

1970

A History of the Arkansas Assemblies of God 1908-1968

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A HISTORY OF THE ARKANSAS ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

1908 - 1968

A Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate Council of

Ouachita Baptist University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Religion

by

Earl R. Teeter

August, 1970

Director of Graduate Studies

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¹John L. Sherrill, *They Spoke in Other Tongues* (New York: Pyramid Books, 1954), p. 28, citing *Life* magazine, June 6, 1950.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Religious freedom has played an important role in the nation and state. Because of the freedom guaranteed by the United States Constitution, a colorful array of denominations and sects have arisen. One group, the Pentecostals, have been called the "Third force in Protestantism."¹ Of this group the Assemblies of God are the largest, not only nationally and world-wide, but also in Arkansas. In fact, the Arkansas District of the Assemblies of God is the largest district per capita of any of the Assemblies of God Districts in the United States.

For some reason a study on the Arkansas Assemblies of God has been neglected. Two main reasons have been advanced: on the one hand some of the early leaders would have frowned upon an attempt because they were against "hero worship", and on the other hand there was an ardent expectation of Christ's second coming and, therefore, no history was needed.

¹John L. Sherrill, They Speak with Other Tongues (New York: Pyramid Books, 1964), p. 28, citing Life magazine, June 6, 1958.

There is no evidence that a systematic study of the Arkansas Assemblies of God has ever been attempted. Consequently, much of the history of the movement remains in the memory of a few "old timers" or scattered in materials often out of print.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. The present study has been concerned with the compiling of scattered materials on the Arkansas District of the Assemblies of God and the collecting of the materials into a readable, documentary account. The purpose of this paper has been not a plea for Pentecostals, but an account of the trends, issues, and policies of the Arkansas Assemblies of God. The study has concentrated on (1) the beginnings; (2) the dissent; (3) the organization of the district; and (4) the relation of the district to the central organization.

Delimitation of the Problem. The scope of the study has been basically limited to the activities, issues, and policies of the Assemblies of God within the borders of Arkansas. By design, the greater portion of the study has concentrated on the organization and the issues of the movement.

Though the Assemblies of God became world-wide in 1914,² and since had grown into a network of 969 foreign missionaries and more than ninety foreign Bible Schools,³ the world movement was not included within the scope of this study, except to describe the relationship of the Arkansas District to the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

Two factions of Pentecostals, known commonly as the "Latter Rain" and the "Call to Holiness" have been omitted. The "Latter Rain" movement in the early fifties failed to gain significant momentum in Arkansas. In fact, the faction failed to develop a permanent organization; and, consequently, there was probably not one congregation of this persuasion left within the borders of the state.

The "Call to Holiness" had not evolved into a movement. It was a faction but had not by 1968 been received by the Arkansas District. Its proponents denied that it was a schism, but rather claimed to be a summons to call the church back from her strayed position.

²Missionaries of the Pentecostal persuasion went overseas in 1907 (Kendrick, Klaude, The Promise Fulfilled [Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1959] p. VIII.) By the time of the organizational meeting in 1914 twenty-five missionaries were serving in China. (News item in the Word and Witness, July 20, 1913).

³Departmental Reports to the Thirty-Third General Council of the Assemblies of God, August 21-26, 1969 (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1969), p. 93.

The study attempted to recount in detail the beginning of the Arkansas District of the Assemblies of God, from its inception in 1908 under the preaching of Howard A. Goss, through its organization in 1914 by a group of twenty ministers in Russellville, to its 1968 status and work in the state of Arkansas.

Justification of the Problem. A study of the Arkansas Assemblies of God could be valuable as furnishing a basis for identifying the people who have been involved in the movement with the principles laid down by the founders. The study of the movement has been valuable in understanding the Pentecostals, both for the adherents, and others. Since no documented study has been made of the movement, there was a need to present the history and growth of these 450 churches located within the boundaries of the state of Arkansas.

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Literature on National Organizations. Three major works on the Assemblies of God (nationally) appeared between 1959 and 1961. All three dealt with the historical matter from different perspectives. One was written by a New York newspaperman as a popular survey;⁴ another as a doctoral

⁴Irwin Winehouse, The Assemblies of God (New York: Vantage Press, 1959).

dissertation at the University of Texas was later published;⁵ and a third one, Suddenly From Heaven, was written and published expressly for the denomination.⁶ Other smaller works have appeared prior to 1961, but were superceded by these three major publications.

Limitation of the District Material. Studies on the Arkansas District of the Assemblies of God have been neglected except for short statements in national publications. Little material was available other than minutes, financial records, and intermittent issues of the Pentecostal Gleaner which were kept in the district office in Little Rock. Since the early pioneers of the Assemblies of God were not scholars, little historical writing was available. Small significance was attached to historical matters; and, therefore, materials were often destroyed after they had served their original purpose. Record books were often thrown into the fire when a new book was bought, thus destroying the records of a local church-materials that can never be replaced.

⁵Klaude Kendrick, The Promise Fulfilled (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1961).

⁶Carl Brumback, Suddenly From Heaven (Springfield, Missouri: Gospel Publishing House, 1961).

One major problem in the study has been the location of documented information. Many of the broad strokes of this paper have been drawn from living witnesses, and not from printed materials. Those associated with the movement in the earlier years often failed to answer in writing, but there was no lack of enthusiasm on their part when they were talking of important events. Since very few of the witnesses kept printed matter, diaries, or personal journals, much of that which has been written were materials committed to memory. The author attempted to document these accounts by securing several interviews with various witnesses of the same event.

During the years 1908-1917 the materials on the General Council of the Assemblies of God formed a concentric with the materials on the Arkansas District. Arkansas was the locale that gave both birth and momentum to the organization of the Assemblies of God. Therefore, the works of Winehouse, Kendrick, and Brumback have been useful in this area. In addition, Howard A. Goss, one of the early leaders, has written a short resume of his effort in Arkansas. After this brief period no significant publication was available on the Arkansas District of the Assemblies of God.

CHAPTER II

BEGINNING OF THE MODERN PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

A study of the modern Pentecostal movement should begin with Charles F. Parham. Parham was the leader of a school that gave birth to the Pentecostal movement which, in turn, produced the Arkansas Assemblies of God. The purpose, therefore, of this chapter is to give a brief resume of the events which surrounded the beginning of the modern Pentecostal movement and its influence upon Howard A. Goss, the first Arkansas Pentecostal preacher. The chapter begins with the life and work of Charles F. Parham and concludes with the conversion and early ministry of Howard A. Goss, "founder" of the Arkansas Pentecostal movement.

I. PARHAM'S EARLY LIFE

Parham was born in Muscatine, Iowa, on June 4, 1873. He was converted at thirteen years of age, and by fifteen he had experienced some success as a lay preacher in the Congregational church.¹ At sixteen, Parham lost all interest in the church and began the study of medicine. While in this condition he was stricken with rheumatic fever. Fail-

¹Kendrick, op. cit., p. 37.

ing to respond to treatment, little hope was held for his life. Consequently, he rededicated his life to Christ, and vowed that, if he recovered, he would enter the ministry. He later testified that he was healed and lived up to his word.²

After re-entering the ministry, Parham was associated with the Methodists. He could not accept the authority of the church and, as a result, withdrew from it and began fellowship within the Holiness circles. Since the Holiness movement was not a "church," as such, but an association of reactionaries, Parham fitted into its pattern of denouncing "sin" and "dryness" of the more formal churches.³

II. PARHAM'S THEOLOGY

After having become associated with the Holiness movement, Parham championed its cause. Kendrick listed Parham's theological position, which was basically of the Holiness pattern, as follows:

1. Conversion as a crisis experience.⁴
2. Sanctification as a second definite work of grace.⁵

²Ibid., p. 38.

³Ibid., p. 38.

⁴Ibid., p. 38.

⁵Ibid., p. 40.

3. Faith healing in the atonement.⁶

4. Premillennial return of Christ.⁷

III. PARHAM'S SCHOOL

Parham's significance to the Pentecostal movement began with his founding of Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas. He opened the school in October of 1900 with about forty students enrolled for the first semester.⁸ The college was housed in Stone's Castle, nicknamed "Stone's Folly" because a Mr. Stone failed to count the cost of building the structure.⁹ The subjects included the basic Holiness tenets of conversion, sanctification, healing, and the imminent return of Christ, which Parham had preached since leaving the Methodist church.¹⁰

Little notice was taken of the school until December of 1900. At that time an unusual assignment was made by Parham which was later related by Miss Thistlewaite in The Faithful Standard:

⁶Ibid., p. 41.

⁷Ibid., p. 43.

⁸Ibid., p. 48.

⁹Stone's "Folly" was patterned after an English Castle. The first two stories were carved staircases, stained glass windows, woodwork of imported cedar of Lebanon, spotted pine, cherry, bird's-eye maple and mahogany. The third floor was plain wood and common paint. (Brumback, op. cit., p. 21).

¹⁰Ibid.

"It was just before the Christmas holidays that we took up the study of the baptism with the Holy Ghost. Mr. Parham was going to Kansas City to conduct meetings there. . . . Before he left, Parham remarked:

'We have reached in our studies a problem. What about the second chapter of Acts? . . . Having heard so many different religious bodies claim different proof as the evidence of their having the Pentecostal baptism, I want you students to study out diligently what is the Bible evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that we might go before the world with something that is indisputable because it tallies absolutely with the word.'¹¹

Formal Bible lessons and lectures were discontinued while Parham made a three-day trip to Kansas City. The students, in the meanwhile, devoted themselves to prayer and independent Bible studies. When Parham returned, he learned that the students had reached an astonishing discovery from their studies on the "Baptism in the Holy Ghost." Parham wrote:

"I returned to the school on the morning preceeding watch night services in the year 1900. At about ten o'clock in the morning I rang the bell calling all the students into the chapel to get their report on the matter in hand. To my astonishment they all had the same story, that while there were different things

¹¹Lillian T. Thistlewaite, The Faithful Standard, June, 1922, quoted by Brumback, op. cit., p. 22.

occured [sic] when the Pentecostal [sic] blessing fell, the indisputable proof on each occasion was that they spake with other tongues."¹²

J. R. Flower, the first secretary of the Assemblies of God wrote concerning this happening:

"This was a most momentous decision. There had been recorded many instances of persons speaking in tongues prior to the year 1900, but in each case the speaking in tongues was considered to be a spiritual phenomenon or at the most a 'gift' of the Spirit, with the result that no particular emphasis had been given which would cause those seeking for the fulness of the Spirit to expect that they should speak in other tongues. But these students had deduced from God's word that in apostolic times, the speaking in tongues was considered to be the initial physical evidence of a person's having received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It was this decision which has made the Pentecostal movement of the Twentieth Century."¹³

Kendrick further stated that the students acted upon their newly discovered "truth" and sought for a "baptism in the Holy Ghost."¹⁴

¹²Charles F. and Sarah E. Parham, Selected Sermons of the Late Charles F. Parham and Sarah E. Parham, compiled by Robert L. Parham (n. p.: [Published by the compiler], 1941), p. 58, quoted by Kendrick, op. cit., p. 51

¹³J. Roswell Flower, "Birth of the Pentecostal Movement", Pentecostal Evangel, No. 1907 (November 26, 1950), p. 3. Quoted by Kendrick, op. cit., p. 51.

¹⁴Ibid.

Some of the students rejected the new doctrine and withdrew from the school. One such person was S. J. Riggins, who withdrew on January 8, 1901, and pronounced the institution a fake in an interview with the Topeka State Journal.¹⁵ The students who did accept the "evidence" as genuine became enthusiastic preachers of the new doctrine.

IV. PARHAM'S REVIVALS

Parham, himself receiving the new experience, took the new Pentecostal doctrine on the campaign trail. Revivals were conducted in many cities, including two each at Kansas City and Lawrence, Kansas, alternately and one each in Nevada, El Dorado Springs, Missouri, and Galena, Kansas, consecutively. Other revival efforts were conducted but only the Galena effort was significant to the Arkansas movement.

The Galena revival began on October 20, 1903, and ran until January 15, 1904.¹⁷ A tent was erected on the lawn of Mrs. Mary Arthur until cold weather forced the congrega-

¹⁵Ibid., p. 54.

¹⁶Kendrick, op. cit., pp. 54-58.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 58. Goss, The Winds of God (N.Y.: Comet Press), 1958, p. 11, placed the date as "late fall of 1902."

tion into a large store building known locally as the "Grand Leader Building."¹⁸ Crowds of over one thousand persons attended the meeting and, in a period of less than four months, more than eight hundred persons were converted.¹⁹ Howard A. Goss, a young infidel, who was one of the converts at Galena, "surrendered to the ministry" in the fall of 1905.²⁰ After his "surrender to the ministry," Goss became a student of Parham and has thus written of the events:

"In the summer of 1905, Reverend Parham took a band of twenty-four workers in Houston, Texas to open up a work. Soon a great revival was on. . . .

Then in September of 1905 a camp meeting was held in Columbus, Kansas. I took two weeks off from my job and attended. . . . Some of the workers who had gone south to Texas were back. They told how the Lord had worked in the field. This overjoyed all our hearts.

A second group was now preparing to go to Texas to assist in opening more works. At the close of the Columbus Camp a company of twenty-two workers was ready to go to Texas for active evangelistic training.

True to my promise [his surrender to preach] I sold my horse, rig, and everything I had, and bought a ticket to Houston."²¹

¹⁸Goss, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 12, 13.

²⁰Ibid., p. 29.

²¹Ibid., p. 29.

Thus, from the inception in Topeka, to the revival trails, the movement spread from the Midwest to the South. The Galena revival was not only significant numerically but also in the fact that one of the converts, Howard A. Goss, was to become an Arkansas leader in the Pentecostal movement. Parham later estimated that some "25,000 Pentecostal believers had come under his influence by the winter of 1905,"²² three years prior to Goss' revivals in Arkansas. As the Pentecostal movement received its initial reception in Arkansas, it was at the same time reaching out to other areas of the nation.

²²Charles F. Parham, "The Story of the Origin of the Original Apostolic or Pentecostal Movements," Apostolic Faith, July, 1926, p. 5, cited by Kendrick, op. cit., p. 63.

CHAPTER III

BEGINNING OF THE ARKANSAS PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT

Arkansas became a fertile field for the Pentecostal movement. This chapter concerns the entry of the Pentecostal movement into the State of Arkansas, which began with the work of three pioneer Pentecostal preachers, namely Howard A. Goss, E. N. Bell, and D. C. O. Opperman, who were the leading personnel of the era from 1908-1914.

I. THE REVIVALS OF HOWARD A. GOSS

The work of the Assemblies of God in Arkansas evidently began with the arrival of Howard A. Goss. A convert of Parham, Goss had migrated from Kansas to Texas to attend a Bible school in Houston and to work in Pentecostal revival endeavors in that state. Goss did revival work in Texas from 1905-1908 before coming to Arkansas.

After a camp meeting in Houston in July of 1908 Goss was contacted about coming to Arkansas for revivals by E. J. Bayse of Stuttgart. Bayse, a businessman in Stuttgart but formerly of Houston, had requested Goss to come and open up the "new fields" of Arkansas. Goss said,

"Bayse...bought us a large, new Gospel tent, and asked us to come to Arkansas to open up new fields there."¹

Reverend Goss responded to Bayse's offer of a new tent, and between July and Christmas of 1908, he had pitched the tent in Stuttgart, Pine Bluff, Redfield, Hot Springs, Malvern and Benton.² Even though Goss wrote a glowing account of the success of these revivals, no church was established in any of these towns until a much later date.³

Since the Arkansas climate was unsuitable to tent evangelist in the winter, Goss returned to Texas and remained there until the summer of 1909.⁴

The second Arkansas revival effort of Goss began in the summer of 1909. Apparently he had won some converts in the first revival effort in the state; therefore, Goss returned to part of his former campaign trail, namely, Hot Springs, Stuttgart, and a camp meeting in Redfield. Of the camp meeting in Redfield, Goss wrote:

¹Goss, op. cit., p. 82.

²Ibid.

³Malvern Assembly of God is generally accepted as the first Pentecostal work in Arkansas. It was established in 1909.

⁴Goss, op. cit., p. 118.

"Here I was much pressed in the spirit of God, also depressed in my own spirit, because of certain conditions in the meeting which could not be surmounted."

"One night after service I went into the woods to pray and seek the Lord. While there, the Lord told me to 'Get up! and go into a place which I will show you.'⁵ He led us [sic] to Malvern, Arkansas..."⁵

Because of previous persecutions, Goss attempted no advertising in Malvern. He wanted to get the work started for God "before the devil himself knew we were in town."⁶

The Malvern revival lasted for three months in the tent with two hundred-fifty persons converted and baptized in the Holy Spirit during the first two months.⁷ Out of the revival of three months about seventy-five people were called to preach.⁸ A convert stated that in the first year over one-hundred forty persons were called to preach from the church that was established as a direct result of Goss' 1909 revival.⁹

⁵Goss, op. cit., pp. 118, 119. ⁶Ibid., p. 120.

⁷Ibid., p. 70.

⁸Ibid., p. 120.

⁹Statement by Clarence T. Craine, February 18, 1969, personal taped interview. Craine had been a minister in the Pentecostal movement since 1909.

Goss, an evangelist, was discontented with being a pastor. After he stayed with the Malvern congregation for approximately one year, he returned to the revival trail. Before Goss departed Malvern he invited E. N. Bell to take over the Malvern church. Bell accepted the invitation and Goss departed shortly, but frequently returned to help Bell.

II. THE PASTORATE OF E. N. BELL

Bell, forty-five years of age, had recently married. He and his companion assumed the responsibility of the Malvern congregation in the summer of 1910. Previously Bell had been a Baptist minister in Fort Worth, but in July of 1908, he had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Chicago.¹⁰

By 1910 the Malvern congregation had grown to a membership of approximately two-hundred-fifty. The crowds increased until a new facility was required. A loan was obtained for \$600 to erect a new building.¹¹

Under the leadership of Bell the church's influence grew. Bell, seeing the need for a paper to guide those who had been converted under Goss' ministry (and other Pente-

¹⁰Winehouse, op. cit., p. 39.

¹¹records of Malvern Church. Reposited in the church building.

costal preachers in the United States), moved a paper called the Word and Witness to Malvern from Ft. Worth.¹² The name was changed from Word and Witness to The Apostolic Faith.¹³ Then after having obtained another paper, also called the Word and Witness, published by J. A. Corbell in Texarkana, Bell merged the two papers and renamed the continuation Word and Witness.¹⁴

Malvern became somewhat of a national center because of the influence of Bell's paper, Word and Witness. A typical issue advertised "Revival News in the Home Land" as far west as San Bernardino, California, as far east as Ellijay, Georgia. Three foreign missionary reports were listed as well as fourteen camp meetings.¹⁵ Malvern also served, because of Bell's paper, as a contact point for addresses of evangelists throughout the United States and foreign missionaries throughout the world. The "call" for

¹²Goss, op. cit., p. 122. Prior to Ft. Worth, the paper had been published in Houston, Texas.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Wm. B. McCafferty, "Looking Back on a Quarter of a Century," Pentecostal Gleaner, XVIII (September, 1939), p. 2.

¹⁵Word and Witness IX (July 20, 1913), p. 1.

the Organizational Meeting of the Assemblies of God was issued through the pages of this paper.

The Malvern congregation under Bell was instrumental in establishing new missions in Arkansas. The men called to preach in the Malvern revival of 1909 went in the surrounding counties preaching and establishing new "churches." Statistics are unavailable on precisely how many missions were established, but Craine, one of those sent out, stated:

"I went out in the evangelistic work with an evangelist and his wife as a helper and we travelled in the country north and west of Hot Springs and founded many churches. Then I began preaching and pastoring in those churches."¹⁶

Missions flourished as a result of a revival, but withered almost as quickly as they had arisen.

The Malvern Church was the site of an annual camp meeting. Under the direction of Goss and Bell, the first "Annual Encampment of the Apostolic Faith for the State of Arkansas"¹⁷ was advertised for September 9-25, 1910. The

¹⁶Clarence T. Craine, Jonesboro, Arkansas, personal interview with Earl R. Teeter, February 18, 1969. Craine would not estimate how many churches were established.

¹⁷News item in the Pentecostal Testimony, I (July 1, 1910), p. 10.

Malvern church began and continued this state encampment "on a freewill offering plan."¹⁸ The advertisement stated that "everything will be free as the Lord makes possible."¹⁹

At this camp meeting in the fall of 1910 the issues of the "Finished Work of Calvary" and "The Second Work of Grace" came to a head.²⁰ Since the beginning of the Pentecostal movement the ministers of the "Holiness" persuasion had preached the "Second Work of Grace" message. The "Second Work of Grace" proponents challenged the "Finished Work of Grace" teaching with the following eight point argument:

1. This doctrine aligns its adherents with non-Pentecostals who reject any subsequent work whatsoever.
2. By restricting sanctification to the time of conversion, it will not receive the emphasis it does as a separate work of grace.
3. This "conversion plus a lifetime" view of sanctification is too vague, does not pinpoint the time, and thus fails to provide a 'point of contact' for deliverance from the old nature.
4. It will encourage people to give in to the Adamic nature, for it tells them that they cannot have it eradicated--root, branch and all.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Goss, op. cit., pp. 101-104.

5. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, one must be sanctified, for He will not fill an unclean vessel.
6. It is a denial of a sacred experience in the lives of many splendid Christians . . . and tends to throw the credulous into a state of confusion.
7. God approved the second definite work view by making its proponents the first recipients of the Latter Rain in the Twentieth Century.
8. The conflict over sanctification is dividing the movement, and whatever is schismatic must be wrong.²¹

William A. Durham, of Chicago's North Avenue Mission, an advocate of the "Finished Work" teaching, was at the Malvern Camp meeting. Durham had come as one of the camp speakers, along with A. G. Canada, a Reverend Jackson, S. D. Klinne, and D. C. O. Opperman.²² Interest in the issue ran high, according to Goss, when:

" . . . the 'Finished Work of Calvary' vs 'The Second Work of Grace' was officially discussed. . . . I soon saw the doctrine of the 'Finished Work of Calvary' was right. . . . So for me the 'Second Work' theory soon faded out."²³

²¹Brumback, op. cit., pp. 101-104.

²²Goss, op. cit., p. 126.

²³Ibid.

The issue itself faded after the Malvern Camp meeting and those persons who held the "Second Work of Grace" position found their place in churches of that persuasion, namely, The Church of God (of Cleveland, Tennessee), and The Pentecostal Holiness. The Malvern congregation maintained the Bell and Goss position and continued its work.

Meantime the Malvern church was instrumental in the Bethel Rescue Home in Hot Springs. Information is lacking concerning the founding of the mission, but its purpose was to rescue girls who were in the "white slave prisons."²⁴ The home which was run on "faith lines", was overseen by Mrs. E. W. Chambers.²⁵ Bell and Goss served as trustees of the home and solicited funds through articles printed in the Word and Witness.

Bell remained pastor of the Malvern church until 1914 when he was elected superintendent of the Assemblies of God at the organizational meeting in Hot Springs. Superintendent Bell continued as editor of Word and Witness which was shortly moved to Findley, Ohio, and later to St. Louis, Missouri.

²⁴Word and Witness IX (June 1913).

²⁵Ibid.

Goss and Bell were the two "big names" in Arkansas for the period 1908-1914.²⁶ The men converted under their ministry held what they said with respect. Goss, encouraged by the success of his Arkansas efforts, invited his friend, D. C. O. Opperman, to come to Hot Springs where Goss held a pastorate, to assume temporarily Goss' ministerial responsibilities and to conduct a short-term Bible school. This arrangement left Goss free to travel in the interest of the proposed organizational meeting.

III. THE BIBLE SCHOOL OF D. C. O. OPPERMAN

Opperman was primarily a teacher, having conducted short-term schools in Houston, Texas (1908); Hattiesburg, Mississippi (1909); Joplin, Missouri (1910); Anniston, Alabama (February, 1911); Des Moines, Iowa (October, 1911); and Ft. Worth, Texas (1912); before he came to Hot Springs in January, 1913.²⁷

Opperman followed a basic format for all the schools that he conducted,²⁸ i.e. "a four or five week duration and

²⁶Craine, taped personal interview, February 18, 1969.

²⁷Eugene N. Hastie, History of the West Central District of the Assemblies of God (N.P., 1948), p. 31.

²⁸Craine, taped personal interview, February 18, 1969.

carried on entirely by faith in God to provide all needful things."²⁹ The Arkansas school began in January of 1914 and ran until the last of March. The sessions were conducted in the Grand Opera House on Central Avenue in Hot Springs. McCafferty, an early leader in the movement, recalled that:

" . . . A little old store building on Whittington Avenue was where the students . . . prepared and ate their meals. One by twelve planks made the tables and benches for the dining room."³⁰

The rooms were plain and board was scant. The students, as Crain said, did not know "from what source the next meal would arrive."³¹

The studies were simple, usually consisting of a verse-by-verse exposition.³² Often undue prominence was accorded the operation of the Spirit.³³ The mornings were devoted to teaching and studying; the afternoons to witnessing on the street. The nights were reserved for a revival effort in the opera hall, with student leadership

²⁹Exact dates were not available.

³⁰McCafferty, op. cit., p. 2.

³¹Craine, taped personal interview, February 18, 1969.

³²Brumback, op. cit., p. 110.

³³Ibid.

in the services.³⁴ Studies were sometimes suspended for a practical application of witnessing and praying. Although lacking in formal routine, the Opperman school met a need in the training of young preachers who were directly from the farm.

From these rudimentary beginnings the Pentecostal message was proclaimed throughout much of Arkansas. Hardships were encountered as missions were established by those who valued this message. Although many preachers were involved simultaneously, the preaching and faith of Goss, Bell and Opperman were most instrumental in giving the movement its impetus. In about two years the Pentecostal message had made inroads into most parts of the state. Besides their work in Arkansas, these three men promoted an organizational meeting which attempted to unite all the Pentecostal churches in the United States.

³⁴Craine, taped personal interview, February 18, 1969.

CHAPTER IV

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The entry of the Pentecostal movement into Arkansas in 1908 was under the leadership of Howard A. Goss, E. N. Bell, and D. C. O. Opperman. No organization existed beyond a "gentlemen's agreement" until matters dictated such an organization. Since there were no written credentials for ministers, too great an opportunity was afforded those who would mislead young converts for financial gain or selfish interests. .

The research of this chapter was an examination of the role of Arkansas in the organizational meeting of the Assemblies of God. The early leaders, sensing the need for a central organization, called an organizational meeting which was held in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and resulted in the national establishment known as the General Council of the Assemblies of God. In this manner the Arkansas leaders became national leaders in the Pentecostal movement.

I. THE NEED OF ORGANIZATION

Goss, in explaining the need for organization, stated:

"As our numbers increased, the influx brought with it leaders who did not believe in organization at all; some even preached that anything of that nature (when committed to paper) was of the devil."¹

The need was further underscored when a man would announce that he was the "one with the message." As an illustration, Goss pointed out:

"One afternoon two strangers arrived at the worker's house . . . They said they were 'Apostolic' preachers and were going to attend the service that night. They told which Assembly they had come from and what wonderful meetings they always had. They were invited to attend the seven o'clock street meeting and then to preach later in the Mission Hall.

"That night the two men testified and did fairly well, until the last one, trying to impress their hearers with how much power they had, pointed to a telephone pole and said, 'By this power I have I can climb that pole unaided', and proposed to try. Of course, the workers were horrified, and started a chorus to cover up.

"To complicate matters further, the two preachers were wanted for horse stealing in an eastern state."²

Bell and Goss, having seen several missions practically destroyed by imposters, began issuing credentials [see Fig. I] in 1910 under the name of "Church of God in Christ."³

¹Goss, op. cit., p. 163. ²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 163. This association bore no relation to the colored church of that name.

Since the "Church of God in Christ" was an association and had no organization beyond a "gentlemen's agreement", the credentials failed to correct the "wolf in sheep's clothing" preacher. Goss further stated that:

"It was becoming increasingly apparent that something would have to be done, if we were to preserve the work. New situations were arising all the time, as our work grew larger and more unyielding."⁴

Churches were being "fleeced" and imposters were making off with the churches' finances. Something had to be done. Bell and Goss continued to work toward a solution. Realizing that great care was expedient because some preachers had taught against formal organization, Goss and Bell were cognizant of the fact that:

"Irresponsible brethren, if they heard too much, might immediately use the opportunity to poison the saints against us before we could explain, and call us 'compromisers!'--a serious charge in those days.

"Of necessity, we secretly discussed calling a conference to organize the work. So in November of 1913, Brother Bell and I ventured to announce a conference at Hot Springs, Arkansas, from April 2-12, 1914."⁵

The formal call for the convention was published in the December 12, 1913, Word and Witness. It carried con-

⁴Ibid., p. 163.

⁵Ibid., p. 174.

siderable weight because it was signed by M. M. Pinson (Phoenix, Arizona), A. P. Collins (Ft. Worth, Texas), Howard A. Goss (Hot Springs, Arkansas), D. C. O. Opperman (Houston, Texas), and E. N. Bell (Malvern, Arkansas), all well-known Pentecostal preachers. The call was addressed to:

" . . . all the churches of God in Christ, to all Pentecostal or Apostolic Faith Assemblies who desire with united purpose to co-operate in love and peace. . . ."⁶

Five purposes were enumerated for the called convention:

1. To put churches on a legal basis.
2. To use mission money wisely.
3. To conserve the work at home and abroad.
4. To build a Bible School with a literary department.
5. To teach the same doctrine.⁷

Goss, who was then a Hot Springs pastor, leased the "Grand Opera House" on Central Avenue for six months and moved his congregation into it.⁸

Opperman conducted a Bible School in the Opera House (see Chapter III) while Goss went north to conduct a revival in Wisconsin.⁹ On the way he visited several

⁶Brumback, op. cit., p. 157.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Goss, op. cit., p. 175.

⁹Ibid.

churches, apparently in the interest of the called convention (April 2-14, 1914). Opperman, who had joined in the "call" for a convention with Bell and Goss, had everything in readiness for the convention when Goss returned from his northern campaign.¹⁰

II. THE ORGANIZATION MEETING AT HOT SPRINGS

Registration day of the convention held a great surprise for the men who had worked so long and hard to get the idea of organization generally accepted. In spite of inadequate transportation, over three hundred persons registered representing about twenty states.¹¹ These were a mixed multitude having come for various reasons according to a statement by Goss:

"A great number of ministers from all over the states arrived to attend this assemblage. Some came hoping to block us. Others came to back us. . . . So the first few days of prayer, praise and worship were days of tension and suspicion. No one wanted to express his ideas first. Some-time old friends were even ignored for fear of being seen talking with a 'compromiser'."¹²

¹⁰Goss, op. cit., p. 175.

¹¹Brumback, op. cit., p. 162.

¹²Goss, op. cit., p. 175.

The first three days of the organizational meeting were given over to prayer, testimonies, and sermons.¹³ No one was sure where the other stood on the organization so no business was attempted until April 6, 1914.¹⁴ Suspicions soon gave over to a spirit of fellowship. As Goss said:

"Soon the most blessed spirit of fellowship prevailed throughout the gathered host. Hearts were blended together and a most blessed spirit of love, unity and peace was manifested."¹⁵

Goss did not think that all contention was gone, even-though he seemed to feel that "sermons accomplished the purpose for which they had been inspired."¹⁶

On the third day when business did begin, a committee was appointed by Bell, the acting chairman, to present "suitable reports and resolutions to the convention."¹⁷ A self-appointed committee caucused to counteract the Bell committee. Goss wrote:

"One night a group of opposition ministers met privately and formed a resolution to be brought to the floor . . . a resolution . . . to forestall

¹³Brumback, op. cit., p. 162.

¹⁴Kendrick, op. cit., p. 84.

¹⁵Word and Witness, April 20, 1914, p. 1.

¹⁶Goss, op. cit., p. 176.

¹⁷Brumback, op. cit., p. 174.

any move on our part toward rigid organization.

"The next day they unexpectedly read their proposal from the floor. This was a surprise to us, but as we listened, we heard, to our great joy, our own idea being read out."¹⁸

The statement was as follows:

1. That God, our heavenly Father, sent His only begotten Son into the world who built and established His church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the head and chief corner stone.

2. That the holy inspired scriptures are the all-sufficient rule for faith and practice and we shall not add to or take from them.

3. That Christ commanded that there should be no schism in His body, the General Assembly and church of the first born, which are written in Heaven.

4. That we recognize ourselves as members of said Assembly of God and do not believe in identifying ourselves into a sect or denomination which constitutes an organization which legislates or forms laws and articles of faith and has jurisdiction over its members and creates unscriptural lines of fellowship and disfellowship, [sic] which separates itself from other members of the General Assembly of the first born.¹⁹

¹⁸Goss, op. cit., p. 176.

¹⁹Minutes, cited by Brumback, p. 175.

The ice was broken and the convention proceeded to the main business, namely a concrete statement for organization. The resolutions were as follows:

"Resolved, first, that we recognize that we have assembled as a general council of Pentecostal saints from local churches of God in Christ, Assemblies of God, and various Apostolic Faith Missions and churches and Full Gospel Pentecostal Missions, and Assemblies of like faith in the United States and foreign lands, whose purpose is not to legislate laws of government, nor usurp authority over various Assemblies, nor to deprive them of their scriptural rights and privileges.

Second, to recognize scriptural methods and rules of unity, fellowship, work and business for God, and to disapprove all unscriptural methods and conduct, endeavoring to keep the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and to walk accordingly. (Eph. 4:1-32).

Finally, that we recognize all of the above said Assemblies of various names, and, when speaking of them, refer to them by the general scriptural name, i.e. 'Assembly of God', and adopt it as soon as possible for the purpose of convenience, unity, fellowship and to be more scriptural and legal in transacting business, owning property, and executing missionary work at home and foreign lands."²⁰

Two knotty problems faced the convention. One was the type of government for the newly-founded council, and

²⁰Ibid.

the other a doctrinal statement, which the convention might approve. The first was resolved by an agreement that the relationship of the local congregation to the organization was a congregational one. One of the basic declarations of the organizational meeting in Hot Springs was that the central organization was not to "usurp authority over the various Assemblies."²¹ The second problem of a doctrinal position was dispelled by a simple statement that the "Bible was to be the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice."²²

In addition, the convention approved the authorization of twelve men "to act in all necessary matters on behalf of this General Council as a Home and Foreign Missionary and Executive Presbytery during the ensuing year, or until their successors are appointed."²³ With the addition of the presbytery the structure became more than Congregationalism.

III. THE RESULTS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Thus the various missions were united under one common organization to be called the Assemblies of God. Out

²¹Minutes of the original meeting, cited by Brumback, op. cit., p. 175.

²²Kendrick, op. cit., p. 85.

²³Ibid., pp. 86, 87.

of the five original purposes for the meeting, three were immediately accomplished. As soon as practical legal instruments were drawn up, thus renaming each mission as an Assembly of God. As a result of the co-operative effort between the central organization and the local churches, a missions secretary was appointed to see that mission money was used wisely. Credentials were issued and revoked by the central organization, thus helping conserve work at home and abroad.²⁴ Two of the purposes, the founding of a Bible school with a literary department and the teaching of the same doctrine discussed in Chapter V, awaited a later date than 1914.

The work of the organizational meeting had proved fruitful even though it left much to be done in the way of genuinely uniting the congregations of the Pentecostal movement. Though united in three of the five main purposes for the meeting, one of the purposes omitted was to cause dissent and major division at a later time.

²⁴Ibid.

"Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always." - Matt. 28: 19-20.

CREDENTIALS

OR

CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION AND UNITY.

This is to Certify:

That the bearer hereof Harland Robins
of Wahvern, State of Ark

having been called by the Holy Ghost and ordained in regular council in conjunction with Christ's assembly at
Wahvern State of Ark

in the "CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST" and in unity with the Apostolic Faith Movement

as a Helper in the Gospel of Christ, is hereby

commended in such office to the "CHURCHES OF GOD IN CHRIST," (1 Thes. 2:14) under the usages governing the same, and to all Christians everywhere, so long as the present unity of the Spirit exists and while maintaining a godly life and a Scriptural standard in teaching.

Harvard A. Boss

G. N. Bell
Pastor

Date Sept. 15, 1911.

FIGURE I

EARLY MINISTERIAL CREDENTIALS OF G. N. ROBBINS

CHAPTER V

THE MOVEMENT IN DISSENT

The infant organization of the Pentecostal movement officially organized in April of 1914 and then one year old, was shaken by a theological controversy; namely, the "New Issue." Until this controversy was precipitated, the General Council of the Assemblies of God had declared no doctrinal statement except "the Bible is the all-sufficient rule for faith and practice." By 1916 the doctrinal dissent had arisen to such proportions that a split occurred, and the General Council was obliged to meet and work out an explicit doctrinal statement agreeable to the majority of the constituency of the denomination. The doctrinal statement agreed upon was commonly known as the "Sixteen Fundamental Truths" [see Appendix B]. This chapter concerns the "New Issue" and how it contributed to the production of that doctrinal statement.

I. THE ORIGIN OF THE NEW ISSUE

The "New Issue" according to Goss was made possible because:

". . . (Pentecostal) preachers were far more afraid of compromising a message which they believed to be God [sic] than they were of backsliding. . . . Consequently, a preacher who did not dig up

some new slant on a Scripture, or get some new revelation . . . was considered slow, stupid, unspiritual . . . For many years this was common practice. Our eyes were so constantly being opened to some new phase of the Word of God, that, when we met each other, nothing seemed to be so important a topic of conversation as the scriptures. A familiar and most absorbing question when preachers met was: 'What new revelation have you received?'"¹

John G. Scheppe was the one who received the new revelation of Jesus-name, commonly known as the "New Issue." Scheppe was attending a camp meeting of April, 1913, in Arroyo Seco, California. As was the practice of some ministers to spend long periods in prayer, Scheppe had been challenged by the camp meeting speaker to pray. As was reported by Brumbak, Scheppe:

" . . . was so inspired that he spent a night in prayer. Along toward morning he was given a glimpse of the power of that blessed name. Leaping to his feet, he ran through the camp, shouting to all the early risers what the Lord had shown him. The 'revelation' made a profound impression upon the campers and all rejoiced with Scheppe, . . . concerning the 'Name of Jesus'." ²

The real issue was not baptism using the formula of "Jesus only" for that had been used for several years, but

¹Goss, op. cit., pp. 155-6.

²Brumbak, op. cit., p. 191.

the issue was that the only scriptural baptism was in Jesus' name, and not the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.³ The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were mere titles of the Godhead, but the name was Jesus. The fact which the "Oneness" failed to see was that this was not a "New Issue," but rather an old one. The movement known historically as "modalism" was practically the same in concept as the "New Issue."⁴

II. THE NEW ISSUE RAGING

The revelation of Scheppe had already been practiced prior to 1915. Goss, when first converted in Galena, Kansas, was baptized using the Oneness formula. McClain stated: "In the year 1903 . . . H. A. Goss was converted and buried in Jesus' name through water baptism."⁵ Goss later said that he was "too young and new in Pentecost to fully under-

³The oneness position as of 1968. Clarence Craine, personal interview, February 18, 1969.

⁴Robert A. Baker, A Summary of Christian History, (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1959), p. 35. Baker's discussion on "modalism" was practically the same as Clarence Craine's statement on the "Oneness" of the Godhead. Clarence Craine, personal interview, February 18, 1969.

⁵S. C. McClain, Student Handbook of Facts in Church History, (Tupelo, Miss.: College Press, 1951), p. 3.

stand its consequences at the time."⁶

The issue became an extremely controversial one in 1915 in Arkansas. Exact evidence was lacking as to who preached the first "Oneness" message in the state; but at a general camp meeting, called for August 15 through September 12 in Little Rock, L. C. Hall, of Zion, Illinois, a Oneness preacher was invited to be camp speaker. His theme for the meeting, Col. 2:9-12, "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily," capitalized upon the Oneness controversy.⁷

The latter part of the general camp meeting was the Little Rock State Camp Meeting (September 2-12, 1915) at which time the presbyters looked into the matter of the forms of words to be used in baptizing converts.⁸ As a result of the deliberation, a personal statement was signed by seven of the eleven presbyters, the total number present. The other four were out of the state and not present at the meeting.

⁶Fred J. Foster, Think It Not Strange: A History of the Oneness Movement, (St. Louis, Mo.: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1965), p. 71.

⁷Foster, op. cit., p. 56.

⁸News item, Word and Witness (Evidently September or October of 1915 since there is a report of the September camp meeting and an invitation to the October 1-10 council which convened at St. Louis).

The time for a personal statement from the leadership of the Assemblies of God was overdue. A personal statement of the presbyters was drawn up and divided into seven divisions. Of the seven divisions, four were concerned with the "New Issue" of which three were most pertinent to this study. The first statement dealt directly with water baptism.

"1. That the essential thing in Christian baptism is the burial, in obedience to the command of Christ . . . and that its validity should not be repudiated solely because of some slight variation in the formula repeated over him in the act; that the use, in connection with baptism, of any of the following passages of Scriptures should be accepted: Matt. 28:19; Act 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; or 19:5.

2. That the Scriptures give no example of any one who has once had christian sic baptism ever being re-baptized.

3. That, therefore, re-baptizing of converts who have been once buried with Christ in baptism should be discouraged, and that ministers should respect, as a rule, such baptisms performed by their fellow ministers.

4. That in the case of individual conscience, each minister or candidate should have the full liberty to be personally baptized with any words he prefers, so long as he stays with the scriptures on the subject . . ."⁹

The second statement summed up the relation of the Father and the Son in conjunction with the "New Issue."

⁹Ibid.

"We hold that Jesus is the Son of the living God and that the living God is the Father of Jesus, and we are opposed to all such unscriptural teaching as that the Son is his own Father. This would be an absurdity."¹⁰

The third statement declared the relationship of the "Son to the Holy Ghost."

"Nothing is more unscriptural than that the word 'Christ' means the Holy Ghost. Jesus stood in the Jordan at his baptism praying and the Spirit descended in the form of a dove and abode upon him. God, the Father, spoke out of heaven saying, 'This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him', (Matt. 3:16, 17). We believe it all just as given. God is a Spirit, or the Lord is a Spirit; but the word Christ means anointed--anointed, of course, with the Holy Ghost; and we also are anointed with the Holy Ghost, but that does not make us the Holy Ghost. Jesus was God in the flesh before the Holy Ghost fell on him in Jordan."¹¹

Instead of cooling the Oneness down, Goss was re-baptized at the Little Rock meeting in Jesus' name by Bell and became one of the Oneness' most active proponents in the state. Complicating the controversy further, Goss was elected chairman of the Arkansas District of the Assemblies of God.

In the fall of 1915 the issue became "too hot to handle." The Word and Witness flatly refused to take issue.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

"In the future we shall refuse to publish reports containing references to baptism in a controversial spirit. We believe in baptism in the likeness of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, when so understood, is Christian baptism. All references to Acts 2:38 and Matthew 28:19 is [sic] considered out of order and will be cut out of all reports which we publish. We will report so many were baptized in water, but will omit the scripture reference with a punch in it, which is aimed at the other party who does not see as you do about the form of words to be used in administering Christian baptism."¹²

But in the next issue of Word and Witness the lead article was Bell's statement of why he was re-baptized in Jesus' name. Bell, editor-in-chief of Word and Witness, then the official organ of the entire Assemblies of God, stated that:

"... I saw that all Scriptures on the subject represents the apostles as teaching and commanding baptism in the name of the Lord, etc. I consider the apostles to be the best interpreters on earth of what Jesus meant by Matt. 28:19."¹³

In the same paper a call was sent forth for the St. Louis General Council to settle the question on the proper words to be used in baptism. All correspondence was

¹²Foster, op. cit., p. 57. Bell had already been re-baptized in Jesus' name earlier in the summer of 1915.

¹³News item in Word and Witness, September, 1915, (St. Louis: Gospel Publishing House) p. 4.

directed to Howard A. Goss.¹⁴ Two Oneness men, Bell and Goss, were occupying extremely influential positions in the movement.

III. CULMINATION OF THE DISSENT OVER THE "NEW ISSUE"

The Council opened in Turner Hall in St. Louis on October 1, 1915. The first three days were devoted to testimonies, praise, and non-controversial subjects.¹⁵ But on Tuesday, October 5, a forum on the baptismal formula was initiated that hopefully would settle the controversy. Bell and Haywood (of Indiana) were chosen for Acts 2:38; Collins and Jacob Miller for Matthew 28:19.¹⁶ After a lengthy discussion, the resolutions committee pleaded for toleration for both positions of the baptismal formula:

"We strongly advise against all strife, harsh contention or division. . . This council refuses to attempt to bind the consciences of men in this matter, refuses to draw any lines of Christian fellowship on either side of the question . . . so long as the person . . . keeps in a sweet Christian spirit, is not factious, does not tear up Assemblies, etc."¹⁷

¹⁴Article in Word and Witness, October, 1915 XII.

¹⁵Brumback, op. cit., p. 200.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

The council accepted the resolutions committee's request and waited for one year. It was somewhat of a "cold war" since both groups believed themselves to be correct.

In October of 1916 a council was again called for St. Louis. Bethel Chapel, a small church, was to be the site of the fourth General Council of the Assemblies of God.¹⁸ It appeared that the lines were already drawn before the Council opened, for it was soon apparent that the tide was running against the Oneness. At the close of the meeting there were four-hundred twenty-nine Trinitarians and one-hundred fifty-six Oneness.¹⁹

Evidence is lacking as to the number of Arkansas churches and ministers that went out of the Assemblies of God with the "New Issue."²⁰ Since the 1916 General Council, the Assemblies of God has officially stood for the Trinitarian position of theology. The repercussions of the conflict remained until the 1930's.²¹

¹⁸Ibid., p. 204.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 209-10.

²⁰In 1968 there were 98 United Pentecostal churches in Arkansas, a majority of the "Oneness" churches.

²¹Opinion expressed by G. N. Robbins, 1969. Robbins has been associated with the Pentecostals since 1911. See Fig. I, p. 31.

After the 1916 Council, Opperman, one of the leaders of the oneness movement, set up an organization in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, in December, 1916. He issued credentials under the name of the "General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies." Opperman was the general chairman and Goss was secretary.²²

In addition, a training school was founded in Eureka Springs, known as Faith Bible School.²³ Since Opperman and Goss had previously served in influential positions in the Arkansas Assemblies of God, it became necessary for the Arkansas District to oppose the school.

The 1917 Arkansas District Council publicly opposed the school by passing a resolution condemning the "New Issue" for "denying the scriptural teaching of the Trinity."²⁴ Thus, Goss and Opperman, two of the most influential persons in beginning the Pentecostal movement in Arkansas became opposed to the Trinitarian baptismal formula of the Assemblies of God churches, and through a schism known as the "New Issue" set up their own organization. Because of the division, a doctrinal statement was drawn up and approved by the Assemblies of God, [see Appendix B] attempting to block any future divisions in the organization.

²²Foster, op. cit., p. 73.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Minutes, 1917, p. 8.

CHAPTER VI

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE ARKANSAS DISTRICT

Soon after the organizational meeting of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in April of 1914, the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God came into being. Information remained unavailable as of 1968 on many important details of the meeting. This chapter is an examination of the organization and policy of the Arkansas Assemblies of God.

I. THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING AT RUSSELLVILLE

The available material indicated that the district was organized in Russellville, Arkansas, in September, 1914. Of the meeting, little is known except that about twenty ministers were present and the meeting took place on East "G" Street under the shade of an oak tree. Howard A. Goss was elected chairman; E. R. Fitzgerald, Jacob Miller, and C. A. Lasater were elected district presbyters. Two others at the meeting included L. L. Riley and W. H. Hacker.¹

The Arkansas District had received authority to organize from the General Council which had met in Hot Springs in April, 1914. Since the District Council was the

¹C. A. Lasater, Pentecostal Gleaner, Vol. 8, No. 5, September 1939, p. 1.

"creature of the General Council and subordinate thereto, [it] cannot be authorized, in any way to violate the principles of the General Council constitutional agreements of by-laws."²

The District Council's structure was basically patterned after the General Council, having a chairman, presbytery, and a secretary-treasurer (the second year). The Council was not incorporated or chartered since it received its authority directly from the General Council.

The 1921 District Council session made this view clear when it adopted the following resolution:

". . . All local Assemblies which co-operate with the state and General Council are free to govern themselves as separate and sovereign bodies. Our relation to them is merely co-operative. We recommend and advise, but do not compel."³

II. THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The District Council remained the highest legislative and policy making body amenable only to the General

²Minutes of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, 1955 (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1955), p. 60. Hereafter minutes of general council meetings of the Assemblies of God will be cited as General Council Minutes followed by the year of the meeting.

³Minutes of the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God, 1921, (Hot Springs and Little Rock: Arkansas District of the Assemblies of God, 1921), p. 16. Hereafter minutes of the Arkansas District of the Assemblies of God will be cited as Minutes followed by the year.

Council. Its membership consisted of all ordained and licensed ministers of the Arkansas Assemblies of God, plus one lay delegate from each sovereign church. The sessions have been conducted annually since their inception. The District Council had supervision over all the activities of the Assemblies of God within its geographical boundaries, "except such as agreed upon by the District Council and the General Council officials."⁴ The body could not rule on matters of doctrine (this would usurp the authority of the General Council) but primarily acted on matters of policy. The District Council had no regular meeting place until 1953 [See Appendix A] when Hot Springs was chosen as the permanent site.

III. THE PRESBYTERS

The Executive Presbytery. The first council set up three district presbyters to serve the interest of the district. Since no secretary was elected at the first council, the presbyters evidently did not deal in financial matters. At the 1917 council a motion was voted down to increase the number of presbyters from three to five, which would have been patterned after the General Council.

⁴General Council Minutes, 1953, p. 45.

Instead, a motion prevailed to elect seven men as presbyters.⁵ The function of the office has remained basically the same throughout the years, but the number of presbyters has fluctuated considerably. In 1920 there were eight,⁶ in 1926, five executive presbyters and twelve associate presbyters.⁷ In 1928, the presbytery was further divided into three categories; namely, district presbyters at large, executive presbyters, and sectional presbyters.⁸

The executive presbyters did not gain much authority until 1931. As late as 1928, any minister might attend the presbytery meeting with considerable voice. At one such meeting in Malvern,

"Present besides all the District Presbyters executive presbyters were several district ministers who were seated in the meeting with voice and voting privileges."⁹

Through the years, the authority of the office has been amplified, so that from 1931 to 1968 the role of executive presbyter was as follows:

⁵Minutes, 1917, p. 3.

⁶Minutes, 1920, inside cover.

⁷Minutes, 1926, inside cover. The associate presbyters were forerunners of the sectional presbyters. Fay Hutchinson, personal interview.

⁸Minutes, 1928, inside cover.

⁹Ibid., p. 5.

"The Executive Presbyter [sic] shall act as trustees of this fellowship and shall have general oversight of the activities and departments of the same during the interm [sic] of the District Council sessions, unless the District Council shall make other provisions. It shall be authorized to act for the fellowship in all matters that affect its interests while the District Council is not in session. . . . its decisions shall be final unless revised by the District Council."¹⁰

The Sectional Presbyters. The sectional presbyters were called "associate presbyters" until 1927 when they received their present name of sectional presbyter.¹¹ In 1928 there were five sections, namely Louisiana,¹² Southern, Northeastern, Northwestern and Southwestern Arkansas.¹³ The Louisiana Trinitarian churches joined the Arkansas District, having been known as the Louisiana section. Louisiana became a district to itself in 1936.

By 1931 the duties of the sectional presbyters were definitely determined. Among the duties of a sectional pres-

¹⁰Minutes, 1931, pp. 22, 23.

¹¹Evidently the 1927 council made the change. The 1927 Minutes have been missing for years. But in 1926 the term "associate presbyter" was used and in 1928 the term "sectional presbyter" was accepted as though it had been in existence for some time.

¹²Louisiana had about twelve churches when the "New Issue" came (1914-17) and lost all of them to the "Oneness" (Minutes, 1923, p. 11).

¹³Minutes, 1928, p. 14.

byter were:

- (a) To be under supervisors of their respective sections.
- (b) To take the initiative in settling all difficulties, which may arise in his particular section.¹⁴

The basic duties listed by the 1931 minutes made the sectional presbyter a liaison between the District and the churches, a function which has continued.

In 1937 the sections were divided so that the original four were made eight.¹⁵ In 1946 the state was further divided into fourteen sections, because of "road conditions and distance [which] makes it impractical for good attendance at sectional meetings."¹⁶ A central section was added in 1955¹⁷ which brought the total to fifteen.

IV. OFFICERS OF THE DISTRICT

In the beginning of the organization of the Arkansas District only one officer was elected, the chairman. The following year another office was added, that of secretary;

¹⁴Minutes, 1931, p. 23.

¹⁵Minutes, 1937, p. 3.

¹⁶Minutes, 1946, p. 71.

¹⁷Minutes, 1955, p. 102.

and in 1923 an assistant chairman was elected. In 1927 the titles were changed from chairman and assistant chairman to superintendent and assistant superintendent. This was in keeping with the pattern set by the General Council, a practice that continued. The district superintendent had the oversight of the district work when the District Council was not in session. He headed the District office, presided over the executive presbyters' meetings, administered discipline when directed by the executive presbytery, and signed all District credentials and legal documents.¹⁸

The assistant superintendent was primarily a person to fill the vacancy of the superintendent should one occur. He was also a member of the executive committee and executive presbytery.¹⁹

The secretary-treasurer had the responsibility of keeping records of the general meetings, maintained an accurate list of all the District's ministers and churches, was custodian of the official seal, and issued credentials upon recommendations of proper authorities. He was responsible for District funds and submitted a financial report to

¹⁸Minutes, 1968, p. 16.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 17.

the District Council and the executive presbytery. In addition, the secretary-treasurer served as director of the education department.²⁰

V. FISCAL POLICY OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Arkansas District has made several changes in its fiscal policy. For the early years, the major expense was a state camp meeting which was conducted on a free-will offering basis. Each Assembly was to take an offering "to help bear the financial burden of the Lord's work in this district."²¹ The officers of the District received little financial remunerations for their services. Their financial support generally came from their pastorate. In 1923 the chairman became a fulltime officer of the District.²² No salary was guaranteed, but offerings were taken where he ministered. A system in which the ministers paid their tithes to the district was worked out early and has continued.²³ Audits were made annually by a certified public accountant prior to the district council.

²⁰Ibid., p. 18.

²¹Minutes, 1917, p. 6.

²²Minutes, 1923, p. 14.

²³Fay Hutchinson, personal interview.

VI. DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THE ARKANSAS DISTRICT

The doctrinal statement of the Arkansas District has been adopted from the General Council's declaration. The District does not legislate in matters of doctrine, a prerogative reserved for the General Council.

From the organization in 1914 to the division in 1916 the only doctrinal statement was that the "Bible was the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice." But, after the split in 1914 over the doctrine of the Trinity, a "Statement of Fundamental Truths" [see Appendix C] was adopted. Little modification has occurred through the years from the original statement.

A review of the organization of the Arkansas District has revealed a close correlation to the organization of the National Organization. The District Council parallels the General Council and its subordinate structure and policy.

interest had been generated by 1913 to warrant the publishing of Sunday School materials by the Gospel Publishing House, the publishing was done by the circulation of the

¹ Ibid. Early roots of the Gospel Publishing House were in Palmyra where E. N. Bell published the Book of Wonders, which moved to Findley, Ohio, then to St. Louis, and to the present location in Springfield, Missouri.

CHAPTER VII

DEPARTMENTAL ORGANIZATION OF THE ARKANSAS DISTRICT

The Arkansas District of the Assemblies of God has formed divisional units to enhance its fellowship potential. This chapter is a discussion of the various departments organized for the purpose of educating and propagating the tenets of the faith to the members of the denomination.

I. THE SUNDAY SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

The national leadership of the Assemblies of God saw the need of training to augment and stabilize the churches. National leaders, such as J. W. Welch, had written of the need of Sunday Schools as early as 1915.¹ J. R. Flowers, the first secretary of the Assemblies of God, and his wife had written comments on the International Sunday School Lessons in 1914 and published them in the Christian Evangel, the first weekly voice of the Assemblies of God.² Enough interest had been generated by 1919 to warrant the publishing of Sunday School materials by the Gospel Publishing House, the publishing firm owned by the Assemblies of God.³

¹Kendrick, op. cit., p. 118. ²Ibid., pp. 118-9.

³Ibid. Early roots of the Gospel Publishing House were in Malvern where E. N. Bell published the Word and Witness, which moved to Findley, Ohio, then to St. Louis, and to its present location in Springfield, Missouri.

The development of the Assemblies of God Sunday Schools in Arkansas was slow. The following three factors seemed to contribute to the hesitancy of the churches in developing these schools:

- (1) A tendency to deprecate any type of formal training.
- (2) A great emphasis upon the imminent return of Christ.⁴
- (3) The church buildings were usually one-room, i.e. an auditorium, and not conducive to classroom teaching.

Even though there were formidable barriers, the leadership of the district, having seen the need for more training in the churches, appointed a committee in 1925 to look into the feasibility of developing Sunday Schools. The committee investigated and found a "dire lack of interest."⁵ The committee recommended the following resolution to the 1926 Arkansas District Council session:

- (1) That the general form of Sunday School work be followed . . . by electing a District Superintendent to supervise the work of the district.
- (2) That the duty of such superintendent shall be to organize new schools . . . hold Sunday School revivals, to conduct Sunday School teachers institutes, [and] to attend Fellowship Council

⁴Kendrick, op. cit., p. 47.

⁵Minutes, 1928, p. 9.

- (3) That means for such activities shall be provided for by a tithe of the Sunday School funds of the District. . . .⁶

The resolution passed and David Burris, one of the committee-men, was elected first Sunday School Superintendent of the Arkansas District. Although there were Sunday School personnel at the publishing house in Springfield, Burris became the first District Superintendent in the United States.

Burris assumed the office, according to his statement, with "practically no plans" for the carrying out of the resolution of the Council. Being the first Sunday School Superintendent in the Assemblies of God, he worked out his plans experimentally. His effectiveness was further reduced by misunderstandings, oppositions and suspicions⁷ that he encountered. Nine new Sunday Schools⁸ were inaugurated in 1926 as a result of Burris' effort. He continued as District Sunday School Superintendent for five years (1926-1931), at which time he became District Superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Arkansas, a post which he held until 1951.⁹

⁶Minutes, 1928, p. 9.

⁷Minutes, 1927, p. 8.

⁸Ibid., p. 9.

⁹Burris, in addition, incorporated a youth program into his Sunday School work. This facet has been dealt with in the next section under the heading of Christ's Ambassadors Department.

When Burris assumed the office of District Superintendent Mrs. Agnes Stokes was selected to fill the vacated office of District Sunday School Director. One of the first acts of Stokes was to make a tour of the district. The district fellowship accepted the change in leadership, receiving her warmly. In a letter to a friend, she reflected upon this by saying:

" . . . the Lord gave me wonderful favor wherever I went. . . .

"Now that it seemed I had the good wishes of the district brethren and that they felt assured we were not trying to undo anything, they gave me their wholehearted support. Although there was no outlined policy or any program [that] I was to follow, I began step by step to do little things."¹⁰

Burris had forged the new program for five years before Stokes assumed office. Much of the opposition and misunderstanding had been overcome by him.¹¹ Since these obstacles were minimized, Stokes began a program to put the Sunday School into action.

One of the first actions of Stokes was to begin a Vacation Bible School. The first one was called for Russellville. Since no materials were being published on Vacation

¹⁰Agnes Stokes, personal letter.

¹¹Burris had unusual respect in the Arkansas District. He was returned to a district office about twenty-five times (1926-51).

Bible Schools in the Assemblies of God, Stokes developed her own.¹² Over three hundred students attended this initial Bible School. Young people were brought in from other sections of the state to help in this school and to gain practical knowledge by observing the endeavor. Ten of them went into other communities and conducted their own schools using the Russellville experiment as a guide.¹³ This pattern continued so that three summers later (1932-1935), forty Vacation Bible Schools were conducted.¹⁴

Another contribution of Stokes to the movement was the workers' training program. She, having obtained training in the Baptist organization, believed that training courses would be beneficial to the Assemblies of God. So an introductory course was ordered from Standard Publishing Company of Ohio. Stokes taught young people and then sent them out to teach others.

From this inception, the Gospel Publishing House began publication of study books for workers' training. Thirteen books were developed quickly. The original study course consisted of the following areas of study:

¹²It would have been considered "unpardonable" to have used materials of another denomination.

¹³Agnes Stokes, personal letter.

¹⁴Minutes, 1935, p. 51.

Bible Preview

Old Testament

New Testament

Principles and Methods of Teaching

The Life of Christ

Dispensations

Personal Work

Biblical Instruction

Child Study

• Sunday School Administration

Doctrine

Prophecy

The texts were written to appeal to the masses; and, even though elementary, the studies did much to improve the teaching in the Assemblies of God Sunday Schools.¹⁵

Meanwhile, the Sunday Schools of the Arkansas District of the Assemblies were still growing. Enthusiasm ran high as interest in workers' training and Vacation Bible School continued. In the summer of 1937 about one hundred schools were conducted in Arkansas.¹⁶

¹⁵Kendrick, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

¹⁶Minutes, 1937, p. 60.

New churches were opened, [see Fig. II, p. 78] and numerical growth was noted. The slogan for the district was: "A church in every city, in every town, in every village, wherever there is a post office, and at every cross-roads."¹⁷ The thirties and forties saw unprecedented growth in the movement. One year's Sunday School growth was over 3,000.¹⁸

II. THE CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS DEPARTMENT

During the earlier years of the Arkansas Assemblies of God (1914-1926), the youth program was left entirely to the local congregation. Some churches had excellent programs while others ignored the youth.

Agnes Stokes wrote:

"In as much as many organizations were so very highly organized, the brethren were shy about this. Especially [sic] among young people, as has always been the desire for change, it was feared the youth would be so far reaching in their influence to cause even among older ones, formality which was greatly feared."¹⁹

¹⁷Minutes, 1943, p. 48.

¹⁸Average attendance in 1946 was 25,086, in 1947, 28,120, minutes, 1947, p. 66. Other comparative figures on Sunday School growth for the forties were unavailable.

¹⁹Stokes, personal letter.

David Burris, the first District Sunday School Superintendent saw the need of building a youth program among the churches in the state. "Burris," Stokes said, "fearing the disapproval of his elders . . . subtly incorporated young people in sic his Sunday School"²⁰ program. (The exact date of this action is unavailable, but was about 1926 or 1927). Since this step was not disapproved as Burris feared, he proceeded into the development of the youth program.

Similar youth groups had gained momentum in Northern and Southern California about 1925, which was a year or two before Burris' program. Headed by Carl E. Hatch, the youth group of Bethel Temple of Los Angeles organized under the name of Christ's Ambassadors."²¹ Other names were advanced, especially in California, such as "Pentecostal Ambassadors for Christ" and "Christian Crusaders."²² But after an article in the Pentecostal Evangel which suggested that youth groups embrace the name "Christ's Ambassadors"²³ the Arkansas group adopted this name.

In the meantime Burris had been making considerable headway with the youth group in Arkansas. To the 1927 Council he made the following report:

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Kendrick, op. cit., p. 141.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

"Two . . . services were given in behalf of the district [sic] young people's work. A president (Annie Skelton) and secretary (Very [Vera] Riley) was [sic] chosen to help care for the state work."²⁴

Burriss was able to get the youth work on its feet and prove to the elders that young people were not monsters as some feared, but rather a potential that could be used for the development of churches in Arkansas. The more dedicated and serious ones were often sent into new churches to help in the effort. Twenty new churches were established in the state [probably by young ministers] about 1936.²⁵

As the youth groups continued to grow, new programs were inaugurated. While Stokes was leader, Divisional rallies (i.e. several churches in a given area) came into being.²⁶ These rallies became exceptionally strong attractions for the youth groups as one church competed against other churches for an attendance banner. They were overseen by area directors, who were usually young ministers residing within the given area.

²⁴Minutes, 1927.

²⁵Stokes, personal letter.

²⁶In the sixties the name of the rally was changed from Divisional to Area; as one facetiously said, "So there would be no division among the churches."

The major activity of the youth department has been the missionary endeavor called Speed-the-Light. Officially launched in July of 1944 by the National Youth Department, Speed-the-Light quickly spread across the nation. Originally conceived by Ralph W. Harris, Speed-the-Light was a crusade to provide transportation for the foreign missionaries of the Assemblies of God.

Arkansas became involved in the Speed-the-Light program in 1945. Funds were solicited in 1946 by letters from the district headquarters. In 1947 a pledge system was inaugurated, which has since become a regular means of Speed-the-Light.²⁷

For eleven years (1947-1958) pledges were given by the churches at the District Christ's Ambassadors' Convention; but in 1958 the program was sectionalized. The reasoning was that more churches would participate if the pledges were given on a more local level. The initial tour netted \$23,000 for the program, the largest contribution by the district up to that time.²⁸ These tours have since become an annual affair and have boosted the program toward the \$70,000 per year mark. [See graph, Fig. 3].

²⁷Edwin Burris, personal interview, June 16, 1970. Burris served as District Youth Director for the years 1946-1950.

²⁸Joe Wilmoth, personal interview, June 16, 1970. Wilmoth was District Youth Director 1957-1965.

Since the inauguration of the Speed-the-Light program the Arkansas District Youth Groups have given a total of \$389,058.70.²⁹ The Van Buren youth group led the nation as the number one contributor for several consecutive years, having given a total of \$56,270.25 to the program.³⁰

Another activity of the District Christ's Ambassadors Department has been the sponsoring of summer youth camps. Officially called for by the 1952 Arkansas District Council session, the camps were begun in the summer of 1953.³¹ The three-fold purpose of Christian training, physical development and youth evangelism had not changed over the years.³² The program, therefore, was developed around the pattern of the mornings devoted to study, the afternoons to recreation and the nights to evangelism and worship. The enrollment had increased until six camps were necessary.

Several issues had erupted into controversies over the camping program. Some ministers were fearful when

²⁹Twenty-fifth Anniversary of Speed-the-Light pamphlet. (n.p. [Published by the Christ's Ambassadors Department] n.d.), p. 14.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Merle Harris, personal interview, June 16, 1970. Harris was District Youth Director from 1952 to 1956.

³²Ibid.

attempts were made to run the camps co-educationally.³³ But since having adopted the co-educational plan the camps have noticeably improved.³⁴ In fact, in over fifteen years of camps there has been only one incident resulting in three people being sent home.³⁵

Other programs of the youth department have included Bible quizzes, teen talent contests and Chi Alpha, which was the collegiate youth program.

III. THE WOMEN'S MISSIONARY COUNCIL DEPARTMENT

The Arkansas Women's Missionary Council Department was not organized under the circumstances of misunderstandings and controversy as the Sunday School and Youth Departments were, but like them, it had an uncertain existence for its earlier years.

The District's W. M. C. work was officially launched at Camden, Arkansas, in 1940;³⁶ but several local groups had functioned prior to that time in the state. This agency was basically slanted toward missions and benevolent works.

³³Opinion expressed by Joe Wilmoth, personal interview, June 16, 1970.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Manual, Women's Missionary Council, Assemblies of God, (Arkansas District, Women's Missionary Council, n.d. [no date]), p. 5.

The basic responsibilities of the local groups included the following activities:

- (1) Studying the Bible together.
- (2) Visiting and praying with shut-ins.
- (3) Witnessing.
- (4) Collecting and distributing clothes and food to the needy.
- (5) Distributing literature.
- (6) Conducting monthly foreign mission service.
- (7) Sponsoring fund-raising projects for their local churches.³⁷

Detailed administration was overseen by a District President whose duties included a visit to each section of the state once a year to encourage the local works.³⁸

Information of the District W. M. C. Department has been carried in the Pentecostal Gleaner as well as a monthly news letter from the state office.³⁹

IV. EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

The Educational Department, concerned mainly with the education of young people in other than doctrinal or Biblical subjects, was instituted because of a reaction against some

³⁷Ibid., p. 2.

³⁸Minutes, 1968, p. 47.

³⁹Fay Hutchinson, personal interview.

of the teachings of the public school system of 1929-1930. The Scopes trial had received wide-spread attention. Some mistook this to be the teaching norm of the public schools of Arkansas. The reaction was reflected in the 1929 District Council by the following resolution:

"We as a religious people believe in education. . . . We deplore the conditions that subject our youth into the atheistic influence emanating from the promulgation of the so-called scientific doctrine of evolution and to the injection into our religious and moral conception the venom of the modernistic thought concerning the Bible, commonly called 'Higher Criticism'.

We further deplore the bringing into our educational system, the excessive practice of time-wasting, no-educative public entertainments [sic], which are of a duplicate tendency toward the vaudeville of the French Theatre; and also the innovation of the seductive sportive spirit in the guise of athletics, having its counterpart in the paganish practices of the Olympian games of Ancient Greece, or in the heathenish and barbarous performances of the Gladiatorial combats [sic] of the old Roman Amphitheatre."⁴⁰

The real heart of the resolution called for the establishing of an elementary and a secondary school where the youth of the movement would not be subjected to such evil influences.

⁴⁰Minutes, 1929, p. 13.

After this brief battle the educational program of the Arkansas Assemblies of God turned its attention to the training of ministers. If schools (i.e. elementary and secondary) were to be established, they had to be the work of the local congregations, not of the District.

The direction of the education program was set by 1931 when the educational committee adopted the following recommendation:

"The need of educational training in our Assemblies is steadily increasing. Many who desire to enter the ministry or who are in the ministry and are in need of special training are handicapped in this manner. We recommend that special Bible studies be supervised by the pastor in each Assembly where needs demand, in connection with C. A.'s (youth group), together with others in the Assembly who desire such training."⁴¹

In addition, a list of books was given for study. The following February (1937) an Educational Department was formed with the duties of correlating materials with other departments (i.e. Sunday School, Christ's Ambassadors) or the District and of carrying out the resolution about ministers' study.

By 1940 the educational department had developed a series of studies on three levels for year one, two, and

⁴¹Minutes, 1936, p. 60.

three. The following table gives some indication of the increase in the interest of the studies:

TABLE I

ENROLLMENT GROWTH OF ARKANSAS DISTRICT CORRESPONDENCE COURSES

YEAR	FIRST YEAR STUDY	SECOND YEAR STUDY	THIRD YEAR STUDY	
1940	16	3	2	
1941	28	14	5	
1942	34	16	12	
1943	31	20	17	
1944	28	19	21	42

The Educational Department, having accepted the interest in the reading courses as a criteria for further expansion, presented a resolution to the 1944 District Council session calling for the establishment of a short term "Ministers' and Christian Workers' Normal School."⁴³

The Arkansas District Bible Institute. The first school, known as the Arkansas District Bible Institute, opened in Russellville on January 10, 1944, and ran for six consecutive weeks, until February 21.⁴⁴ The school's facili-

⁴²Minutes, 1940, pp. 57-58; Minutes 1941, pp. 61-62; Minutes, 1942, pp. 60-61; Minutes, 1943, pp. 55-56; Minutes, 1944, pp. 61-62.

⁴³Minutes, 1944, p. 37.

⁴⁴Pentecostal Gleaner, p. 8 (Hot Springs; 1943)
Vol. 22, No. 7.

ties were those of the First Assembly of God in Russellville. David Burris, District Superintendent, served as president; C. A. Lasater as business manager; and Agnes Stokes as principal.⁴⁵ Eight Arkansas ministers served as the faculty. Records are unavailable on the exact number who attended the first institute.

The second institute was conducted at Russellville about one year later. Approximately one-hundred twenty persons attended.⁴⁶ The third institute was conducted one year afterward with one hundred students.⁴⁷

The institutes were made an annual program of the District. These schools were continued until 1949 when South Central Bible College was in full operation.

South Central Bible College. As the Arkansas District Bible Institute developed out of the interest in the study courses, the South Central Bible College, likewise, was the out-growth of the Bible Institute.

Burris, in his superintendent's report to the 1947 District council session, stated:

⁴⁵Minutes, 1944, p. 37.

⁴⁶Minutes, 1945, p. 54.

⁴⁷Pentecostal Gleaner, February, 1946, p. 3, Vol. 24, No. 7.

"I would heartily recommend that we push forward with every available means to a full establishment of our Bible School, (and) Christian Junior College. . . ."48

With the encouragement of the District Superintendent, an educational committee made the following resolution to the same council session:

"Resolved, That this District Council go on record as advocating a District Bible Institute with a view of adding a Junior College as funds will permit and that this matter be left in the hands of the District Executive Presbytery, and that a school committee be appointed at this council to work out details to this end. It is further recommended, that said Bible Institute and Junior College be self-supporting."49

A very strong argument advanced for the school was that sister schools of the denomination were having to turn applicants away because of lack of facilities; therefore, what was needed was a school in the Arkansas District.

The executive presbytery, having received authority from the 1947 District Council session, announced the establishment of the Bible College at the district camp ground at Hot Springs September 7, 1948.⁵⁰ As Burris pointed out:

⁴⁸Minutes, 1947, p. 53.

⁴⁹Minutes, 1947, p. 70.

⁵⁰Minutes, 1948, p. 52.

"Perhaps our first term will be flattering considering the problems and obstacles confronting the establishing of a College in the crowded fields of secular educational institutions."⁵¹

During the first year courses were offered in three departments, namely: Bible School, Bible College and Junior College.⁵² The cost was \$400 for a nine-month term for room, board, and tuition.⁵³ In the fall of the opening year, the school was approved by the Veteran's Department so that ex-servicemen could attend under the "G. I. Bill of Rights."⁵⁴

An indication of the number of students and faculty may be noted by the following table:

TABLE II

NUMBER OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY OF SOUTH CENTRAL BIBLE COLLEGE

YEAR	STUDENTS	FACULTY
1948-1949	110	9
1949-1950	130	14
1950-1951	163	16

⁵¹Ibid., p. 52.

⁵²Pentecostal Gleaner, July, 1948, Vol. 26, No. 1, p. 3.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Pentecostal Gleaner, Dec., 1948, Vol. 27, No. 3, p. 5.

TABLE II (Continued)

YEAR	STUDENTS	FACULTY
1951-1952	94	14
1952-1953	89	11

Since no satisfactory financial program was built whereby the school might be self-supporting, the executive presbytery voted to merge South Central Bible College with a sister school in Springfield, Missouri in 1953.⁵⁶ Immediate reaction to the announced merger was that the executive presbytery had not reflected the consensus of the Arkansas District.⁵⁷ The opponents to the school's closing believed that a District Council would reverse the decision of the executive presbytery. A special one-day council, therefore, was called for April 17, 1953, at Russellville to decide the fate of the school.⁵⁸ Well over two-thirds voted to merge the school with Central Bible College, Springfield, Missouri. The merger was formally completed in the fall of 1952,⁵⁹ thus

⁵⁵Yearbook for 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953 of S.C.B.C.

⁵⁶Personal interview, Fay Hutchinson, District Superintendent.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Minutes, 1953, p. 53.

⁵⁹Fay Hutchinson, personal interview.

ending a short attempt to establish a four-year school of the Arkansas District. Arkansas had some interest in a regional school located in Waxahachie, Texas, known as Southwestern Assemblies of God College.⁶⁰

The Education Department has encouraged ministerial candidates to continue their education. Southwestern Assemblies of God College serves as the primary training school for the ministers of the Arkansas District.

The departments mentioned in this chapter, the Sunday School Department, the Christ's Ambassadors Department, the Women's Missionary Council Department, and the Education Department, have enhanced the work of the Arkansas District in the state. These departments have helped to augment and stabilize the churches.

⁶⁰Ibid.

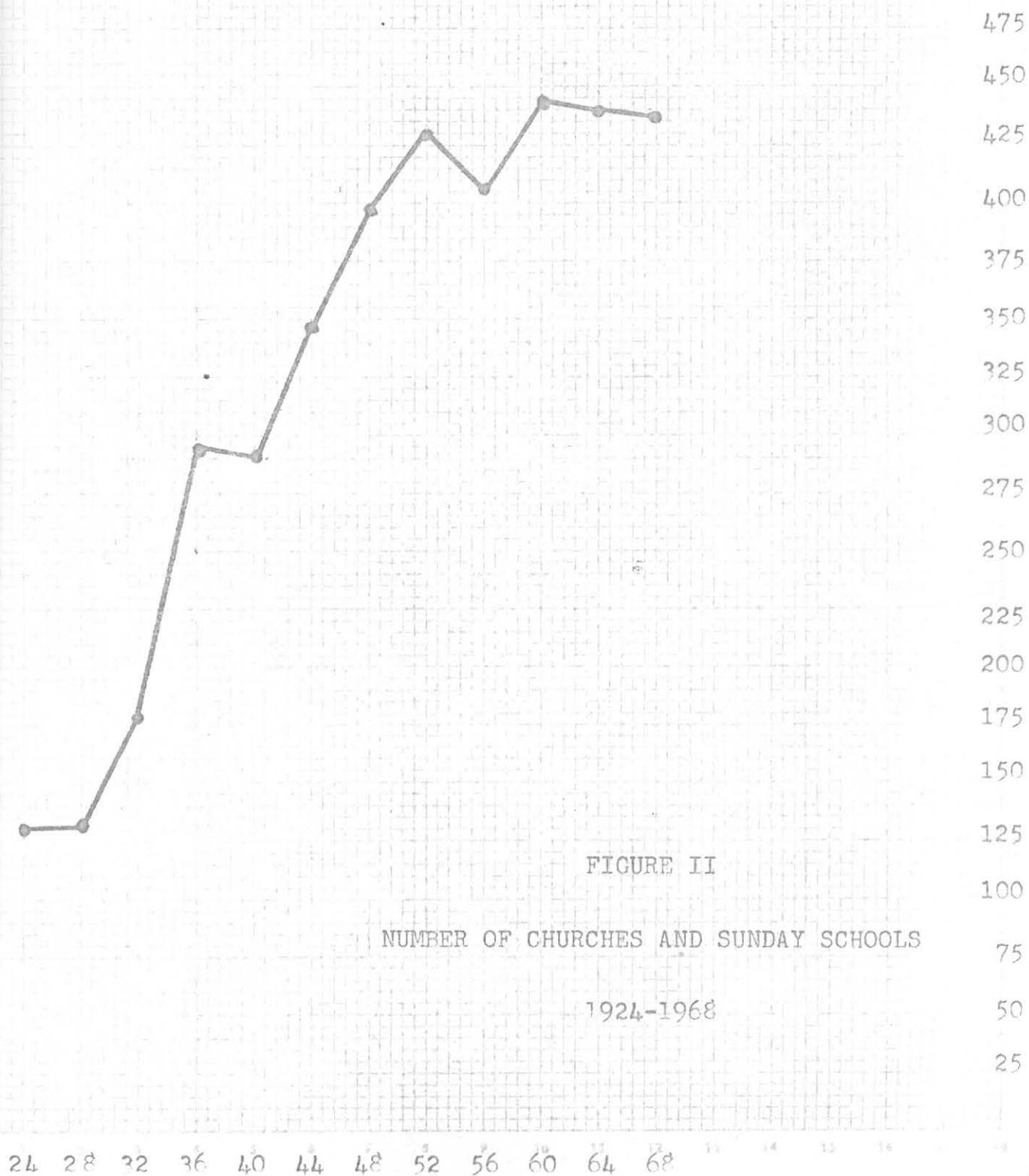


FIGURE II

NUMBER OF CHURCHES AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS

1924-1968

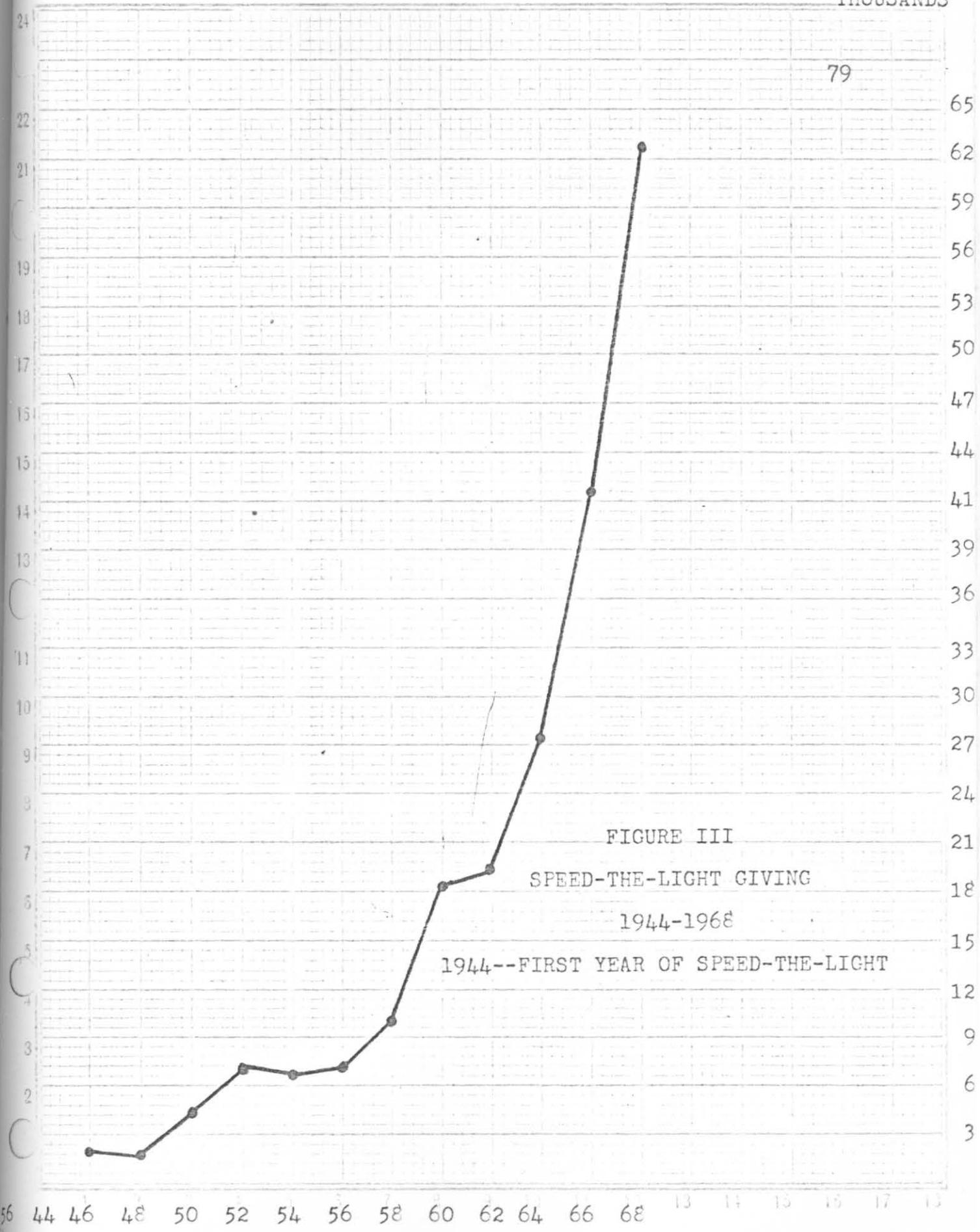


FIGURE III
 SPEED-THE-LIGHT GIVING
 1944-1968

1944--FIRST YEAR OF SPEED-THE-LIGHT

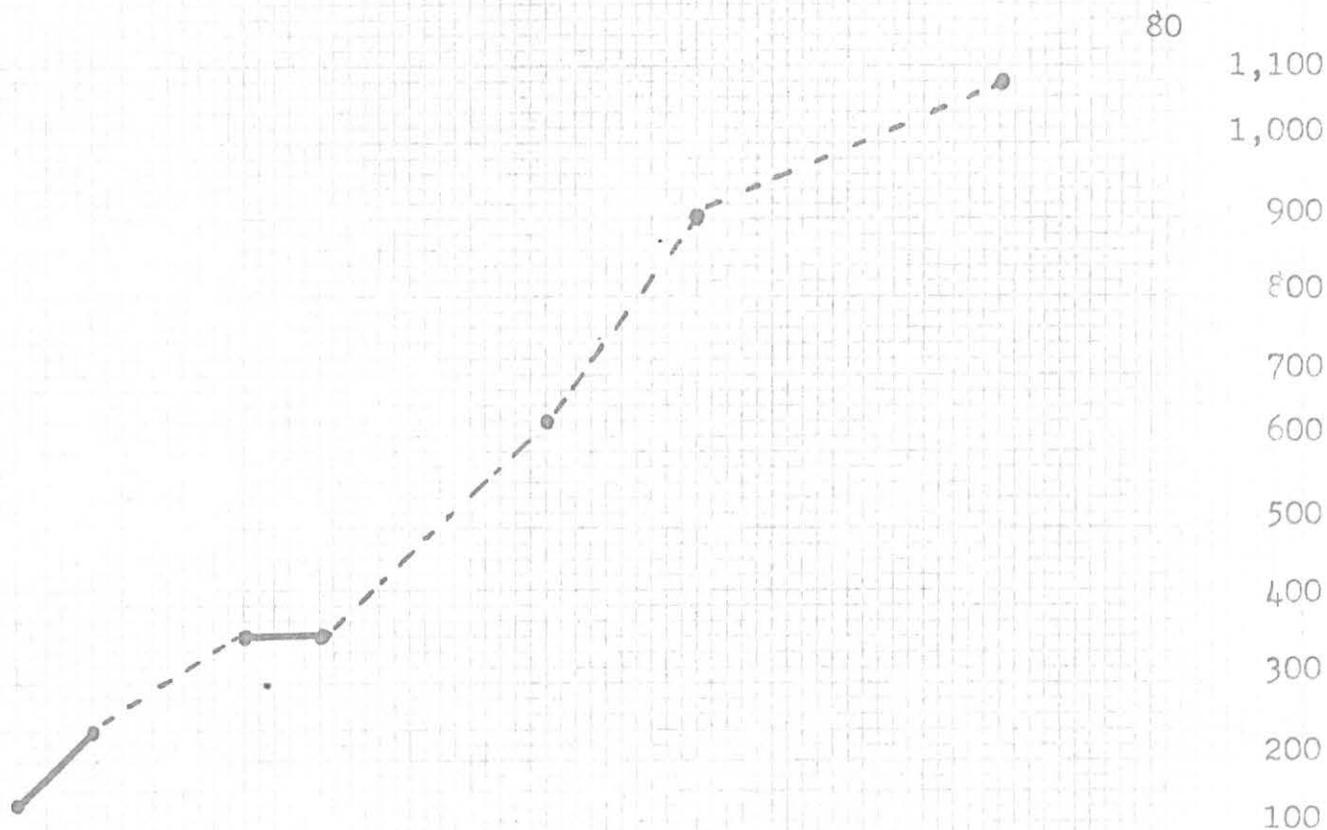


FIGURE IV

YOUTH CAMP ATTENDANCE

1953-1968

(Broken lines indicate unavailable information)

53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68

CHAPTER VIII

THE RELATION OF THE ARKANSAS DISTRICT TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

The Arkansas District and the General Council have served the interest of each other in a reciprocating manner. The relationship has been sustained by a close co-operation. The national organization has depended upon the district organization for financial support, ministerial candidates, and general oversight of local churches. The district has depended upon the central organization for church supplies, benevolent endeavors, departmental initiations, and as a clearing house for the support of missionaries. This chapter relates the correlation of activities as to missions and departmental programs of the Arkansas District to the General Council.

I. THE CORRELATION OF THE MISSIONS PROGRAM

Foreign Missions. Before the organizing of the Assemblies of God, Pentecostal missionaries were all "strictly faith supported."¹ The unwritten policy appears to have been simply that a Pentecostal magazine would list the names of missionaries and ask for financial help. Of the money

¹News item, Pentecostal Testimonies, 1910.

received, one-hundred per cent was forwarded to the missionary.² Word and Witness, published at Malvern, followed this basic pattern and served as a clearing house for mission funds as early as 1913.³ With the founding of the Assemblies of God, the chairman, (E. N. Bell of Malvern) was to serve as Missions Secretary.⁴

In 1915 a three-fold policy was adopted by the third General Council which:

1. Screened applicants for the mission field, as to "calling" and physical fitness for the work.
2. Solicited funds from local churches.
3. Stated the policy of furloughed missionaries.⁵

Since the founding, the foreign missions program of the Assemblies has experienced considerable growth which may be noted by the following table:

²Ibid.

³News item, Word and Witness, July 20, 1913, Vol. 9 No. 7, p. 1.

⁴Word and Witness, May 20, 1914, p. 1.

⁵Kendrick, op. cit., p. 97.

TABLE III

GROWTH OF MISSIONS CONTRIBUTIONS
AND NUMBER OF FOREIGN MISSIONARIES

YEAR	FOREIGN MISSIONARIES	CONTRIBUTIONS
1917	91	\$10,223
1937	346	\$349,106
1956	676	\$4,481,452
1968	842	\$7,405,413 ⁶

Early in the program systematic appeals for missions were not made, but in 1937 the District Council approved a plan whereby a special foreign missions' offering would be received on the first Sunday of each month in the churches of the District.⁷

The Arkansas District has been an integral part of the General Council missions program since its inception. As has been noted, mission offerings had been channeled through Malvern prior to the organization of the General Council. Concern was expressed at the 1917 Arkansas District Council to let the "people remember these brethren [the missionaries] in their offerings, and also their prayers."⁸

⁶Brumback, op. cit., p. 368 for years 1917-1956; 1968 Departmental Reports, op. cit., p. 93 for number of foreign missionaries and p. 23 for contributions.

⁷Minutes, 1937.

⁸Minutes, 1917, p. 7.

The District accepted any person whom the national missions department approved. The missionary then itinerated among the churches of the District, at the approval of the District Superintendent and the sectional presbyter, raising his budget. Congregations were asked to pledge support for a missionary. Contributions were sent through the Missions Department in Springfield, Missouri. Pledges were to be continued so long as the missionary was on his present term of duty.⁹

Home Missions Program (District). The Arkansas District had an aggressive home missions program from 1918. The feeling was that a united effort should be made "to evangelize the neglected places"¹⁰ of the state. The endeavor was directed that year by three leading preachers, namely Jacov Miller, Fred Lohmann and E. R. Fitzgerald,¹¹ who organized "bands" of workers to help in the effort. In 1922 two state missionaries, one for the northern, the other for the southern part of the District, were appointed, supported by one-half of the tithes of the District's ministers.¹² The missionaries duties were to:

⁹Minutes

¹⁰Minutes, 1918, p. 3.

¹¹Ibid., p. 4.

¹²Minutes, 1922, p. 11.

- (1) Open up new works in "waste places."
- (2) Give Bible lessons and instruction . . . to such churches.¹³

Much good was accomplished but friction often erupted because of infringement into the geographical area of another church.¹⁴ Another problem was that many of the ministers of the District did not co-operate in a financial way with the program¹⁵ and some who did were not satisfied and vented their feeling to the 1925 District Council with the following resolution:

"Resolved, That no more ministerial tithes from the state treasure be used to pay state tent transportation, seating and lighting expenses of missionary campaign sic or for any other purpose but that designated by the word of God, namely, the support of the ministry."¹⁶

In 1928 a new home-missions emphasis was instituted. Local churches were to organize "bands" of workers to go into the "neighboring town to conduct evangelistic campaigns".¹⁷ The next step in the home-missions policy was to subdivide the state into sections, which was accomplished in 1934.¹⁸ But instead of improving the program "there was an appalling indifference to the responsibility."¹⁹ However,

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Minutes, 1923, pp. 4, 5.

¹⁵Minutes, 1924, p. 13.

¹⁶Minutes, 1926, p. 12.

¹⁷Minutes, 1928, p. 18.

¹⁸Minutes, 1934, p. 34.

¹⁹Minutes, 1935, p. 42.

1936 was a "banner year"²⁰ for the Home-Missions Department.

Although the District's home-mission program was never satisfactory to all, it did achieve results. By 1939 the question of two churches in one town was raised. The duty of judgment was handed to the "District presbyter [executive presbyter] to decide when and where such a new church [should] be established."²¹ Some towns, for example Fort Smith, had had two or more churches since 1920, but the general feeling was that a town belonged to one church and a second one was not needed or wanted.

Home Missions Program (National). In the meantime the National Home Missions Department had begun to function. Arkansas had a several-years start on the national program. In keeping with the primary responsibility of evangelism and soul winning, the national department's effort included the following:

- (1) Church extention.
- (2) Ministry among those people in the United States who are in need of special ministry by reason of language barrier, physical confinement, handicap, comparative isolation or religious prejudices.

²⁰Minutes, 1936, p. 45.

²¹Minutes, 1939, p. 58.

- (3) General supervision of various foreign branches that are now or may hereafter be authorized.²²

A more specific division has made eight categories of departmental ministeries, viz.:

"the establishment of new Assemblies of God churches, ministry to Jews, prison evangelism, ministry to the deaf, work in Alaska, ministry to the American Indians, ministry to foreign language groups in the United States and [an] industrial chaplaincy program."²³

In co-operation with the districts, such as Arkansas, the National Home Missions Department has helped "pioneer pastors and established churches to enter new fields."²⁴ Practical aids have also been provided, such as:

"(1) Maintaining Revolving Loan Funds; (2) Providing building plans at a nominal fee; and (3) Supplying the pioneer pastor with literature for distribution and other helps."²⁵

The Department is financed by world missions offerings, gifts and contributions from district churches and interested friends. Since Arkansas has been one of the "leading" districts, the National Home Missions Department has generally concentrated its efforts into less evangelized fields.

²²General Council Minutes, 1967, p. 96.

²³Kendrick, op. cit., p. 103.

²⁴General Council Minutes, 1967, p. 97.

²⁵Ibid.

II. THE CORRELATION OF DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMS

In the early years the departments (Sunday School, Christ's Ambassadors²⁶) of the District were forced to rely on their own resources. When the central organization gained momentum, many of the programs became interwoven. The national departments began initiating programs for the districts, which in turn were passed on to the local congregations.

The Sunday School Department. The National Sunday School Department had been assigned the responsibility of promoting the development of Sunday Schools and other schools of "non-academic nature throughout the fellowship."²⁷

In keeping with the purpose, the National Sunday School Department assisted in setting up effective programs, promoted Sunday School Conventions, conducted training programs for teachers and workers, produced literature and helped in organizing Vacation Bible Schools and other activities of the local church.²⁸ The administration of

²⁶The Women's Missionary Council Department was a much later program and the central organization helped to implement it.

²⁷General Council Minutes, 1967, p. 97.

²⁸Ibid., p. 102.

the National Sunday School Department was under the direction of a national secretary who worked under an executive director.

Ideas, supplements, and helps were published for the department in an official organ, called The Sunday School Counselor. The publication was generally purchased by the local Sunday Schools and distributed free to their staffs.

Since the District Sunday School Department was described in Chapter 7, this section shows the relation of the District department to the national department. The District Sunday School organization had the responsibility:

- (1) To co-ordinate national, sectional and local efforts for Sunday School efficiency, growth and development.
- (2) To encourage every Sunday School in the District to attain to the National Sunday School Standard.
- (3) To promote Sunday School efficiency through seminars, tours, conventions, or by any other acceptable means.²⁹

The leadership of the District Sunday School Department was under a District Sunday School Director. Information concerning the District work, policy, and propagation was carried in the Pentecostal Gleaner, a monthly publica-

²⁹Ibid., pp. 102, 103.

tion of the Arkansas District.

Christ's Ambassadors Department. A National Youth Department known as Christ's Ambassadors was established to promote the youth activities of the fellowship. The purpose of the Department was "to plan and promote a spiritual program to save and conserve young people for the Kingdom of God."³⁰ The Department's aim was to correlate the wisdom of the "elders" with the enthusiasm of the youth. In line with the responsibility of the other departments its program was to challenge the youth of the church in "evangelism and soul winning."³¹

The Department's functions included the following:

- (1) Encouraging and assisting the development of District Young People's programs.
- (2) Co-ordinating the development and promotion of projects of national scope.
- (3) Producing literature and helps to meet the needs of our Christ's Ambassadors.
- (4) Promotion spiritual programs adaptable to the particular problems of young people in high schools and colleges.³²

An Assistant General Superintendent has served as executive director of the youth organization. Detailed

³⁰Ibid., p. 104.

³¹Ibid., p. 105.

³²Ibid., p. 105.

administration was carried on by a national secretary. The department published a youth magazine, called The Christ's Ambassadors Herald which was distributed to the youth of the denomination.

The District Department co-operated with the National Department by spearheading the National Department's plans to sectional, area, and local Christ's Ambassadors groups. For a fuller development of the Arkansas Youth Department, see Chapter 7.

Women's Missionary Council (W. M. C.). A department of women's work was established by the central organization. It, too, bore a responsibility of promotion evangelism and soul winning within its sphere of activity.

The department served to synchronize the women's work in relation to world missions, and benevolence work. Other activities of the department included work with the District W. M. C. programs; promotion of a girls' program, known as "Missionettes"; and the publication of handbooks, manuals and bulletins for propagation of and instruction in Women's work.³³

³³Ibid., p. 112.

The National Women's Missionary Council departmental activities were publicized in The Pentecostal Evangel. A national secretary served as co-ordinator of the programs.

Department of Publication. The most direct link from the central organization to the local churches was in publication. The tremendous growth of the department of publication indicated the emphasis which the denomination placed upon printed materials.

The functioning arm of the Department of Publication was the publishing firm known as The Gospel Publishing House. Located in Springfield, Missouri, the publishing firm had been previously located at St. Louis, Findley, Ohio, and before formal organization of the Assemblies of God, at Malvern, Arkansas. The following table gives some indication of the growth of its business through the years:

TABLE IV

GROWTH OF GROSS SALES OF GOSPEL PUBLISHING HOUSE

YEAR	SALES
1917	\$17,000
1918	\$23,000
1930-31	\$384,312

The Editorial TABLE IV (Continued)

YEAR	SALES
1954-55	\$4,125,659 ³⁴
1968-69 (March-March)	\$6,056,198 ³⁵

The Gospel Publishing House printed materials primarily for Assemblies of God churches; Sunday School materials, youth magazines, Women's Missionary Council materials, as well as an assortment of books, pamphlets and periodicals.

The major publication of the denomination was the weekly Pentecostal Evangel. The Evangel, the official organ of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, was published in the interest of the fellowship and for the propagation of the denomination. The magazine has kept pace with the denomination's growth. The paid circulation of the Evangel was 188,988 in 1967³⁶ with special editions running as high as 573,000.³⁷ The magazine was generally available at local churches of the Assemblies of God or on a subscription basis.

³⁴Kendrick, op. cit., p. 110.

³⁵Departmental Reports to General Council, 1969, p. 25.

³⁶General Council Minutes, 1967, p. 104.

³⁷Ibid., p. 114.

The editorial policy board of the Evangel was composed of non-resident executive presbyters, who met quarterly to provide "field-related guidance and suggestions"³⁸ for the Evangel. From 1915 to 1968 there were six editors of the magazine.³⁹

The Radio Department. The Radio Department of the national organization began in 1946.⁴⁰ Local churches of the denomination had been broadcasting by radio as early as 1925 but no national effort was advanced until 1946.⁴¹ Little development in radio was achieved by the department until 1953 when a national radio program, Revivaltime, was begun.

Revivaltime went world-wide in December of 1953 with C. M. Ward as speaker. From an uncertain beginning the weekly program was heard on 601 United States, 97 foreign, and four special Armed Forces stations.⁴² The Radio Department, through Revivaltime, distributed more than one and a half million pieces of literature annually.⁴³

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Kendrick, op. cit., p. 111.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 104.

⁴¹Winehouse, op. cit., p. 194.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Departmental Reports, 1969, p. 117.

The Arkansas District shared in the Revivaltime broadcast with financial aid and distribution of literature. In turn, the program was broadcast in 1968 on ten stations in the state.

In addition, a transcription library was provided by Revivaltime and the radio department which churches could use in preparation of local broadcasts. The executive presbytery appointed a secretary of the radio department who served under an executive director of the department.

Department of Education. The educational department of the Assemblies of God was limited in its scope to the supervision of institutional training. One of the reasons for organizing in 1914 was to establish a training school. The department, from its inception, attempted to maintain a high level of "spirituality" in the schools and to guard against any departure from the denomination's "Statement of Fundamental Truths."

The department of education sought to "correlate all educational efforts into a unified program."⁴⁴ More specifically, the department desired to contribute to the education of the denomination in the following ways:

⁴⁴Fay Hutchinson, personal letter to Earl R. Teeter.

- (1) To offer guidance and council in the opening of new schools . . .
- (2) To recommend the broadening of the scope of individual school services.
- (3) To provide general services to all schools.⁴⁵

Two General Council schools, Evangel College and Central Bible College, were operated for the denomination. The remaining schools of the church were either regionally or district supported. The supervision of all these schools, whether General Council, regional, or district was overseen by the National Educational Department. Arkansas was made a member of the Southwest region which includes Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, and Louisiana. These states supported Southwestern Assemblies of God College in Waxahachie, Texas.

The National Education Department was overseen by a national secretary who served under an executive head. The Department also supervised correspondence courses, ministers' institutes and seminars for ministerial candidates who were unable to attend one of the denomination's schools.

Department of Benevolence. The work of the Department of Benevolence, which affected Arkansas was divided into

⁴⁵General Council Minutes, 1967, p. 100.

the following two categories; (1) Hillcrest Children's Home and (2) Aged Ministers Assistance (A.M.A.).

Hillcrest Children's Home. Hillcrest Children's Home was the vision of one woman, Miss Gladys Hinson. In 1942 Miss Hinson saw the need of a home for children from broken homes and presented her plans to the general presbyters of the Assemblies of God.⁴⁶

In 1944 a five-room cottage on Malvern Road in Hot Springs was purchased. Miss Hinson began immediately a tour of the Arkansas District in the interest of the home. Churches were asked to contribute to the financial support of the endeavor.⁴⁷ Letters of request were mailed from the Arkansas Women's Missionary Council office asking for clothing and any articles to help in the operation of a children's home.⁴⁸

The home opened in September of 1944 with three young boys and Miss Hinson.⁴⁹ As the home grew numerically other buildings were added to the grounds. Although the home

⁴⁶Anne Baar, The Hillcrest Story (Springfield, Mo.: Department of Benevolence, 1969) p. 4.

⁴⁷News item, Pentecostal Gleaner, June, 1944, Vol. 22 No. 12 (Hot Springs) p. 3.

⁴⁸Women's Missionary Council Monthly Letter, Pentecostal Gleaner, August, 1944, Vol. 23, No. 2, p. 5.

⁴⁹Baar, op. cit., p. 11.

did not reach proportions conceived by the founder of one thousand⁵⁰ children, it was a service to many children of which about eighty were housed there during the year 1968.⁵¹

Hillcrest Children's Home was governed by a board of directors, who were appointed by the Department of Benevolence Committee. Administration was overseen by a superintendent of the home, whose title was changed in 1966 to "Administrator."⁵²

Aged Ministers Assistance. Along with Hillcrest Children's Home the National Benevolence Department contributed to the retired ministers of the state of Arkansas in a program, known commonly as A. M. A. The assistance was administered according to need with the most needy receiving only a meager allotment.⁵³

Stringent requirements were set for the applicant to be eligible for assistance. A minister had to be sixty-five, ordained and in good standing with the church. Among other qualifications for the assistance, he must have had credentials with the denomination for at least ten years prior to

⁵⁰Minutes, 1945, p. 76. ⁵¹Baar, op. cit., p. 48.

⁵²Ibid., p. 45.

⁵³Fay Hutchinson, personal interview.

his retirement and the unqualified endorsement of the District officials.⁵⁴

In 1968 one-hundred sixty-eight Arkansas ministers were receiving financial help from the Aged Ministers Assistance. Of this number, eighty-two received Social Security, twenty-nine received Welfare assistance, three had supplementary wages, five had relatives that helped, and nine had no other source of income.⁵⁵

Money to finance the A. M. A. came from two appeals to the churches of the denomination; one in May, on Memorial Day, and the other the Sunday following Thanksgiving in November.⁵⁶

The author has attempted in this chapter to discuss the relation of the missions work and the work of the various subordinate departments of the Arkansas District to the central organization.

⁵⁴General Council Minutes, 1967, p. 110.

⁵⁵Fay Hutchinson, personal letter to Earl R. Teeter.

⁵⁶Ibid.

CHAPTER IX

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SUMMARY

The beginning of the Arkansas Assemblies of God has been traced from the early inception of the Pentecostal movement in Topeka, Kansas, under the direction of William F. Parham. The man who first brought the Pentecostal message to Arkansas was Howard A. Goss, a student of Parham. While Goss was personally responsible for only a few churches (primarily Malvern and Hot Springs), many others developed out of the revival campaigns which he conducted in various parts of the state.

The next Pentecostal preacher of significance to the study was E. N. Bell. As Goss began the work of organizing a few churches, Bell began the work of strengthening them through articles printed in his paper, Word and Witness. Bell continued the task of organizing by issuing a "call" for organization through editorials and news items in his paper. These promotions in the Word and Witness resulted in the national organization, known as the General Council of the Assemblies of God. Bell became the chairman of the movement, the highest office in the organization. In the meanwhile, Goss helped in the organizing of the State Council, known as the Arkansas District of the Assemblies of God.

In 1914-1917 a great controversy erupted in the movement which resulted in a split. Arkansas was greatly involved in this schism, known as the "New Issue." A Little Rock Camp meeting was the climactic point of the "New Issue" within the state. Goss, a District leader, was re-baptized at the meeting. The executive presbytery board was summoned to the meeting and their basic statement at Little Rock was practically synonymous with the final declaration of the General Council in St. Louis in 1916. Two early leaders, Goss and Opperman, of the Arkansas District were removed because of their "New Issue" beliefs. They organized a new movement at Eureka Springs, Arkansas, which later became a leading segment of the United Pentecostal Church. The repercussions of the conflict continued until the 1930's.

After the "New Issue" conflict, the Arkansas District strengthened its organization by adopting the General Council's "Statement of Fundamental Truths," and by adding other officers to help with the work of the District. Among those added after the conflict were a Sunday School Director, a Christ's Ambassadors President, and a Women's Missionary Council President.

This study has presented a history of a Pentecostal movement known as the Arkansas Assemblies of God. During the years from 1908-1968, the District has changed from a relatively simple operation to one of elaborate complexity. From

a rather small body of churches in 1914 to the four hundred, fifty in 1968, she has carved out a place in the work of the Assemblies of God both nationally and internationally.

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APPENDIX

OFFICERS OF THE ARKANSAS DISTRICT COUNCIL
OF THE ASSOCIATION OF MEN

A RECORD OF PLACES AND DATES FOR THE HOLDING OF DISTRICT
COUNCILS TOGETHER WITH LIST OF OFFICERS CHOSEN TO
SERVE THE FELLOWSHIP

YEAR	CHAIRMAN	LOCATION AND DATE	SECRETARY
1914	Edward A. Goss	Russellville--September, 1914	W. Secretary
1915	Edward A. Goss	APPENDIX Little Rock--September, 1915	Barrett Kozelce
1916	W. H. Galt	[Location Unavailable]	W. H. Galt
1917	W. H. Fitzgerald	Malvern--January, 1917	Fred Johnson
1918	W. J. Wainwright	Hammondville--January, 1918	Barrett Kozelce

APPENDIX A

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CHAIRMAN LOCATION SECRETARY
 OFFICERS OF THE ARKANSAS DISTRICT COUNCIL
 OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD
 Malvern--November 23-24

A RECORD OF PLACES AND DATES FOR THE HOLDING OF DISTRICT
 COUNCILS TOGETHER WITH LIST OF OFFICERS CHOSEN TO
 SERVE THE FELLOWSHIP

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHAIRMAN</u>	<u>LOCATION AND DATE</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>
1914	Howard A. Goss	Russellville--September, 1914	No Secretary
1915	Howard A. Goss	Little Rock--September 2-12	Fayette Romaine
1916	E. N. Bell	(Location Unavailable)	Fred Lohmann
1917	E. R. Fitzgerald	Malvern--January 23-24	Fred Lohmann
1918	W. J. Walthall	Russellville--January 14	Fayette Romaine

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHAIRMAN</u>	<u>LOCATION AND DATE</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>
1920	E. R. Fitzgerald	Malvern--November 23-26	Fayette Romaine
1921	W. J. Walthall	Russellville--November 1-6	E. J. Bruton
1922	W. J. Walthall	Malvern--September 26-28	Z. J. Launius
1923	W. J. Walthall	Hartford--October 9-12	Charles E. Robinson
1924	W. J. Walthall	Malvern--October 7-10	Charles E. Robinson
1925	W. J. Walthall	Russellville--October 13-16	Fayette Romaine
1926	C. A. Lasater	El Dorado--October 5-8	W. J. Walthall

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHAIRMAN</u>	<u>LOCATION AND DATE</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>
1934	David Burris	Russellville--October 12-15	E. J. Bruton
1935	David Burris	El Dorado--October 22-25	G. W. Hardcastle
		Russellville--October 12-15	Carl W. Barnes
1936	David Burris	Russellville--October 12-16	Charles Peppers
		Russellville--October 12-15	H. L. Shaw
1937	David Burris	Russellville--October 12-15	Robert Sellers
		Russellville--October 12-15	H. L. Shaw
1938	David Burris	Camden--October 17-20	Robert Sellers
		Camden--October 17-20	H. L. Shaw
1939	David Burris	Hot Springs--October 16-20	Robert Sellers
		Hot Springs--October 16-20	H. L. Shaw
1940	David Burris	Camden--October 14-18	Robert Sellers
		Camden--October 14-18	H. L. Shaw
1941	David Burris	Hot Springs--October 13-16	Robert Sellers

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHAIRMAN</u>	<u>LOCATION AND DATE</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>
1942	David Burris	Russellville--October 12-15	Robert Sellers
1943	David Burris	Russellville--October 11-14	Carl W. Barnes
1944	David Burris	Russellville--October 9-12	H. E. Shaw
1945	David Burris	Russellville--October 8-11	H. E. Shaw
1946	David Burris	Hot Springs--September 23-26	H. E. Shaw
1947	David Burris	Hot Springs--September 22-25	H. E. Shaw
1948	David Burris	Hot Springs--September 23-26	H. E. Shaw
1949	D. W. Hardcastle	Hot Springs--September 24-27	H. E. Shaw

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHAIRMAN</u>	<u>LOCATION AND DATE</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>
1949	David Burris	Hot Springs--August 22-25	C. A. Price
1950	David Burris	Hot Springs--August 14-17	C. A. Price
1951	G. W. Hardcastle	Hot Springs--September 3-6	C. A. Price
1952	G. W. Hardcastle	Camden--October 13-16	C. A. Price
1953	G. W. Hardcastle	Minutes unavailable	H. W. Culbreth
1954	G. W. Hardcastle	Hot Springs--September 27-29	H. E. Shaw
1955	G. W. Hardcastle	Hot Springs--September 26-28	H. E. Shaw
1956	G. W. Hardcastle	Hot Springs--September 24-27	H. E. Shaw

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHAIRMAN</u>	<u>LOCATION AND DATE</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>
1957	G. W. Hardcastle	Hot Springs--September 23-26	H. E. Shaw
1958	G. W. Hardcastle	Hot Springs--September 22-24	H. W. Culbreth
1959	G. W. Hardcastle	Hot Springs--September 21-23	H. W. Culbreth
1960	G. W. Hardcastle	Hot Springs--September 26-28	H. W. Culbreth
1961	G. W. Hardcastle	Hot Springs--September 25-27	H. W. Culbreth
1962	G. W. Hardcastle	Hot Springs--September 24-26	H. W. Culbreth
1963		(No Council)	
1964	G. W. Hardcastle	Hot Springs--April 13-15	H. W. Culbreth

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHAIRMAN</u>	<u>LOCATION AND DATE</u>	<u>SECRETARY</u>
1965	Fay Hutchinson	Hot Springs--May 3-5	H. W. Culbreth
1966		Minutes unavailable	
1967	Fay Hutchinson	Hot Springs--April 18-20	H. W. Culbreth
1968	Fay Hutchinson	Hot Springs--May 7-9	H. W. Culbreth

APPENDIX B

PREAMBLE AND CONSTITUTION

of the

ARKANSAS DISTRICT OF THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of promulgating the gospel of Jesus Christ by all available means in our particular district, so that the results of our efforts may be conserved and assemblies established and developed in general unity and cooperative fellowship along the lines of our distinctive testimony; and for the further purpose of cooperating with all other like districts in the work of the General Council at home and abroad; we, who are members of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, hereby associate ourselves as the District Council of the Assemblies of God, and agree to be governed by the following Constitution, and By-Laws.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I -- NAME

The name of this body shall be the Arkansas District Council of the Assemblies of God.

ARTICLE II -- TERRITORY

The District shall include the territory covered by the State of Arkansas.

ARTICLE III -- RELATIONSHIP

This Council is an integral part of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Inc., with headquarters at Springfield, Missouri. Therefore, the principles of voluntary and cooperative fellowship as set forth in the Constitution of the General Council, adopted at Springfield, Missouri, September 16-22, 1927, are the principles which shall govern this District Council.

ARTICLE IV -- TENETS OF FAITH

Statements of Fundamental Truths

The Bible is our all-sufficient rule for faith and practice. This Statement of Fundamental Truths is intended simply as a basis of fellowship among us (i.e., that we all speak the same thing, I Cor. 1:10; Acts 2:42). The phraseology employed in this Statement is not inspired or contended for, but the truth set forth is held to be essential to a full-gospel ministry. No claim is made it contains all Biblical truth, only that it covers our need as to these fundamental doctrines.

1. The Scriptures Inspired

The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct (2 Tim. 3:15-17; I Thess. 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21).

2. The One True God

The one true God has revealed Himself as the eternally self-existent "I AM," the Creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed Himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son and Holy Ghost (Deut. 6:4; Isaiah 43:10, 11; Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22).

THE ADORABLE GODHEAD

(a) Terms Defined

The terms "Trinity" and "persons," as related to the Godhead, while not found in the Scriptures, are words in harmony with Scripture, whereby we may convey to others our immediate understanding of the doctrine of Christ respecting the Being of God, as distinguished from "gods many and lords many." We therefore may speak with propriety of the Lord our God, who is One Lord, as a trinity or as one Being of three persons, and still be absolutely Scriptural (examples, Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; John 14:16, 17).

(b) Distinction and Relationship in the Godhead

Christ taught a distinction of Persons in the Godhead which He expressed in specific terms of relationship, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but that this distinction and relationship, as to its mode is inscrutable and incomprehensible, because unexplained. Luke 1:35; 1 Cor. 1:24; Matt. 11:25-27; 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 John 1:3, 4.

(c) Unity of the One Being of Father, Son and Holy Ghost

Accordingly, therefore, there is that in the Son which constitutes Him the Son and not the Father; and there is that in the Holy Ghost which constitutes Him the Holy Ghost and not either the Father or the Son. Wherefore the Father is the Begetter, the Son is the Begotten; and the Holy Ghost is the one proceeding from the Father and the Son. Therefore, because these three persons in the Godhead are in a state of unity, there is but one Lord God Almighty and His name one. John 1:18; 15:26; 17:11, 21; Zech. 14:9.

(d) Identity and Cooperation in the Godhead

The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are never identical as to Person; nor confused as to relation; nor divided in respect to the Godhead; nor opposed as to cooperation. The Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son as to relationship. The Son is with the Father and the Father is with the Son, as to fellowship. The Father is not from the Son; but the Son is from the Father, as to authority. The Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son proceeding, as to nature, relationship, cooperation and authority. Hence, neither Person in the Godhead either exists or works separately or independently of the others. John 5:17-30, 32, 37; John 8:17, 18.

(e) The Title, Lord Jesus Christ

The appellation, "Lord Jesus Christ," is a proper name. It is never applied, in the New Testament, either to the Father or to the Holy Ghost. It therefore belongs exclusively to the Son of God. Rom. 1:1-3, 7; 2 John 3.

(f) The Lord Jesus Christ, God with Us

The Lord Jesus Christ, as to His divine and eternal nature, is the proper and only Begotten of the Father, but as to His human nature, He is the proper Son of Man. He is, therefore, acknowledged to be both God and man; who because He is God and man, is "Immanuel," God with us. Matt. 1:23; 1 John 4:2, 10, 14; Rev. 1:13, 17.

(g) The Title, Son of God

Since the name "Immanuel" embraces both God and man in the one Person, our Lord Jesus Christ, it follows that the title, Son of God, describes His proper deity, and the title, Son of Man, His proper humanity. Therefore, the title, Son of God, belongs to the order of eternity, and the title, Son of Man, to the order of time. Matt. 1:21-23; 2 John 3; 1 John 3:8; Heb. 7:3; 1:1-13.

(h) Transgression of the Doctrine of Christ

Wherefore, it is a transgression of the Doctrine of Christ to say that Jesus Christ derived the title, Son of God, solely from the fact of the incarnation, or because of His relation to the economy of redemption. Therefore, to deny that the Father is a real and eternal Father, and that the Son is a real and eternal Son, is a denial of the distinction and relationship in the Being of God; a denial of the Father and the Son; and a displacement of the truth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. 2 John 9; John 1:1, 2, 14, 18, 29, 49; 1 John 2:22, 23; 4:1-5; Heb. 12:2.

(i) Exaltation of Jesus Christ as Lord

The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, having by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; angels and principalities and powers having been made subject unto Him. And having been made both Lord and Christ, He sent the Holy Ghost that we, in the name of Jesus, might bow our knees and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father until the end, when the Son shall become subject to the Father that God may be all in all. Heb. 1:3; 1 Peter 3:22; Acts 2:32-36; Rom. 14:11; 1 Cor. 15:24-28.

(j) Equal Honor to the Father and to the Son

Wherefore, since the Father has delivered all judgment unto the Son, it is not only the express duty of all in heaven and on earth to bow the knee, but it is an unspeakable joy in the Holy Ghost to ascribe unto the Son all the attributes of Deity, and to give Him all the honor and the glory contained in all the names and titles of the Godhead (except those which express relationship. See paragraphs b, c, and d), and thus honor the Son even as we honor the Father. John 5:22, 23; 1 Peter 1:8; Rev. 5:6-14; Phil. 2:8, 9; Rev. 7:9, 10; 4:8-11.

3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The Scriptures declare:

- (a) His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:31, 35).
- (b) His sinless life (Hebrews 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).
- (c) His miracles (Acts 2:22; 10:38).
- (d) His substitutionary work on the cross (1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21).
- (e) His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:4).
- (f) His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9, 11; 2:33; Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 1:3).

4. The Fall of Man

Man was created good and upright; for God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." However, man by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:17; 3:6; Romans 5:12-19).

5. The Salvation of Man

Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God.

(a) Conditions to Salvation

Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according

to the hope of eternal life (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7).

(b) The Evidences of Salvation

The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:16). The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24; Titus 2:12).

6. The Ordinances of the Church

(a) Baptism in Water

The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe on Christ as Saviour and Lord are to be baptized. Thus they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life. (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10:47, 48; Romans 6:4).

(b) Holy Communion

The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements--bread and the fruit of the vine--is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4); a memorial of His suffering and death (1 Cor. 11:26); and a prophecy of His second coming (1 Cor. 11:26); and is enjoined on all believers "till He come!"

7. The Baptism in the Holy Ghost

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the Baptism in the Holy Ghost and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the enduement of power for life and service, the bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8; 1 Cor. 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12-17; 10:44-46, 11:14-16; 15:7-9). With the Baptism in the Holy Ghost come such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Heb. 12:28), an

intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His word and for the lost (Mark 16:20).

8. The Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost

The Baptism of believers in the Holy Ghost is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (1 Cor. 12:4-10, 28), but different in purpose and use.

9. Sanctification

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God (Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 13:12). The scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). By the power of the Holy Ghost we are able to obey the command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15, 16).

Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing our individual identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the deminion of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:1-11, 13; Rom. 8:1, 2, 13; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:12, 13; 1 Peter 1:5).

10. The Church

The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in heaven (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 2:22; Hebrews 12:23).

11. The Ministry

A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for a twofold purpose: (1) The evangelization of the world, and (2) The edifying of the Body of Christ (Mark 16:15-20; Ephesians 4:11-13).

12. Divine Healing

Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers (Isaiah 53:4, 5; Matt. 8:16, 17; James 5:14-16).

13. The Blessed Hope

The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the church (1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Romans 8:23; Titus 2:13; 1 Cor. 15:51, 52).

14. The Millennial Reign of Christ

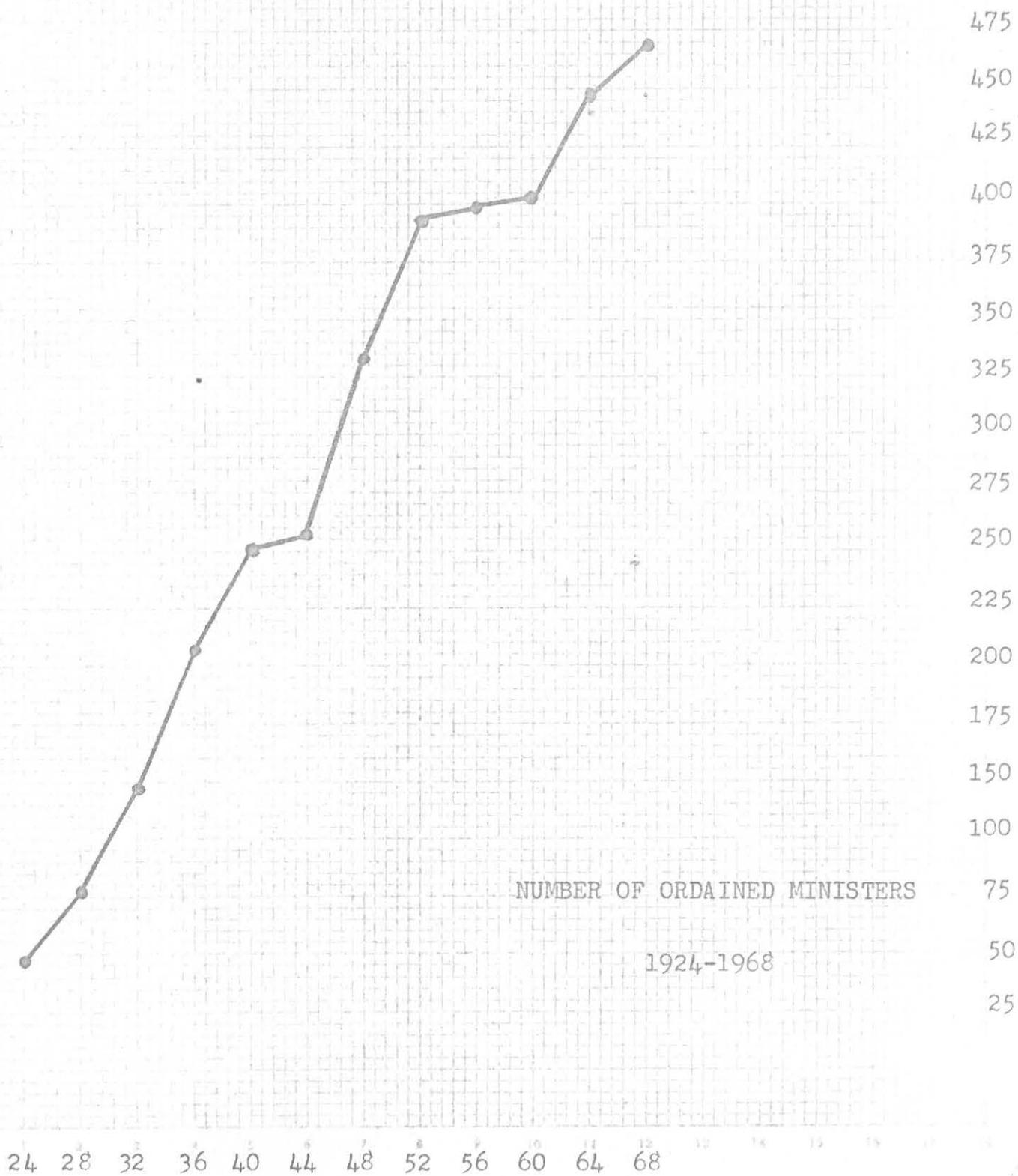
The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years (Zech. 14:5; Matt. 24:27, 30; Revelation 1:7; 19:11-14; 20:1-6). This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel (Ezekiel 37:21, 22; Zephaniah 3:19, 20; Romans 11:26, 27) and the establishment of universal peace (Isaiah 11:6-9; Psalms 72:3-8; Micah 4:3, 4).

15. The Final Judgment

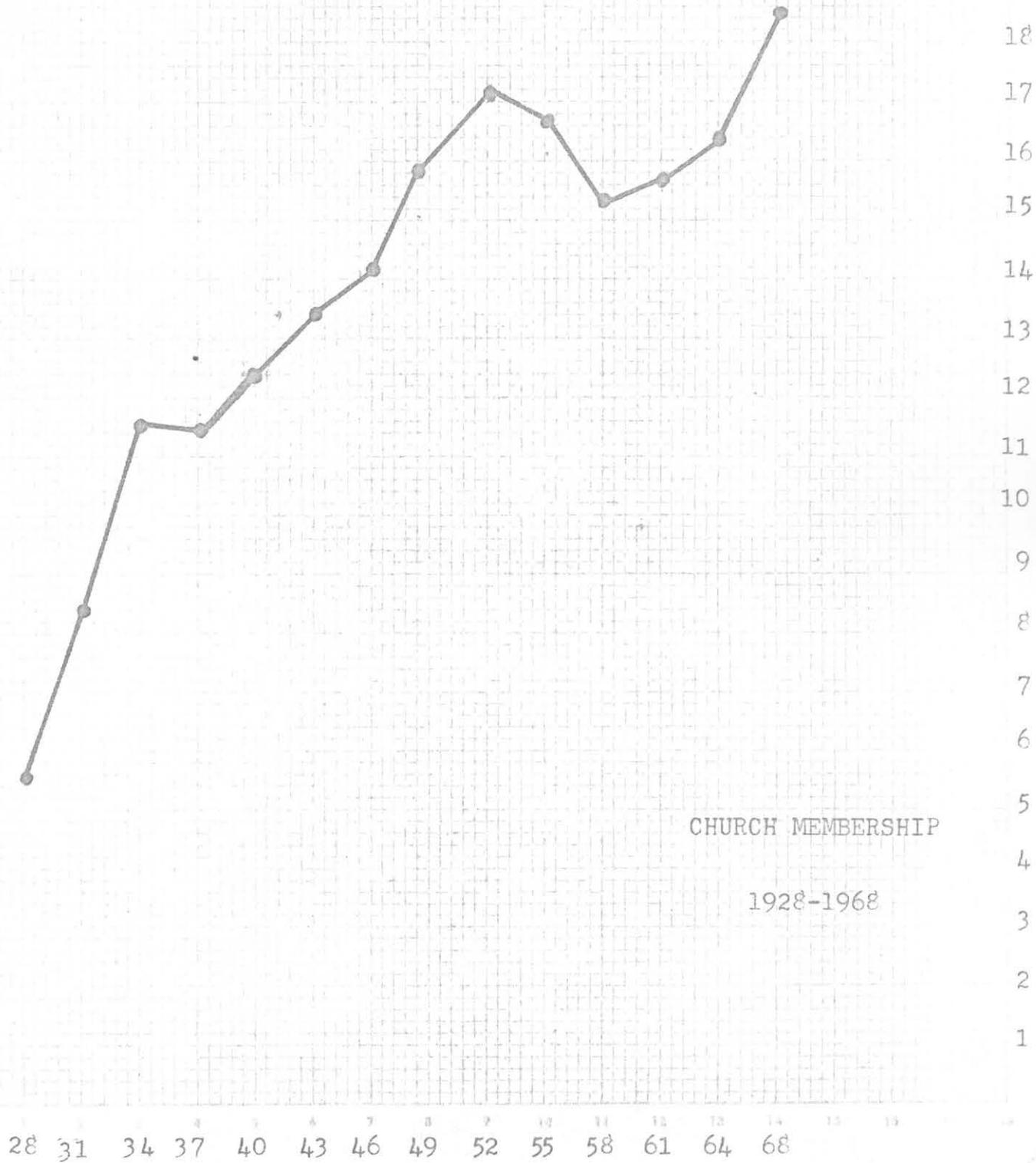
There will be a final judgment at which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophet, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Revelation 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8; Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43-48).

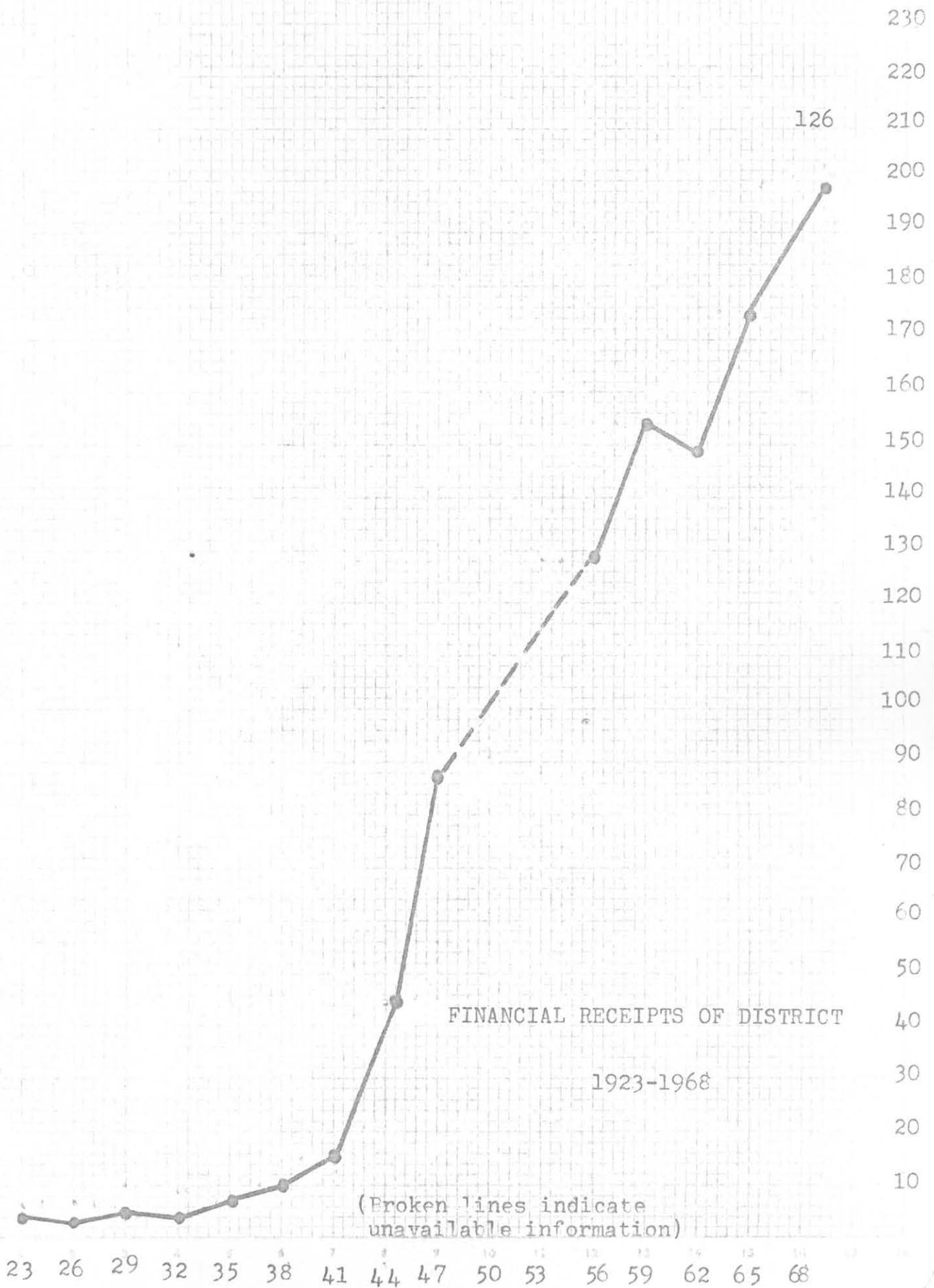
16. The New Heavens and the New Earth

We, "according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:22).



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A HISTORY OF THE ARKANSAS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

1908 - 1968

An Abstract

by

Carl E. Taylor

August, 1970

A HISTORY OF THE ARKANSAS ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

1908 - 1968

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study of the history of the Arkansas Assemblies of God has apparently been neglected. No evidence was available that a systematic study of its history had ever been attempted. Consequently, much of its history remained in scattered materials. The purpose of this study was to organize these scattered materials into a documentary account of the history of the Arkansas Assemblies of God.

An Abstract of a Thesis

The primary source of information has been derived from the historical and statistical periodicals, periodicals, and other materials. In addition to these sources, the records of the Assemblies of God, and the records of the Assemblies of God were used. The materials used in the study were:

Materials were gathered to discover material pertaining to the history of the Arkansas Assemblies of God. From these sources, materials were selected which were deemed to be of value. The materials were organized into a study which was completed by

Earl R. Teeter

August, 1970

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I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study of the history of the Arkansas Assemblies of God has apparently been neglected; no evidence was available that a systematic study of its history had ever been attempted. Consequently, much of its history remained in scattered materials. The purpose of this study was to compile these scattered materials into a documentary account of the History of the Arkansas Assemblies of God.

II. PROCEDURES USED IN GATHERING DATA

The primary source of information has been Minutes of both the district and national organizations, periodicals, and living witnesses. In addition to these sources, the works of Kendrick, Brumback, Goss, and Winehouse were used. Other materials having less bearing upon the study were consulted.

These sources were surveyed to discover material pertaining to the history of the Arkansas Assemblies of God. From these sources, materials were selected which were deemed to be both relevant and pertinent to the study. Materials which made a contribution to the following areas of study were

considered pertinent and, therefore, were organized and incorporated into the study:

- (1) Beginnings of the Modern Pentecostal movement
- (2) Beginnings of the Arkansas Pentecostal movement
- (3) Organizational meeting of the General Council
- (4) The movement in dissent
- (5) The organization of the Arkansas District
- (6) Departmental organization of the Arkansas District
- (7) The relation of the district to the national organization.

III. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The beginning of the Arkansas Assemblies of God has been traced from the early inception of the Pentecostal movement in Topeka, Kansas under the direction of William F. Parham. The man who first brought the Pentecostal message to Arkansas was Howard A. Goss, a student of Parham. While Goss was personally responsible for only a few churches (primarily Malvern and Hot Springs), many others developed out of the revival campaigns which he conducted in various parts of the state.

The next Pentecostal preacher of significance to the study was E. N. Bell. As Goss began the work of organizing a few churches, Bell began the work of strengthening them through articles printed in his paper, Word and Witness. Bell continued the task of organizing by issuing a "call" for organization through editorials and news items in his paper. These promotions in the Word and Witness resulted in the national organization, known as the General Council of the Assemblies of God. Bell became the chairman of the movement, the highest office in the organization. In the meanwhile, Goss helped the organizing of the State Council, known as the Arkansas District of the Assemblies of God.

In 1914 a controversy erupted in the movement which resulted in a split. Arkansas was greatly involved in this schism, known as the "New Issue." A Little Rock camp meeting was the climactic point of the "New Issue" within the state. Goss, a District leader, was re-baptized at the meeting. The executive presbytery was summoned to the meeting and its basic statement at Little Rock was practically synonymous with the final declaration of the General Council in St. Louis in 1916. Two early leaders, Goss and Opperman, of the Arkansas District were removed because of their "New Issue" beliefs. They organized a new movement at

Eureka Springs, Arkansas, which later became a leading segment of the United Pentecostal Church. The repercussions of the conflict remained until the 1930's.

After the "New Issue" conflict, the Arkansas District strengthened its organization by adopting the General Council's "Statement of Fundamental Truths", and by adding other officers to help with the work of the District. Among those added after the conflict were a Sunday School Director, a Christ's Ambassadors President, and a Women's Missionary Council President.

This study has presented a history of a Pentecostal movement known as the Arkansas Assemblies of God. During the years from 1808-1968, the work District has changed from a relatively simple operation to one of elaborate complexity. From a rather small body of churches in 1914 to the four-hundred fifty in 1968, the District has carved out a significant place in the work of the Assemblies of God.