylvania," *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, 125.

<sup>26</sup>"At Home," *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* XVI:1 (January 3, 1896): 19; David Wesley Myland, "Convention Tour in Ohio" *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXXIV:5 (February 4, 1905): 77; W. F. Meminger, "Touring Ohio," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXX:7 (May 16, 1908): 117.

<sup>27</sup>Eldridge, "Indiana and Kentucky," *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, 12; Kerr, "Pine Lake Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, 140-141; "Linn Grove," *Decatur (IN) Democrat*, 8.

<sup>28</sup>Eldridge, "Indiana and Kentucky," *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, 12; William Davidson, "Work in Kentucky," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXVII:16 (October 19, 1901): 221.

<sup>29</sup>"Conventions in Ohio" *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXVIII:9 (March 1, 1902): 122.

<sup>30</sup>Walter H. Lugibihl and Jared F. Gerig, *The Missionary Church Association: Historical Account of Its Origin and Development* (Berne, IN: Economy Printing Concern, 1950): 29-30.

<sup>31</sup>Mrs. J. E. Ramseyer, "German Convention at Groveland, Ill," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXXI:19 (October 10, 1903); "Linn Grove," *Decatur (IN) Democrat*, 8; "Obituary," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXIV:22 (June 2, 1900): 370-371; Stratton, "Beulah Park Convention," *Alliance Weekly*, 398.

<sup>32</sup>Alldrige, "Cleveland Correspondence," *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly*, 630-631; *Fort Wayne News*, April 27, 1899, 3; "At Home," *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* XVI:1 (January 3, 1896): 19; D. W. Kerr, "Note From Ohio," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XIII:2 (January 1, 1899): 59.

<sup>33</sup>G. N. Eldridge, "Indiana and Kentucky," *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, 12.

<sup>34</sup>"Fine Program Prepared," *Fort Wayne Evening Sentinel*, December 23, 1899, 11; "Gospel Teachers," *Fort Wayne Evening Sentinel*, December 28, 1899, 2; "Convention Ends," *Fort Wayne Evening Sentinel*, December 30, 1899, 2; "Among the Churches," *Fort Wayne News*, July 7, 1900, 5.

<sup>35</sup>"Convention," *Hamilton Evening Democrat* 16:26 (January 20, 1902): 8; George A. Murray, "Let the People be Assembled," *Latter Rain Evangel* 1:2 (November 1908): 2.

<sup>36</sup>F. W. Meminger, "Late Field Superintendent Meminger's Report – Ohio," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXXI:4 (June 27, 1902): 53.

<sup>37</sup>Christine Kerr Peirce, as quoted in Brumback, *Suddenly ... From Heaven*, 79-80. Mattie Z. Kerr, "How I Received My Baptism," *Pentecostal Evangel*, September 5, 1931, 8-9.

<sup>38</sup>"Chicago Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXX:16 (July 18, 1908): 267; W. A. Cramer, "Cleveland Convention," *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXX:1 (April 4, 1908): 17; George A. Murray, "Toronto Convention," *Bridegroom's Messenger* 2:26 (November 15, 1908): 4.

<sup>39</sup>William H. Durham, "The Work of God in Los Angeles," *Pentecostal Testimony* 1:8 (1911): 11.

<sup>40</sup>By 1912, the CMA was in crisis over the gift of tongues. For three different perspectives on this crisis see A. W. Tozer, *Wingspread: A. B. Simpson: A Study in Spiritual Altitude* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1943), 133-134; Brumback, *Suddenly ... From Heaven*, 88-97; Charles W. Neinkirchen, *A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992): 81-96.

<sup>41</sup>Kerr, "How I Received My Baptism," *Pentecostal Evangel*, 8-9. The Kerrs' last known participation in a CMA event was the

1912 convention at Beulah Park.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup>"Who and Where," *Alliance Weekly* XXXVII:6 (November 11, 1911): 94. Don and Christine Groves, *Seeds of Faith* (Lyndhurst, OH: First Assembly of God, 2011): 7-8.

<sup>44</sup>Groves, 7-8.

<sup>45</sup>Glenn W. Gohr, "Who's Who at Hot Springs," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 34 (2014): 29.

<sup>46</sup>Wilson, "The Kerr-Peirce Role in A/G Education," *Assemblies of God Heritage*, 6-8, 21-22.

<sup>47</sup>*General Council Minutes*, April 1914, 5. Although Kerr's ministerial file lists his date of joining the AG as November 25, 1914, he is included on the ministerial list published just after the April 1914 founding convention and published before the November 1914 General Council.

<sup>48</sup>*General Council Minutes*, November 1914, 9.

<sup>49</sup>*General Council Minutes*, 1916, 4; *General Council Minutes*, 1917, 6; *General Council Minutes*, 1918, 2; *General Council Minutes*, 1920, 35.

<sup>50</sup>*General Council Minutes*, 1917, 10; *General Council Minutes*, 1919, 15.

<sup>51</sup>*General Council Minutes*, 1920, 35; *General Council Minutes*, 1921, 60.

<sup>52</sup>*General Council Minutes*, 1920, 49.

<sup>53</sup>*General Council Minutes*, 1918, 9.

<sup>54</sup>*General Council Minutes*, 1921, 58.

<sup>55</sup>*General Council Minutes*, 1923, 61.

<sup>56</sup>Menzies, 118-120; Glenn W. Gohr, "The Historical Development of the Statement of Fundamental Truths," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 32 (2012): 62-63; *General Council Minutes*, 1916, 4; J. Roswell Flower, "Historic Record of the Growth of the Assemblies of God" [notes for Church Orientation class at Central Bible College], 1950, 7; Gary B. McGee, "Historical Background" in *Systematic Theology*, rev. ed., ed. Stanley M. Horton (Springfield, MO: Logion Press, 2007), 21; L. William Oliverio, *Theological Hermeneutics in the Classical Pentecostal Tradition: A Typological Account* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 89.

<sup>57</sup>Menzies, 119.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup>Brumback, *Suddenly ... From Heaven*, 222-223; Oliverio, 89.; Glen Menzies, "Tongues as the 'Initial Physical Sign' of Spirit Baptism in the Thought of D. W. Kerr," *PNEUMA* 20:2 (Fall 1998): 175-189.

<sup>60</sup>Glen Menzies and Gordon L. Anderson, "D.

W. Kerr and Eschatological Diversity in the Assemblies of God,” *Paraclete* 27:1 (Winter 1993): 8-16.

<sup>61</sup>For specific documentation of all his travels, see my unabridged paper, “Daniel Warren Kerr: A World-Wide Missionary,” presented at the 44th Annual Meeting of the Society for Pentecostal Studies, March 13, 2015, 16-18, 23-24.

<sup>62</sup>*General Council Minutes*, 1916, 3; *General Council Minutes*, 1917, 5; *General Council Minutes*, 1918, 8, 12, 13; *General Council Minutes*, 1919, 14, 16; *General Council Minutes*, 1925, 62.

<sup>63</sup>This Missionary Conference was independent of, but collaborated with, the General Council of the Assemblies of God. In the 1920s it was absorbed into the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

<sup>64</sup>Reiff, “Business Sessions of the Conference,” *Latter Rain Evangel* 10:9 (June 1918): 18.

<sup>65</sup>Stanley H. Frodsham, “The World Wide Missionary Conference,” *Christian Evangel*, June 1, 1918, 2-3.

<sup>66</sup>Zella H. Reynolds, “The Third Missionary Conference,” *Christian Evangel*, November 16, 1918, 2; Stanley H. Frodsham, “The Fourth Missionary Council” *Pentecostal Evangel*, October 18, 1919, 1, 4; Stanley H. Frodsham, “The Recent Great Convention in Springfield, Mo.,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, October 16, 1920, 1, 3-6; “Good Things Said at The Recent Council,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, October 15, 1921, 2; “The Missionary Conference in Springfield, Mo.,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, May 5, 1923, 13.

<sup>67</sup>Stanley H. Frodsham, “Missionary Prayer Calendar,” *Christian Evangel*, June 28, 1919), 4; “Missionary Prayer Calendars,” *Christian Evangel*, August 9, 1919, 4.

<sup>68</sup>Frodsham, “The Recent Great Convention in Springfield, Mo.,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, 5-6; Stanley H. Frodsham, “More About the Tenth General Council,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, October 13, 1923, 3, 8.

<sup>69</sup>“Missionary and Bible Conventions,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, March 17, 1923, 12.

<sup>70</sup>E. N. Bell, “Springfield’s Good Convention,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, June 6, 1923, 4.

<sup>71</sup>For greater details of Kerr’s academic influence see: Wilson, “The Kerr-Peirce Role in A/G Education,” *Assemblies of God Heritage*, 6-8, 21-22.

<sup>72</sup>“The Ohio Convention,” *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, 193; “Beulah Park Convention,” *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, 282; “Beulah Park Convention,”

*Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXXII:25 (July 31, 1909): 153; “Beulah Park Home and Bible School,” *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, 464.

<sup>73</sup>*President’s Report of the Christian & Missionary Alliance for the Year 1905-6*, 139-140.

<sup>74</sup>“Obituary,” *Christian and Missionary Alliance*, 370-371; “The Bible Training School at Fort Wayne, Ind.,” *Christian and Missionary Alliance* XXIV:16 (April 22, 1905): 253; “The Special Church Notices,” *Fort Wayne News*, September 16, 1905, 3.

<sup>75</sup>Marion Meloon, *Ivan Spencer: Willow in the Wind* (Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1974): 22-24; Lillian M. Jewett, “Beulah Heights Convention,” *Christian Evangel*, June 15, 1918, 12.

<sup>76</sup>“The Gospel School,” *Christian Evangel*, September 19, 1914, 4; “Mount Tabor Bible Training School,” *Weekly Evangel*, November 17, 1917, 16.

<sup>77</sup>*Minutes of the Central District Council* [4th] (Dayton, Ohio, May 8-10, 1923), 4; Advertisement, *Manitoba Free Press*, Winnipeg, October 17, 1925, 27.

<sup>78</sup>“Pacific Pentecostal Bible School,” *Christian Evangel*, September 6, 1919, 8; D. W. Kerr, “Report From The Bible School Department,” *Triumphs of Faith* 39:12 (December 1919): 284-285. This school became known as Glad Tidings Bible Institute and later Bethany University.

<sup>79</sup>Ira F. Surface, “Glad Tidings Bible Training School,” *Triumphs of Faith* 40:8 (August 1920): 188.

<sup>80</sup>“Pentecostal,” *Oakland (CA) Tribune* LXXXI:7 (February 21, 1920): 6; “Pentecostal,” *Oakland (CA) Tribune*, LXXXI:21 (March 6, 1920): 4.

<sup>81</sup>“Announcement,” *Triumphs of Faith* 40:4 (April 1920): 96; W. C. Peirce, “Announcement,” *Triumphs of Faith* 40:8 (August 1920): 192. This school is now Vanguard University of Southern California, located in Costa Mesa.

<sup>82</sup>“The Southern California Bible School,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, April 30, 1921, 11; “The Southern California Bible School of Los Angeles,” *Triumphs of Faith* 41:5 (May 1921): 119.

<sup>83</sup>D. W. Kerr, “Bible Schools,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, April 1, 1922, 4; D. W. Kerr, “Bible Schools: Bible Schools are Necessary,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, April 15, 1922, 4; D. W. Kerr. “Heart Talks on Bible Schools: Present Day Bible Schools Based on the Bible,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, April 29, 1922,

5; D. W. Kerr, “Heart Talks on Bible Schools: The Purpose of Bible Schools,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, May 27, 1922, 5.

<sup>84</sup>Kerr, “Heart Talks on Bible Schools: The Purpose of Bible Schools,” 5.

<sup>85</sup>E. N. Bell, “Council Bible School Now Certain,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, June 10, 1922, 3; E. N. Bell, “Our Pentecostal Bible School,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, July 8, 1922, 4.

<sup>86</sup>“A Year of Blessed Progress,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, November 13, 1926, 5.

<sup>87</sup>D. W. Kerr, *Waters in the Desert*, (Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1925); Advertisement, *Pentecostal Evangel*, September 26, 1925, 16; D. W. Kerr, “Rivers Of Living Water,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, June 23, 1923, 14; D. W. Kerr, “Our Family Physician,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, October 20, 1923, 4-5; D. W. Kerr, “A Thanksgiving Night Message,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, November 24, 1923, 3; D. W. Kerr, “The Relation of the Holy Spirit to Christ and His People,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, June 28, 1924, 2-3, 5; D. W. Kerr “This He Said To Prove Him,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, October 18, 1924, 4; D. W. Kerr “Present Triumphs And Future Prospects,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, November 1, 1924, 3, 5; D. W. Kerr, “Scriptural Holiness,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, December 13, 1924, 5; D. W. Kerr, “The Mind of Christ,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, January 17, 1925, 2-3; D. W. Kerr, “The Practice of The Presence of God,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, February 14, 1925, 2-3; D. W. Kerr, “Meekness and Lowliness in Practical Life,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, May 23, 1925, 2-3; D. W. Kerr, “The Evangelization of The World,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, October 17, 1925, 4-5.

<sup>88</sup>Frank L. Peddie, “Thriving Mission,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, June 23, 1928, 13; “Camp Meeting Opens,” *Findlay Morning Republican* XLII:225 (July 23, 1928): 2; “Revival at the Capital City,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, April 27, 1929, 12; William E. Booth-Clibborn, “Decisions for Christ Reach the Thousand Mark,” *Latter Rain Evangel* 22:6 (March 1930): 17-18; “Forthcoming Meetings,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, March 22, 1930, 13; Martha M. Wuokila, “Detroit, Mich.,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, January 6, 1934, 13.

<sup>89</sup>Kerr, “Valleys and Mountain Peaks,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, 1, 7; Mattie Z. Kerr, “Proving God as Healer,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, July 18, 1931, 6-7; Kerr, “How I Received My Baptism,” *Pentecostal Evangel*, 8-9.

<sup>90</sup>Kerr, “Heart Talks on Bible Schools: The Purpose of Bible Schools,” 5.



...were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Acts 2:4

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# Fortieth Anniversary of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center

By Wayne E. Warner and Darrin J. Rodgers

**T**he Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center (FPHC) plays a unique role in the Assemblies of God (AG) and the broader Pentecostal movement. Over the past forty years, the FPHC has developed into the largest Pentecostal archives in the world. Located in the Assemblies of God national office in Springfield, Missouri, the FPHC has become an important hub for Pentecostal history and research, preserving and promoting Pentecostal testimonies and identity so that future generations can know the works of God.

The Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center originated as a vision in the late 1960s in the mind of a young Assemblies of God scholar, William W. Menzies, who was writing his dissertation on the history of the Assemblies of God. Many first-generation Pentecostals were still alive, yet materials documenting Pentecostal history were difficult to find. Menzies realized that the heritage and testimony of Pentecostals would be lost, unless intentional steps were taken to create an archives.

Finally, in 1977, after years of discussion in committees, the Assemblies of God Archives was established. From small beginnings, great things developed. *Assemblies of God Heritage* magazine was founded in 1981, the name of the archives was changed to Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center in 1997, its museum opened in 1999, and its online research center went live in 2000.

Today, the work of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center is more necessary than ever. With each passing year, Pentecostals become further removed from the important themes, people, and revivals that shaped the movement. The FPHC preserves and promotes these voices from history, which hopefully will inspire new generations to embrace the Pentecostal testimony as their own.

## Vision for an Archives

Planning for an Assemblies of God archives began in earnest during the early 1970s. Those involved in the initial discussions probably could not foresee the expansive Center that exists today. But it was a beginning. Much of the credit can be given to the late William W. Menzies, who served at the time as a professor at Central Bible College.

In 1968, when the Assemblies of God was six years away from its sixtieth anniversary, the Executive Presbytery commissioned Menzies to write a new denominational history. The executives knew Menzies and respected the fact that he had grown up in a pastor's home, was a graduate of Central Bible College and Wheaton College, and had just completed a doctorate in History at the University of Iowa.<sup>1</sup> Menzies' new book, *Anointed to Serve*,<sup>2</sup> was introduced at the 1971 General Council in Kansas City. For many years colleges used it as the standard history of the AG.

The need for an archives surfaced during Menzies' research. He experienced difficulty sorting through various file cabinets in the *Pentecostal Evangel* office, the Office of Information, and Central Bible College. He was being more than charitable when he wrote that he had spent two months in the Assemblies of God "Archives"—ten years before there was an official archives.<sup>3</sup>

While archival resources were lacking, Menzies was able to interview first- and second-generation pioneers such as J. Roswell Flower, Ralph Riggs, E. S. Williams, Noel Perkin, Gayle Lewis, James Hamill, Bert Webb, Frank Boyd, Aaron A. Wilson, and others. Menzies wrote that their "vantage point scans the Pentecostal Movement from its beginnings."<sup>4</sup>

Menzies' difficulty finding historical materials prompted

**Over the past forty years, the FPHC has developed into the largest Pentecostal archives in the world.**

him to push for the establishment of an official archives—not only for the preservation of important documents, but also to provide access to future researchers.

It was another three years, January 1974, before the Archives Study Committee was formed to study the need and make a report. General Superintendent Thomas F. Zimmerman appointed National Director of Publications Lee Shultz to serve as chairman. Two other committee members appointed were General Secretary Bartlett Peterson and Menzies. Assemblies of God Research Secretary Grace Carroll was named as a resource person.<sup>5</sup>

Menzies visited or contacted 13 other church groups, seeking information about their archives and how they were organized. When the committee presented its report to the Board of Administration in March 1974, it opened with an arresting statement: “With each passing year of time it becomes more apparent that we must preserve the story of the Pentecostal revival out of which the Assemblies of God movement was born.”<sup>6</sup> The committee’s next report cited the importance of acting as soon as possible: “We are at a point in time when certain information and materials are still available. There is however, an urgency in obtaining materials before they slip away from us.”<sup>7</sup>

The Board of Administration accepted the report and recommended it to the Executive Presbytery, June 12, 1975, which gave the proposal a green light to establish the Assemblies of God Archives for the then 61-year-old denomination.<sup>8</sup>

The archives was not to become a collection of miscellaneous old things locked in a damp cellar, but it was to become an active facility as evidenced by the mission: “1) Insuring that records of the Assemblies of God having enduring value are collected and preserved. 2) Providing historical documentation for evaluation of the continuity of purpose of the Assemblies of God. 3) Making

archival records accessible to the public for historical research, analysis, and other approved uses.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Debut of the Assemblies of God Archives**

Finally, in 1977, the Assemblies of God Archives opened its doors. The archives initially was placed under the administration of the Assemblies of God Graduate School (AGGS), which had opened just four years earlier and was located on the fifth and sixth floors of the Gospel Publishing House Distribution Center.

It seemed logical to join the archives with the new school. Having a research facility would help AGGS in its application for accreditation, and students would benefit by having easy access to the archives. Ownership of the materials in the archives, however, would remain with the denomination.<sup>10</sup>

The Assemblies of God Archives was located adjacent to the AGGS library on

sions service in South Africa.

An Archives Advisory Committee (later Advisory Board) was created and included Harris Jansen, director; Pam Eastlake, archives assistant; Delmer Guynes, AGGS executive vice president; J. Calvin Holsinger, Evangel College professor; Gerard Flokstra, Central Bible College librarian; Verna Flower, headquarters research secretary; and Julieen Turnage, director of the Office of Information (later called Office of Public Relations).

New space for the archives, including a small walk-in vault, was constructed in early 1978. A policy manual to steer the new ship on its course was also created. Minutes of the May 9, 1978 Archives Study Committee revealed a broadening vision for the archives. Assemblies of God materials would always be the core collection, but the committee then made up of Guynes, Jansen, Eastlake, and Holsinger began thinking beyond the denomination and encouraged collecting



**Assemblies of God Archives, May 1978. Emily Johns (seated at desk). Standing (l-r): Delmer Guynes (AGGS executive vice-president), Thomas F. Zimmerman (general superintendent), Harris Jansen (archives director). Pamela Eastlake (assistant archivist) is seated at a microfiche reader.**

the fifth floor. The archives would remain in this location until 1997. Harris Jansen, as director of Research Services for AGGS, had oversight of the Cordas C. Burnett Library and the archives.<sup>11</sup>

Pam Eastlake, who was reared in nearby Central Assembly and had training and experience in the archival field, was hired as archives assistant (title later changed to archivist). Emily Johns served as a part-time secretary, a position she held until she and her husband Greg began preparations for World Mis-

materials from the broader Pentecostal field.<sup>12</sup> They were thinking outside the box and helped lay the foundation for what would become the largest Pentecostal archives in the world.

The school administration kept a close watch over the archives, ensuring that expenses remained under its annual \$35,000 budget.<sup>13</sup>

Eastlake was assigned the major task of surveying and gathering documents from the Headquarters departments and organizing nearly 65 years of

the Assemblies of God story. With her archival training and denominational background, she became the key person who developed the methods of organizing materials that would guide future archives employees and researchers.

## **The 1980s: Significant Expansion**

When Jansen transferred from the archives to direct AGGS extension education in 1979, Eastlake assumed responsibilities of the day-to-day operations of the archives until the summer of 1980, when the Headquarters Board of Administration invited Wayne Warner to become the first full-time director. Warner left his book editing job at Gospel Publishing House and moved from the fourth floor to the director's office on the fifth floor. At the time, Warner and Eastlake were the only two staff members of the archives.

The year 1981 proved eventful for the archives, which included an administration change. The Board of Administration moved the archives from AGGS to the oversight of the denomination's General Secretary, Joseph Flower. The archives remained on the fifth floor—but began answering to the general secretary. This change facilitated a closer working relationship between the archives and the various departments within the denomination. Among the positive changes were better funding, newer technology, and more generous travel and personnel budgets.

The archives quickly became a destination for the small but growing number of Pentecostal historians. Edith Blumhofer, Gary McGee, Stanley Burgess, Grant Wacker, and Vinson Synan were among the earliest Pentecostal scholars to spend time in the archives. Since then, countless students, church leaders, and researchers have utilized the resources of the FPHC.

Joseph Flower was a major contributor to the success of the archives. As general secretary, he served in the same role as his father, J. Roswell Flower.

Having witnessed the early Pentecostal revivals and the development of the Assemblies of God, he had a deep sense of the importance of preserving historical materials for future generations. He realized that history and identity are intertwined. Flower championed the cause of history, raising money and the stature of the archives. In 1997, four years after Flower's 1993 retirement, the archives was renamed Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, in honor of the Flower family. After the museum was dedicated in 1999, he loved to walk through the exhibits, view the videos, and reminisce about many pioneers he knew as a child and in his early ministry.

A second important event for the archives happened in 1981. At the General Council held in St. Louis, General Superintendent Thomas F. Zimmerman introduced attendees to the new quarterly *Assemblies of God Heritage*. It was only a four-page duotone periodical, but it caught on. The number of pages gradually increased, and color was added in 1999. Former country singer and evangelist T. Texas Tyler graced the first all-color cover. More than one reader said they put everything else aside when *Heritage* arrived in their mailboxes.

Wayne Warner also launched an oral history project in 1981. He realized that most people will not write their memoirs but, if given a chance, they will consent to sit down to record an interview. Warner drew inspiration from AGGS professor Del Tarr, who recorded video interviews of Pentecostal pioneers as part of his communications class. Warner sat down with numerous pioneers and recorded over 700 hours of oral history interviews. Interviewees included Alice Reynolds Flower, Bert Webb, Ralph Harris, Frank Boyd, Irene Pearlman, Josephine Williams, Everett Phillips, Harriet Schoonmaker Bryant, and numerous others. Most of these people are now with the Lord. These priceless interviews are preserved in the archives vault and are available on DVD.

Most of Warner's interviews were

audio rather than video, and many were conducted on the road. Warner interviewed men and women in nursing homes, auditoriums, apartments, churches, hotels, in a Missouri home with 75 chiming clocks, and once while sitting on the front porch of a Charleston, West Virginia, house while the interviewee's construction crew was building a house next door.

Early in his career at the archives, Warner added two staff archivists who proved to be faithful, invaluable members of the team. Joyce Lee began work at the archives in 1986, and Glenn Gohr began in 1987. Both were previously on staff at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary (AGTS, formerly Assemblies of God Graduate School) library. Lee and Gohr became standard fixtures at the archives, developing in-depth knowledge of the archives and of AG history. Today, over 30 years later, they continue to work at the FPHC.

## **The 1990s: Modernizing the Archives**

An important period of progress at the FPHC came when George O. Wood was elected as General Secretary in 1993. Dr. Wood, the son of missionaries, loves Pentecostal history and brought new ideas for moving the Center to a more adequate location, raising funds for the new facility, and replacing microfilming with digitization. The FPHC owes much to Dr. Wood for his active leadership to modernize the archives.

One of the first new projects taken on by archives staff under Wood's oversight was production of the biennial *In Memoriam* booklet, which includes the names and photos of Assemblies of God ministers who died during the previous two years. The booklets, which are distributed to surviving family members and at General Council meetings, honor those who devoted their lives to building the Church through the Assemblies of God. The FPHC took over publication of the booklets in 1995. In prior editions, the booklets included names without pho-



## Meet the Director

### *From Law to Grace*

When Darrin Rodgers became director in 2005, he was no stranger to the Heritage Center. While a student at AGTS (1996-1998), he spent hundreds of hours researching Pentecostal history in the FPHC. He went on to earn his juris doctorate from the University of North Dakota School of Law and worked in law for the State of North Dakota. However, he continued to research and write about his true passion—Pentecostal history.

In 2004, he accepted a position at Fuller Theological Seminary, where he worked at the McAlister Library and the David du Plessis Archives, a large Pentecostal research collection. He quips that he “moved from law to grace.” In 2005, Assemblies of God leaders asked Rodgers to move back to Springfield and lead the Heritage Center.

### *Building Bridges*

While driving with his possessions from California to Missouri, Rodgers relates that he asked God if there was a special purpose for him to fulfill at the Heritage Center. “Somewhere in New Mexico,” he recalled, “I sensed that God wanted me to do two things: first, encourage Pentecostals to rediscover the worldview that motivated the Movement’s pioneers; and second, build bridges.” “As I prayed and traveled the next couple of days, I sensed that these bridges should be built—not just across the generations—but also across the denominational, ethnic, social, and linguistic divides within the Pentecostal movement.”

The impression of the importance of building bridges stuck, and Rodgers has focused his leadership at the Heritage Center on preserving and sharing the Pentecostal testimony from across the various divides within the Pentecostal movement.

tos. It is a large task—FPHC staff members contact surviving relatives of the approximately 800 deceased ministers each biennium in an effort to obtain photographs and other historical materials.<sup>14</sup>

The most visible sign of change and progress for the archives came in the late 1990s. AGTS moved in 1997 to its new building on the Evangel University campus, which left the archives alone on the fifth floor of the Distribution Center. Because World Missions was going to take over the entire fifth and sixth floors, the archives would have to move.

With executive approval, the archives began looking for a new location. Suggestions included moving into the former headquarters and printing building at 434 West Pacific Street, about three blocks away. It seemed like a great concept, as figures like E.N. Bell, John Welch, Stanley Frodsham, and J. Roswell Flower had labored in that historic building. But the building was dilapidated and disconnected from the headquarters complex.

Other property was available but nothing seemed to fit the special needs of an archives. In the meantime, approval was given to build in the GPH printing area an 800-square-foot climate-controlled vault with compact moveable shelves. The vault was large and beautiful compared to the small, overflowing vault in the previous location.

However, suitable space for the archives office and research room could not be located, to the disappointment of archives staff. The archives moved to temporary space on the second floor of the administration building. During this time, Brett Pavia was hired to fill a new position, Coordinator of Special Projects. Pavia was responsible for a massive digital scanning project, the launch of a new website in 2000, designing each issue of *Heritage*, and other computer-related assignments.

A new day dawned when Assistant General Superintendent Charles Crabtree surprised the archives committee with exciting news—the archives was

going to be relocated to a 5,000-square-foot area being vacated by World Missions on the second floor of the administration building, near the main entrance.

Archives staff began brainstorming and doing research about how they could utilize the space. They settled upon a plan to create offices, a research room, an audiovisual room, and an interactive 3,000-square-foot visitors center including a store-front chapel.

The archives hired a company that specialized in building museum exhibits, Lynch Industries, to help develop and construct the museum. Lynch’s credits included exhibits at the Billy Graham Center (Wheaton, Illinois) and the New York Stock Exchange.

After two years of making plans with Lynch, raising money, and working with a local architect and construction workers, Lynch shipped the exhibits to Springfield in two semi-trailers. The beautiful Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center—with its offices, research room, vault, and interactive museum—was dedicated on January 19, 1999. The Center’s new name—honoring J. Roswell and his family—had been adopted two years earlier when the fundraising campaign was launched. Flower family members participated in the dedication, which was followed by an open house and banquet. After years of delays and hard work, the dream of a world-class Pentecostal archives, research center, and museum finally became reality.

### **The 2000s: New Leadership, Growth, and Building Bridges**

After serving at the helm of the archives for 25 years, Wayne Warner retired in August 2005. Assemblies of God leaders selected Darrin Rodgers, a law-trained Pentecostal historian and archivist, to serve as the third director of the Heritage Center. Rodgers was already well-known in the archives office. Ten years earlier, while a student at AGTS, he had spent hundreds of hours doing research at the FPHC for his book,

*Northern Harvest: Pentecostalism in North Dakota.*<sup>15</sup>

Rodgers brought with him a passion for collecting Pentecostal treasures from across the various denominational, racial, national, and linguistic divides.

Rodgers led the FPHC to augment its very strong collections relating to the Assemblies of God USA and early North American Pentecostalism by intentionally seeking materials that document various groups that are under-represented in the history books. Rodgers has a passion for building bridges that has led him to develop relationships with Hispanics, African-Americans, and Native Americans, among others, within the Assemblies of God and other Pentecostal fellowships, which has resulted in the donation of numerous collections at the FPHC.

Some treasure-hunting expeditions proved to be humorous. Rodgers visited Jellico, Tennessee, where he met with Jerome Walden, the retired General Overseer of the Church of God Mountain Assembly (CGMA), a small historic Pentecostal fellowship with churches located primarily in Appalachia. Walden offered to place his collection of historic CGMA publications at the FPHC, but only if Rodgers first preached an impromptu sermon, right there in Walden's office. He did, and now the FPHC has a significant CGMA collection.

One of the most interesting and enduring relationships has been with Mother Mary P. Patterson, widow of J. O. Patterson, Sr., who served as presiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC) from 1968 to 1989. Patterson wanted to place her husband's personal papers in a professional archives that specialized in Pentecostal history, so she reached out to Rodgers in 2007.

Patterson visited Springfield and was impressed by the FPHC's facilities and staff. She particularly loved that nearly everyone she met at the AG national office took time to pray with her. She deposited the Bishop J. O. Patterson, Sr. Collection at the FPHC in 2010, and

about 1,000 people came to the events surrounding the collection dedication, held at AGTS, Central Bible College, and the AG national office.<sup>16</sup> Patterson and the FPHC have collaborated on various COGIC historical projects, including two symposia and the 2015 dedication of a historical marker at the site of the COGIC's founding in Lexington, Mississippi.

Patterson was excited about the broader implications of the archival rela-



**Darrin Rodgers, director of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center, Mother Mary P. Patterson of the Church of God in Christ; and Byron Klaus, former president of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary at the dedication of a historical marker for Bishop Charles H. Mason near the Holmes County Courthouse in Lexington, Mississippi, October 16, 2015.**

tionship, stating that she wanted to send a signal that the AG and COGIC should develop a closer relationship.<sup>17</sup> And that is exactly what happened. Two COGIC leaders who spoke at the collection dedication—Bishop Lemuel Thuston and Dr. David Daniels—visited with AG general superintendent George O. Wood. As a

result of that meeting, Wood developed a relationship with COGIC Presiding Bishop Charles E. Blake, they spoke at the other's national events, and they brought AG and COGIC leaders together to fellowship and minister on various occasions.

The FPHC did not become the largest Pentecostal archives in the world overnight. Over the years, people have given the FPHC individual items (such as books, tracts, diaries, or photographs), while others have deposited collections both small and large.

The list of people whose personal papers now reside at the FPHC reads like a Who's Who of the Pentecostal world. The list includes AG church leaders Thomas F. Zimmerman and G. Raymond Carlson; educators Grant Wacker, William W. Menzies, Gary McGee, and J. Robert Ashcroft; Foursquare leader Jack Hayford; and Fellowship of Christian Assemblies historian Henry Jauhiainen. Various important African-American Pentecostal collections, representing the Church of God in Christ and various Oneness churches, have also been deposited at the FPHC. Trinity Broadcasting Network placed its sizeable "C. M. Ward Library" at the FPHC. The archives of several schools—Central Bible College, Bethany University, and Patten University—have also been deposited at the FPHC.

Since 2005, the FPHC's collection has grown significantly. The number of catalog records in the FPHC's online catalog has grown from 50,000 to over 120,000, including materials in over 140 languages. In recent years, over ten percent of new acquisitions have been in non-English languages, including many materials documenting the work of various national churches in the World Assemblies of God Fellowship. In February 2018, the top ten non-English languages in the FPHC holdings were: Spanish (1,927); Swedish (653); French (581); German (489); Finnish (264); Portuguese (181); Russian (172); Korean (143); Chinese (128); and Norwe-

gian (122).

Collecting materials telling the stories of Pentecostals from across the world is essential if church leaders and scholars are to better understand the big picture of what God has been doing through the Pentecostal movement. The Assemblies of God and the broader Pentecostal movement have been growing most rapidly in the United States among immigrants and non-Anglos; worldwide, the greatest growth has been outside the Western world.<sup>18</sup>

### **Continuing to Preserve and Promote the Pentecostal Testimony**

Much of the success of the FPHC is due to the behind-the-scenes work of dedicated archivists who have subject-matter expertise and technical cataloging and archiving skills. Joyce Lee, who served as Archivist from 1986 until her retirement in 2013, oversaw the cataloging of all materials. She continues to work part-time. Her successor, Bob Sears, brings to the FPHC several decades of experience as a library director and a longtime passion for Pentecostal history.

Glenn Gohr started at the FPHC in 1987 as an Archival Assistant and now is Reference Archivist. He also oversees the photograph and audiovisual collections and is copy editor of *Heritage* magazine. He is the resident expert on Springfield Pentecostal history and—quite literally—knows where the bodies are buried. He is known for his tours of local cemeteries.

William Molenaar succeeded Brett Pavia in 2007 and served as Digital Archivist until 2015. He oversaw the digitization of about 400,000 pages of Pentecostal periodicals and the continuing development of the website. Sharon Rasnake served as a very capable office administrator from 2001 until her retirement in 2012. Others who served for shorter periods of time also contributed greatly to the success of the FPHC.

The FPHC preserves its extensive



**Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center Staff. Front (l-r): Alice Harris, Meaghan Collier, and Catherine McGee. Back (l-r): Darrin Rodgers, Joyce Lee, Robert Sears, Ruthie Oberg, and Glenn Gohr.**

collection of Pentecostal treasures in two primary locations. Items that are most important or frequently-accessed are stored in its 800-square-foot climate-controlled vault in the AG national office. The FPHC also stores materials in a 4,500-square-foot secure cave in the Springfield Underground—a sprawling system of secure warehouses built in old mining tunnels left by a limestone mining operation. The cave is an ideal location for preservation of materials—it has constant temperature and humidity and is tornado-proof.

These Pentecostal treasures are made accessible to researchers in several ways. For those who want to do in-depth historical research, nothing beats a visit to the FPHC. Those unable to visit Springfield may purchase photocopies of materials for a nominal fee through the FPHC’s reference services. The FPHC staff has assisted countless scholars, students, church leaders, and people in the pew.

Another important way that the FPHC makes its materials accessible is through its website ([www.ifphc.org](http://www.ifphc.org)),

which was redeveloped in 2007. The website has become an indispensable tool for researchers, featuring its online catalog, as well as free access to over 350,000 pages of Pentecostal publications, which are searchable by index and by full-text searches. The FPHC blog (<https://ifphc.wordpress.com>) has received nearly 500,000 page views, featuring “This Week in AG History” columns and other articles. The most popular article to date features a 1971 sermon from David Wilkerson: “Don’t Let Your Pentecostal Fire be Replaced by the Fire of Indignation.”

The FPHC also helped in 2011 to spearhead the formation of the Consortium of Pentecostal Archives ([www.pentecostalarchives.org](http://www.pentecostalarchives.org)), which makes accessible digitized publications from various Pentecostal archives and denominations, including the Assemblies of God, Church of God (Cleveland, TN), Church of God of Prophecy, International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, International Pentecostal Holiness Church, and others.

*Assemblies of God Heritage maga-*



zine, now in its 38th year of publication, has seen over 100 issues published since 1981. The quarterly magazine, which had grown to about 2,000 subscribers under Wayne Warner's editorship, in 2007 became an expanded annual publication, sent to all AG ministers plus subscribers. It is the only Pentecostal history magazine of its kind. The publication promotes the heritage and identity of the Assemblies of God and also publicizes the work of the FPHC.

The FPHC museum has remained largely the same since 1999, although a few new exhibits have been added. Louie, the puppet who served as Assemblies of God evangelist Dan Betzer's sidekick since 1954, went into retirement and became a permanent display in the FPHC museum in 2012. Several new displays were placed in the museum in celebration of the AG's centennial in 2014, and a rotating exhibit area is slated to open in 2018 at the rear of the museum's E. N. Bell Chapel.

## The Spiritual Value of History

It is appropriate that the namesake of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center cared deeply about Pentecostal history. J. Roswell Flower wrote a widely-distributed booklet about the Fellowship's history, he taught the standard Assemblies of God History and Polity course at Central Bible Institute, and he planned to write a denominational history book that he was unable to complete before his death. He also lived much of the history.<sup>19</sup>

Even at a young age, Flower recognized that history has spiritual value. He was 25 years old when he published the following brief admonition in the *Christian Evangel* (the predecessor of the *Pentecostal Evangel*): "Every Christian should study Church history alongside of his Bible. If we knew more Church history we would go astray less in our interpretation of the Word of God."<sup>20</sup>

This observation by a revered Assemblies of God pioneer remains true

today. It is easy to be swamped by prevailing popular worldviews, which can color one's interpretation of Scripture. Knowledge of church history—learning from the wisdom of those who lived in other times and places—can liberate Christians from fashions and winds of doctrine, and it can also inspire Christians toward great things.

Assemblies of God leaders recognized the spiritual value of history when they established the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center in 1977. They understood that the Pentecostal movement would have a limited future if the Pentecostal testimony is not transmitted to the next generation.

Forty years later, the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center has become the largest archival repository of Pentecostal historical materials in the world. Church leaders, scholars, and people in the pew have entrusted their Pentecostal treasures to the Center's dedicated archivists, who make these materials accessible to researchers online, by mail, and in person. Hopefully, these Pentecostal voices from across the chronological, linguistic, national, and denominational divides will inspire new generations to embrace the Pentecostal testimony as their own. ✝



**Wayne E. Warner served as director of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center from 1980 to 2005. He is retired and lives in Springfield with his wife, Pat.**



**Darrin J. Rodgers has served as director of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center since 2005. He lives in Springfield with his wife, Desiree.**

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Menzies' dissertation was titled, "The Assemblies of God, 1941-1967: The Consolidation of a Revival Movement" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1968).

<sup>2</sup>William W. Menzies, *Anointed to Serve: The Story of the Assemblies of God* (Gospel Publishing House, 1971).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, 11.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>*Board of Administration Minutes*, March 6, 1974, 4; Glenn Gohr, "A Silver Anniversary for the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 22:3 (Fall 2002): 4-9; Lee Shultz, telephone interview by Wayne Warner, August 27, 2002.

<sup>6</sup>Archives Study Committee's report to the Board of Administration, March 1, 1974.

<sup>7</sup>Archives Study Committee's report to the Board of Administration, February 11, 1975.

<sup>8</sup>*Executive Presbytery Minutes*, June 12, 1975, 23.

<sup>9</sup>"AGGS Houses Archives in New Facilities," *Pentecostal Evangel*, February 12, 1978, 30.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. AGGS was renamed Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in 1984.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Archives Study Committee minutes, May 9, 1978; Archives Advisory Committee minutes, March 20, 1979.

<sup>13</sup>According to *Dollar Times* the buying power of that \$35,000 in 1978 is now worth \$138,942.67 in 2018.

<sup>14</sup>The *In Memoriam* booklet began publication in 1959 as a four-page list of the names of deceased ministers from the previous biennium.

<sup>15</sup>Darrin J. Rodgers, *Northern Harvest: Pentecostalism in North Dakota* (Bismarck, ND: North Dakota District Council, 2003).

<sup>16</sup>"Personal Papers of Bishop J. O. Patterson, Sr. Deposited at FPHC," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 31 (2011): 73.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

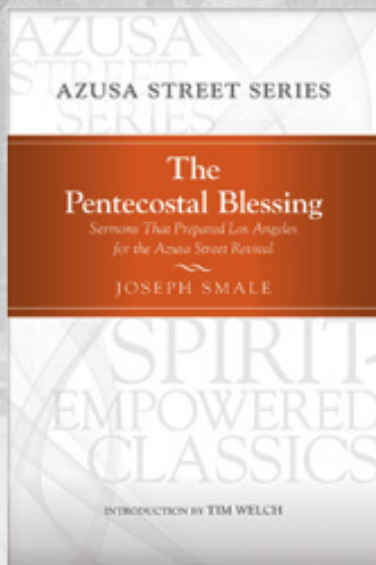
<sup>18</sup>Darrin J. Rodgers, "Global, Diverse, and Growing," *Assemblies of God Heritage* 34 (2014): 2-3.

<sup>19</sup>David Ringer, *J. Roswell Flower: A Brief Biography* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016). Flower's booklet, *The Origin and Development of the Assemblies of God*, went through six editions from 1938 to 1954. His research and class notes were deposited at the FPHC.

<sup>20</sup>*Christian Evangel*, October 18, 1913, 8.

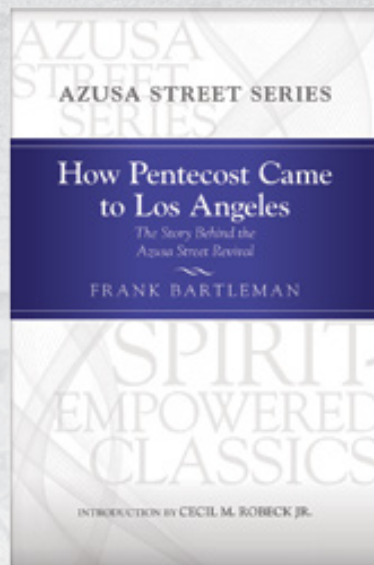
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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.; “Pentecostal Professor,” 6; Nelle Reeder Vazakas, unpublished notes on Alexander Vazakas, folder 39, Byron Vazakas Papers, Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania.

<sup>9</sup>Nelle Vazakas, notes.

<sup>10</sup>Vakazas, autobiography, folder 32. Vazakas described Metzger, the stationmaster, as “a perfect gentleman and scrupulously honest”; however, “he could swear in seven different languages, mostly at his wife.”

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. Vazakas moved to Thessalonica because his older brother lived there.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.; Nelle Vazakas, notes; “Pentecostal Professor,” 6.

<sup>15</sup>Nelle Vazakas, notes; “Pentecostal Professor,” 6. As he roved along the road, Vazakas met several English ladies who had rented a waterfront café and repurposed it to host worship services for British sailors serving at the port of Thessalonica. Worshipping at this chapel, Vazakas heard electrifying singing, and he witnessed fervent prayer and testimonies. The worship encounter intensified Vazakas’s hunger for God; see Vazakas, autobiography, folder 32.

<sup>16</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 31. Besides serving as a priest, Barnabas had also established a watchmaking business

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.; Nelle Vazakas, notes; “Pentecostal Professor,” 7. Vazakas also tells of the property owner, who was known as a gambler and drunkard. When he heard the uproar, he came to mock, but then, “as if struck by lightning,” the man starting running around the room. He screamed, “What have you done to me? I see hell before me. Come and help me, or I am lost!”

<sup>18</sup>Vazakas autobiography, folder 31, folder 33. One cannot miss the echoes to the day of Pentecost and Peter’s words, “This is that” (Acts 2:16, KJV).

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., folder 33. Vazakas carefully points out that the scorn did not derive from the Greek Orthodox Church. In fact, referring to the Greek Orthodox, Vazakas wrote, “The people in that church were my friends, always eager to hear God’s word.”

<sup>20</sup>As the two-week ocean passage neared its end near Newfoundland, the weather became tumultuous, and the motors began to malfunction. Passengers and crew expressed concerns about their safety, but when Vazakas’s cabin mate’s wife came to find her husband, she encountered Vazakas singing hymns. She became angry at how calm he seemed when their lives were endangered.

<sup>21</sup>D. C. Marquis, *General Catalogue of the McCormick Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, Chicago, Illinois* (Chicago: Rogerson Press, 1900), 129.

<sup>22</sup>National Archives and Records Administration, *Soundex Index to Naturalization Petitions for the United States District and Circuit Courts, Northern District of Illinois and Immigration and Naturalization Service District 9, 1840-1950 (M1285)*, microfilm serial M1285, microfilm roll 167; Illinois Department of Public Health, “Marriage Records, 1871–present,” Division of Vital Records,

Springfield, IL.

<sup>23</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 33; James Patrick Morgans, *John Todd and the Underground Railroad: Biography of an Iowa Abolitionist* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2006), 63. Dubbed “the daughter of Oberlin,” Tabor College, like its “mother” school, devoted itself to progressive causes, such as abolition. Tabor, Iowa, also boasted “the world’s shortest standard gauge” railroad line. It ran 8.79 miles from Malvern, Iowa, and resulted from the successful efforts of the Tabor community to prevent Tabor College from relocating; see Otha B. Wearin, “The Tabor and Northern Railroad,” *The Annals of Iowa* 38 (1966), 427–430.

<sup>24</sup>His wood sawing work garnered fifteen cents per hour. The college president also allowed Vazakas to use his property to raise pigs and sell them to market. The proceeds from this venture equaled the amount needed for Vazakas to pay for his brother Alfred’s fare to the United States; see Vazakas, autobiography, folder 33. Vazakas may have become involved with the Hephzibah Faith Missionary Association, a holiness denomination based in Tabor, during his years at Tabor College. Vazakas attended the Association’s 1917 convention in Elmira, NY; see “Hephzibah Association Closes Its Convention,” *Elmira Star-Gazette*, September 15, 1917, 7; T. F. Murphy, ed., *Religious Bodies, 1936: Denominations - Statistics, History, Doctrine, Organization, Work*, United States Census Bureau (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1936), 565. Vazakas, autobiography, folder 33 notes interactions with the founder of the movement George Weavers and his son-in-law and successor Leonard Worcester. The Hephzibah Association became part of the Church of the Nazarene in 1950. See “Our Global Church,” The Church of the Nazarene, accessed May 5, 2017, <http://www.nazarene.org/sites/default/files/essentials/docs/Our-Global-Church-En1.2.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 33.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid. Vazakas graduated from a “preparatory course” at Tabor in 1895; see H. A. Simons, “Graduates from Fremont County Schools, 1895,” *Fremont County Sun*, June 20, 1895, 6.

<sup>27</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 33. Along the way to Greece, Vazakas stopped in Keswick, England, and participated in a Higher Life Conference.

<sup>28</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 31, folder 33; *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Greek Evangelical Union (formerly “Alliance”)* (Smyrna: Greek Evangelical Union, 1898), 5.

<sup>29</sup>U.S. Passport Application for Alexander A. Vazakas, February 28, 1914, in National Archives and Records Administration, *General Emergency Passport Applications, 1907-1923*, vol. 140: Rheims to Turkey; Sidney is the county seat of Fremont County, which includes Tabor.

<sup>30</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 33. Vazakas recalled, “I was very cheerful during my imprisonment. I was singing and the presence of Christ was with me.” See Elizabeth Geyer, “Dr. Vazakas, Oldest Faculty Member, To Teach Part-Time,” *The Lance*, April 5, 1962. Thank you to Evangel University archivist Shirley Shedd for assistance with articles from *The Lance*.

<sup>31</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 31, folder 33.

<sup>32</sup>Henry M. Brown, ed., *General Alumni Catalogue of New York University: College, Applied Science, and Honorary Alumni, 1833-1905* (New York: General Alumni Society, 1906), 142.

<sup>33</sup>*Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York, 1906-1907* (New York: Union Theological Seminary, 1907), 15. According to Vazakas, autobiography, folder 31, he chose Union because the American that continued his late father’s work in Monastir had attended there.

<sup>34</sup>“Says Woman Hypnotized Him,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 7, 1908, 1. This marriage is further corroborated by a June 6, 1900, passport application “for a person claiming citizenship through naturalization of husband or parent.” Louise Vazakas completed the approved application in Athens. The information matches Alexander’s immigration and citizenship date. Louise was born in Germany in 1849. See Passport Application for Louise Vazakas, National Archives and Records Administration, *Emergency Passport Applications (Issued Abroad), 1877-1907*, roll 17, vol. 28: Egypt to Portugal. Vazakas does not mention Louise or this episode in his autobiography or notes.

<sup>35</sup>“Vazakas Can’t Lose Hypnotic Greek Wife,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, March 27, 1908, 22; *The New York Supplement Containing the Decisions of the Supreme and Lower Courts of Record of New York State*, vol. 109 (New York: West Publishing, 1908), 568-570.

<sup>36</sup>“Pentecostal Professor,” 6; Vazakas, autobiography, folder 31, folder 33; Nelle Vazakas, notes.

<sup>37</sup>Alexander A. Vazakas, “The Solution of the Will to Live: A Comparative Study” (master’s thesis, Columbia University, 1911), 48, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York. One of Vazakas’s professors at Columbia was John Dewey, the philosopher, psychologist, and educational reformer.

<sup>38</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 33. While he was a student at Tabor, Vazakas earned enough money through his various jobs to pay for Alfred’s journey to the United States. Tragically, Alfred died in New York on December 31, 1912, as a result of pneumonia. Vazakas moved Alfred’s widow and three sons to a Chicago apartment, but a fire destroyed the apartment complex a few weeks after their arrival. Alfred’s wife and children left and moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, before settling in Reading, Pennsylvania. Alfred’s oldest son was the poet Byron A. Vazakas.

<sup>39</sup>“Death Takes Scholar, 91,” *Springfield News-Leader*, February 27, 1965.

<sup>40</sup>“Overseas Secretaries,” *Association Men*, September 1917, 565; *Columbia Alumni News*, October 4, 1918, 77; *Year Book of the Young Men’s Christian Associations of North America for the Year May 1, 1920, to April 30, 1921* (New York: Association Press, 1921), 153.

<sup>41</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 35. Archbishop Chrysostomos was brutally killed by a mob following



the Turkish sacking of Smyrna in 1922. He was later declared a saint and martyr by the Eastern Orthodox Church.

<sup>42</sup>Nelle Vazakas, notes; "Vazakas Entrain on First Leg of Trip to Egypt and Greece," *The Willamette Collegian*, July 14, 1944, 3; "Dr. Vazakas' Rites Slated," *Springfield News-Leader*, February 27, 1965; "Professor, Linguist, Editor: Teacher for 77 Years Dies," *The Lance*, March 11, 1965, 1.

<sup>43</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 35; Nelle Vazakas, notes. The disposition of his marriage to Luise Zenia at this time is unknown. I have been unable to uncover any divorce records. It is possible that she had died.

<sup>44</sup>*Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1820-1957*, Records of the U.S. Customs Service, National Archives, Washington, D.C., record group 36, roll 3639, line 17, page 161.

<sup>45</sup>Alexander Aristides Vazakas, "The Greek of Acts 1:1-15:25" (doctor of philosophy dissertation, University of Chicago, 1927). Vazakas's dissertation argues against a theory, common at the time, that the Greek in the first fifteen chapters of Acts derives from a translation of an Aramaic original. Vazakas had earlier written on the same subject in an abbreviated form in A. A. Vazakas, "Is Acts I-XV.35 a Literal Translation from an Aramaic Original?," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 37 (1918), 105-110. Vazakas evidently began his studies prior to the beginning of World War I; see *Circular of Information: The Divinity School, 1915-1916* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1916), 86, which identified Vazakas as Vice President of the New Testament Club. See also *Annual Register Covering the Academic Year Ending June 30, 1916, with Announcements for the Year 1916-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1916), 599.

<sup>46</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 35. "Professor, Linguist," *The Lance*, also notes that Vazakas "studied abroad at the Universities of Mexico, Athens, Paris, Switzerland, and Madrid."

<sup>47</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 35.

<sup>48</sup>See William J. Molenaar, "The American Mission Field: Intercultural Ministries" *Assemblies of God Heritage* 34 (2014): 42.

<sup>49</sup>"Reporter Discovers Hobbies of Faculty: New Members of Teaching Staff Are Revealed by Means of Their Avocations," *Willamette Collegian*, September 29, 1927, 1; Mary Clanfield, "Society," *Willamette Collegian*, January 19, 1928, 3.

<sup>50</sup>"Whew!!! Vazakas Teaches Five Different Languages," *Willamette Collegian*, November 28, 1941, 8.

<sup>51</sup>"Faculty Makes Course Changes," *Willamette Collegian*, November 13, 1942, 1.

<sup>52</sup>"Linguistic Heights," *Willamette Collegian*, March 19, 1943, 3.

<sup>53</sup>"Wesleyans Have Interesting Meets," *Willamette Collegian*, November 13, 1931, 3; "French Club Meets," *Willamette Collegian*, February 18, 1932, 1; "Vazakas Says Europe's 'Sore Spots' Overrated," *Willamette Collegian*, November 3, 1933, 1; "Russian Seen International Language," *Willamette Collegian*, December 3, 1943, 8; "Vazakas Tells of Russians," *Willamette Collegian*, October 9, 1942,

3; "Intervarsity Fellowship on Thursday," *Willamette Collegian*, February 18, 1944, 5. Vazakas was also a regular speaker for community groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and civic clubs; e.g., "Mysticism Talk Enjoyed by Club," *Daily Capital Journal*, March 31, 1928, 5; "Vazakas to Speak," *The Oregon Statesman*, October 2, 1942, 5; "Gospel Need of Germans," *Daily Capital Journal*, June 1, 1944, 11.

<sup>54</sup>"Introducing Dr. Vazakas," *Willamette Collegian*, February 4, 1938, 2.

<sup>55</sup>"Vazakas Entrain," 3; Vazakas, autobiography, folder 31.

<sup>56</sup>"Personalalia," *The Modern Language Journal* 32 (1948), 452.

<sup>57</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 35.

<sup>58</sup>Dick Burdette, "Intercession City . . . Last Exit to Yesterday," *Orlando Sentinel*, May 19, 1974, C-3; Jovida Fletcher, "Defunct Bible College Lives On in Minister," *Osceola Sentinel*, August 6, 1989, 3; Jovida Fletcher, "Intercession City Founded By Pioneers With Failed Dreams," *Osceola Sentinel*, July 8, 1990, 3; Jovida Fletcher, "Minister Followed Father's Steps All The Way To Intercession City," *Osceola Sentinel*, May 14, 1995, 3; Vic Reasoner, "Smith, Aaron Jacob," in *The A to Z of the Holiness Movement*, ed. William Kostlevy (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2010), 272-273; "Who was Osie England?," Historic Intercession City, accessed May 5, 2017, [http://intercessioncity.webstarts.com/the\\_plan.html](http://intercessioncity.webstarts.com/the_plan.html); "The Intercession City Schools," Historic Intercession City, accessed May 5, 2017, <http://intercessioncity.webstarts.com/missionaries.html>.

<sup>59</sup>Obituary for Mrs. Ida A. Vazakas, *Orlando Sentinel*, October 28, 1953, 23.

<sup>60</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 35.

<sup>61</sup>Marriage certificate for Alexander A. Vazakas and Nelle Reeder, December 23, 1954, San Francisco, California, folder 39, Byron Vazakas Papers, Albright College, Reading, Pennsylvania. Tounger is listed among the credentialed AG clergy in General Council of the Assemblies of God, *Official List of the Ministers and Missionaries of the General Council of the Assemblies of God Revised to January 15, 1955* (Springfield, MO: Executive Office of the Assemblies of God, 1955), 172. According to J. Roswell Flower's Assemblies of God minister's letter, March 18, 1954, Tounger was added to the ministerial list in 1954. For the pastor's involvement in the Greek Branch, see Gust A. Harbas, "Annual Convention," *Pentecostal Evangel*, May 3, 1959, 27; Gust A. Harbas, "Annual Convention of Hellenic Protoponos Apostolic Ecclesia," *Pentecostal Evangel*, May 29, 1960, 27; "29th Annual Convention of the Greek Branch," *Pentecostal Evangel*, May 16, 1965, 30. The Hellenic Protoponos Apostolic Ecclesia, matching the address of the church identified on the Vazakas marriage certificate, is listed in *Assemblies of God Directory: A Complete Listing by District of Churches of Evangelical, Protestant Faith, Affiliated and Co-operative with the General Council of the Assemblies of God to July 1, 1955* (Springfield, MO: Executive Headquarters of the Assemblies of God, 1955), 206. The church name and date of Rev. Tounger's credentialing indicates that the congregation was part of the Greek Original Apostolic Church; see also Molenaar, 42.

<sup>62</sup>Nelle Reeder's mother was Harriet Reeder, a credentialed AG minister who passed away in 1951. Nelle must have had something to do with connecting Vazakas more to the AG later in life.

<sup>63</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 35; Nelle Vazakas, notes.

<sup>64</sup>Gust A. Harbas, "Greek Branch Holds Convention," *Pentecostal Evangel*, November 10, 1957, 30.

<sup>65</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 35, indicates he was not pleased with "assistant" being in his title: "All the past years of my teaching experience I've been a full professor, but now, after thirty years I have become an assistant professor. Why? Assistant to whom?" Despite his misgivings about "assistant," Vazakas acknowledged that he was "thrilled" to be teaching at Evangel.

<sup>66</sup>Thurman Vanzant, e-mail message to author, May 10, 2017. Emphasis original.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Vazakas, autobiography, folder 35.

<sup>70</sup>"Language Teacher Covers Khrushchev's Recent Visit," *The Lance*, September 30, 1959, 1.

<sup>71</sup>Stanley M. Burgess, telephone conversation with author, May 10, 2017. Shirley Shedd, e-mail message to author, April 21, 2017, remarks that Vazakas "was obviously well loved by students as the 1962 yearbook was dedicated to him." After his death, the Alexander Vazakas Memorial Scholarship fund was established at Evangel; the School of Theology and Church Ministries continues to award it.

<sup>72</sup>George O. Wood, e-mail message to author, April 18, 2017. Wood states, "If our relationship with God were based on us having complete informational knowledge of God before we could 'know' him, then we would be excluded from knowing God."

<sup>73</sup>George O. Wood, "What Did Jesus Really Mean that We Must Become as a Child?," Dr. George O. Wood blog, accessed April 30, 2017, <http://georgeowood.com/what-did-jesus-really-mean-that-we-must-become-as-a-child/>.

<sup>74</sup>Stanley M. Burgess, ed., *Christian Peoples of the Spirit: A Documentary History of Pentecostal Spirituality from the Early Church to the Present* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 1, 4.

<sup>75</sup>Roger R. Olson, "Pentecostalism's Dark Side," *Christian Century*, March 7, 2006, 27.

<sup>76</sup>On welding the life of the mind and the life of the Spirit, see Rick M. Nañez, Full Gospel, Fractured Minds?: A Call to Use God's Gift of the Intellect (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005); Jonathan Olson, "The Quest for Legitimacy: American Pentecostal Scholars and the Quandaries of Academic Pursuit," *Intermountain West Journal of Religious Studies* 4 (2012): 94-115. For these and further lessons from Vazakas's life, see Darrin J. Rodgers, "Dr. Alexander Vazakas: Early Greek Pentecostal, Philosopher, Linguist," Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center blog, September 1, 2016, accessed May 1, 2017, <https://ifphc.wordpress.com/2016/09/01/dr-alexander-vazakas-early-greek-pentecostal-philosopher-linguist/>.

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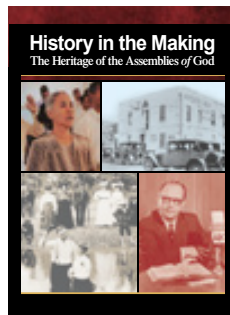
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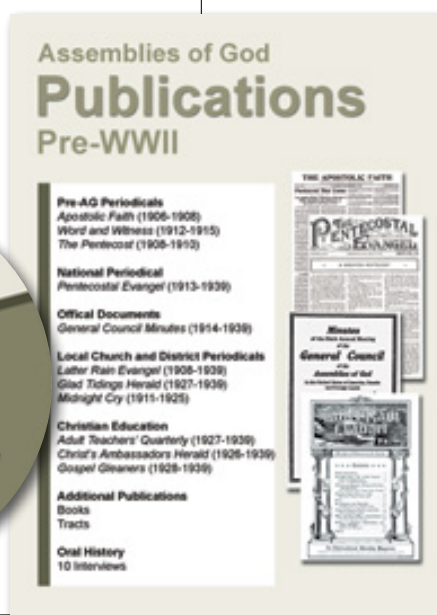
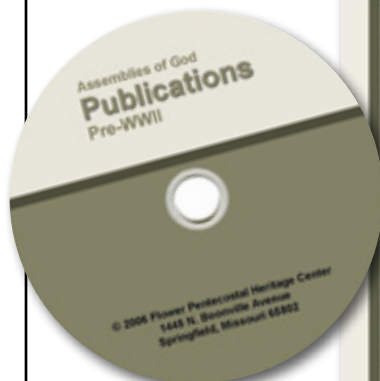
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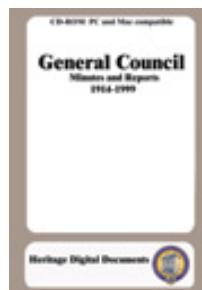
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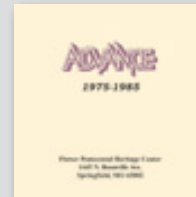
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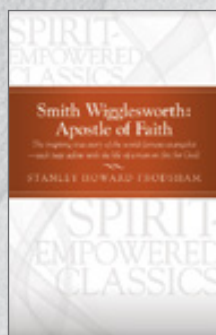
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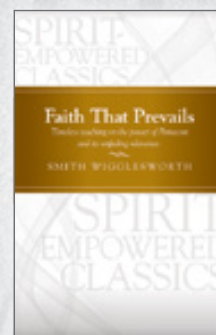
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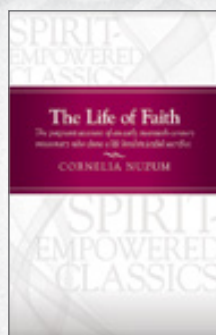
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You may wish to consider making a financial contribution to the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center endowment to help ensure the long-term future of this ministry of remembrance. You can give needed support for the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center by making a gift of cash or property or simply by including the following words in your will:

I give, devise, and bequeath to the Assemblies of God Foundation, 1445 N. Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802 (insert amount being given here) to be used to support the ministry of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center.

Bequests are free of estate tax, and can substantially reduce the amount of your assets claimed by the government. A bequest can be a specific dollar amount, a specific piece of property, a percentage of an estate, or all or part of the residue of an estate. You can also name the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center as a contingency beneficiary in the event someone named in your will is no longer living. It is recommended that an attorney help in drafting or amending a will.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss how you can help us to preserve and share our Pentecostal heritage with future generations. Thank you for your dedication to God and to the Assemblies of God!

Darrin J. Rodgers, M.A., J.D.  
email: [drodgers@ag.org](mailto:drodgers@ag.org)

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**Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center**  
1445 N. Boonville Ave.  
Springfield, MO 65802 USA

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