

PAWHistory

(Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc)

*A Brief Historical Treatise of the
Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc.*

*by
Elder Keith C. Braddy*

Part I

The Organizational Years 1906-1919

Much is unknown about the initial founding and early organization of the Pentecostal Assemblies Of The World, Inc. Unfortunately, due to the mindset of early 20th century Pentecostals that the coming of the Lord was immanent, the need for records, and organization structure, were regarded as unnecessary and sometimes "worldly" (Golder 34-36). Although such teachings and modes of thought would be considered extreme, irrational, and lacking wise foresight in today's modern Pentecostal circles. This prevailing worldview in the early days of the Pentecostal movement, caused no Apostolic or Trinitarian Pentecostal ecclesiastical body the ability to boast of possessing accurate, complete, and full knowledge of the early history and founding of their respective denominations. Nevertheless, much work has been done by Pentecostal historians such as Bishop Emeritus, Morris E. Golder, D.D., and Elder James L. Tyson, in trying to reconstruct the events of the Pentecostal Assemblies Of The World Inc., during the 1906-1919 period.

According to the records and resources that have survived, the Pentecostal Assemblies Of The World, Inc. was founded in the year 1906 in Los Angeles, California, in the same year and city of the famed Azusa Street Revival, as a loosely organized ministerial fellowship of Christians who embraced the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as a third work of grace (Golder 36, Roberts 203). Initially the Pentecostal Assemblies Of the World, Inc. was Trinitarian in its concept of the Godhead, and adhered to the Holiness-Wesleyan doctrine of three weeks of grace as taught by Elder Parham and Elder William J. Seymour (Tyson 188).

Many historians who are not Pentecostal, nor members of the PAW, thus not having an accurate knowledge of our denomination, assert that the PAW came into existence in the year 1915 when its headquarters existed in Portland, Oregon, or in 1919, when the Pentecostal Assemblies Of The World, Inc. was legally incorporated in its present headquarters of Indianapolis, Indiana. To the contrary, the PAW began in its initial organization in 1906, and was re-organized and as stated previously incorporated in 1919 (Golder 45). The main emphasis of these early meetings was "basic introductory transactions that governed the organizing of all Pentecostal groups, including the election of officers, the establishment of committees, discussion of a constitution and bylaws, the establishment of an official paper, and general business" (Tyson 188-189). From an analyses of this establishment of the early PAW, organization and centralized leadership was frowned upon as an opportunity for ecclesiastical "popery" and dictatorship. However in the case of the thinking of the early founders of the PAW, this is not surprising because most religious sects tend to be comprised of "small faithful groups," who usually reject large bureaucratic organization (Roberts 205). Moreover, early 20th century Pentecostals justified this thinking, by believing that churches could survive solely under the leadership of one

autonomous pastor, and the alleged "leading of the Holy Spirit" (Golder 60). Unfortunately, this archaic, unbiblical, and unprogressive thinking yet prevail among some of the brethren today, creating unity with the denomination difficult. Nevertheless, as a result of the need for fellowship of "brethren of precious like faith," and the protection of smaller assemblies from doctrinal error and ministerial con-artist, as a last result the early Pentecostal clergy saw the need to form what would become known as the Pentecostal Assemblies Of The World, Inc.(Golder 60).

Listed below are the early recorded leadership of the PAW on what little records we have been able to ascertain. You will notice that there was little to no use of ecclesiastical title that will characterize PAW polity later. However, it is assumed that all of the individuals were clergy in some sense of the world.

1907:

*Brother Pendleton, Chairmen protem
Brother Clark, Secretary protem*

(None of these individuals held further offices with the PAW as far as we know.)

1908:

*Sister Hopkins, Temporary Chairman
Elder J. J. Franzee, Secretary*

1912-1918:

*Elder J. J. Franzee, General Superintendent
Elder John Mautz, Secretary*

(It is important to note that by the year 1914, the Pentecostal Assemblies Of The World, Inc. became an Apostolic, or Oneness Pentecostal organization. [Tyson 184].)

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The So-called "New Issue" And the Effect on the PAW:

During the year 1913-1915, something extraordinary would occur within the Pentecostal movement that would effect the Pentecostal Assemblies Of The World, Inc. forever. The Great Apostolic Awakening Of 1913, began at the World-Wide Camp meeting Of 1913, where the great Evangelist, Mary Woodworth Etter was the keynote speaker. At this camp meeting on the west coast, several prominent Pentecostal clergy, both men and women, were present from all of the United States and Canada. During the camp meeting, and after baptizing several candidates, Elder R. E. McAlister preached forcefully that the correct way of baptism according to Matthew 28:19 was in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Foster 89). Such a stir was caused by this message, that the prominent theologian and pastor, Elder Frank J. Ewart, invited Elder McAlister to discuss the matter of the baptism in the name of Jesus further. Elder Ewart through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, believed the theology that Elder McAlister proposed, but yet pondered it in his heart the truths that had been shared with him (Foster 90).

Then during the same camp meeting, Elder John G. Scheppe became so inspired by the preaching of Elder McAlister, that he spent the whole night praying and reading the scripture, to find the truth concerning the correct formula of baptism and the name of Jesus. Early in the morning, so glorious was the revelation of the name of God to Elder Scheppe, that he leaped running through the camp declaring to the people what the Lord had revealed to him (Foster 89, Golder 41).

Soon thereafter, Elder Ewart, McAlister, and Cook, held a revival on Main street Los Angeles, and among the many ministers were Elder Garfield T. Haywood of Indianapolis, Indiana (Foster 90). This revival gave Ewart ad McAlister another opportunity to express the matter of the name of Jesus further. Elder Ewart through observation began to recognize the mighty miracles that were being performed through the power of the name of Jesus, and when he would preach on the subject. It was shortly after this time that Elder Ewart would obey God, and began preaching baptism in Jesus' name, and he and Cook would be rebaptized. Moreover, through further consecration, God would reveal to Elder Ewart that the full revelation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, can be fully and totally comprehended in the person of Jesus, revealing to him the Oneness of God.

Consequently, many Pentecostal believers began to accept the revelation of God in Christ, and rejected baptism using the formula "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." These believers of the Oneness of God began to interpret the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in Matthew 28:19 to be the name Jesus. As a result, great periods of rebaptisms occurred all

over the country. For Pentecostals who were rebaptized in the name of Jesus, this was known as a "revival of truth," for Pentecostals who still embraced the Trinitarian doctrine, and verbal invocation of the Matthew 28:19 baptismal formula, it would be known as a deeply divisive "new issue." Nevertheless, this phrase "new issue" seems illogical, because Church History reveals that it is a very old issue, due to some who have always maintained a baptism in the name of Jesus alone.

By 1914, the Assemblies of God was founded in Hot Springs, Arkansas, by many prominent white Pentecostal leaders such as Elder Howard A. Goss, Elder Daniel C. O. Opperman, and educated former Baptist minister who later became its first General Superintendent, Endourus N. Bell. Many of these white clergymen, were former members of the Church Of God In Christ, a Holiness denomination founded by the late Senior Bishop, Charles H. Mason in 1897 in Lexington, Mississippi, which embraced the Pentecostal experience in 1907.

Two years later, after the Assemblies Of God's inception, the alleged "new issue" of the Oneness of the Godhead, and baptism in the name of Jesus alone, threatened the future of the new organization, due to the Assemblies of God not having a formal doctrinal creed. Many of the Assemblies Of God's laity and hierarchy, began to accept what would be known as the "Apostolic or Oneness Pentecostal" message, including its General Superintendent E.N.Bell (Foster 95, 113).

Eventually a great power struggle arose between the Oneness and Trinitarian clergy, causing the leadership of the Assemblies Of God to take a definitive stand. To settle the matter, Elders E. N. Bell and G. T. Haywood met in Turner hall in 1915 representing the Oneness view, and Elders A. C. Collins and Jacob Miller represented the Trinitarian view (Foster 110). Arguments were heard and tabled to be considered. Nevertheless, the hierarchy of the Assemblies Of God, with the aid of its early theologian Elder D. W. Kerr, decided to maintain its Trinitarian position and codified the Assemblies of God position in a "Statement Of Fundamental Truth." As a result, 156 ministers left the Assemblies Of God in 1916 feeling that the doctrinal committee failed to assess the view of the whole General Assembly of the Assemblies Of God (Tyson 174-176). Unfortunately, the brethren of Trinitarian and Oneness persuasion allowed theology to be a means of intense division, which is felt and is gradually being overcome even to this day. Ministers and Christian workers who had preached, prayed, received the Holy Ghost together, now denounced and ostracized each other forming "us" and "they" boundaries because of a feeling of particularism. The Assemblies Of God ministers who adhered to the Oneness of God, then more commonly known in slander and in commendation as "Jesus Only," united together due to conflict, and formed the General Assemblies Of Apostolic Assemblies on December 28, 1916.

Unfortunately, the life of the General Assemblies Of Apostolic Assemblies was short lived. The GAAA was not recognized by the government of the United States, which presented some serious problems. For unknown reasons, GAAA could not receive recognition from the United States Clergy Bureau, which was of critical importance seeing that World War I was taking place, and most Pentecostals have been historically conscientious objectors (Tyson 183). Secondly, because the GAAA like other Pentecostal bodies had an evangelistic emphasis, many of the GAAA's ministers would travel several destinations preaching in circuits. This became difficult, because the GAAA ministers who were mostly poor, could not secure discount rates on trains, the principle vehicle of long distance transportation in those days (Tyson 183). Thus, the leaders of the GAAA knowing they could not exist in their present state, decide to merge with then little known Pentecostal Assemblies Of The World, Inc. on January 22, 1918, a body embracing Apostolic-Pentecostal theology since 1915.

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