

PAWHistory

(Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc)

Road to the Merger

by

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Part II

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When The Assemblies of God adopted the doctrine of the trinity at its Fourth General Council in October 1916, the Oneness Pentecostals were forced to withdraw from the organization. Two months later, in late December and early January, Oneness ministers met in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, and on January 2, 1917, they formed a Oneness Pentecostal organization, called The General Assembly of the Apostolic Assemblies.

In late 1917 or early 1918 The General Assemblies of the Apostolic Assemblies merged with The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World and then held its first meeting in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, later in the same year. This interracial organization, which adopted the name of The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, was the only Oneness Pentecostal organization until late 1924, when a separation occurred mainly along racial lines. During 1925 three new organizations were formed: The Apostolic Churches of Jesus Christ, The Pentecostal Ministerial Alliance, and Emmanuel's Church in Jesus Christ.

This organizational division among Oneness people was not desired, however, and in 1927 the first step was taken toward bringing them back together. Meeting in a joint convention in Guthrie, Oklahoma, Emmanuel's Church in Jesus Christ and The Apostolic Churches of Jesus Christ merged under the name The Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. This merger, which united about 400 ministers, was consummated at the next General Convention held in Port Arthur, Texas, in October 1928.

In 1931, a unity conference with representatives from four Oneness organizations met in Columbus, Ohio, in an attempt to bring all Oneness people together. Unfortunately, this attempt was only partially successful. The Pentecostal Ministerial Alliance ministers voted to merge with The Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ, but the terms of the proposed merger was not accepted by the ministers in The Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. However, a merger between The Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ and The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World was consummated in November 1931. The merger adopted the name of The Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ.

In 1932, The Pentecostal Ministerial Alliance changed its name to The Pentecostal Church, Incorporated, reflecting its organizational structure. But no further attempt was made for a merger with The Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ until 1936, when The Pentecostal Church, Incorporated ministers voted to work toward an amalgamation of the two bodies. Once again no agreement could be found.

The desire to be united remained alive and growing, and eight years later, in 1944, the first step was taken that led to the successful merger in 1945 of these two Oneness Pentecostal organizations to form the United Pentecostal Church International.

The merger of these two Oneness Pentecostal bodies brought together 1,838 ministers and about 900 churches. These numbers have risen year by year until today in 2000, there are more than 8,347 ministers and more than 3,940 churches in North America.

