

Winner of the  
Charles W. Conn Historical  
Writing Award for 2008-2010

# Streams of Living Water

100 Years  
of the  
Church of God  
in Mississippi  
1909 - 2009

Volume 1 - Revised

Written and Compiled by  
Louis F. Morgan, Ph.D.



# THE MISSION

## to reach mississippi

The New Testament illustrates the transformational results accomplished by people with a mission. The early apostles “turned the world upside down” as they were enabled by the Holy Spirit to continue the work Christ began. We, too, have this same commission today. And, we have a rich heritage in the Church of God in Mississippi of men and women dedicated to the mission of transforming their communities for Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

This first volume highlights the missional focus of consecrated apostolic followers of Christ during the formation and development of the Church of God in Mississippi from 1909 through the mid-1940s. It examines briefly the diverse movements within Pentecostalism impacting the Church of God in Mississippi, followed by reflections of how the movement spread throughout the state prior to 1945. The story culminates with accounts of men and women from various locations who proclaimed the message of Jesus Christ and the full gospel in their local communities.

Emphasized throughout is the theme “streams of living water.” During the initial Church of God revival in Mississippi in 1909 Clara Allison preached a sermon referencing living water (Rev. 22:17) and nearby there was a small stream that circled around the Stonefield tabernacle. In addition, water often is used as a symbol for the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it seems only fitting that water, and living water in particular, should guide us through our journey into Mississippi Church of God history.

This work is a culmination of more than 20 years of personal research and interviews. However, it is not comprehensive, nor is it definitive. My goal is to preserve the story of how the Church of God began in Mississippi and to encourage discussion about its continued development. I acknowledge there are ministers (clergy and laity) and congregations not included in this inaugural edition. However, your contribution of information is requested for future revisions and updates. In an effort to preserve additional stories and photographs, a companion website has been created and will be updated routinely. Pastor Lamar Davis and the Morgantown congregation generously provided access to their church website to house this continuing project. (Please forward any correspondence to my email or post office address in the right column).

It is my sincere prayer for this history to inform and inspire readers. May we gain courage from the revolutionary acts exemplified by our forebears who charted a new course for their era as they focused on the mission of reaching their communities for Jesus Christ. And, may we be filled with passion to do the same in this current generation through the power of God’s Holy Spirit. May God continue to bless us in our mission to reach Mississippi.

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Streams of Living Water:  
100 Years of the Church of God  
in Mississippi, 1909-2009  
Volume 1

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*“In the last day, that  
great day of the feast,  
Jesus stood and cried,  
saying, ‘If any man  
thirst, let him come unto  
me, and drink.*

*He that believeth on me,  
as the scripture hath said,  
out of his belly shall flow  
rivers of living water.”*

*~ John 7:37-38 (KJV)*

*“The Spirit and the Bride  
say come and let him  
that heareth say come  
and let him athirst, come  
and whosoever will,  
let him take the  
water of life freely.”*

*~ Revelation 22:17 (KJV)*



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of African-Americans than any other state.<sup>14</sup> African-Americans, totaling more than 1 million in population, outnumbered whites by as much as five times in some areas, particularly the Mississippi River valley areas.<sup>15</sup> There were 1,250 Native Americans of the Choctaw tribe, although many had already been removed to Oklahoma to become part of the Choctaw nation there.<sup>16</sup>

Income was primarily from agricultural production.<sup>17</sup> Cotton was king in Mississippi, and the state was fourth in the nation in the production of turpentine and rosin.<sup>18</sup> Mississippi was one of most important sugar-cane producing states as well. In 1909 the state produced 1,665 pounds of sugar and almost 3 million gallons of syrup.<sup>19</sup> The leading crops in order were cotton, corn, cottonseed, hay and forage, and sweet potatoes and yams.<sup>20</sup>

Of almost 30 million acres of land area in 1909, more than 19 million acres were farms.<sup>21</sup> The average farm size was 67.6 acres.<sup>22</sup> The total value of crops in Mississippi in 1909 was more than \$147 million.<sup>23</sup> By 1910 there were 274,382 farm operators, of which only 92,891 were farm owners and 181,491 were tenants (or share-croppers).<sup>24</sup>

There were 50,384 wage earners (of which 47,898 were male) and nearly half of them worked 60 hours per week.<sup>25</sup> 37,118 of these wage earners were in the

lumber and timber industry, followed by 3,014 in oil and cottonseed industry.<sup>26</sup>

Voting rights were limited to male citizens 21 years of age or older who had resided in Mississippi for at least two years and in his voting district for at least one year.<sup>27</sup> He must have registered and paid taxes for two preceding years, been able to read or interpret the Constitution of the United States to the satisfaction of the voter registration officer, and paid the required poll tax of \$2.<sup>28</sup> This limited most voting privileges to wealthy land owners, as sharecroppers (both white and black) often traveled from farm to farm and were unable to afford the poll tax.

Education was seen as a luxury to many Mississippi families, as children were often needed to assist in harvesting crops. As a result, 22 percent of the state's population was illiterate in 1909.<sup>29</sup>

Over half the population of the state belonged to the Baptist faith and the majority of the remainder to the Methodist faith.<sup>30</sup> Other significant denominations were Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Christian, and Protestant Episcopal.<sup>31</sup>

### **Tallahatchie County in 1909**

On a local level, Tallahatchie County newspapers reported usual community happenings, such as picnics at a local lake, church and school events, and even local political news. Other reports in 1909 quickly became local gossip, such

the City of Charleston receiving new electric lights,<sup>32</sup> a new courthouse erected at Sumner,<sup>33</sup> and the purchase of the first automobile in the community of Cassilla.<sup>34</sup> In addition to reports of exciting innovation were more somber accounts, such as the death of an African-American at the hands of the local sheriff,<sup>35</sup> depicting racial tension typical of many Mississippi communities during that time. Nonetheless, the pages of *The Herald Progress* and *The Tallahatchie Herald* highlighted the societal tension experienced among most Mississippians in 1909—a time of transitioning into a new era of innovation while struggling to separate from the deeply ingrained ideologies of the Old South.

Sociologically, individuals were grasping for power and identity in this time of progress. In the midst of this apprehension of the future, several sincere men and women who were seeking deeper consecration to God received spiritual renewal. It was in 1909 that an outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurred as the Church of God was first introduced into Mississippi in rural Tallahatchie County. Although unnoticed by the local press, this spiritual awakening transformed local residents. Much like the benefits of that year's innovation, the positive impact of the Church of God in Mississippi ultimately swept across the state. 100 years later the Church of God continues to have strong spiritual influence in Mississippi. This is the story of its beginning. †









leadership of Bishop Charles Harrison Mason, the Church of God in Christ was energizing the spiritual experience among Memphis' black population.<sup>44</sup> Spiritual renewal was occurring among Memphis' white residents as well, particularly at a house church located at 736 Richmond Street (one block southwest of the East McLemore/Mississippi Boulevard intersection). These services were led by L.P. Adams, a lawyer and former minister with the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.<sup>45</sup> Soon Adams' church would intersect with Cascilla residents with such intensity that the impact would continue more than a century later.

### Pentecostal Outpourings

Meanwhile, spiritual outpourings similar to that recorded in the New Testament Book of Acts, particularly the manifestations of healing and speaking in unlearned languages, were reported in various locations in the United States and other parts of the world. Daniel Awrey was given supernatural ability to speak in a language he did not know at Delaware, Ohio in 1891, and his wife, Ella, had a similar experience in 1899 at Beniah (Bradley County), Tennessee.<sup>46</sup> In the late 1890s the forebears of the Church of God (Cleveland, TN) experienced tongues-speech during a holiness revival at the Shearer School House at Camp Creek, North Carolina (near Murphy).<sup>47</sup> Students at Bethel Bible School, under the tutelage of Charles Fox Parham, experienced tongues-speech in 1901, and they coined the phrase that tongues-speech was the "Bible evidence" of the baptism with the Holy Ghost after searching the scriptures concerning this spiritual manifestation.<sup>48</sup>

While there was an influx of this spiritual expression at the turn of the 20th Century, historians would later note

its practice by individuals throughout the history of the Christian Church, beginning with the early apostles and including such personalities as St. Francis of Assisi in the 13th Century and Edward Irving of Scotland in 1830.<sup>49</sup> Some theologians would later surmise such spiritual expressions were a continuation of the fulfillment of Joel's prophesy ("And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my

spirit," Joel 2:28-29, KJV), which the apostle Peter also referenced in his sermon following the early apostles' receiving the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues as the Holy Spirit gave them the ability to do so (Acts 2:14-21).<sup>50</sup>

### Azusa Street Revival

Perhaps the most celebrated of these outpourings occurred in April 1906 in Los Angeles, California-- first at the home of Richard Asbury at 214 North Bonnie Brae Street and then on Azusa Street.<sup>51</sup> It was there that holiness pastor William J. Seymour, a native of Louisiana and the son of former slaves, led a multi-ethnic team of men and women who conducted services in a former livery stable.<sup>52</sup> Because of the newspaper coverage of the unique spiritual manifestations occurring at the revival, the spiritually hungry from across America and various parts of the world flocked to Los Angeles to the small mission located at 312 Azusa Street. There, thousands of people received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and supernaturally spoke in languages they did not know. They testified of receiving greater power and love for others. Missionaries, evangelists, and pastors who were full of zeal and the power of the Holy Spirit left the Azusa Street meetings and took the message of Jesus to numerous cities and villages across the globe. These radical trailblazers for the Gospel, compelled by the mission of Jesus, left the comforts of their former occupations and communities and saw their work as a restoration of New Testament Christianity. They believed that, just like Christ's early apostles, they were empowered to continue the work established by Christ and recorded in the New Testament. And, just like those early apostles, many of these Pentecostal pioneers suffered extreme persecution, even death, for preaching the



**William J. Seymour who led the Azusa Street meetings.**

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A Pentecostal tabernacle was erected in Carmichael, Mississippi, in 1909, a successful revival was conducted in Quitman in 1913, and Pentecostal services were conducted in Laurel as early as 1914.<sup>70</sup> Other Mississippi towns with strong Pentecostal activity prior to 1915 were Sturgis, Neshoba, and West Point.<sup>71</sup> While many of these Pentecostal believers most likely had little or no interaction with one another, it was from these early “streams of the Spirit” that the Pentecostal movement in Mississippi traces its beginning.

## Memphis Ablaze with Pentecost

When Charles Harrison Mason, the Memphis leader of the Church of God in Christ, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at the mission on Azusa Street, his experience ushered the Church of God in Christ into the Pentecostal movement in 1907.<sup>72</sup> Gaston Barnabus Cashwell from Dunn, North Carolina, was another minister who was baptized with the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street.<sup>73</sup> He then took the Pentecostal message to numerous locations and was referred to as “the apostle of Pentecost to the South.”<sup>74</sup> In May 1907 Cashwell, along with Mack M. Pinson and H.G. Rodgers, visited Memphis, where L.P. Adams embraced the Pentecostal message and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>75</sup> Empowered by his Pentecostal baptism, Adams sought fellowship with like-minded believers and soon found his way into the Church of God (Cleveland).<sup>76</sup> Adams’ Memphis congregation was organized as a Church of God by A.J. Tomlinson in November 1908.<sup>77</sup>

## Memphis Newspaper Report Intrigues Cascilla Resident

8



of 1908 was located in a storefront building at 129 Jefferson Avenue and North 2nd Street in Memphis.<sup>78</sup> These healings captured the attention of local reporters. *The Commercial Appeal*, a Memphis newspaper, published reports of some of these healings, which caught the attention of Ephram Keeton “E.K.” Simpson, a Cascilla resident who subscribed to the Memphis newspaper.<sup>79</sup> Simpson was intrigued by Adams’ claims to have received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and special power from God by which he could speak in unknown languages, cast out devils, and heal the sick. The language referring to tongues-speech as “the baptism of the Holy Ghost” appealed to Simpson, as early holiness adherents (pre-Pentecostalism) believed sanctification was the baptism of the Holy Ghost.<sup>80</sup> Desiring to know more, Simpson decided to locate Adams’ church while on a business trip to Memphis in early 1909.<sup>81</sup> During Simpson’s visit, he was overcome with the strong presence of God’s power in the service and the love and sincerity exhibited among the members of Adams’ congregation. The testimonies of those claiming to have been healed by God’s power rekindled Simpson’s own zeal for spiritual renewal.

Returning to Cascilla, Simpson revealed his findings to the local congregation. The men of the church, including pastor J.W. Mullen, Billy Baker, and E.K. Simpson, held a meeting and decided to invite Adams to visit Cascilla for their annual protracted meeting.<sup>82</sup> Adams agreed to conduct a meeting in Cascilla, but interest increased to such a degree that local residents could not wait until the cotton had been planted to begin the services. So

Mullen, Baker and Simpson supplied 40 dollars and sent to Adams in advance.<sup>83</sup>

### **L.P. Adams Arrives at Cascilla**

During cotton-planting season, Adams arrived in Cascilla, accompanied by local church workers from his Memphis congregation, including his wife, daughter, and Winnie Minks. Stonefield church member Clara Allison later noted, “Sister Minks was a wonderful worker. She had been healed of tuberculosis. She couldn’t speak above a whisper, she said, and when the Lord healed her, He gave her a voice almost like a trumpet.”<sup>84</sup> On Sunday, April 25, 1909, Adams began preaching under the outdoor tabernacle of the Stonefield Holiness Church.<sup>85</sup> His first sermon text was from Acts 2:1-4:

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one

accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (KJV).<sup>86</sup>

Adams testified of his personal experience and referenced it with scripture. As he preached the Holy Spirit began to reveal the truth of his message to the congregation. Convinced that Adams’ message and experience were indeed biblical, the people began to desire the “blessing” of the Holy Ghost baptism. Clara Allison Priest would later remember, “We would pray and tarry and seek the Holy Ghost. Oh, how hungry my soul was for the blessing! It seemed I couldn’t live if I didn’t get the Holy Ghost.”<sup>87</sup>

Desiring to have everything the Bible promised to followers of Christ, many individuals attending the revival services began to seek this same experience and gathered to pray before the services. They often fasted for days while seeking what they understood to be a promise for all Christians that would help them live for Christ and empower them to witness of His power to others.<sup>88</sup> The men would meet

**Memphis pastor L.P. Adams who introduced the Church of God into Mississippi in 1909 at Cascilla.**

on one side of the tabernacle for prayer, and the women would gather on the other side of the tabernacle.<sup>89</sup> As they scattered through the hillside in places of prayer, their voices echoed through the hills and hollows around the tabernacle.<sup>90</sup>

## Clara Allison Receives the Pentecostal Blessing

The revival continued for a couple of weeks. As the service began on Monday, May 10, 1909, the tabernacle was crowded with individuals earnestly seeking the Holy Ghost baptism, as well as those simply investigating the reports spreading throughout the community about a Memphis preacher who could speak in other languages while praying for the sick.<sup>91</sup>

As the service began Clara McHann Allison, who was a member of the Stonefield Holiness Church, entered the service with her husband, Monroe, and their three daughters, Audrey, Bessie and Gladys.<sup>92</sup> A large crowd had assembled on this morning and all the benches were filled. Finding no place in which to sit, the Allison family made their way to the front of the tabernacle and sat down on the altar.<sup>93</sup>

Clara Allison later remembered that during the service, while listening to Adams preach, “a peculiar, yet wonderful, feeling” came over her.<sup>94</sup> About midway into Adams’ message as Clara was worshipping the Lord, she began to speak in a language unknown to her. It was then that she realized what was taking place. In her willingness to yield to the Lord and her deep desire to receive the Holy Ghost, He came in and spoke for Himself as

she listened to the Word and yielded her tongue to Him.<sup>95</sup>

Since the local people had never before seen anyone receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, initially they were concerned by Clara's actions. They called for the area doctor, who quickly arrived at the tabernacle and examined Clara. When the



physician asked her how she felt, Clara replied, “Doctor Franklin, I never have been so happy in my life!” She then began speaking in tongues, shouting and dancing throughout the tabernacle as she praised the Lord. The doctor explained there was no visible cause for concern, and that day the Lord ministered to and through Clara for about 4 hours.<sup>96</sup>

## Maggie McHann Speaks Spanish Fluently by Holy Spirit's Power

Thereafter, Maggie Simpson McHann, who was the daughter of E.K. Simpson and married to Clara Allison's brother, John, ran to the altar in expectation. She too wanted to receive this Pentecostal blessing. As Adams laid his hands on her and prayed, Maggie McHann began speaking in a language as the Holy Spirit gave her the words. After she had spoken in tongues for a few minutes, a Hispanic gentlemen and former soldier known in the community as Johnny Jack stood to his feet. Knowing Maggie personally, he knew that she did not know the Spanish language, which she did not. However, he reported to the congregation that Maggie's experience convinced him the Holy Spirit baptism was real, for Maggie was speaking fluently in Spanish.<sup>97</sup> This excited the congregation and others rushed to the altar for prayer.

Interestingly, Nancy Elizabeth Simpson, the wife of E.K. Simpson and mother of Maggie McHann, wrote to her son, Sidney, concerning the revival. Sidney later reflected, “My mother wrote to me and said she didn’t want any of that Goose Chatter, but she was under conviction at the time.”<sup>98</sup> Soon, Nancy Simpson received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. She is remembered for her intense prayer life, which was often accompanied by shouting while on her knees as she yielded to the Holy Spirit.<sup>99</sup>

\* Center image is of Clara Allison Priest,  
circa 1950

*Louis F. Morgan Collection*



## Clara Allison Beckons All to the Living Water

A few days later Adams had to return to Memphis to resume responsibilities as pastor of his congregation there. However, local residents continued to meet for prayer and preaching of the Word. During the first service after Adams returned to Memphis, the meeting at Stonefield Tabernacle began as usual with prayer, singing and testifying. However, when it came time for the message, J.W. Mullen, the local pastor, informed the congregation that he felt he could no longer preach until he, too, had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was then the congregation called upon Clara Allison to preach.<sup>100</sup>

Although unprepared, Clara Allison agreed and made her way to the pulpit. She chose for her text Revelation 22:17: “The Spirit and the Bride say come and let him that heareth say come and let him athirst, come and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Clara began by testifying of her personal experience and the transformation she felt taking place in her life. She quickly began to preach, and an intense power, which she later explained as the anointing of the

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*They often fasted for days while seeking what they understood to be a promise for all Christians that would help them live for Christ and empower them to witness of His power to others.*

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Holy Spirit, seemed to rest upon her. It was as if she could literally feel God’s presence inside her being as she preached, and she spoke boldly to the congregation. Soon Clara was lost in this wonderful feeling. When she came to herself, almost everyone in the house was experiencing some manifestation as a result of the presence of God. People were laying prostrate on the floor as in a spiritual trance (typically referred to in Pentecostal churches as being “slain in the Spirit”), some were shouting, running, dancing in the Holy Spirit, and several had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and were speaking in other tongues. Among those

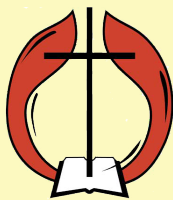
who received the Holy Spirit baptism were Clara’s husband, Monroe, and her close friends Etta and Hal Pressgrove. The service did not conclude until about 3 o’clock in the afternoon as the congregation rejoiced throughout the tabernacle. Their love for God and one another compelled them to continue worshipping together into the afternoon.<sup>101</sup> In addition to church services, individuals were receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit at different times and places throughout the community. Clara Allison later noted, “Revival really broke out all over the country. Folks received the Holy Ghost at home, in the field, almost anywhere.”<sup>102</sup>

## Church of God is Firmly Established in Mississippi

Not only had the Church of God message been introduced into Mississippi, it had won a place in the heart of many individuals who would soon take its message of holiness, divine healing, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit to their neighbors, family and friends. The refreshing rain of God’s Spirit that fell at Stonefield formed a stream of living water that soon would quench the spiritual thirst of men, women and children throughout Mississippi and beyond. †

## Dixon Pentecostal Research Center

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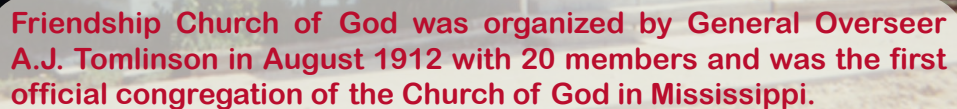
# Formative Years of the Church of God in Mississippi, 1908 - 1915

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>1908</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– L.P. Adams is licensed as a Church of God minister</li> <li>– Memphis newspaper reports local revival; Mississippi subscriber E.K. Simpson is intrigued and visits church</li> </ul>  |
| <b>1909 (April 25)</b>  | – L.P. Adams arrives in Cascilla, Mississippi to begin revival at Stonefield Holiness Church and Tabernacle (a Free Methodist church)  |
| <b>1909 (May 10)</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Clara Allison [Priest] receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Adams' revival at Stonefield</li> <li>– Maggie Simpson McHann, daughter of E.K. Simpson and sister-in-law of Clara Allison, receives the Holy Spirit baptism; supernaturally speaks in Spanish</li> </ul>   |
| <b>1909 (May)</b>       | – Following the revival, Clara Allison [Priest] is called upon to preach as the local pastor does not have baptism of the Holy Spirit; many receive the Holy Spirit baptism during her first sermon  |
| <b>1909 (Summer)</b>    | – Hyde family (relatives of Clara Allison and Maggie McHann) living near Charleston, Mississippi request A.J. Tomlinson to come preach; he is unable to do so at that time   |
| <b>1910 (Summer)</b>    | – M.S. Lemons preaches at Stonefield Tabernacle  |
| <b>1910 (October)</b>   | – A.J. Tomlinson visits Hyde family near Charleston (Friendship Church area) to conduct a service; some Cascilla residents are present; Tomlinson departs to attend Adams' Memphis Camp Meeting  |
| <b>1911 (August)</b>    | – Annual Church of God revival held at Stonefield and also near Friendship community   |
| <b>1911 (August 28)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– First Mississippi ministers are set forth at Stonefield (although no church is officially organized yet): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– E.K. Simpson set forth as a Deacon</li> <li>– D.W. Dollahite set forth as an Evangelist; later assists others in taking the Church of God message to Arkansas</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |



- 1912 (August)** – Friendship Church of God organizes with 20 members; first official congregation in Mississippi
- 1913 (January)** – By this time Z.D. Simpson has organized Pilgrim's Rest Church of God in Artesia (near Mississippi / Alabama border) and three deacons have received license:
  - C.L. Blankenship, W.H. Thompson, and Tildon Turner
- 1913 (Summer)** – M.S. Lemons preaches at Stonefield and Friendship; accompanied by Homer Tomlinson, son of General Overseer A.J. Tomlinson
  - Some Stonefield congregation participants wish to unite with Church of God, others are unsettled
  - Lemons and Tomlinson establish Turkey Foot Fork Church of God with some Stonefield participants
  - Turkey Foot Fork and Stonefield congregations share pastor, J.W. Mullen, and continue to worship together
- 1913 (October)** – Following Stonefield revival, Lemons and Haynes conduct meeting at Friendship and license two deacons, Jim Allen Bell and Tom Morgan
- 1913 (December 25)** – M.S. Lemons and M.S. Haynes arrive at Stonefield to begin revival
- 1914 (January 5)** – Stonefield Church of God organizes and Turkey Foot Fork members merge with Stonefield members
  - J.W. Mullen is licensed as an Evangelist and continues to serve as pastor
- 1914 (January)** – M.S. Lemons visits Hardy, Mississippi, where he baptizes Lillie Tilghman and her 10 children in water and receives them into the Church of God
- 1915 (August)** – Warren Evans Sr. returns to Marion County from Florida as Church of God evangelist; conducts first Church of God service in southern Mississippi under a brush arbor at Morgantown

# Formation of Early Local Churches





flowed from the Cascilla hills into Mississippi's desert places to quench the spiritually thirsty with the refreshing Spirit of God. It was not enough for men and women to enjoy the Pentecostal blessing for their self only, but, according to God's plan, they were motivated by the Holy Spirit's energy to lead others to Jesus Christ, that One who remains the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). As a result, the stream of the Church of God began to overflow from the Cascilla hills into other communities.

### Friendship Church of God

Members of the Hyde family were among those attending the revival when L.P. Adams preached at Stonefield Tabernacle. It was there they first learned about the Pentecostal baptism and the Church of God. In fact, the first two individuals to receive the Holy Spirit baptism at Stonefield, Clara Allison and her sister-in-law Maggie McHann,<sup>107</sup> were related

to the Hyde family from the Charleston and Teasdale communities, located about 20 miles from Cascilla.<sup>108</sup> As a result, the news of the Holy Spirit outpouring and the Church of God quickly spread among this family and their neighbors.

Following the Cascilla revival, members of the Hyde family living near Charleston wrote to Reverend A.J. Tomlinson, then general overseer of the Church of God, and asked him to conduct a revival in northern Mississippi. To their dismay and for reasons uncertain, he was unable to grant their request in 1909. However, by October 1910 Tomlinson accepted a second invitation of the Hyde family. While on his way to Reverend L.P. Adams' Memphis Camp Meeting, Brother Tomlinson visited northern Mississippi and stayed in the home of Tom Morgan--on whose property Tomlinson conducted a few services.<sup>109</sup>

Assisted by "some of the saints from

Cascilla" whose "prayers and testimonies were a great stimulant to the work," Brother Tomlinson reported that some professions were made, others sanctified, quite a number of seekers of the Holy Ghost, and six baptized in water as a result of the brief revival held at what would become known as the Friendship Tabernacle.<sup>110</sup> Communion and feet washing, which some had never before practiced, were also observed during this meeting with a special move of the Holy Spirit during that service. When Tomlinson closed the revival and boarded the train for Memphis, he was satisfied that the church had "made many warm friends, and [was] sure that good seed fell in some true and honest hearts."<sup>111</sup>

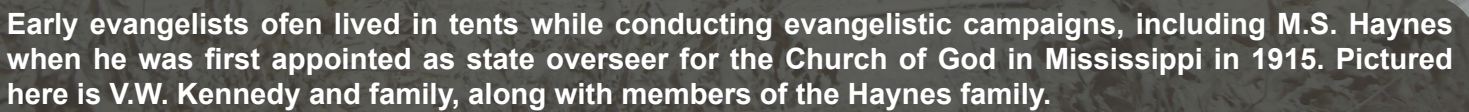
Following this revival, *The Evening Light and Church of God Evangel* began to be more widely circulated throughout the area. It served as a link to the Pentecostal movement for some of the Spirit-filled believers--encouraging them in their new lifestyle. This is evident by a letter published in the *Evangel* on December 15, 1910, and written by Virgie Pritchard of Holcomb.<sup>112</sup> It is said that Virgie's husband, John, was plowing in the field, praying and praising the Lord as he worked, when suddenly the power of God came upon him and he fell to the ground. He then received the Holy Ghost baptism and began speaking in other tongues. When he "came to himself" he found his mule grazing along the fence row.<sup>113</sup> And the joy of his infilling was just as real to him more than a year later when his wife corresponded with the Church of God periodical. She wrote, ...Since the Comforter has come He has taken the place of loved ones [four children who had passed away], dried the falling tears away, turned my sorrow into laughter, turned my nighttime

Wagon load of young people going to a brush arbor meeting in 1916 near the present-day Mount Sinai Church of God in Foxworth, Mississippi.

Louis F. Morgan Collection







into day. O how I praise Him for the blessed Holy Ghost. How the dove of peace sings in my soul this morning as we read of the wonderful works of God that are being manifested in different places, and the wonderful testimonies in the last 'Evening Light' as we read them the power fell upon us and we were made to rejoice. O how I praise the Lord for what He has done at this place....<sup>114</sup>

group of Spirit-filled believers in northern Mississippi, they were one step closer to uniting with the Church of God.

Beginning in 1911, Church of God ministers began holding protracted meetings, which they termed camp meetings, at both Stonefield and Friendship tabernacles.<sup>115</sup> The first meeting usually was held at Stonefield, followed immediately by a meeting at Friendship.<sup>116</sup>

1911, the first Church of God ministers in Mississippi were set forth into ministry. Interestingly, this was before a local Church of God congregation was officially organized. On Monday, August 28, 1911, D.W. Dollahite was commissioned as an Evangelist and E.K. Simpson was set forth as a Deacon.<sup>117</sup> Consequently, these two men played a vital role in establishing the Church of God in Mississippi-- Dollahite at Friendship and Simpson at Cascilla. And, Dollahite would be instrumental in establishing the Church of God in Arkansas.



## Friendship: Mississippi's First Official Congregation

In August 1912 A.J. Tomlinson traveled to Mississippi personally and received the Friendship church into the Church of God.<sup>118</sup> Assisting him during this revival were J.W. Buckalew and the Pentecostal Mission Band, a group of musicians and evangelists who traveled the Southeast assisting Tomlinson in his evangelistic campaigns.<sup>119</sup> The 20-member congregation at Friendship became the first Mississippi church to officially unite with the Church of God.<sup>120</sup> By 1914 the congregation had grown to almost 60 members, and D.W. Dollahite organized a Sunday School averaging 40 in attendance.<sup>121</sup> During this same time Dollahite wrote to the *Church of God Evangel* in which he shared from his heart and the Word,

Praise God. How we should praise Him for everything, and not mention others' faults, but get the beams out of our own eyes. Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. Praise God, this way just suits me. I will lift up mine eyes to the hills whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth. Praise God for these last days when things long hidden from the wise and prudent are being revealed to babes in Christ.<sup>122</sup>

An earlier correspondence by D.W. Dollahite expressed his zeal for the Lord, ...Thank God for these last days when He is pouring out the Spirit on the children of men. This way is just like heaven to me. When the battle is fought and the smoke clears away I will be found on the battle field. We are looking for the gifts

to be given to the church here at Friendship. Pray that we may come to the Bible standard. We are looking for the coming of the King.<sup>123</sup>

## Pilgrim's Rest Church near Artesia

By January 1913 a second Church of God congregation was organized in Mississippi.<sup>124</sup> The Pilgrim's Rest Church of God in Mayhew, located near the Alabama border town of Artesia in northern Mississippi, was established by Z.D. Simpson, who pastored several Church of God congregations simultaneously.<sup>125</sup> Simpson lived in Ethelsville, Alabama, located about 5 miles east of the Mississippi state line, and he traveled to Artesia once a month to conduct a service for the Pilgrim's Rest congregation.<sup>126</sup> In addition, three deacons were also licensed: C.L. Blankenship, W.H. Thompson, and Tildon Turner.

With the Church of God officially organized in Mississippi, Roy Miller was appointed to serve as state overseer in 1912, but he became ill a few months later and died within the year.<sup>127</sup> Z.D. Simpson followed as the next overseer, and he served from January to November 1913.<sup>128</sup>

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*On August 28, 1911  
D.W. Dollahite and E.K.  
Simpson were the first  
Church of God ministers  
licensed in Mississippi.*

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## Turkey Foot Fork Church at Holcomb

The summer of 1913 brought the anticipated annual camp meeting at the Stonefield campground, where those

attending the camp meeting set up tents around the tabernacle. There they would cook their meals and actually camp for the duration of the one or two week meeting, thus the term "camp meeting." A small stream circled around the sides and back of the tabernacle, providing water for those assembled for the services.<sup>129</sup>

M.S. Lemons, a prominent Church of God evangelist, conducted the 1913 camp meeting at Stonefield. He was accompanied by Homer Tomlinson, an emerging evangelist who was the son of General Overseer A.J. Tomlinson.<sup>130</sup> As Lemons preached, several participants "caught a vision" of the Church of God and were finally ready to unite with the movement.<sup>131</sup> Many of these individuals had traveled to the camp meeting from the nearby Holcomb community. However, not everyone at Stonefield was prepared to make such a commitment to unite with the Church of God. While the Stonefield congregation was no longer affiliated with the Free Methodist Church<sup>132</sup> and participants considered themselves connected with the Church of God, there was some disagreement among the congregation concerning teachings of the Church of God that had been circulated in 1910.<sup>133</sup> In addition, by this time L.P. Adams had since withdrawn from the Church of God and was leading a group of white ministers in the predominantly African-American Church of God in Christ.<sup>134</sup> J.W. Mullen, pastor of the Stonefield congregation, desired for complete unity within the congregation regarding the Church of God teachings before entering into a covenant with the church.<sup>135</sup>

However, individuals from Holcomb were ready to enter into covenant with the Church of God and, along with some members of the Stonefield congregation





leading her family, sometimes praying for hours at a time. She also found consolation and support as a devout member of Wayside Baptist Church near her home.<sup>157</sup>

One day while praying in her home, Lillie began to speak in a language she did not know. Although somewhat surprised as she was not seeking a spiritual gift, her experience filled her with renewed joy and zeal. Lillie knew about the baptism of the Holy Spirit from her relatives living near Cascilla who had received this same experience previously. However, until her own Holy Spirit baptism, and even after, she was happy with her own church.<sup>158</sup>

When Lillie testified of her newfound experience in her local church, she was instructed to remain silent and reject the tongues experience. Yet, Lillie could hardly contain the intensity of God's Spirit at work in her life. She continued to worship with vibrant emotion and speak in tongues, for which she was eventually dismissed from the fellowship of her local church.<sup>159</sup>

Undeterred, Lillie was adamant that her family attend church. At first the family traveled by wagon to Cascilla for the services at Stonefield. Yet, this soon became too much for the family. It was then that Lillie began constructing a small building next to her home and secured J.W. Mullen, the pastor at Stonefield, to conduct services once a month. In between Mullen's pastoral visits, Lillie and her children sustained their faith through daily Bible study, singing, and prayers.<sup>160</sup>

God's provision was evident among the Tilghman family. Once two of the children were injured in a wagon accident. It left one unable to move and the other had been trampled in the head and chest by the startled horse. Lillie and the family began to pray and both children were healed instantly. When another child contracted typhoid fever, Lillie prayed and this child was healed instantly as well.<sup>161</sup>



Lillie Tilghman, far right, and her 10 children and their families constructed the Tilghman's Chapel Church of God near Hardy, Mississippi in 1914. Freddie Tilghman Collection

Lillie's spiritual example and guidance of her children helped them develop deep personal relationships with Christ. Years later, her son Horace was living in Arkansas when he dreamed one night that he was walking in water inside his home. Reflecting on the dream the next day, he was troubled and prayed for God to reveal to him the meaning of the dream. He then felt God instructing him to return to Mississippi. He obeyed the leading of God's Spirit, leaving his crops in the field and returned to Mississippi. Miraculously, he safely escaped the 1927 Mississippi River flood that took the lives of many of his neighbors shortly after his departure. Horace Tilghman later became a founding member of the Grenada Church of God.<sup>162</sup>

M.S. Lemons had seen this intense faith and devotion when he visited the Tilghman family home in September 1914. He noted, "Lillie Tilghman is the mother of ten children, all of whom are devoted Christians. It is truly delightful to hear them sing and pray. One can't help but feel he is near heaven's gate to be in her house."<sup>163</sup> Lemons also commended Lillie's determination to provide her

family a place for worship. "This sister dressed a part of the lumber with her own hands and helped in many ways on this building," wrote Lemons. "She just owes \$35 on this nice little church house." During that same visit, Lemons baptized Tilghman and her 10 children and received them into the Church of God.<sup>164</sup> Tilghman's Chapel Church of God served as a place of worship for area residents until 1925,<sup>165</sup> when most of the Tilghman children

moved to other communities.

### Members Take the Church of God to Arkansas

Not only did Mississippi members travel to locations within the state as missionaries of the Church of God, but they also assisted with the establishment of the Church of God in Arkansas, due mainly to the efforts of members from the Friendship and Stonefield congregations.<sup>166</sup> When crop failures and boll weevils devastated the Mississippi Delta, many local farmers moved to Arkansas.<sup>167</sup> Among them were local church members, including Reverend D.W. Dollahite and John and Virgie Pritchard, who helped establish the Church of God in Arkansas in 1914.<sup>168</sup> †

## Despite Persecution

# The Miracle of Warren Evans and the Church of God in Southern Mississippi

Another well of spiritual water sprang forth in 1915 in southern Mississippi in the small village of Morgantown. Although local residents of Morgantown knew nothing of the Church of God or the revival occurring as a result of the meetings at Stonefield, Friendship and beyond, they would soon share a kindred bond with individuals in those communities and play a vital role in the development of the Church of God in Mississippi.

# Warren Evans Moves from Mississippi to Florida

Warren Evans Sr. returned to Morgantown in July 1915 after spending several years in Florida, where he relocated with his wife and children in 1912 to live near his brother and to escape the condemnation of his wife's family because of his keen affection for corn whiskey.<sup>169</sup> Little did Warren know when he left Marion County, Mississippi, the life transformation that awaited him in Florida. It was there he first learned about the Church of God and eventually became an evangelist in the movement. It was his desire to share about his spiritual experience with family members that compelled him to return to Mississippi in 1915 and establish the Church of God in southern Mississippi.



**Warren and Nancy Evans at Morgantown in 1915 with two of their children, J.D. and Melissa.**

**Louis F. Morgan Collection**

Warren Evans was raised in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints,<sup>170</sup> and he participated in Mormon services until his marriage to Nancy Beard in 1896.<sup>171</sup> Nancy's family were prominent residents of Marion County,

Mississippi, and members of Holly Springs Baptist Church there. Warren attended church with Nancy, although he grew weary of the control and constant correction from his wife's relatives because of his drinking habit and dreadful temper.



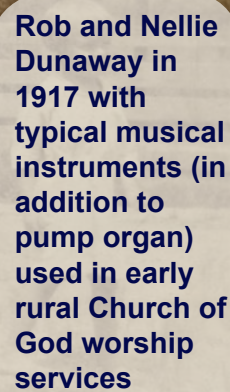
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In Florida the Evans family continued to increase and Warren was content without having others interfere with his drinking addiction. One evening, as the Evans family sat on their porch, they heard singing more lovely than any

overcame Nancy concerning her spiritual condition, and she desired to share the joy of these people who referred to themselves as Holiness and Church of God.<sup>173</sup>

Nancy began attending each service, and as the preacher explained the scripture it seemed to tug at her from somewhere deep within. Soon, Nancy responded to the call to receive sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. She followed others to the front of the tent, where women gathered around her and began to lay their hands on her and pray. It was full of emotion and charged with energy. Suddenly, without warning, Nancy fell to the ground as her body became heavy under the power of the Holy Spirit. As she stood up, Nancy was convinced that the worship of the Church of God people was real. And, she knew what she felt was indeed the power of God on her body. Soon thereafter, Nancy received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. It filled her with a deeper joy than she had ever known. She began praying for her children and husband, that they, too, would receive this same experience.<sup>174</sup>

Although Warren refused to attend the Church of God services initially, he noticed a remarkable difference in Nancy. The Holy Spirit began dealing with Warren concerning his sinful habits. At first Warren stood outside the tent and listened to the preaching, sometimes even making fun of the way the people worshipped, as they would tremble, shout, and dance under the power of the Holy Spirit. Yet, God began dealing with Warren's soul. Eventually he attended the service with Nancy and the children.<sup>175</sup>



**Louis F. Morgan  
Collection**

**Louis F. Morgan  
Collection**



Morgantown, where the nearest established churches were about seven miles away.<sup>189</sup> This was the introduction of the Church of God into southern Mississippi.

### Brush Arbor Meeting at Morgantown

At first a large crowd attended the service, perhaps out of curiosity or skepticism of Warren Evans' spiritual conversion. However, ministers and members of the area's established churches soon instructed their members against participating in the services, as they were unfamiliar with the Pentecostal doctrine and manifestation of speaking in tongues.<sup>190</sup>

Nonetheless, God blessed Warren's efforts. He and Nancy spent much time in prayer and fasted their meals. Slowly men and women began to attend the services and respond to the call to holiness. Many individuals noted the change in Warren's lifestyle and were drawn to the simplicity and sincerity of his preaching. And, just as with Warren, the Holy Spirit was convicting men and women of their sin with such intensity that they could hardly rest until they surrendered more completely to God.<sup>191</sup> At the close of his first meeting in Morgantown, Warren reported to the *Church of God Evangel* on August 7, 1915, "Just closed a meeting here. The Lord sure did bless. A few were saved and an altar full of seekers. I feel that there have been some gospel seeds sown that will spring up into everlasting life."<sup>192</sup>

### Church of God is Organized

In addition to Morgantown, Warren conducted home prayer meetings and brush arbor services at various locations in the adjoining Foxworth Community. However, as the crowd increased the Morgantown Schoolhouse was secured to house the services.<sup>193</sup> It was there in August 1916 that State Overseer M.S.

Haynes conducted a revival in which more than 35 persons were baptized and 51 individuals were received into the Church of God.<sup>194</sup> Known locally as "the schoolhouse church," it was listed with the denomination as the Darbun church, as this was the address for both the pastor (Warren Evans) and clerk (Leon Thornhill).<sup>195</sup> Membership also included individuals from the White Bluff, Pickwick, and Richland Creek communities of Foxworth.<sup>196</sup>

### Mount Sinai and Morgantown Reorganize

The congregation continued to meet in the Morgantown Schoolhouse and various homes for Bible study and prayer meetings. Then, in January 1917, the members living near Holly Springs Baptist Church, about 7 miles from Morgantown, organized the Mount Sinai Church of God.<sup>197</sup> The group at Morgantown continued to meet in the schoolhouse and reorganized with 17 charter members on Saturday, February 17, 1917. On the same day the Morgantown congregation set forth 20-year-old Robert C. Price as an Evangelist, and he assumed the role of pastor for both Morgantown and Mount Sinai congregations.<sup>198</sup> Services were held at Morgantown on the first and third Saturday and Sunday each month, and services were held at Mount Sinai on the second and fourth Saturday and Sunday.<sup>199</sup> This continued until 1942, when separate pastors were appointed for the two churches.<sup>200</sup>

Meanwhile, Warren Evans shifted his focus from pastoring the local churches to evangelizing other communities in the area by conducting home Bible studies and prayer meetings.<sup>201</sup> As a result, other Church of God congregations were established in 1917, including Richland Creek, Pickwick, and Mount Carmel (not the

present-day congregation by this name).<sup>202</sup> It was during one of these home Bible studies just outside of Morgantown that Warren Evans suffered much persecution for his efforts to bring spiritual renewal to Marion County.

### Evans Evangelizes Marion County Amid Persecution

Persecution was common for early Pentecostals, and there was no exception for those living in Marion County. Often they were ridiculed by others who did not understand the Pentecostals' experience. Even relatives and former friends shunned the early holiness adherents.<sup>203</sup> Sometimes raw eggs were thrown at Church of God members as they traveled to and from services, and gun shots were even fired around the brush arbor as they gathered for worship.<sup>204</sup> The local newspaper in Marion County printed unfavorable articles about the Church of God, referring to them as "the Holy Roller cult."<sup>205</sup> One article was titled "Holy Rollers Are A Menace To Society."<sup>206</sup>

Yet, these early Church of God members desired to receive the deeper experiences of a full salvation and Christian lifestyle. By remaining faithful to their mission and relying upon the sustaining grace of Jesus Christ, the men, women and children endured and overcame. In time their efforts would become applauded by the local communities that once proposed they be forced out of the county.

In fact, persecution has been a trademark of the Christian Church since the time of Christ. Martyrs have suffered for the name of Christ for thousands of years.<sup>207</sup> The persecution endured by Warren Evans almost made him a 20th-century martyr.

Evans' preaching stirred the com-

mon life of rural Marion County, and it became headline news in the county seat of Columbia. A key component of his message was the Church of God teaching on making restitution when possible for one's past wrongs.<sup>208</sup> Converts to the growing Pentecostal movement began to pay old debts and apologize to neighbors and relatives for their previous actions that were contrary to Christ's example.<sup>209</sup> Yet, when Warren's father-in-law, Joe Beard, made a confession, it unleashed the fury of local White Caps, which was the Marion County equivalent of the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>210</sup>

## A Confession of Murder Creates Excitement

Joe Beard was seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit and Warren Evans told him he must confess his past sins if the Holy Ghost were to abide within.<sup>211</sup> Therefore, Beard made a confession to a select few that revealed his participation in the White Cap organization, as well as his connection to the 1892 murder of Will Buckley.<sup>212</sup> Beard acknowledged the innocence of Will Purvis, who

had been framed for the murder, survived public hanging on the courthouse square, and then sentenced to prison.<sup>213</sup> However, it was not Will Purvis who had killed Will Buckley. Instead, when the White Caps met to discuss punishment of Will Buckley for his maltreatment of a local widow, Beard and another man had drawn the shortest straws to carry out the murder.<sup>214</sup>

Joe Beard and Louis Thornhill hid in a brush near Buckley's home. As Buckley rode by on his horse, Beard was supposed to shoot him. However, Beard confessed in 1917 that his heart failed him and he could not pull the trigger. It was then that Louis Thornhill took the gun and killed Buckley. Because of a previous argument between Buckley and Purvis, local law officials charged Purvis with the murder.<sup>215</sup>

Shortly before Joe Beard's death on

March 4, 1917, he made plans to publicly confess of the evil he and others had accomplished 25 years earlier. News quickly spread throughout the community concerning Beard's confession. This angered the remaining members of the area White Caps, who, following the death of Beard, focused their vengeance on Warren Evans.<sup>216</sup>

## Warren Evans is Beaten by a Mob of White Caps

On Wednesday, June 27, 1917, Evans led a prayer meeting at the home of a widow Davis just outside of Morgantown. During the meeting two men came to the door and asked to speak with Evans, claiming to seek salvation. Evans invited them into the house, yet the men insisted on praying outside. Thinking only of their soul's condition, Evans followed them beyond a group of small bushes, where the moonlight revealed the images of others wearing white hoods. The men overtook Evans and one exclaimed, "If you believe

**Morgantown, Mississippi,  
Church of God - 1939**

**Louis F. Morgan Collection**





in miracles, then you better ask God to give you one now.” With that, the men began to beat Evans with a buggy trace and one man gave him a blow to the head with a revolver. Evans fell to the ground, where he was kicked in his side until two ribs were broken. The men demanded Evans get up and run toward nearby railroad tracks, which he did. However, when his energy failed and he could run no farther, Evans was tied to the back of a buggy with a rope and pulled for almost a mile. His beaten and almost lifeless body was left in front of the home of R.W.

“Bob” and Rosa Hammond, two of his followers who cared for him in their home for several weeks.<sup>217</sup>

The persecution made headlines and editorial discussion in the June 29, 1917 issue of a local newspaper, *The Marion County Progress*. The newspaper editor noted,

It has been commonly conceded that only one unmentionable crime justified the attentions of a mob, and certainly the religious activities of no man, however of small account, would not justify the maiming and bruising of one such as was the case of ‘Rev.’ Warren Evans....It appears the man had been repeatedly warned to cut short his activities in that section....Be this as it may, and the Lord knows they have caused trouble enough, there is never a good excuse for law-

less acts, and a better plan could have been carried out than was adopted, and we are afraid of the dragon’s teeth that are being sown.<sup>218</sup>

Yet, the reaction by Church of God members was not one of vengeance, but of prayer and intercession for their beloved leader and even those whose hardened hearts had compelled them to commit such a violent act.<sup>219</sup>

Evans remained in a coma for several days, but church members gathered by his side and held prayer meetings in the house where his wounds were being treated. Soon God answered those prayers and Evans awoke from the coma. Although bedridden for several more days, he was eventually able to minister again, which excited the community and sparked interest in the Church of God. Some of those who had been the staunchest persecutors

of the holiness group soon were among its most dedicated members.<sup>220</sup>

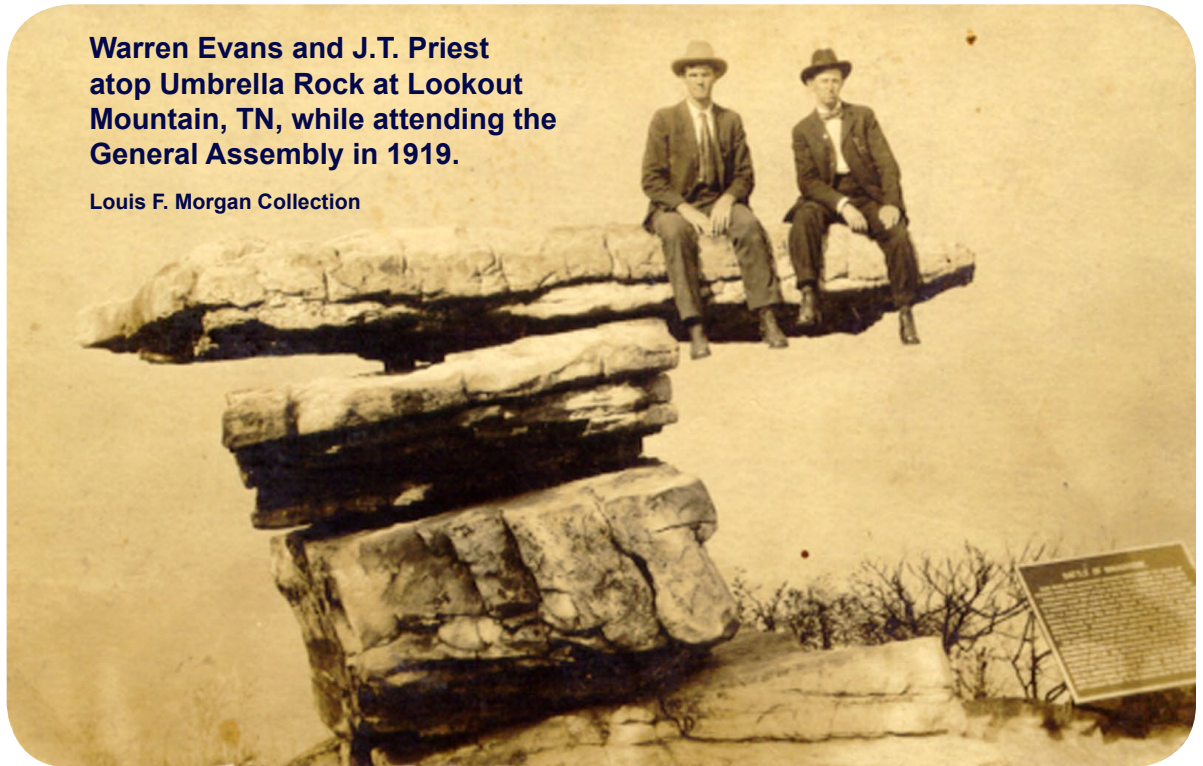
By the end of the year church participation and membership had doubled in Marion County. In 1918 the Mount Sinai congregation constructed a building in which to worship, followed by Morgantown members constructing a church building that same year.<sup>221</sup>

### **Marion County Evangelists Preach God’s Power Throughout Southern Mississippi**

Evangelistic campaigns reached into other communities and counties as local Church of God members began to travel by buggy, train, and even on foot to share the testimony of God’s power and saving grace. By the end of 1917 there were 184 members of the Church of God in 6 churches in Marion County.<sup>222</sup> The entire state membership was 743 members in 18 churches.<sup>223</sup> †

### **Warren Evans and J.T. Priest atop Umbrella Rock at Lookout Mountain, TN, while attending the General Assembly in 1919.**

Louis F. Morgan Collection



**Mamie Parker, far left, taught a Sunday school class at Taylor Church of God near Vardaman, Mississippi, prior to her marriage to Reverend Grant Williams in 1923.**

Louis F. Morgan Collection

26



## First District Overseers in Mississippi

State Overseer E.B. Culpepper appointed the first district overseers in Mississippi in March of 1919.<sup>227</sup> Six districts were created initially. The six ministers appointed to oversee these districts were commissioned to preach in and expand the Church of God into all 82 counties in the state. The appointed overseers and their districts were:

### District 1 - Eupora

**Overseer:** E.C. Rider (Red Bay, Alabama)  
**Counties:** Alcorn, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Lowndes, Marshall, Monroe, Montgomery, Oktibbeha, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tishomingo, Tippah, and Webster.

### District 2 - Forest

**Overseer:** Robert C. Price (Morgantown)  
**Counties:** Attala, Clarke, Jasper, Kemper, Lauderdale, Leake, Newton, Neshoba, Noxubee, Rankin, Scott, Simpson, and Winston.

### District 3 - Grenada

**Overseer:** P.F. Fritz (Cascilla)  
**Counties:** Bolivar, Carroll, Coahoma, Desoto, Grenada, Leflore, Panola, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica, Tate, Quitman, Washington, and Yalobusha.

### District 4 - Hattiesburg

**Overseer:** J.T. Priest (Morgantown)  
**Counties:** Covington, Forrest, Greene, George, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson,

Jefferson Davis, Jones, Lamar, Marion, Pearl River, and Perry.

### District 5 - Meadville

**Overseer:** James R. Smith (Morgantown)  
**Counties:** Adams, Amite, Franklin, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lincoln, Meadville, Pike, Walthall, and Wilkinson.

### District 6 - Raymond

**Overseer:** George T. Cook (Catchings)  
**Counties:** Claiborne, Copiah, Hinds, Holmes, Issaquena, Madison, Sharkey, Warren, and Yazoo.<sup>228</sup>

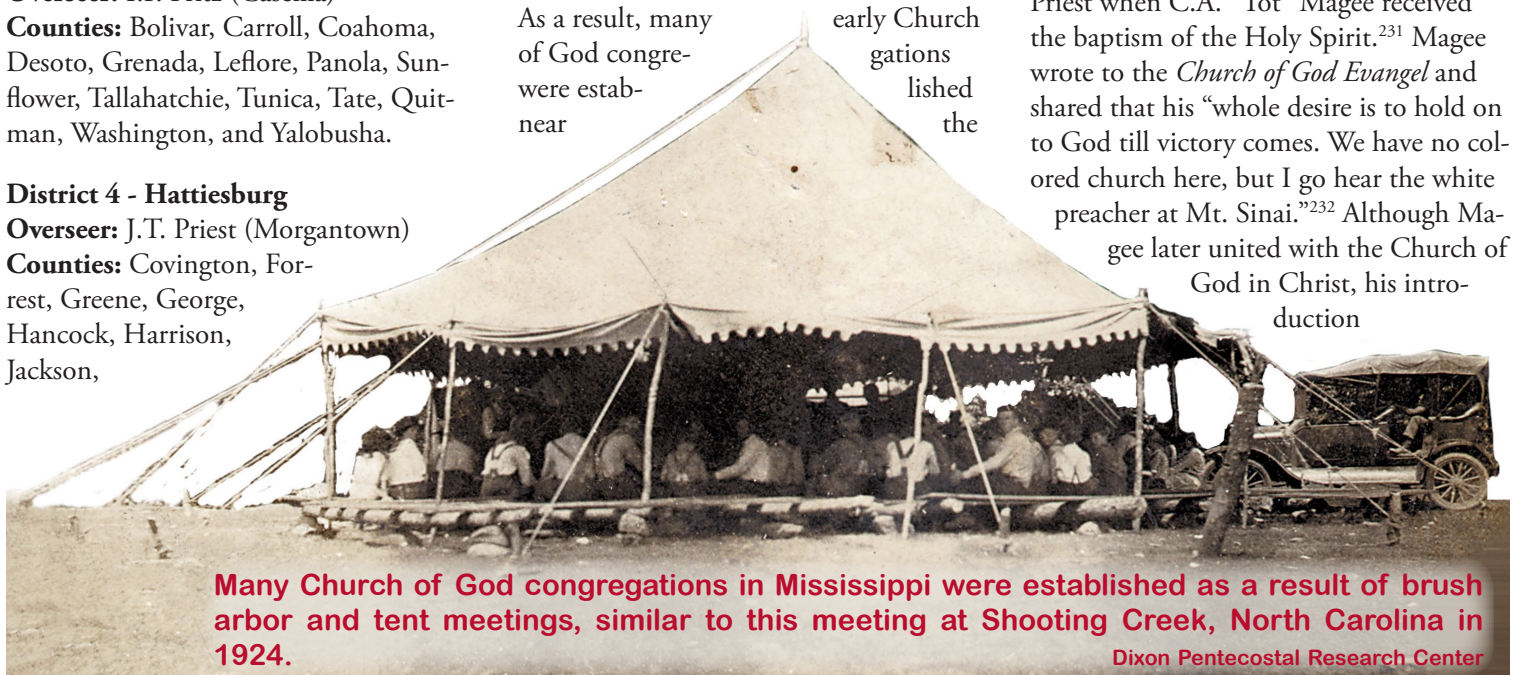
Compelled by the mission of Jesus and reaching others with the message of the full gospel, these district overseers began traveling throughout their designated regions. Often traveling by train, the ministers would stop at each train depot and determine the feasibility of conducting a meeting. Typically they would preach at the depot and distribute copies of the *Church of God Evangel* and various tracts before boarding the train for the next stop. If individuals accepted Christ or seemed interested, the minister typically located a place to conduct services. As a result, many early Church of God congregations were established near the

railroad line. Many of these overseers were also pastoring local churches. During the week they would travel throughout their designated region and then return to their appointed congregation. Many local churches had deacons licensed by the Church of God who moderated services in the event the pastor was absent due a revival meeting on the assigned district. And, most churches had capable laity who often preached and led local services.<sup>229</sup>

The evangelistic efforts of the district overseers proved effective, as 18 congregations were organized in 1919 and 1920 (compared to 23 churches organized during the years 1912 to 1917).<sup>230</sup>

## Breaking the Racial Barrier in Mississippi

It was during the fervor of such evangelism that the Mount Sinai congregation became the first in the Church of God in Mississippi to break through the racial barrier so prevalent in the South at that time. The first known African-American convert to the Church of God in Mississippi occurred under the ministry of J.T. Priest when C.A. "Tot" Magee received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>231</sup> Magee wrote to the *Church of God Evangel* and shared that his "whole desire is to hold on to God till victory comes. We have no colored church here, but I go hear the white preacher at Mt. Sinai."<sup>232</sup> Although Magee later united with the Church of God in Christ, his introduction



Many Church of God congregations in Mississippi were established as a result of brush arbor and tent meetings, similar to this meeting at Shooting Creek, North Carolina in 1924.

Dixon Pentecostal Research Center





so that I can tell the lost world  
more about our precious Savior.  
Oh! friends, pray for me that I  
may have this blessed experience  
that leads our souls to know more  
about Christ.<sup>248</sup>

Later that summer Mamie received the Holy Spirit baptism during a two-week revival conducted by E.C. Rider at the Taylor School House near Vardaman. Mamie was the first young person in her community to receive the Pentecostal blessing. Desiring for other young people to share in this experience, she began teaching a Sunday school class at church, as well as playing the organ for services. Soon she had a class of 20 to 30 young people from the Free, Parker, Tallent, Taylor, Vanlandingham, and Willis families, among others.<sup>249</sup>

When the summer revival meetings had concluded, Mamie made her way back home near Vardaman, uncertain if her father would receive her. She later remembered,

ily understand. I knew I was doing what God wanted and I had to trust Him to work it out.... When [Papa] caught a glimpse of me, he quickly ran to meet me in the front yard. Papa had never been a very affectionate man. I was certain of his love while growing up, but affection was a rarity. However, on this day he kissed my face and tightly embraced me as he welcomed me home. From then on Papa never objected to me going and helping in revivals.<sup>251</sup>

Mamie continued to teach a Sunday school class at Taylor Church and assist in revival meetings until her marriage to Reverend Grant Williams in 1923. Together they pastored in six states and raised a family of eight children, all of whom grew up to serve the Lord.<sup>252</sup>

Similarly, Mary Grace Comans of the Rocky Hill Church near Sebastopol had an early encounter with the Holy Spirit that drew her to seek a close relationship with Christ. As a child she often spent her school recess time praying under a shade tree on the school campus. Her classmates often heard her speaking in tongues during her prayers. In adulthood she traveled to Japan, where she taught U.S. military dependents stationed in Tokyo. She also opened her home to Japanese youth, whom she taught English by using the Bible as her text. In time her Bible study emerged into a local church, which today is the largest Church of God congregation in Japan.<sup>253</sup>

town and services were conducted for nine weeks, resulting in more than 80 individuals accepting Christ and more than 60 receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>254</sup> Effie Morgan, a charter member of the church and wife of Reverend B.J. Morgan, had been crippled for seven years. However, she was instantly healed during a service of this revival as a trio sang the song “Have Faith In God.”<sup>255</sup> Soon after the close of this revival a new church building was constructed, the first brick sanctuary for the Church of God in Mississippi.<sup>256</sup> Opal later served as a teacher and administrator of the Church of God International Preparatory Institute in San Antonio, Texas, which trained missionaries.<sup>257</sup>

Other noted Mississippi evangelists who began preaching during their youth were F.J. May at Union, A.D. Gammill at Meadville, Ralph Boyles at Morgantown, Cecil Knight at Hattiesburg, and Julius Roberts at Moorhead.<sup>258</sup> Following the Second World War other youth would expand the Church of God in Mississippi as evangelists and local church laity.

## Thorn Church Established Amid Dynamic Healings

During the summer of 1921 a revival was conducted by G.C. Dunn and his wife, Mirtie, in the Thorn community near Houston, Mississippi. Other workers assisting with the meeting were Lou Lamb from Artesia, Nell Lovette from Sapa, Mildred Biggers from near Ackerman, and Mamie Parker from Vardaman. Mamie played the pump organ and prayed with individuals in the altar service, while all of the others took turns preaching. A teenage girl named Mary Wimberley received healing in her eyes during this revival and no longer needed to wear glasses. Other healings were reported, as well as remarkable conversions to Christ among

individuals who had been known for riotous living. Mamie Parker Williams later remembered, “About 30 were saved and filled with the Holy Ghost. Brother Dunn baptized about 25 in water and set the church in order with 39 members just before the summer revival season ended. We spent the entire summer there working in the revival and witnessing throughout the community.”<sup>259</sup>

## The Battle for Oak Grove and Pate's Temple Churches

The refreshing recostal blessing began to spread across Mississippi and quench the spiritual thirst of men, women, and children seeking a closer relationship with the Lord. During the winter of 1917-18, a meeting was conducted near the northern Mississippi community of Rara Avis (located near the state line community of Red Bay, Alabama).<sup>260</sup> Among the first individuals in the area to receive sanctification and the Ghost as a result of services were J.F. and Joe and Emily Holloman Moxley, and Luther. Soon this experience spread to other members of this family and other residents. Empowered and full of zeal to share this experience, everyone

preacher as they testified of the wonderful blessing they received. Prayer meetings and Bible studies were conducted in homes, spreading from community to community.<sup>262</sup> Preaching stations (unorganized churches) were set up in various communities. Dozens of individuals were being filled with the Holy Spirit in these communities. B.O. Funderburk (known as a great Bible teacher), A.L. Funderburk and wife Dora, Elmer Wiggington (known for his wisdom, visionary leadership, and as “the preachingest man in the country”), John Irving “Kosciusko” Ken-

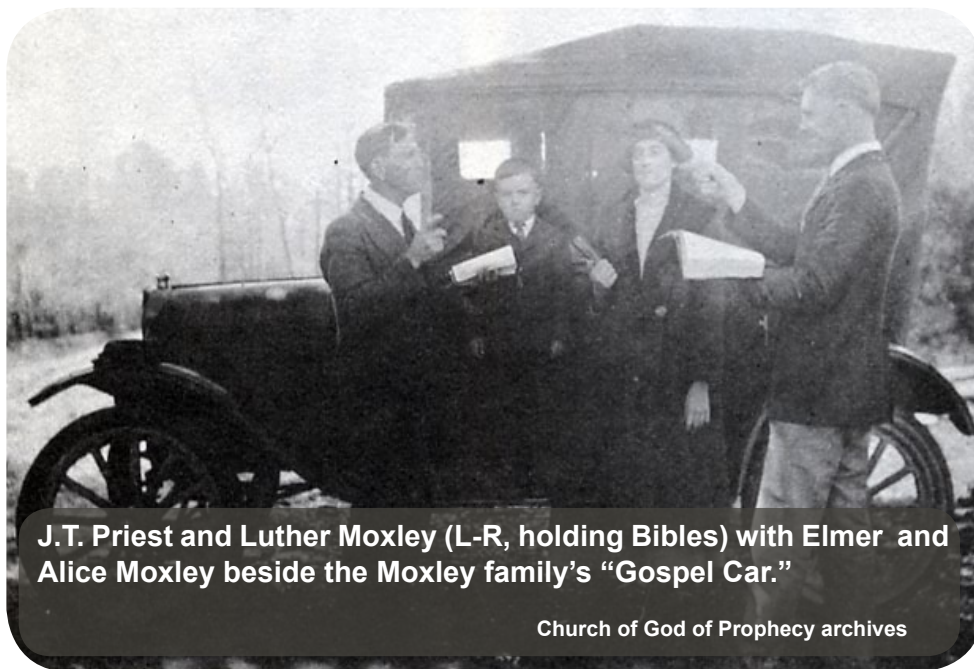
Pentecostal denominations.

Persecution was intense for these recently Spirit-baptized believers. They were labeled with the derogatory term “Sankies” because of their strong belief in sanctification as a second definite work of grace.<sup>264</sup> And, because of fearful skepticism as a result of the First World War, local residents even contacted government authorities in Washington, D.C., who visited the Church of God members in Rara Avis to determine if they were German spies because of their unique worship style and speaking in a language other than English.<sup>265</sup>

Threats of physical harm against the early Pentecostals turned to violence, as a mob disrupted a service at Mount Zion Church and physically attacked J.R. Moxley and Wesley Abbott as they were conducting the meeting.<sup>266</sup> Local law officials disregarded the plea of local church members to assist them in keeping the peace and provid-

ing them with protection.<sup>267</sup> As a result, A.L. Funderburk rushed a petition to the Governor's Office requesting assistance, resulting in the arrival of peace officers in less than three days who provided protection for the remainder of the meeting.<sup>268</sup>

During this same time the Oak Grove congregation near Red Bay, Alabama (although located in Mississippi) was torched by an arsonist who first encircled



**J.T. Priest and Luther Moxley (L-R, holding Bibles) with Elmer and Alice Moxley beside the Moxley family's "Gospel Car."**

Church of God of Prophecy archives

nedy and wife, and Joe Collier and wife were among these early Church of God members.<sup>263</sup> Some of these preaching stations were organized into local churches following the protracted meetings, such as Oak Grove and Pate's Temple congregations. Others simply served to bring the message of the full gospel to communities and individuals who later joined the Church of God in other areas or other



the building with gasoline.<sup>269</sup> The building collapsed inward as a result of the fire that destroyed the place of worship local Church of God members had sacrificed to build.<sup>270</sup> The arsonist, who had been paid \$90 to burn the building by those opposing the Church of God, confessed of his merciless act shortly thereafter, while

on his deathbed prior to succumbing to double-pneumonia.<sup>271</sup>

### **Grant Williams Arrested at Bude**

When 19-year-old Grant Williams was establishing the Church of God near the mill village of Bude, he encountered much opposition. He preached divine

healing, resulting in many people testifying of receiving physical healing in their body. Others were laying down their medicine and trusting the Lord with the healing of their bodies. This angered local physicians, including the local mayor/physician who forced the mill owner to stop Grant from preaching in the local company houses. Thereafter, a local resident allowed Grant to preach in his home on the outskirts of town near a theater. As the crowd grew, the services were moved outside. Grant was preaching on the front porch of this home with the congregation scattered throughout the yard. Soon Grant's preaching disrupted the theater, which resulted in local law officials arresting Grant and charging him with disturbing the peace. Appearing before the judge, a local resident sympathetic to Grant instructed him to plead guilty to disturbing "their" peace. This Grant did and was ordered by the judge to pay a fine. However, realizing Grant did not have money to pay the fine and would go to jail, the judge passed around a hat in the courtroom and collected more than enough money to pay the fine. Grant continued preaching at Bude and soon a tabernacle was erected for the services. By the fall of 1921 a dedicated congregation was assembled at Bude and Grant organized the local church.<sup>272</sup>

Grant also assisted J.R. Smith in "preaching out" the McCall Creek congregation, which was organized in April 1921 with about 15 members.<sup>273</sup> Even earlier Grant had established the Jacobs Tabernacle congregation near Liberty and the Causey's Chapel Church (first called Union) near Gloster.<sup>274</sup>

Numerous healings occurred in these meetings, which was typical of God's confirmation on the preached



**Mississippi evangelists Leon Thornhill and Hal Pressgrove**

Louis F. Morgan Collection

Word in Grant's ministry. In addition to demons being cast out of individuals, other persons were healed of near-death experiences from fevers and chills (which often resulted in death in the early part of the 20th century). And all these blessings occurred despite the persecution of people who did not understand holiness or the Pentecostal experience. Grant was threatened to be whipped on numerous occasions. When establishing the Rock Hill congregation, Grant's meetings were often disrupted by rough boys from the community. Eventually they physically attacked visiting-preacher Robert Blackwood as he exited the church building. And yet, God gave Grant wisdom to know how to speak to those causing trouble to calm them from exhibiting additional violence.<sup>275</sup> The work of the Lord continued to increase as the Church of God ministers and members remained sweet in spirit and focused on their mission to reach Mississippi for Jesus.

## Luther Moxley and Tithing

Evangelist Robert Price of Morgantown conducted a service at the Pate's Temple Church of God near Red Bay, Alabama in 1919 and preached about the biblical requirement of tithing,<sup>276</sup> or returning to the Lord one-tenth of income. During Price's sermon on tithing, Luther Moxley was convicted about the importance of tithing.<sup>277</sup> James J. Steward later noted,

So completely convinced was Brother Moxley of the tithe-paying requirement of the Scriptures that he did a then-unheard of thing. Very carefully he inventoried everything he possessed--his eighty fertile acres, all the livestock, farming equipment, buildings, their clothing and fur-

niture. 'Right down to my pocket knife,' he later testified. To each item they assigned a fair price as though preparing to auction off the entire lot. Then, upon the total amount-- the gross assessed value-- he paid into the treasury of the Church of God one tenth. He felt then, and only then, that he could begin tithe-paying with a clean slate.<sup>278</sup>

# Splintering Pentecostalism Impacts Church of God in Mississippi

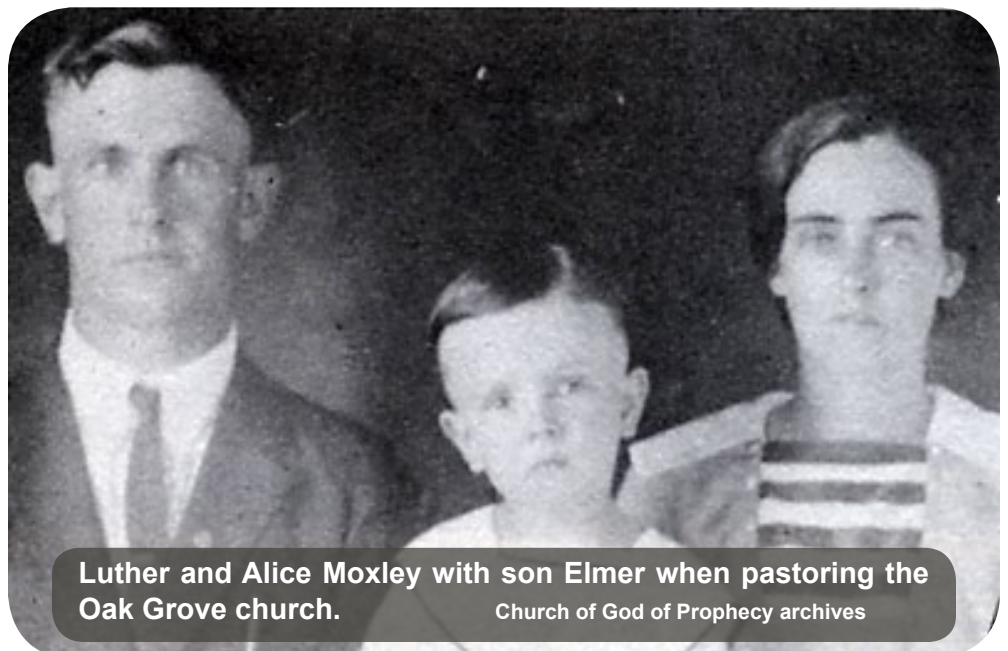
It was during this time of evangelistic fervor that Pentecostalism began to experience increasing division. A movement founded on unity was influenced by fallen humanity, as power struggles and differences in doctrinal interpretation caused brothers and sisters to break fellowship with one another. New denominations were being formed and legalistic codes seemed to replace the communal aspect of biblical interpretation for one's faith

and practice. Mississippi was not spared, neither was the Church of God.

In 1922 the Church of God movement found itself divided over various issues related to finances and leadership authority, most centering around General Overseer A.J. Tomlinson.<sup>279</sup> Some believed Tomlinson had misappropriated some of the Church's general funds; others believed the accusations were the result of an inner power struggle among the leadership.<sup>280</sup> Divisive thinking was soon increasing among supporters of both sides, even amid calls for unity-- which were ultimately drowned out in the uproar of accusations and defensive pleas.

Ultimately, A.J. Tomlinson was removed as General Overseer of the Church of God, after which his supporters aligned with him in what would become known as the Church of God of Prophecy.<sup>281</sup>

Several Church of God ministers and members in Mississippi aligned with the Church of God of Prophecy after 1923.





Some entire congregations left the Church of God, while others experienced splits creating separate congregations within the same community. Among the Mississippi congregations that remained with A.J. Tomlinson include Chapel Hill (Dennis), Causey's Chapel (Gloster), Jacobs Tabernacle (Liberty), Union Grove (Moorville), Spanish Fort, and the Rock Hill mission.<sup>282</sup>

Hal Pressgrove, who received the Holy Spirit baptism in the 1909 Stonefield outpouring and later served as state overseer for the Church of God in Mississippi, was among the ministers who aligned with former Church of God General Overseer A.J. Tomlinson for a brief period.<sup>283</sup> Pressgrove, living in Chattanooga, Tennessee, at the time of the division, provided his home for the reorganization meeting of the Church of God of Prophecy denomination in 1924.<sup>284</sup> In time, Pressgrove returned to the Church of God and to Mississippi.<sup>285</sup>

In addition, the Oneness Pentecostal movement began to increase in Mississippi during this same time. Doctrinal differences over the understanding of the nature of God and water baptism caused some congregations to divide as early as 1920, such as Mount Sinai and Morgantown.<sup>286</sup> However, at least two entire congregations left the Church of God for the Oneness doctrine, including Jayess and Mount Carmel in Foxworth (both of which are now United Pentecostal Church congregations).<sup>287</sup> While some ministers returned to the Church of God from both the Church of God of Prophecy and Oneness churches, the period between 1920 and 1927 was filled with uncertainty and indecision for the Church of God in Mississippi until individuals settled on their denominational preference.

## Supporting Local Pastors and Churches

Finances were scarce during the early days of the Church of God. Often pastors' income, which came from church tithes and various forms of personal secular work, was extremely limited as many early Pentecostals were farmers and mill workers with low incomes.<sup>288</sup> Cash tithes were almost a novelty when members gave the tenth to the Lord and, particularly, to the shepherd He had sent to lead their flock.<sup>289</sup> Generally, tithes came in the form of hens, eggs, milk, meat, flour, corn and other items that could be consumed or bartered.<sup>290</sup>

J.C. Lentz, an evangelist and pastor from Clay, Mississippi, recorded his early ministerial travels, including his train fare expenses and offerings and tithes received.<sup>291</sup> In September 1923 he received \$2 tithes and a total offering of \$13. His expenses were \$2.75 for oil and gas, 50 cents for postage, and \$6.10 for railroad fare.<sup>292</sup> Similarly, in 1925 he noted tithes received from Oak Grove, Mount Sinai, Morgantown, and Pickwick, including 3/4 bushel of potatoes valued at \$1.15, 2 hens valued at \$1.50, 1 gallon of syrup valued at \$1.50, and less than \$20 in cash.<sup>293</sup> He traveled to his appointments by train.<sup>294</sup>

When Grant Williams served as state overseer of Mississippi in 1931 there was no salary or benefits, just as local pastors had no set salary or benefits.<sup>295</sup> The local churches were supposed to send offerings to assist with the state overseer's expenses.<sup>296</sup> However, the economic depression in the United States created additional financial struggles for pastors and churches. Cotton crops in Mississippi were not paying as much as in previous years, and most Church of God members were farmers or sharecroppers depending on successful

harvesting of crops for their livelihood.<sup>297</sup> There was little money in local churches prior to the ending of the Second World War.<sup>298</sup> Mamie Williams, widow of state overseer Grant Williams, later remembered that most church members were struggling financially.<sup>299</sup> Instead of cash offerings, many times the reports from local churches included a dollar or maybe even some postage stamps.<sup>300</sup> Yet, the financial strain did not hinder the Christian love expressed to one another and the power of the Holy Spirit that operated in the midst of those early Church of God members. Although most members had little to offer in worldly possessions, it was their zeal for the Lord and the Spirit of God possessing them that attracted others to their services. In the midst of difficulty, their joy in following Jesus helped the Church of God to increase tremendously during the 1920s and 1930s.

## Moving Forward and Digging New Wells

Following a period of uncertainty in the Church of God during the early 1920s, which lasted for several years in some locations, the movement reaffirmed its mission and realigned its focus. The Church of God moved forward as a denomination, and the ministry in Mississippi experienced a paradigm shift that resulted in healthy growth. The black ministry increased in the state, churches were organized in cities, and Mississippians made positive impacts on the Church of God denomination in music and education.

### St. Mary's Church of God: Mississippi's First African-American Congregation

St. Mary's Church of God in Eupora was set in order in 1926, becoming the first African-American congregation





In 1931 Earl Brewer was serving as a state evangelist and conducted numerous revivals throughout Mississippi, often lasting weeks at a time and resulting in dozens of conversions.<sup>317</sup> It was in 1931 that Brewer conducted a four-week meeting at Hattiesburg during which 64 individuals were saved and 25 baptized with the Holy Ghost.<sup>318</sup> A church was organized with 52 charter members, and Edward W. Breland was appointed as the local church clerk.<sup>319</sup> At the close of the revival, Brewer was appointed pastor of the Hattiesburg congregation.<sup>320</sup> This was the first Church of God congregation in Mississippi organized within the city limits.<sup>321</sup>

When Grant Williams ended his tenure as Mississippi State Overseer following the 1932 General Assembly, he and his family returned to pastoral ministry. They moved to the Mississippi Delta and began planting a church inside the city limits of Greenville. Initially, they conducted services in a ball field. Since they were planting a church and no parsonage existed, they lived with another couple while the Williams children were divided into the homes of church parishioners. Upon establishing the church, Grant Williams remained as pastor for about one year before accepting the pastorate of the Friendship congregation near Charleston. Soon other congregations were established within the city limits of other major cities in Mississippi.<sup>322</sup>

In 1943 the first Church of God congregation was organized in

the Mississippi capital city of Jackson as the result of a tent meeting conducted by J.T. Roberts.<sup>323</sup> Jackson's Bailey Avenue Church of God would later become the largest congregation in Mississippi during the pastorate of M.H. Kennedy.<sup>324</sup>

### Singing with Spirit

Music also served a vital role in drawing people to the Church of God, as well as teaching them basic church doctrine through song lyrics.

In the early days of the Church of God in Mississippi services were not as sophisticated as today. Music is one way in which this is evident. According to Mamie Williams, in the early days most everyone in the congregation assembled in the choir after the service began. Sometimes only one or two people remained seated

in the congregation as all others were in the choir. In the very earliest of days, everyone gathered around the pump organ and sang various hymns and convention songs (which were published annually in a songbook produced by the Church of God). If anyone had a selection they

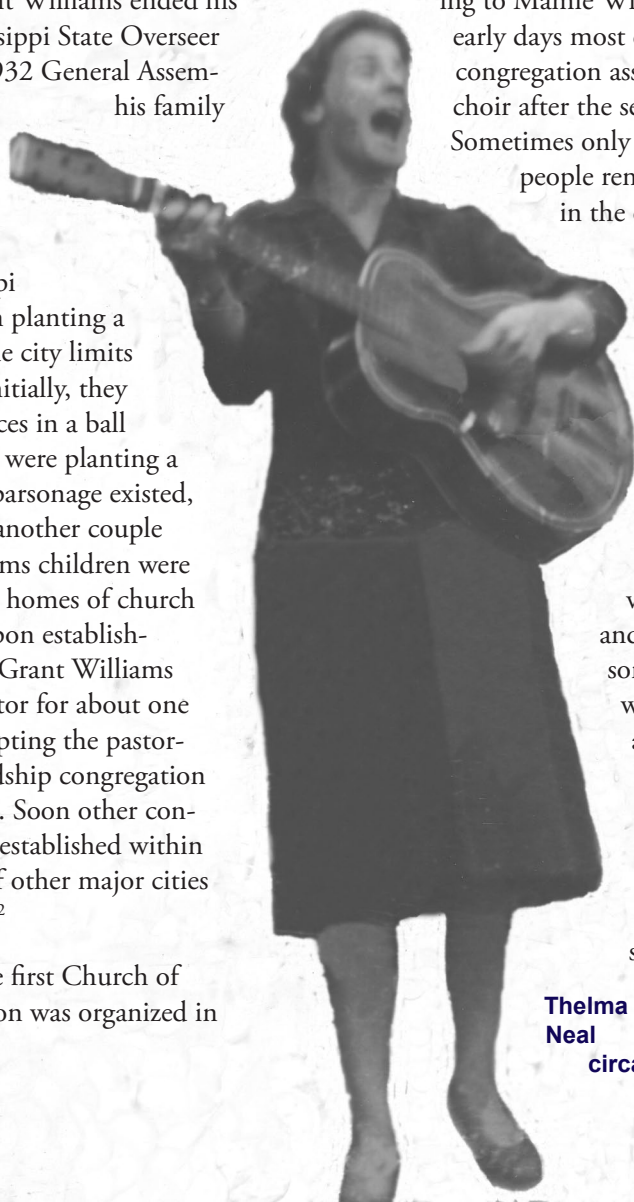
waited until a song had ended and then simply announced the page number they would like the choir to sing. If the organist did not know how to play a song, the choir usually sang it without music using Shaped-note syllables of "Do-Re-Mi-Fa-So-La-Ti-Do" until everyone had learned how to sing their specific part of the song (i.e., soprano, alto, tenor or bass).<sup>325</sup>

Often people would be overcome with joy during the singing and begin to shout, dance under the power of God, and speak in tongues. It was not uncommon for individuals to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit while singing and rejoicing.<sup>326</sup>

As the years progressed, church members often brought their musical instruments to the services. There were guitars, tambourines, drums, trumpets and other brass instruments. Pianos were the main instrument in most churches, however. Everyone used what talent they had to help in the work of the Lord.<sup>327</sup>

### Adams Family Band

One of the earliest musical groups in the Church of God in Mississippi was the Adams Family Band. Archibald and Pearl Adams united with the Gatewood congregation in 1915 and were set forth as ministers.<sup>328</sup> Archibald was the first bishop licensed in the Church of God in Mississippi, and he also served as an early state overseer of Louisiana.<sup>329</sup> Following his death in 1916, Pearl Adams and children moved into the upstairs loft of the Stonefield church.<sup>330</sup> There Pearl Adams, a talented musician, provided music lessons for area children.<sup>331</sup> Each of her children played a musical instrument as well, and she organized a family band that became a favorite in the Church of God movement.<sup>332</sup> They traveled throughout the Southeast singing and preaching. The Ad-



**Thelma Massengill  
Neal**  
circa 1950





who later became noted evangelists and pastors, received personal training under Annie Heath's guidance.<sup>349</sup> In 1931, she pastored at Morgantown and Mount Sinai in Mississippi, and in nearby Bogalusa, Louisiana in 1932.<sup>350</sup> She then served as an evangelist throughout the southeast.

In 1933 Annie Heath was selected to teach piano at the Bible Training School (now Lee University).<sup>351</sup> While on her way to BTS, she passed away unexpectedly while conducting a camp meeting in Montgomery, Alabama.<sup>352</sup> At the 1934 General Assembly, "Professor Walker" noted, "I know you who have been here before must miss [Sister Heath] greatly this year. I have seen her sitting at the piano so many times, making music that I am sure Heaven is filled with.... Now, even as the mantle of Elijah fell on Elisha so must Sister Heath's mantle fall on someone. If it falls your lot to take up the banner she laid down, please don't shirk, but let us all be faithful...."<sup>353</sup>

Despite her many accomplishments, Annie Heath is best remembered for her musical ability and playing the piano at the General Assembly. One of her most requested songs was "Heaven's Bells Are Ringing," which was co-written with M.S. Lemons in 1919 and published in the first Church of God songbook.<sup>354</sup> More than 75 years after Annie Heath's death, that song remains as a testimony of her ministry passion:

*"The heaven's bells are ringing,  
so be sure your heart is right.  
The angels now are singing,  
'Hold out the heav'nly light.'  
Our Lord will come in glory  
with a host of angels bright;  
O, keep telling out the story,  
He may come tonight."*<sup>355</sup>

Click on bottom left corner of the audio box to hear Cindy Stringfield Smith play and sing "Heaven's Bells Are Ringing."



(online  
viewers  
only)

### Williams and Hamilton First Mississippi Students at Bible Training School



Mississippians have served a vital role in the educational development of the Church of God. When the denomination began a Bible Training School (now Lee University) in 1918 for the training of ministers,<sup>356</sup> two Mississippians enrolled in November 1918 for the school's second term.<sup>357</sup> 17-year-old Grant Williams and 24-year-old J. Oscar Hamilton, both young evangelists from the Mount Moriah church in Eupora, studied under Nora Chambers, a Church of God minister and teacher at the Bible Training School.<sup>358</sup> Over the next 90 years, numerous church members in Mississippi have prepared for a variety of ministry paths at institutions of higher education, including those sponsored by the Church of God, such as Lee University and the Theological Seminary.

### Moxley Receives Training Through Correspondence

In addition to students relocating to Tennessee for ministerial training, some Mississippians received training by cor-

respondence, including Luther Moxley.<sup>359</sup> A school teacher since 1910,<sup>360</sup> Moxley valued education and desired to have more Biblical training after becoming a Church of God minister. Unable to attend the church school in Tennessee, Moxley enrolled in its correspondence courses. It is believed he was one of the first Mississippians to complete the correspondence courses at what is now Lee University.<sup>361</sup>

On campus and correspondence training opened a door of educational opportunity for many Church of God members in Mississippi who most likely would not have attended Bible school or college. It provided an incentive and access for ministry preparation among clergy and laity, and many Mississippians took advantage of the educational opportunities at church-sponsored schools. Years later the Church of God would expand its educational efforts by providing Church Training Courses and Lay Leadership Courses at the local level. Aspiring clergy would participate in a Ministerial Internship Program as part of the licensing process.

In addition to preparing for ministry through formal education, several members of the Church of God in Mississippi also served as teachers at the denomination's schools. One of the earliest professors in the Church of God in Mississippi was R.R. Walker, who is believed to be the first Church of God minister with an earned degree.<sup>362</sup>

### R.R. Walker: Mississippi's Premier Educator

A native of Taylorsville, Rufus Royd Walker (1895-1976) became a Baptist minister in 1919 and enrolled in Mississippi College.<sup>363</sup> Alternating school teaching with summer coursework, Walker earned an A.B. degree in 1927 and continued his studies at the State

Six weeks into the revival, Walker testified to the Morgantown congregation of his newfound understanding and announced he was “going to be the first one in the altar.”<sup>370</sup> Walker remembered his experience, “There came an indwelling joy and a power into my very being that took complete charge of my mind, body, and soul.... I knew of a certainty I had received the wonderful blessing of sanctification.”<sup>371</sup> He noted, “I cried out, ‘Oh, Lord, here I am, take me; I am completely Thine, my heart, my soul, my body,

On May 13, 1933, Walker resigned his pastorates and united with the Church of God,<sup>373</sup> where he became esteemed as “Professor Walker” because of his academic credentials.<sup>374</sup> Due to his education and reputation for integrity, Walker quickly emerged as a leader in the Church of God. He was appointed Principal of the high school division at Bible Training School (now Lee University), followed by pastorates in Tennessee (North Cleveland) and South Carolina (Charleston, Anderson, and Greenwood).<sup>375</sup> In 1946 Walker was elected Secretary General and unanimously re-elected in 1948.<sup>376</sup> He served as Administrative Bishop of Kentucky, sixteen years on the Executive Council, and as Superintendent of the Home for Children.<sup>377</sup>

Through the love, joy, and authentic transformation exhibited among Church of God members, Walker was motivated to

seek sanctification and the Holy Spirit baptism. As a result, his efforts impacted positively the Church of God and helped lead the movement into a new era of ministry enhanced by education.

Since R.R. Walker joined the faculty of the Bible Training School in 1934, numerous Mississippians have served as faculty members at Church of God schools training students for a variety of careers and ministries.



**R.R. Walker and his wife, Leedie, united with the Church of God in May 1933 as its first minister with an earned college degree.**

Louis F. Morgan Collection



## Everyone is a Minister in the Church of God

The Church of God has held to the idea of the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9). In the early days of the Church of God this was encouraged at all levels of local church ministry, from church clerks, singing, teaching, and even preaching. Numerous men and women and even children were encouraged to use their spiritual giftings and talents to advance the Kingdom of God. This included those with and without ministerial license who relied upon the Holy Spirit's gifts [words of wisdom, words of knowledge, faith, healing, working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, different kinds of tongues, and interpretation of tongues (1 Corinthians 12:8-13)] and the Holy

Spirit's fruit [love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)] to perform the work of God through them.

The Church of God has embraced the five-fold ministry gifts Christ gave to the Church: apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher (Ephesians 4:11). Although apostles and prophets were not generally labelled in the early Church of God in Mississippi, numerous individuals operated in these roles by supervising the planting of numerous congregations and being used of God to supernaturally reveal future events. The ministry roles of evangelist, pastor and teacher were more frequently noted by early Church of God members. Nonetheless, individuals have

continued to operate in these special gifts throughout the history of the Church of God in Mississippi for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry and to edify of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12).

One hundred years after its introduction into Mississippi, the Church of God continues to embrace the vision and mission of its forebears-- emphasizing the need for all individuals to be empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to be consecrated in all holiness and godliness and to witness to others of the transforming message of Jesus Christ. As God has led us in the past, may He continue to guide our steps as we yield to His will, His Word, and His Holy Spirit. †

Ephesians 4:1-32 (KJV)

11. And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;
12. For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
13. Till we all come in 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:
14. That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;
15. But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:
16. From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.
17. This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,
18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:
19. Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.
20. But ye have not so learned Christ;
21. If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:
22. That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;
23. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
24. And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.
25. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.
26. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:
27. Neither give place to the devil.
28. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.
29. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.
30. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.
31. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:
32. And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

FreeFoto.c#m





Word of the Lord endures forever. The goal must always be about personal and communal transformation, which can ultimately transform an entire culture. Finding the most effective ways to communicate the teachings of Jesus, the message of the cross, and the power of God to redeem— all performed by the Holy Spirit— will once again, just as with the early apostles, “turn the world upside down” (Acts 17:6).

Noted author and pastor Ed Stetzer admonishes the Church to stay focused on mission, which he suggests is simply continuing the mission established by Christ.<sup>378</sup> This, according to Stetzer, requires being culturally relevant without conforming to unbiblical practices.<sup>379</sup> Being missional requires a commitment to living out what Christ has instructed in our motives, actions, and interactions with others. It also requires an understanding of one’s location—the culture, people, and setting. This does not mean one model will work in all settings and for all time. It is specific for each community or given ministry context.<sup>380</sup>

**Appreciating the Pioneers’ Example**

Reflecting on Stetzer’s explanation of missional, it is easy to see the revolutionary and missional approach lived out among the early pioneers of the Church of God in Mississippi. While some may have exploited their ministry roles for

personal gain, those individuals who were true to the mission of Jesus were less concerned with their own popularity and more focused with seeing God’s plan fulfilled and their communities transformed. They desired to be in submission to Jesus and the principles of His spiritual kingdom in their lifestyle and spiritual practice. They moved beyond their comfort zones and relied upon the Holy Spirit to lead and guide them into all Truth as confirmed in scripture and with miraculous signs and wonders following. As these individuals entered communities, living among and befriending local residents, they did so out of a radical commitment to the mission of Jesus. They confronted sin, called for integrity, and sacrificed willingly. They were noted as people full of joy and love—the evidence of God’s Spirit motivating and comforting them.

**Moving Forward ‘On Mission’**

While we respect, honor, and learn from the past, we cannot reside there. Today’s world requires no less of us than it did of our forebears. We still have a mission. In our time and our setting, we must move forward with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We must know the One whom we serve and understand the message He has called us to deliver— the same message that echoes through the ages of time. We also must understand the culture of those to whom we are sent to serve. Love. Passion. Purity. Holiness.

Discipline. Integrity. Accountability. Boldness. Mercy. Grace. Faithfulness. These are timeless and changeless values and virtues. The gifts, fruit, and power of the Holy Spirit will enable us to do the work of ministry in the context to which God has called us to serve Him and others. Drawing inspiration from the example of those who have paved the way before us, we must now accept our responsibility to become the revolutionaries of our time and place.

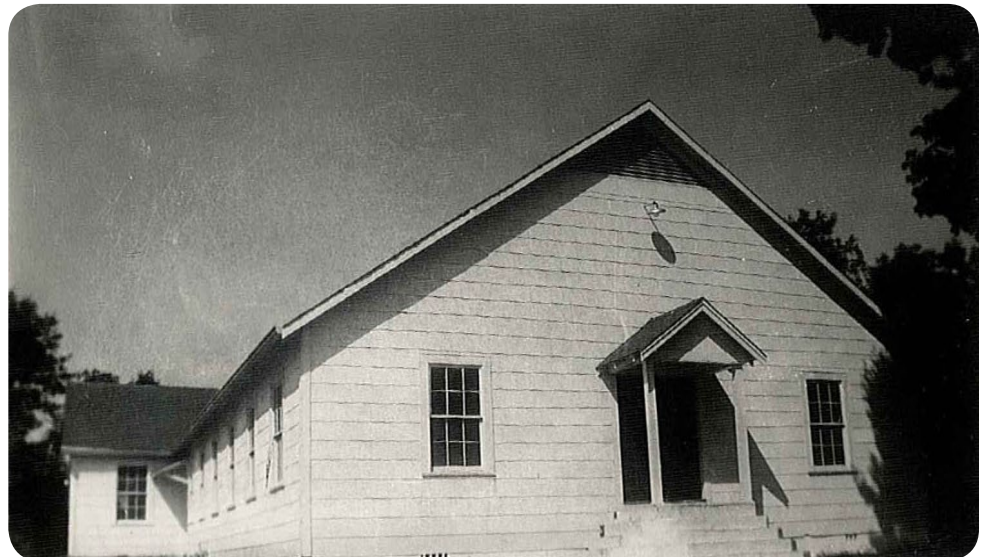
Until the Lord returns again to receive His followers unto Himself, we are instructed to continue doing the work to which He has called us. Simply, we are to be “on mission.” What actions are we doing today to ensure the message of Jesus is being proclaimed in our communities? Years from now, if we have the opportunity to look back on this moment, what will the pages of history record about how we embrace our role in serving God and others?

May we continue to move forward with the transforming message of Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit empowers us to continue the work Christ started more than 2,000 years ago. The Holy Spirit is still available to enable us to live as Christ commanded and to witness to the world around us. Let us be “on mission.” We have the living water, and many spiritually thirsty Mississippians are waiting on us to share it with them. †

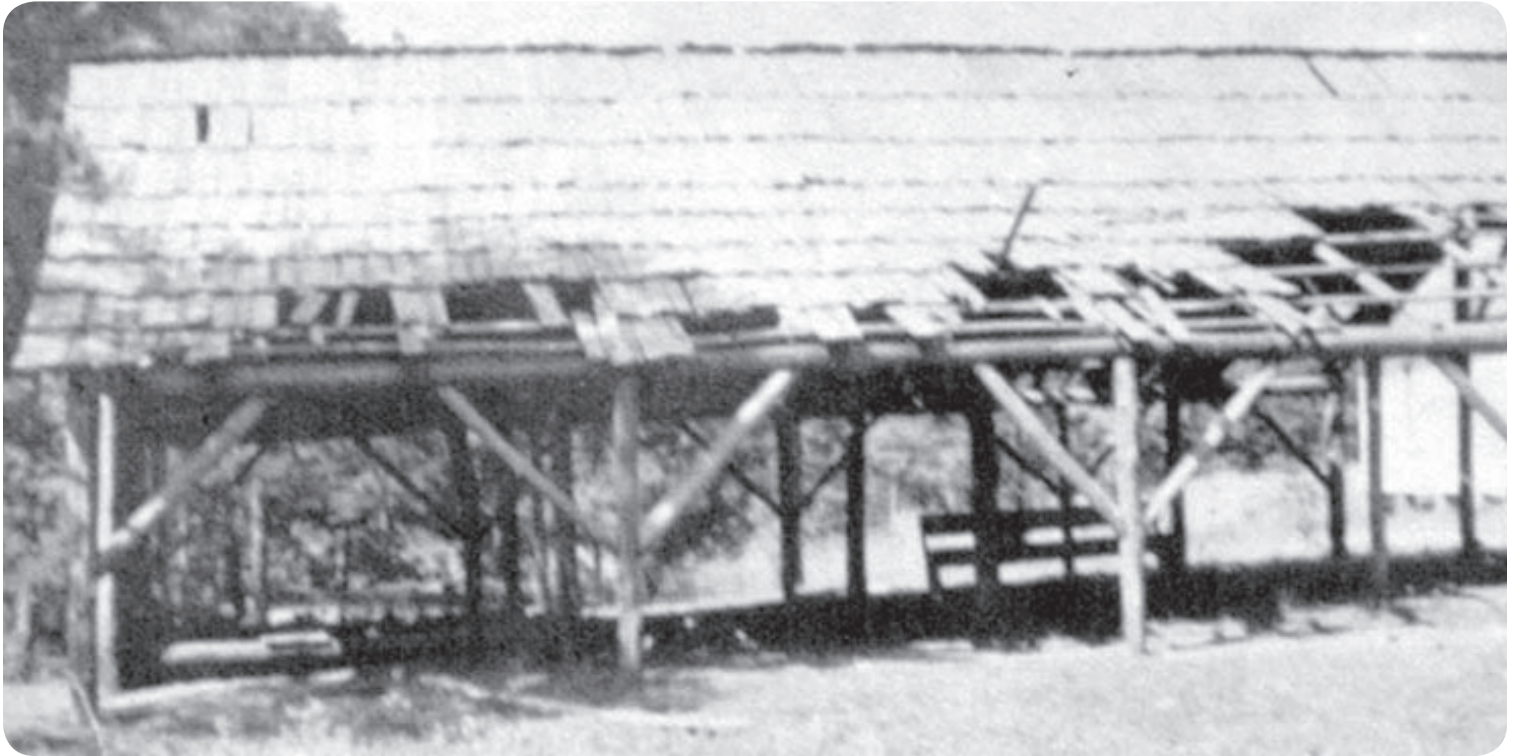


## A black and white photograph of a group of approximately ten people, including men, women, and a child, standing outdoors in front of a wooden building. They are all holding open books, likely hymnals or Bibles, and appear to be participating in a religious service or choir practice. The group is dressed in formal attire from the early 20th century. In the front center, a woman with dark hair is seated at a piano, looking down at her book. To her left, a young child in a light-colored dress with a large collar is looking towards the camera. Behind them, several men and women stand in rows, some looking at their books and others looking forward. The men are wearing suits and ties, while the women are wearing high-collared dresses. The background shows the wooden structure of a building, possibly a church or school.

(Mississippi COG State Office)









To listen to a brief excerpt from a sermon by G.G. Williams, click on the bottom left corner of the audio box below.

(online viewers only)







**James Blackwood and Bill  
Boyles at Morgantown, 1936**

(Louis F. Morgan Collection)



**Julia Hammond, first musician in southern Mississippi**

(Louis F. Morgan Collection)



**A.J. Gardner and wife,  
early pastor in Mississippi**

(Dixon Pentecostal Research Center)



## Morgantown Church of God in 1945

**First brick sanctuary in Church of God in Mississippi constructed following a nine-week revival**

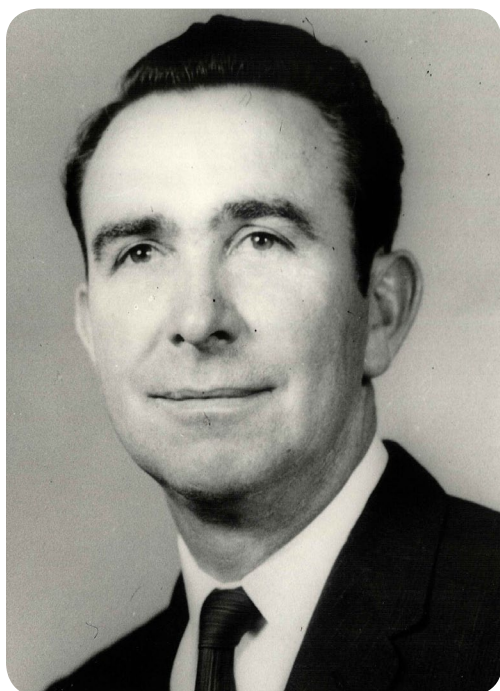
(Louis F. Morgan Collection)





(Louis F. Morgan Collection)





**(above):**  
Brick sanctuary of Bailey Avenue Church constructed during the pastorate of M.H. Kennedy.

(Mississippi COG State Office)

**(far left):**  
Early image of Reverend M.H. Kennedy

(Mississippi COG State Office)

**(left):**  
The Kennedy family during the time they served the Bailey Avenue church.

(Louis F. Morgan Collection)





(right):  
Timmie Whittington  
and family  
(Dixon Pentecostal Research Center)





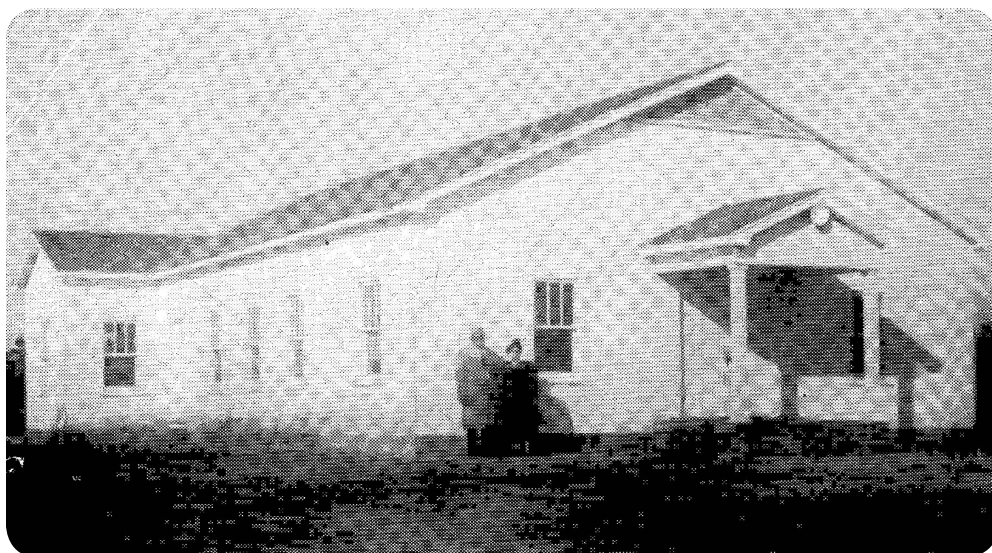


(above):  
Early image of the  
Grenada Church

(left):  
Grenada Church radio  
ministry includes (l-r,  
standing): Mae Brasher,  
Rev. J.L. Brasher, Grace  
Bloodworth, Greek  
Mullen, Yvonne Taylor  
Mullen, the radio an-  
nouncer and (seated)  
Bessie Wolfe (at piano)  
and Rev. A.D. Gammill  
and Maudie Gammill.  
This photo was taken  
inside Grenada's WNAG  
studio.



(right):  
Oak Ridge Church of  
God  
(Mississippi COG State Office)

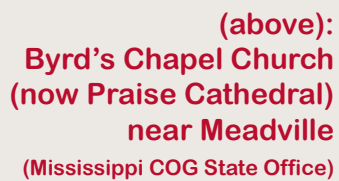






**(above):**  
**Center Hill Church**  
(Mississippi COG State Office)

**(left):**  
**Early African-American**  
**members attend Sunday**  
**School on the porch of**  
**the parsonage**  
(Mississippi COG State Office)















## Help Preserve Mississippi's Heritage... ***Donate Materials***

### The Dixon Pentecostal Research Center

I know first-hand the importance of the Dixon Pentecostal Research Center. As a student at Lee University, I began working in the Dixon Pentecostal Research Center in August 1995. I served there in some capacity until August 2003, when I joined the faculty at Lee University. As the archivist of the Research Center from 1999 to 2003, I worked diligently to preserve materials related to the history of the Church of God and the

Pentecostal movement. I also had the opportunity to become a student of Pentecostal history under the mentorship of Dr. David Roebuck, director of the Research Center and official Church of God historian. I know first-hand Dr. Roebuck's passion for Church of God history, and I know the commitment of Research Center personnel to preserve our heritage.

Today I am most grateful for the service the Research Center provides to the Church of God. It would have been impossible to compile this history without the collection of materials housed at the Research Center. Beginning with the vision of the Dr. Charles W. Conn and Lee University librarian LeMoyne Swiger, the first collection began on a bookshelf in the Lee University library in 1971. Through the generosity of Church of God members throughout the world and a special contribution of Hal Bernard and Starr Dixon, the current Dixon Pentecostal Research Center facilities were provided in 1984. Since then the collection has continued to expand and scholars from across the globe spend time viewing the materials for their research projects. In addition, local churches and various offices within the Church of God utilize the collection regularly.

But the mission has not ended. Now, perhaps even more than ever, there is a need for individuals to know how God has blessed us, the miracles He has performed, and the consecration and devotion of men and women to the Word of God and fulfilling the mission of Jesus. I have compiled this history free-of-charge as a means to do my part in preserving this wonderful legacy. I encourage you to consider joining me in the preservation of our heritage by donating materials pertaining to the history of your local church.

In addition, the Research Center has products available that inspire and educate, including an extended video interview with Dr. Cecil Knight filmed shortly before his death. Also available are sermons by Dr. Ray H. Hughes and other noted evangelists.

Please consider assisting the Dixon Pentecostal Research Center by donating your historical materials. It will not only preserve the past, but also make available to future generations the stories of God's power and faithfulness to Church of God members in Mississippi.

[www.cogheritage.org](http://www.cogheritage.org)

God bless you,  
Louis F. Morgan











the truth was the Bible and the *Church of God Evangel*. How we loved to get copies of the *Evangel*! I remember that we were all so hungry for more of God and to learn more about His power. We wanted to be closer to Christ. We had just a taste of His presence and we longed for more.

Eventually we got in touch with Brother E.C. Rider, a Church of God preacher. He came to our community during the summer of 1920 and conducted a two-week meeting at the Taylor School House. The Baptist church would not let us hold service in the church house because the pastor was skeptical of speaking in tongues. Later our little band of believers faced much persecution and criticism from both the Baptist and Methodist churches nearby. We did not want to cause trouble for the established churches, nor were we against them. We just knew from reading the *Evangel* and from the two experiences within our own community that God was blessing in a powerful way in accordance with the Bible. We had to know more about the Pentecostal blessing.

Different preachers visited us at first for several days' meeting. Sometimes it was a male evangelist and sometimes a female evangelist. Crowds gathered when they heard we were going to have services. Usually most all sermons dealt with what it meant to be "holiness," which is what we called ourselves for believing in salvation, sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, divine healing, and the Church of God. Back then we were taught that the Church of God was the restoration of the Bible Church like the early apostles had experienced. Members generally believed that all Christians would ultimately come to understand the Pentecostal blessing and unite together with the Church of God. But even then I did not believe that Church of God people were the only Christians, I just felt that others had not seen the light on the baptism of the Holy Ghost and all God has for His children.

About a week after my birthday in 1920, Brother Rider returned to our community and conducted another 10 days' meeting, after which he set the Church of God in order with 10 members. Five of us had the Holy Ghost by that time, and Brother Rider baptized six of us in water. Then we shared in the Lord's Supper and feet washing before Brother Rider left our community. Oh, we had a time! We shouted and danced and praised the Lord. For so long we had depended solely upon the *Evangel* to gain light into the way of Pentecost, but finally we had a church of our own in which to worship. We were so happy.

Click on the bottom left corner of the audio box to hear Mamie Williams tell about her early ministry (online viewers only).



~ Mamie Parker Williams  
from her autobiography  
*My Journey Home:  
100 Years of Walking  
with the Lord*



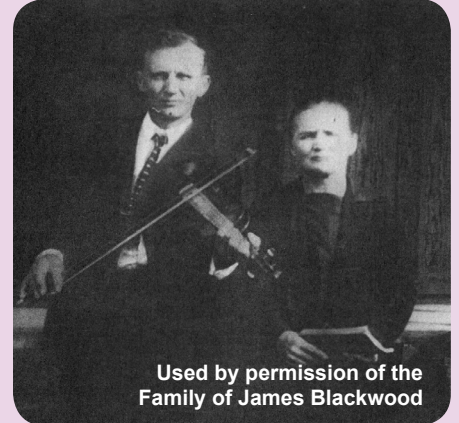




## Carrie Prewitt Blackwood

(not licensed)

In 1916 Carrie Prewitt Blackwood became one of the first Church of God members in Choctaw County, Mississippi. She was first drawn to the Church of God during an open-air meeting conducted by Z.D. Simpson in Johnny Coleman's grove at Fentress, Mississippi. Shortly thereafter she received the Holy Spirit baptism during a service conducted at New Bethel Church of God in Sapa and was instrumental in organizing the Mount Olive Church of God near her home at Weir (near Ackerman). She served as clerk for this church for many years and is remembered for joy, prayerfulness, and consecration to God. She was also the mother and grandmother of the original members of the world-renowned Blackwood Brothers' Quartet.



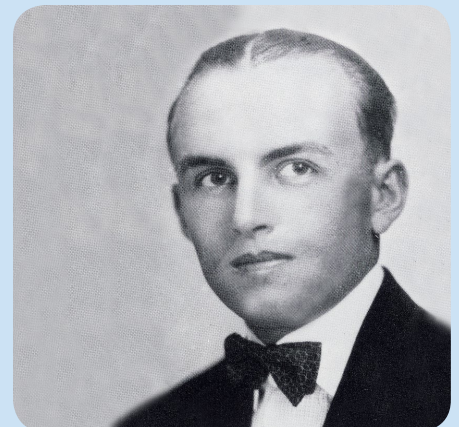
Used by permission of the  
Family of James Blackwood

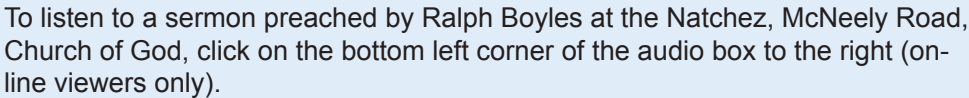
## Robert & Arena Blackwood

While hospitalized in an Atlanta hospital during the First World War, Robert was visited by Church of God ministers S.J. and Annie Heath at the request of his sister-in-law, Carrie Blackwood. Robert attended church with the Heaths at what is now Mt. Paran Central Church of God, where he received the Holy Spirit baptism. Upon arriving home to Ackerman, Mississippi, Robert married Arena Blackwood and entered the ministry. Both Robert and Arena were dynamic speakers and effective ministers. Their boldness and determination benefited them in planting churches and in leading others to Christ. They pastored leading congregations in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Georgia, and Robert served as a state overseer. In addition, their children (Robert, Mary Elsie, and Kate) were noted educators in the Church of God and taught at Lee University.

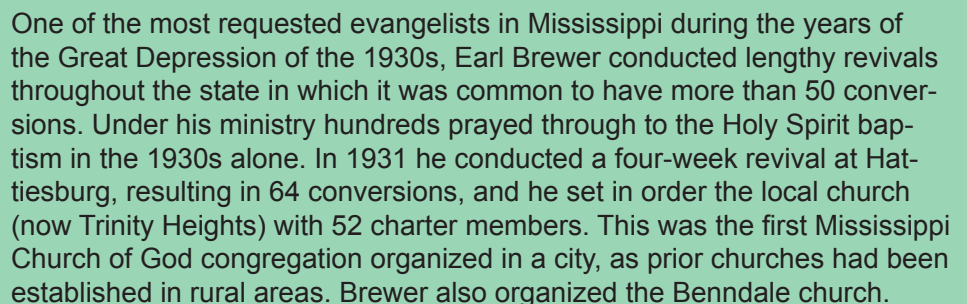
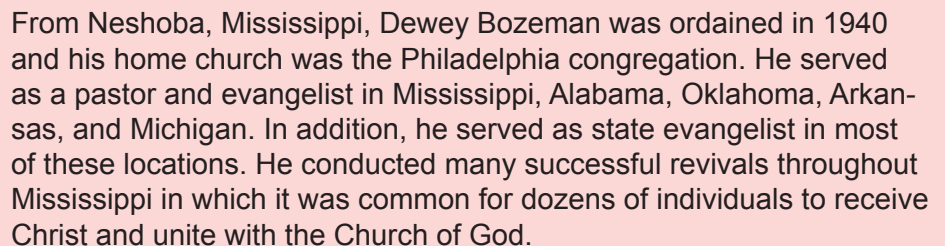
## Roy E. Blackwood

Influenced by his mother's Christian witness and devotion, Roy Blackwood began to seek a deeper experience with God. He received the Holy Spirit baptism while singing in the choir during a revival at the William Springs Church of God. Thereafter he became a member of the Mount Olive Church and later served as an evangelist. He also pastored leading congregations in Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, and North Carolina, as well as serving as State Overseer for North Carolina. In 1934 he organized the internationally famous Blackwood Brothers Quartet, along with his brothers, James and Doyle, and his son, R.W. In his later life he was a minister with the Assemblies of God in Memphis and had an early spiritual influence on the legendary Elvis Presley.





A native of Morgantown, Ralph Boyles was the son of a Baptist father and Church of God mother. His grandfather, Reverend B.J. Morgan, donated the land for the first Morgantown church. Ralph graduated from the Church of God Bible Training School (now Lee University) in 1935, then married Helen Herrington, also of Morgantown, and began to evangelize throughout Mississippi. He later pastored some of Mississippi's leading congregations and served as state evangelist for many years. He had tremendous insight and understanding of end-time prophecy and was an energetic speaker. Numerous individuals accepted Christ, were baptized with the Holy Spirit, and joined the Church of God under his ministry before his death in 1986.





## Maggie Free Chesser

Maggie Free and her family were among the early Church of God members at the Taylor Church near Vardaman. She was actively involved in the Sunday School class taught by Mamie Parker [Williams], and was given opportunity to teach the class occasionally. During her youth in Mississippi, Maggie was instrumental in leading other young people into the Pentecostal experience, and she often spoke at district meetings and regional camp meetings. Following her marriage to Reverend P.W. Chesser, she continued her ministry in other states.



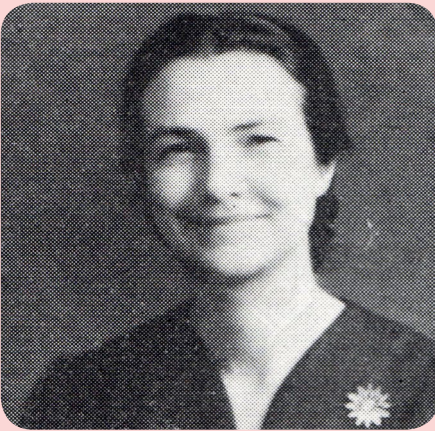
## C.A. Churchill

An early minister in the Church of God in Mississippi, C.A. Churchill was a popular evangelist, pastor, and gifted musician. He was noted for conducting street services in which he would sing songs he had composed and then preach to the crowd assembled to hear him sing. His songs were also sung by Church of God members in their local churches.

## Dovie Coats

Dovie Coats was born in Tallahatchie County, Mississippi in 1893, and she was licensed as a Church of God evangelist in 1922 while living near Parchman, Mississippi. Her husband, Charlie, was also a licensed minister in the Church of God. Dovie served as an evangelist in 28 states and she also pastored churches in West Virginia and Louisiana (Epps and Forrest). Much of her later ministry was spent in Louisiana and Texas.

Mack Cockrell was from the Mendenhall and Magee area and was instrumental in starting the South Shady Grove church near Magee. He helped build the blocks used in building the South Shady Grove church, which were made from sand in an old branch near the church building. After moving to the Mississippi Delta for work, he homesteaded a 1,040-acre farm near Shaw. There he traveled to his pastoral appointments. He served as pastor 11 years at Isola, where he walked to church for many years before he was able to purchase an automobile. He also pastored the Fairview church. During this time he supported his family by his farm work and did not receive money from the local churches. Mack Cockrell also gave the first \$500 toward the purchase of the Church of God campground, which continues to serve church members throughout Mississippi for annual camp meetings, youth camps, and other ministry activities.



Mary Grace Comans

As a child Mary Grace Comans was sensitive to spiritual things and desired to follow Jesus. She received spiritual training at the Rocky Hill Church of God near Sebastopol, where her family attended. During recess at school, her classmates often saw her praying under a tree as they played in the schoolyard. Sometimes they even heard her speak in tongues. Eventually Mary Grace became a teacher and traveled to Japan, where she taught dependents of U.S. military stationed in Tokyo in the 1950s and 1960s. There Mary Grace opened up her home to teach English to Japanese youth, using the Bible as her textbook. Many Japanese youth accepted Christ, and today the largest Church of God congregation in Japan exists because of those initial Bible studies started by Mary Grace Comans.

Vianna Free Daniel (not licensed, but a lay preacher in her youth)

In 1920 the Free family helped organize the Taylor Church of God near Vardaman, Mississippi. Vianna Free Daniel was among those early Pentecostals in the area. She later moved to Tennessee and worked for the international offices of the Church of God. During the annual general assemblies she recorded the *Minutes* and text from the sermons. Taking notes each day, she then stayed up late each evening to type out the *Minutes* and have them prepared for the next day's session. Her work allowed Church of God members to have individual copies of the *Minutes of the General Assembly* of the Church of God each year. Vianna was also the mother of The Daniel Sisters, a Southern Gospel trio well-known during the 1940s through 1960s who sang with Otis McCoy, editor of the famed "red-back" *Church Hymnal*.

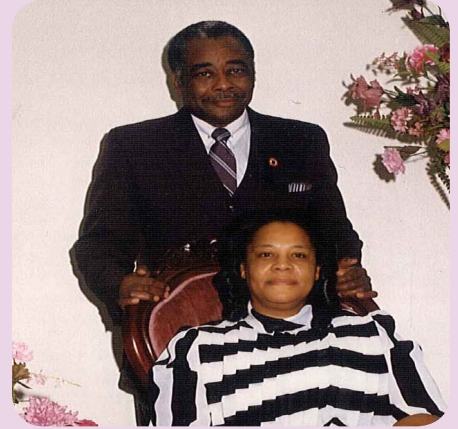
U.B. Daniels

Born in 1891, U. B. Daniels was an early African-American evangelist and pastor in Mississippi. He was first licensed with the Church of God in 1932. Among his early pastoral appointments included St. Mary's (Eupora), Bingham's Chapel, and New Albany. He was a true pioneer and stabilizing force in the early black work in Mississippi.



## Calvin C. Daniels

The son of Bud and Nettie Daniels, C.C. Daniels was raised in the home of a devoted Church of God family. His father was a deacon, his mother a church clerk, and his uncle a pastor. Following his service in the Korean War, C.C. Daniels accepted the call into full-time ministry and started a Church of God congregation, one of only 5 African-American congregations in the Church of God in Mississippi at that time. He served Mississippi as state overseer of the black ministries from 1957-1970, when the state offices were separated according to race. He was instrumental in providing strong leadership that increased the black ministries within the Church of God in Mississippi and provided a solid foundation for its continued growth. Bishop Daniels was recognized by the denomination in 1999 for his capable leadership and devotion to the Church of God. The Daniels Temple congregation is named for him.



## D.W. Dollahite

In 1911 D.W. Dollahite was one of the first two ministers to receive license with the Church of God in Mississippi. Prior to the introduction of the Church of God in Mississippi in 1909, Dollahite was a member of the Stonefield Holiness Church (a Free Methodist congregation) at Cascilla. After receiving the Holy Spirit baptism in 1909 and affiliating with the Church of God, he was instrumental in establishing the Friendship congregation, where he also served as an early pastor. When boll weevils began to make cotton production in the Mississippi Delta difficult, Dollahite was one of the early Tallahatchie County residents who moved to Arkansas, where he also helped to establish local Church of God congregations.

## Nellie Beard Dunaway (not licensed)

Nellie Dunaway was among the first members of the Church of God in southern Mississippi. Her father, Nelson Beard, supplied the needed \$60 for Warren Evans and his family to return to Morgantown from Florida in 1915, bringing with them the Church of God message. Nellie and her sister, Julia Hammond, assisted in those early services by singing and playing musical instruments. Nellie received the Holy Spirit baptism while churning butter and praying. Thereafter she became an unlicensed evangelist, often conducting services in local churches and preaching at the local train depot. She was a charter member of the Mount Sinai church, and she served as a church clerk, Sunday school teacher, and youth minister in several congregations, including Mount Sinai, Hattiesburg, and Morgantown. She and her sister, Julia, also assisted Warren Evans in establishing the church at Bogalusa, Louisiana in 1919. At her death in 1979, her home was sold and the money given to the Home for Children according to her wishes.





Grover C. Dunn

G.C. Dunn was one of the most noted pastors to emerge from the Church of God in Mississippi. He united with the Church of God in 1918 at Liberty, Mississippi, and established several congregations within the state, including the Thorn Church of God. Dunn also served as a mentor and encourager to younger ministers, both male and female. He pastored leading congregations in Mississippi and other states, as well as serving as a state overseer (including Mississippi from 1925 to 1926) and a respected leader in the Church of God.

Ima Edwards was an early state evangelist among the African-American constituency of the Church of God in Mississippi. She traveled throughout the state to minister at various “preaching stations” and early African-American mission churches within the state. In addition, she served as an interim pastor and church clerk, including at the Eupora congregation.



## Jim Evans

Jim Evans was born in Lincoln County, Mississippi in 1900 and was first licensed in the Church of God in 1936. Among his pastorates in Mississippi include McCall Creek, Wesley Chapel, Natchez, Laurel, Hattiesburg, West Point, Greenville, Pilgrim's Rest (Shaw). He also pastored the Sharp's Chapel Church in Covington, Louisiana. Often preaching in brush arbors and storefronts, he was instrumental in establishing churches, including the first Church of God in Brookhaven, Mississippi.

## Warren Evans Sr.

Escaping correction from his wife's relatives because of his sinful habits, Warren Evans moved with his family to Florida. There he attended a Church of God revival and was converted, delivered from alcohol, sanctified, and baptized with the Holy Ghost. In 1915 he eagerly returned to his wife's family in Morgantown, Mississippi and began conducting services under a brush arbor. One night he was lured away from a service by men claiming to seek salvation, only to be beaten mercilessly by White Caps and left for dead in front of a church member's house. Evans survived and established churches in Mississippi and Louisiana. He united with the Oneness Pentecostal movement in 1920, where he established several churches in Louisiana before returning to the Church of God. However, he conducted revivals in both groups until his death.



## Charles C. Floyd

Reverend Floyd accepted Christ in 1921 and united with the Church of God in 1924. He served as a licensed deacon in the Church of God until 1938, when he was licensed as an evangelist. He pastored congregations in Mississippi and Louisiana, as well as serving as a district overseer and evangelizing extensively in both states.





A.D. Gammill

# Mary Lamb Graves

68



## J. Oscar Hamilton

J. Oscar Hamilton was licensed as a minister in the Church of God in 1919 at the Mount Moriah Church of God in Eupora, Mississippi. Along with Grant Williams, he was one of the first Mississippi students enrolled at the Church of God Bible Training School (now Lee University) in Tennessee. He served as pastor at Oak Grove, Morgantown, and Mount Sinai churches and the first Starkville congregation. Following the division in the Church of God 1922-23, Oscar Hamilton continued under the leadership of A.J. Tomlinson and served several years as a state overseer for what would become Church of God of Prophecy congregations in Mississippi.



## William Wesley Hammond

Bill Hammond was born in Marion County and raised in the Morgantown Community. His mother, Rosa, was a charter member of the Church of God in southern Mississippi and also at the Morgantown Church. She had also nursed minister Warren Evans back to health when White Caps beat him and left him for dead in front of the Hammond family home. Bill Hammond married Johnnie Williamson and raised a large family. Then, in the early 1930s he committed his life to Christ and soon became a licensed minister with the Church of God. He evangelized extensively in southern Mississippi and often served as an interim pastor for local churches. He was known for his spiritual discernment and Bible preaching.



## Harmon Spencer Harris

H.S. Harris was among the first individuals attending the Stonefield revival in 1909 when the Church of God was introduced into Mississippi. He received the baptism of the Holy Spirit that same year and was an active member of the Stonefield Church. He was instrumental in the establishment of the North Shady Grove congregation in 1915, when he was licensed as a deacon.



Natives of Georgia, S.J. and Annie Baldwin Heath were charter members of what is now Atlanta's Mount Paran Central church. Both were licensed as evangelists in 1918 and began evangelizing, planting churches, and pastoring throughout Georgia. Annie was a gifted musician, often playing the piano for the General Assembly. Her father, D.N. Baldwin, organized the first orchestra at the Mount Paran church. S.J. Heath became a bishop in 1920 and served on the Council of Seventy from 1921-27, as a Supreme Judge of the Court of Judges from 1927-28, a member of the Executive Committee and Supreme Council from 1927-29. He also served as state overseer of Alabama and Mississippi while also pastoring local churches. He was serving as state overseer of Mississippi and pastor of the Morgantown and Mount Sinai churches at the

time of his death in 1931. Annie then pastored the local churches before pastoring the church at Bogalusa, Louisiana in 1932. She was also appointed as Mississippi's first State Superintendent of the Sunday School and YPE (an early version of the state youth director). She also organized Mississippi's first statewide youth and women's ministries activities. Annie was on her way to begin teaching piano at the Bible Training School (now Lee University) when she passed away while preaching a camp meeting in Montgomery, Alabama in 1933. In addition, Earl Paulk Sr. received the Holy Spirit baptism under their ministry in Georgia, and they were instrumental in leading R.R. and Leedie Walker into the Church of God in Mississippi. The Heaths are buried at Morgantown.



Maude Ellen Height organized a Sunday school in Walthall, Mississippi. Originally the services were conducted in the local school house. As interest grew, Reverend Height began preaching and conducting regular services in addition to the Sunday school. As a result, she established the Gatewood Church of God. (A congregation previously existed in this area but had disbanded more than 20 years earlier). She later pastored the Allen's Chapel congregation near Batesville and the Center Hill mission.

Brookhaven native George W. Hemphill was born in 1899 and accepted Christ at age 32. After uniting with the Church of God he began preaching in 1934 and was licensed as a minister the following year. He had an active ministry from 1935 until 1948 and pastored 17 congregations in Mississippi, Louisiana, and Arkansas. Hemphill was unable to remain active in ministry following an illness in 1948. However, he was a faithful member of the Church of God until his death in 1961.



## C.H. Isbell

Reverend Isbell first began preaching in the Church of the Nazarene, where he preached for seven years until receiving the Holy Spirit baptism and uniting with the Church of God. Among his pastoral assignments in Mississippi was Pilgrim Rest (Doddsville), Friendship, Goodwill, Greenville, Mount Olive, Cleveland, Bradley, William Springs, Charleston, and Wrays Chapel. He later served as assistant pastor of the Greenville, New Life congregation. During his ministry he often pastored two congregations at the same time, and once served as pastor for three congregations at the same time. He also served as a district overseer.



## Marion H. Kennedy

At the age of 19 M.H. Kennedy began preaching. One of his earliest services was near the courthouse in Winona, Mississippi. He pastored and built churches in Starkville and West Point in his early ministry. However, he is most remembered for his service at the Bailey Avenue Church in Jackson, where he was appointed pastor of the 15-member church in June 1944. During his more than 20 years pastoring the Bailey Avenue congregation, it grew to become the largest Church of God congregation in Mississippi at that time. Ordained in 1943, Brother Kennedy also served as a state overseer, state youth director, state evangelist, state trustee, state council member, district pastor, and on numerous denominational boards and pastor of leading congregations.



## Lou Etta Lamb

The wife of Dr. Daniel Lamb of Artesia, Mississippi, Lou Etta Lamb was an early evangelist and pastor in the Church of God in the state. She began her ministry by organizing a church in her home. After learning about another Church of God congregation nearby, this house church merged with the Pilgrim's Rest congregation, where she also served as church clerk for several years. She is remembered for her boldness in proclaiming the Gospel, as well as her love for people. She often preached at the local train depot in Artesia, where numerous individuals accepted Christ. She served as a mentor to young female ministers and saw many people converted and filled with the Holy Spirit as a result of the ministry God entrusted to her. In addition, when an African-American congregation was without a pastor, she accepted their invitation and served as their pastor. Following the division in the Church of God, Lou Etta ministered for many years in what would become known as the Church of God of Prophecy.

H.E. Lambert was serving as pastor of an independent Pentecostal church in Laurel, Mississippi when he learned about the Church of God in 1938. That year Lambert and his 38-member congregation united with the denomination and eventually became known as the West Laurel Church of God. Lambert served as an evangelist and pastor for numerous Church of God congregations in Mississippi, during which time many of the churches experienced tremendous growth.



J.C. Lentz was licensed as an evangelist in the Church of God in 1919 while living at Clay, Mississippi. He was instrumental in establishing the Church of God in northeastern Mississippi before moving to Foxworth, Mississippi in 1922. He served as a state evangelist and also pastored the Cleveland, Oak Grove, Thorn, Morgantown, Mount Sinai, and Pickwick churches. His family provided the land for the present-day location of the Mount Sinai Church of God.



Known to many as “Papa Joe,” at first Joe Little was skeptical of the Church of God. Intrigued by reports of a revival at North Shady Grove just prior to 1920, he traveled on horseback to the meeting. Upon his arrival he saw “everyone preaching one after the other” and became scared they would call on him. He jumped on his horse and raced away, only to discover the people were testifying. Joe soon returned and was filled with the Holy Spirit. He entered the ministry and then enrolled at the Bible Training School (now Lee University), where he worked in the publishing house and lit a fire each morning so the General Overseer could be warm when he arrived to pray. In time, the General Overseer invited Little to join him in his morning prayers. Little later served a state youth director of Georgia and then worked behind the scenes at the Church of God Publishing House. After retirement, he served faithfully at Stonefield Church of God, where he taught Sunday School and was known as a man of prayer.



## Nell Lovette

Licensed as a Church of God evangelist in 1919, Nell Lovette devoted herself to full-time ministry. G.C. Dunn and his wife often requested Nell Lovette to assist them when “preaching out” a new church in Mississippi. She served as a mentor to other young female ministers, including Mamie Parker Williams, Mildred and Thelma Biggers, and Maggie Free Chesser. She was also known for her ability to effectively match young couples throughout the state, many of whom later married and served in ministry in their local churches as pastors, teachers, altar workers, and musicians. She later ministered in what would become known as the Church of God of Prophecy.

## Thelma Massengill (Neal)

Noted for her singing and playing the guitar, Thelma Massengill Neal was a favorite at Mississippi Camp Meeting, where she was often requested to sing “Over There” and other songs about Heaven. She was also a popular evangelist and served as a local pastor, including at Pearl City and Holcomb when new buildings were constructed. Too, she conducted street services, where many individuals were drawn to her singing and then convicted of sin by her preaching. She was a faithful member and minister in the Church of God until her death. (See an image of her on page 35 from circa 1950 while singing at the Alcorn County Courthouse in Corinth. For online viewers, click on the video below where Thelma Neal sings at a 1993 Mississippi camp meeting service.)



### “Over There”

There’s a land of pure delight, over there  
Where our faith is lost in sight, over there.

I’ll be there, I mean to be there.  
And the glory of His kingdom I will share.  
When the golden harps are played,  
And the saints rewards are paid,  
In a spotless robe arrayed,  
I’ll be there.

# Flavius Joseph "F.J." May

Dr. F.J. May was born in Neshoba County, Mississippi in 1927. Converted in 1944, he was licensed as a Church of God minister in 1945. The following year he married Lavelle Carpenter. Dr. May pastored in Alabama, Missouri, Illinois, North Dakota, Kentucky, and Mississippi (Marks and Hattiesburg). He also served as a member of the Lee University Board of Directors, a member of the International Executive Council of the Church of God, and as a professor at the Church of God Theological Seminary since its establishment in 1975. In addition, he has become distinguished as a camp meeting Bible teacher and for teaching the Unity Sunday School Class at the North Cleveland Church of God in Cleveland, Tennessee.

Grady N. May

A native of Philadelphia, Mississippi, Grady May began preaching in 1927 and ministered in seven states. He was responsible for establishing five Church of God congregations in Mississippi. Persecution was common for Brother May, including receiving numerous threats of beating and even death by those opposing the Pentecostal message.

Mava Morgan McCoy

Under the supervision of Reverend Annie Heath during the 1930s, two teenage sisters, Mava and Geneva Morgan, of Morgantown pioneered the Young People's Endeavor (Y.P.E.) for Mississippi. After Reverend Heath, Mava became the second State Sunday School and YPE Director for Mississippi (similar to the contemporary State Youth and Christian Education Director). Mava traveled to various churches preaching and establishing local Y.P.E. organizations. She then served as the first Y.P.E. Director for Louisiana while pastoring the West Monroe Church of God. She later married Reverend Joe McCoy and assisted him in church planting and state overseer work while maintaining a significant ministry of her own through preaching, home Bible studies, media ministry and publishing. Several ministers received their call during her meetings.



## Paris L. McLain

Originally from Mobile, Alabama, Paris McLain began preaching in 1943 and was licensed with the Church of God in 1945. Among his early pastorates in Mississippi were Murray Hill, Pleasant Home, and Ward Valley. Along with his sister, Lettie Meadows, Reverend McLain established the Church of God in Columbia in 1946, which was officially set in order in 1948. He also built several church structures in Mississippi, including Mount Carmel, Pascagoula and Benndale. It was during his 10-year pastorate at Pascagoula that the church experienced tremendous growth. Numerous individuals accepted Christ as a result of Reverend McLain's influence in the communities where he ministered.



## Walter McNabb

Walter McNabb was among the first individuals to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit in southern Mississippi. He was among the 51 charter members of the Church of God established in the Morgantown School House in August 1916, although he lived 15 miles away at Pickwick. It was upon his request that Warren Evans and J.R. Smith conducted services at Pickwick, resulting in the establishment of the Church of God there (from which the present-day Mount Carmel congregation traces its beginning). McNabb also pastored a small congregation at the nearby railroad depot community of Suer. McNabb died on July 4, 1923 while preaching at the Suer church. He had just read his sermon text, Isaiah 55:6 and Luke 15:11, and was exhorting sinners to accept Christ when he collapsed lifeless.



## Lettie Meadows (not licensed)

Lettie Meadows and husband, Clarence, moved to Columbia, Mississippi, in the 1940s. During this time the only Pentecostal church in the area was the Assembly of God congregation. Several Church of God families attended the local Assembly of God and, along with Lettie, desired to have a local Church of God congregation. Although unlicensed, Lettie had an active preaching ministry. She began conducting prayer meetings and Bible studies in her home in 1946 that led to the establishment of a Church of God, which Lettie's brother, Paris McLain, set in order. While living in Columbia, Lettie and Flora Cooper, another unlicensed evangelist, often conducted revivals and regular services at the Ward Valley congregation near Silver Creek in the absence of a pastor. Lettie also served other Church of God congregations when living in communities other than Columbia, including Richton and McComb.





# Horatio Mitchell

Tulane D. Mooneyham

T.D. Mooneyham had relatives who were ushered into the Pentecostal movement when the Church of God was established at Thorn, Mississippi in 1921. It was the Church of God that provided Mooneyham with his Christian discipleship and training. Eventually he was called into the ministry as a missionary. He served the Church of God in Angola, Africa and taught at the Berea Bible Seminary in Africa during the 1950s. In addition, the Church of God experienced much growth in Nigeria under his leadership and missionary service.



## Gene W. Morgan

A licensed deacon in the Church of God, Gene W. Morgan was a charter member of the Church of God in southern Mississippi in August 1916 and was also a charter member of the Mount Sinai congregation in January 1917. He often conducted services in the absence of a pastor and performed other ministerial duties throughout the community. He frequently reported to the *Church of God Evangel* the church activities in southern Mississippi. His family has been active in the Church of God for more than 90 years, including his daughter Gladys Beard (wife of Reverend Irone Beard).



## Tom Morgan

In 1910 A.J. Tomlinson conducted a meeting on the property of Tom Morgan, which ultimately resulted in the establishment of the Friendship Church of God near Charleston. Morgan was among the 20 charter members of the Friendship Church in August 1912 and was licensed as a deacon there in 1913. In addition to his work in Tallahatchie County, Tom Morgan assisted many struggling churches by filling pulpits across the Mississippi Delta when a regular pastor was unavailable.

## Joseph Washington Mullen

J.W. Mullen was a Free Methodist minister and pastor at the Stonefield Holiness Church in Cascilla when the Church of God was first introduced there in 1909. Following his Holy Spirit baptism he was instrumental in guiding the Stonefield congregation into the Church of God. He is remembered as a compassionate minister committed to discipleship and consecrated holiness. Years later, when a division occurred within the denomination in 1922-23, Mullen again was instrumental in guiding the Stonefield Church to remain with the Church of God. His descendents continue to serve an active role at the Stonefield Church.





Hettie J. Pearson

Hal Pressgrove

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[illegible]

A vintage black and white photograph of a young man and a woman standing outdoors. The man on the left is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt and light-colored trousers with a dark belt. The woman on the right is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved dress or blouse with a dark belt and a full skirt. They are standing in front of a dark, leafy background.

## 79

Born in Lumberton, Mississippi, B.L. Roberts moved with his family to the Mississippi Delta to work. There he was saved during a Baptist meeting conducted under a cotton gin canopy. Sometime afterward, Roberts went to the cotton field behind his home to pray. While in prayer he received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and began shouting and speaking on tongues in the field. An African-American man working on the farm ran to the house and told B.L.'s father, "Mr. Rueben, come quick. Mr. Lamar has gone stone crazy!" Thereafter B.L. Roberts began preaching. His first pastorate was at Moorhead. Among the other churches he served as pastor were Winona, Mt. Zion at Indianola, Marie, Beasley Bayou and Bethel at Isola, Greenville (New Life), and Walton Chapel. He pastored South Shady Grove church at Magee three times, and he also built the Magee church. B.L. was a respected leader in the Church of God in Mississippi, as was his son, Julius, who served Mississippi as a pastor (including 30 years at Natchez) and also as State Evangelism Director.



Originally from Louisiana, Fount Sharp's family was instrumental in establishing the Sharp's Chapel Church of God near Covington. He attended Bible school (now Lee University) and pastored the Mount Olive Church of God in Tennessee before graduating in 1929. Then he was appointed to pastor in Mississippi, including such churches as Meadville (Praise Cathedral), Greenville (New Life), Mount Sinai, Morgantown, and Rocky Hill. In addition, Reverend Sharp was instrumental in leading into the Church of God the Reverend R.R. Walker, who was the first minister in the movement with an earned college degree (A.B.).



A member of the Stonefield Holiness Church (a Free Methodist congregation) at Cascilla, E.K. Simpson was intrigued after reading in a Memphis newspaper about a Pentecostal pastor named L.P. Adams. After visiting Adams' church in Memphis, Simpson returned to Cascilla and convinced the local pastor to invite Adams, who was a Church of God minister, to conduct a meeting. It was during this revival in 1909 that the Church of God was first introduced into Mississippi. In 1911 E.K. Simpson was one of the first ministers to receive license with the Church of God in Mississippi, and he was instrumental in the organization of the Church of God in Tallahatchie County. He was a charter member of the Turkey Foot Fork church in 1913 and then the Stonefield church in 1914.



Z.D. Simpson

In 1912 Z.D. Simpson organized Mississippi's second Church of God congregation (Pilgrim's Rest near Artesia). At the time Simpson was living at Ethelsville, Alabama and serving as pastor of several congregations. He made regular visits to the Pilgrim's Rest congregation before another pastor was appointed there. Simpson pastored some of the leading congregations in Alabama and served as an early state overseer for Mississippi.



# James Roman "Jim" Smith

A charter member of the Mount Sinai congregation, J.R. Smith was licensed as an evangelist in 1917. He organized numerous churches in Mississippi, most notably at McCall Creek and Pickwick (from which the current Mount Carmel Church of God traces its foundation). He was one of the first ministers in the Church of God in Mississippi to be noted for operating in the spiritual gifts of discernment and prophecy, and he was well-versed in scripture and had a keen understanding of eschatology. He served as a pastor and district overseer in much of southern Mississippi and evangelized frequently throughout the state. During the division in the Church of God in 1923 he served as pastor at Morgantown and Mount Sinai, where the only cash payment he received the entire year was \$1, as all other funds were being sent to assist with the financial woes of the church.



L.C. Smith

L.C. Smith was licensed as a minister in the Church of God in the early 1940s. Assisted by his wife, Betty, his ministry was focused in Mississippi and his pastorates included Philadelphia, Hollandale, Houlika, Runnelstown, Richland Creek (twice), Bradley, Mitchell Chapel, Ackerman, Purvis, Goodwill, Mount Carmel (twice), Sumner, Fame, Eupora, and Mathiston. He also started the Ackerman and Purvis churches. His descendants continue to serve in active ministry with the Church of God, including son Jimmy Smith, who has served as a state overseer and Director of Evangelism and Home Missions.





Mary Tidwell

# Lillie Musselwhite Tilghman

Lillie Tilghman began speaking in tongues while in prayer at her home near Hardy. When she testified of her experience at her local church, she was ultimately dismissed from the local church fellowship. Undaunted, she began holding services in her home. Soon afterward she and her 10 children assisted in the construction of a small church building across the road from their house. In 1914 M.S. Lemons visited the family, baptized them in water, and received them into the Church of God. Tilghman's Chapel Church of God continued until 1925, when it merged with another Church of God congregation nearby. Members of the Tilghman family continue to be vital members of the Church of God in Mississippi.



## R.R. Walker

A Baptist pastor and school superintendent living in Morgantown, R.R. Walker was inspired to seek the deeper experiences of sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Spirit because of the Christian witness of his students. He and his wife, Leedie, received these spiritual experiences in May 1933 and then united with the Church of God. A 1927 graduate of Mississippi College, Walker became the first minister in the Church of God with an earned bachelor's degree (A.B.). In 1934 he was requested to serve as principal of the high school division at the Bible Training School (now Lee University) in Tennessee, where he was esteemed as "Professor Walker" because of his academic credentials. He later served as pastor (including the North Cleveland, Tennessee church), state overseer, superintendent of the orphanage, and as Secretary-General (one of the top administrative positions in the Church of God).



## Timmie Whittington

As a young man, Timmie Whittington pioneered the Grenada Church of God and sacrificed to see the church organized in that city. He later attended Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee and pastored a local congregation there. However, most of his ministry occurred in Mississippi, where he earned the love and respect of Church of God members throughout the state. He led numerous congregations in building churches and parsonages during his time as pastor. Known as a compassionate man with a heart for God and people, Timmie Whittington left a unique mark on the lives he blessed in communities throughout Mississippi.



## General Grant "G.G." Williams

At age 15 Grant Williams accepted Christ, was sanctified, and received the Holy Spirit baptism at Eupora in 1916. In the fall of 1918 he attended the second term of Bible Training School (now Lee University) under the tutelage of Nora Chambers, who often referred to Grant as one of her best students. Licensed as an evangelist on March 29, 1919, Grant was one of the youngest, but also one of the best trained, ministers in the Church of God in Mississippi at that time. He planted numerous congregations in Mississippi, including Bude, Jacobs Tabernacle (Liberty), Causey's Chapel (Gloster), Rock Hill, and Greenville (New Life). Three of these congregations were organized prior to Grant's 1923 marriage to Mamie Parker. Together, they pastored in six states and raised a family of eight children. Grant also served as state overseer of Mississippi from 1931 to 1932. Grant Williams is remembered for his wisdom in dealing with local church problems effectively and the many physical healings that took place in his services and during his times of prayer for people.



(Prior to 1945)

E.L. Newton



If you have photos or biographical information concerning these or other Mississippi ministers, please send that information to:

Dr. Louis F. Morgan  
P.O. Box 5968  
Cleveland, TN 37320  
morganonmission@yahoo.com

W.E. Rogers  
Hal B. Rushing  
Bessie Scruggs  
William Scruggs  
DeWitt Sharp  
A.O. Stewart  
C.C. Stewart

Horace Taylor  
Ethan M. Washam  
R.F. Watkins  
S.B. Webb  
B.M. Woolwine  
(and others)

# GENERAL



General Overseer. He provided 23 and one-half years of unbroken service as a member of the International Executive Council and was President of the Church of God Theological Seminary.



# OVERSEERS

## DR. ROBERT WHITE

Dr. Robert White was the second Mississippian to serve as General Overseer of the Church of God from 1994 to 1996. Born near Richton, Mississippi, Dr. White began his ministry in the early 1950s as an evangelist and new field worker. He pastored his first congregation at Petal in 1954, followed by other pastorates in Texas (Cottonwood, Dallas, and Bonham). Dr. White married Texas native Kathryn Shires, who has assisted him in his ministry. He also served as state youth director in Louisiana and Texas and was state overseer of Montana and Wyoming, Arizona, West Virginia, and Alabama. Dr. White received academic degrees from Rocky Mountain College (B.A.), Arizona State University (M.A.), and the Hama School of Theology (D.Min.) and served on the Board of Directors for Northwest Bible College, West Coast Bible College Board of Directors, the General Board of Education, and as President of the Church of God Theological Seminary. Other appointments include Assistant Director of World Missions, Director of World Missions, Executive Council member, an Assistant General Overseer, General Overseer, and currently as an international evangelist.



## A black and white portrait of a young man with short, dark hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, white shirt, and dark tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The portrait is set within a yellow oval frame. A small, rectangular, light-colored object, possibly a name tag or a small book, is pinned to his left lapel. The background is dark and textured, possibly foliage.



J.A. Davis  
1916 - 1918

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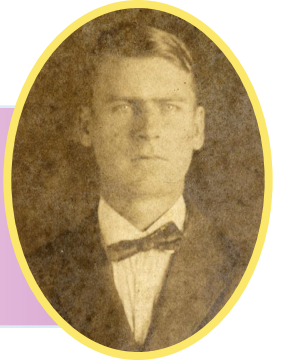




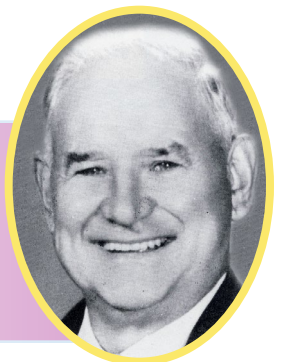
Hal A. Pressgrove  
1920 - 1922



Efford Haynes  
1923



E.B. Culpepper  
1918 - 1920  
1923 - 1925  
1928 - 1929




Grover C. Dunn  
1925 - 1926

M.J. Headley  
1936-1937







A black and white portrait of a middle-aged man with short, dark hair, wearing a suit jacket, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The portrait is set within a yellow oval frame.

G.C. Hamby  
1950-1954

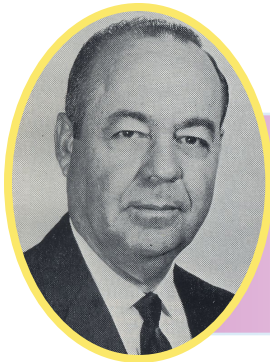
Wade H. Horton  
1958-1960

T.L. Forester  
1964-1968

H.T. Statum  
1954-1958

John D. Smith  
1960-1964





H.D. Sustar  
1970-1974



W.C. Ratchford  
1976-1980



J. Frank Culpepper  
1968 - 1970



B.G. Hamon  
1974-1976



Walter P. Atkinson  
1980 - 1984

Wade A. Bell  
1984-1986

James D. Jenkins  
1988 - 1992

Gary D. Tygart  
1996-2000

B.L. Kelley  
1986 - 1988

Carl E. Allen  
1992 - 1996





These photographs are housed at the Dixon Pentecostal Research Center, either in a photograph collection or in various issues of the *Church of God Evangel* and *Mississippi Messenger*.

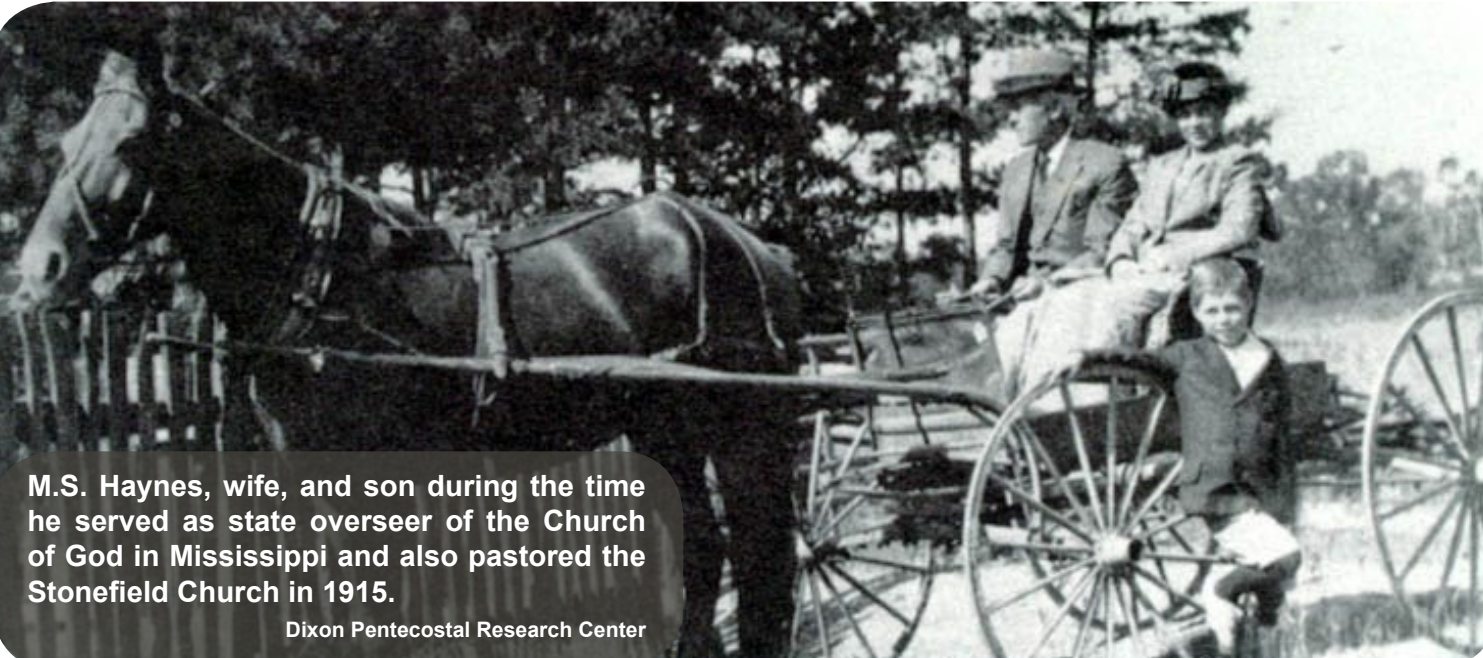


1912 - 2009  
(List is based upon General Assembly appointments)

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General Assembly Term	State Overseer / Administrative Bishop	State Office Location
1940 - 1941	J.L. Dorman	Hattiesburg
1941 - 1942	Clyde C. Cox	Hattiesburg
1942 - 1943	Clyde C. Cox	Hattiesburg / Jackson
1943 - 1944	Clyde C. Cox	Jackson
1944 - 1945	William M. Stallings	Jackson
1945 - 1946	William M. Stallings	Jackson
1946 - 1948	William M. Stallings	Jackson
1948 - 1950	John L. Byrd	Jackson
1950 - 1952	G.C. Hamby	Jackson
1952 - 1954	G.C. Hamby	Jackson
1954 - 1956	H.T. Statum	Jackson
1956 - 1958	H.T. Statum	Jackson
1958 - 1960	Wade H. Horton	Jackson
1960 - 1962	John D. Smith	Jackson
1962 - 1964	John D. Smith	Jackson
1964 - 1966	T.L. Forester	Jackson
1966 - 1968	T.L. Forester	Jackson
1968 - 1970	J. Frank Culpepper	Jackson
1970 - 1972	H.D. Sustar	Jackson
1972 - 1974	H.D. Sustar	Jackson
1974 - 1976	B.G. Hamon	Jackson
1976 - 1978	W.C. Ratchford	Jackson
1978 - 1980	W.C. Ratchford	Jackson
1980 - 1982	Walter P. Atkinson	Jackson
1982 - 1984	Walter P. Atkinson	Jackson
1984 - 1986	Wade A. Bell	Jackson
1986 - 1988	B.L. Kelley	Jackson
1988 - 1990	James D. Jenkins	Jackson
1990 - 1992	James D. Jenkins	Jackson
1992 - 1994	Carl E. Allen	Jackson
1994 - 1996	Carl E. Allen	Jackson



M.S. Haynes, wife, and son during the time he served as state overseer of the Church of God in Mississippi and also pastored the Stonefield Church in 1915.

Dixon Pentecostal Research Center



[illegible]

General Assembly Term	State Overseer	State Office Location
1927 - 1928	T.W. Wimberly	Eupora
1928 - 1929	T.W. Wimberly	Eupora
1929 - 1930	W.M. Stewart	Eupora
1930 - 1931	Alex Richards	Eupora
1931 - 1932	Alex Richards	Eupora
1932 - 1933	Alex Richards	Eupora
1933 - 1934	Alex Richards	Eupora
1934 - 1935	G.C. Sapp	
1935 - 1936	G.C. Sapp	
1936 - 1937	G.C. Sapp	
1937 - 1938	George A. Wallace	
1938 - 1939	George A. Wallace	
1939 - 1940	W.L. Ford	
1940 - 1941	W.L. Ford	
1941 - 1942	W.L. Ford	
1942 - 1943	W.L. Ford	
1943 - 1944	David LaFleur	
1944 - 1945	David LaFleur	
1945 - 1946	L.R. Collins	New Albany
1946 - 1948	L.R. Collins	New Albany
1948 - 1950	L.R. Collins	New Albany
1950 - 1952	F.J. Lane	
1952 - 1954	F.B. Bell	
1954 - 1956	F.B. Bell	
1956 - 1958	F.J. Lane / Calvin C. Daniels (appointed in 1957)	West Point
1958 - 1960	Calvin C. Daniels	West Point
1960 - 1962	Calvin C. Daniels	West Point
1962 - 1964	Calvin C. Daniels	West Point
1964 - 1966	Calvin C. Daniels	West Point
1966 - 1970	Calvin C. Daniels	West Point



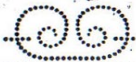

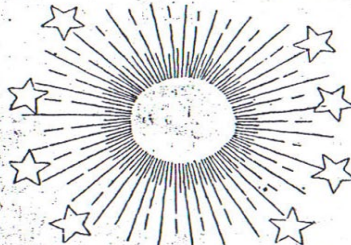


1911 - 1923

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Date Licensed	Minister Name	Ministerial License Rank	Gender	Church Membership	Age
1919 - April 11	Dunaway, Jesse C.	Evangelist	M	Mount Sinai (Foxworth)	44
1919 - April 11	Dunaway, Quinnie C.	Evangelist	M	Mount Sinai (Foxworth)	19
1919 - April 11	Morgan, G.W.	Deacon	M	Mount Sinai (Foxworth)	36
1919 - April 26	Holley, J.H.	Evangelist	M	Pate's Temple (Red Bay, Alabama)	42
1919 - July 18	Hamilton, J. Oscar	Evangelist	M	Mount Moriah (Eupora)	25
1919 - July 25	Rushing, Joe	Evangelist	M	Jayess	30
1919 - July 31	Coats, Charles	Evangelist	M	(Address listed as Parchman, MS)	24
1919 - July 31	Pressgrove, Etta	Evangelist	F	Stonefield (Cascilla)	30
1919 - August 9	Priest, James Thomas "J.T."	Promoted to Bishop	M	Morgantown	34
1920 - August19	DuBois, Ollie A.	Deacon	M	Stonefield (Cascilla)	37
1919 - September 9	Cox, Thomas	Deacon	M	Friendship (Charletson)	39
1919 - September 30	Smith, J.C.	Evangelist	M	Byrd's Chapel (Meadville)	46
1919 - October 2	Lentz, Joseph C.	Evangelist	M	Walker School House (Clay address)	45
1919 - November 15	Clark, J.T.	Evangelist	M	Louisville (Chester address)	42
1919 - November 25	Baker, L.O.	Deacon	M	Stonefield (Cascilla)	29
1919 - November 26	Allen, S.W.	Evangelist	M	Rienzi	32
1919	Lay, Lester	Evangelist	M	(Address listed as Parchman, MS)	
1920 - August 4	Wiggington, J.E.	Evangelist	M	Pate's Temple (Red Bay, Alabama)	26
1920 - September 10	Clegg, Sallie	Evangelist	F	New Bethel (Sapa)	41
1920 - September 10	Lovette, Nellie V.	Evangelist	F	New Bethel (Sapa)	25
1920 - September 10	Sims, Cecil M.	Evangelist	M	New Bethel (Sapa)	26
1920 - September 10	Washam, Eathon	Evangelist	M	New Bethel (Sapa)	22
1920 - November 21	Raney, W.E.	Promoted to Bishop	M	Stonefield (Cascilla)	27
1920 - November 27	Funderburk, B.O.	Deacon	M	Oak Grove (Red Bay, Alabama)	28
1920 - November 27	Pressgrove, Hal A.	Promoted to Bishop	M	Stonefield (Cascilla)	36
1920 - November 27	Rider, E.C.	Promoted to Bishop	M	Pate's Temple (Red Bay, Alabama)	28
1920 - December 27	Churchill, C.A.	Promoted to Bishop	M	New Bethel (Sapa)	26
1921 - May 21	Priest, Clara McHann Allison	Evangelist	F	Stonefield (Cascilla)	39
1921 - May 23	Oswalt, Jesse J.	Evangelist	M	Chapel Hill (Dennis)	40
1921	Byrd, Eula Mae	Evangelist	F	New Bethel (Sapa)	
1921	Musselwhite, Jefferson B.	Evangelist	M	Stonefield (Cascilla)	
1922	Mullen, J.W.	Promoted to Bishop	M	Stonefield (Cascilla)	56
1922	Grissom, L.S.	Deacon	M	Oak Grove (Red Bay, Alabama)	
1922	Blackwood, Roy E.	Evangelist	M	Mount Olive (Weir)	

Date Licensed	Minister Name	Ministerial License Rank	Gender	Church Membership	Age
1922	Coats, Dovie	Evangelist	F	(Address listed as Parchman, MS)	
1922	Gord, Whiten	Evangelist	M	Thorn (Houston)	
1922	Kimbrough, John C.	Evangelist	M	Thorn (Houston)	
1922	Miller, Houston T.	Evangelist	M	Red Bay, Alabama	
1923	Moxley, Luther A.	Evangelist	M	Red Bay, Alabama	
1922	Nabors, Jake U.	Evangelist	M	Thorn (Houston)	
1922	Stewart, C.C.	Evangelist	M	Richburg (Hattiesburg)	
1922	Abbott, J.W.	Evangelist	M	Chapel Hill (Dennis)	
1922	Burgess, G.L.	Evangelist	M	Sunflower River (Farrell)	
1923	Edwards, C.G.	Evangelist	M	Starkville	
1923	Smallwood, Dona	Evangelist	F	(Moved to Missouri after licensed)	

Evangelist's License or Certificate		
<div><p>"If ye love me keep my commandments. Be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves."</p><p>GO PREACH</p></div>	<div></div>	<div><p>"They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever."</p><p>LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS</p></div>
<p>This is to Certify that <u>Walter Luc Hoff</u> Has been duly set forth as an EVANGELIST by the Church of God at <u>Pickwick Miss. U. S. A.</u>, to do the work of an Evangelist; And is hereby authorized to publish, preach and defend the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to baptize, to administer the Lord's Supper and the washing of the Saints' feet and establish churches.</p> <p>This done in church conference, held this <u>4</u> day of <u>Sept.</u> A. D., 191<u>7</u></p> <p>Approved: Date <u>Sept. 13</u> 191<u>7</u></p> <p>Should the holder depart from the truth and duty as taught by the Word, this Certificate is null and void.</p> <p><u>J. J. Paulina</u> Gen. Overseer <u>J. A. Davis</u> Overseer of <u>Miss.</u> <u>Florence M. M. M.</u> Clerk</p>		



# Churches and Ministers Listed in the 1920 Minutes of the General Assembly

## MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

Mississippi				
E. B. Culpepper, Overseer.				
Churches	Members	Clerks	Address	
1 Byrd's Chapel	29	Prentiss Garmill	Little Springs	
2 Cagle's Cross-Roads	26	Maud Medlin	Dublin	
3 Cohelo	20	M. C. Collier	Catchings	
4 Chapel Hill	11	T. A. Wigginton	R. 2, Dennis	
5 Coffeeville	24	E. D. Morgan	Jakiand	
6 Delta	20	Ruby Lay	Delta	
7 Friendship	97	J. A. Bell	Charleston	
8 Jacobs Tabernacle	27	Myrtis Jacobs	Liberty	
9 Jayess	8	S. V. Reeves	R. 1, Jayess	
10 Jones Chapel	31	B. B. Ingram	Lodi	
11 Magee	11	C. Fortenberry	Magee, Miss.	
12 Morgantown	71	F. W. Alexander	Morgantown	
13 Mt. Olive	58	Huddleston	Chester	
14 Mt. Sinai	57	J. B. Beard	Foxworth	
15 Nettleton	11	Elsie Montgomery	Plantersville	
16 New Bethel	66	Modena Holland	Sapa	
17 Oak Grove	32	L. S. Grisson	R. 2, Red Bay, Ala.	
18 Pates Temple	62	L. A. Moxley	R. 2, Red Bay, Ala.	
19 Pickwick	42	H. E. Lee	Cheraw	
20 Pilgrim's Rest	13	W. H. Thompson	Artesia	
21 Rienzi	3	Joe Williams	Rienzi	
22 Shady Grove	34	Lou Dubois	Cascilla	
23 Stonefield	96	W. B. Simpson	R. 1, Holcomb	
24 Taylor School H.	6	J. H. Tallent	Vardaman	
25 Tilghman Chapel	28	Cora Tilghman	Hardy Sta.	
26 Union Grove	17	J. R. Moxley	R. 1, Mooreville	
27 Walker School H.	25	A. J. Stockton	Eastman	
28 Williams Springs	48	J. O. Rushing	Stewart	
Churches,	Members,	Sun. school,	Property Value	
Last Report	22	1 085	13	\$ 2 000 00
Decrease	2	149	2	
Balance	20	836	11	2 000 00
Increase	8	137	5	4 270 00
Grand Total	28	973	16	6 270 00
BISHOPS				
1 Churchill, C. A.,	Sapa	4	Raney, W. E.,	Stonefield
2 Pressgrove, H. A.,	Cascilla	5	Rider, E. C.,	Red Bay, Ala.
3 Priest, J. T.,	Morgantown			
DEACONS				
1 Bell, J. A.,	Charleston	5	Harris, S. H.,	Shady Grove
2 Baker, L. O.,	Cascilla	6	Morgan, G. W.,	Morgantown
3 Dubois, O. A.,	Cascilla	7	Rushin, Joe.,	Jayess
4 Funderburk, B. O.,	Oak Grove	8	Simpson, E. K.,	Cascilla
EVANGELISTS				
1 Clegg, Sallie,	Sapa	11	Walter, McNabb.,	Sandy Hook
2 Dollahite, D. W.,	Poplar G. Ark.	12	McMickle, W. A.,	Haynes, Ark.
3 Dunn, Grover,	Liberty	13	Partridge, Olive,	Weir
4 Dunaway, Quinnie,	Morgantown	14	Smith, J. R.,	Morgantown
5 Holley, J. H.,	Red Bay, Ala.	15	Smedley, Sidney,	Liberty
6 Hamilton, J. O.,	Sapa	16	Sims, C. M.,	Sapa
7 Lenta, J. C.,	Clay	17	Thornhill, J. L.,	Morgantown
8 Lovette, Nellie,	Sapa	18	Williams, Grant,	Eupora
9 Mullen, J. W.,	Holcomb	19	Washam, Esthon,	Sapa
10 Moxley, J. R.,	Red Bay, Ala.	20	Wigginton, J. E.,	Red Bay, Ala.



# Local Congregation Organization Dates

## 1912 - 2009

Organization Year	Church Name	Church Location	Also Known As	Disbanded	Reorganized	Disbanded	Reorganized	Disbanded	Reorganized
1912	<i>Friendship</i>	Charleston							
1912	Artesia, Pilgrim's Rest	Mayhew		1929 (went with Church of God of Prophecy)					
1913	Turkey Foot Fork	Holcomb		1914 (rejoined Stonefield on January 5, 1914)					
1914	<i>Stonefield</i>	Cascilla							
1914	<i>North Shady Grove</i>	Cascilla		1926	1939				
1914	Tilghman Chapel	Hardy		1925					
1915	<i>Gatewood</i>	Coffeeville		1919	1942				
1915	<i>Sumner</i>	Sumner		1915	1964				
1916	Artesia	Artesia		1917 (merged with Artesia, Pilgrim's Rest)					
1916	Deep Slough	Tallahatchie County		1916					
1916	Marks	Marks	Cagle Cross Road / Dublin	1934	1952	2004			
1916	Morgantown School House	Darburn (address of clerk)		1917					
1916	Mt. Olive	Weir		1976					
1917	<i>Mt. Sinai</i>								
1917	<i>Morgantown</i>								
1917	Coloho	Catchings		1929					
1917	Fentress	Weir		1917					
1917	Jayess	Jayess		1924 (went with Oneness)					
1917	Mt. Moriah	Eupora		1919					
1917	Pickwick	Cheraw		1924	1929	1929			
1917	<i>Richland Creek</i>	Foxworth		1919	1949				
1917	<i>William Springs</i>	Stewart							
1919	James Chapel	Stewart		1919					
1919	Louisville	Louisville		1919	1973	1988			
1919	<i>Praise Cathedral</i>	Meadville	Byrd's Chapel	1924	1929				
1919	Mt. Carmel	Morgantown		1923					
1919	New Bethel	Sapa	Murray School House	1924 (went with Church of God of Prophecy)					
1919	Pate's Temple	Red Bay, Alabama		(began reporting to Alabama after 1934)					
1919	Rienzi	Rienzi		1923 (went COGOP)			1954	1954	

Church name in ***Italic Bold*** = Current congregation;

\* = African-American congregation

These dates were determined using the lists of churches published in the *Minutes of the General Assembly* (annually through 1946 and biennially thereafter). It is possible some churches may have been organized or disbanded in different years than listed in the Assembly *Minutes* and noted in this record.

Please forward any corrections to [morganonmission@yahoo.com](mailto:morganonmission@yahoo.com).

Organization Year	Church Name	Church Location	Also Known As	Disbanded	Reorganized	Disbanded	Reorganized	Disbanded	Reorganized
1919	Walker School House	Eastman		1924 (went COGOP)			1929	1929	
1920	Chapel Hill	Dennis		1924 (went COGOP)					
1920	Coffeeville	Coffeeville		1929					
1920	Delta	Delta City		1920					
1920	Jacobs Tabernacle			1924 (went COGOP)					
1920	Jones Chapel			1929					
1920	Magee	Magee		1923	1928-29 / 1940-40 / 1944-50				1970
1920	Nettleton	Plantersville		1924					
1920	<b>Oak Grove</b>	Red Bay, Alabama							
1920	Taylor	Vardaman	Taylor School House	1938					
1920	Union Grove			1921					
1921	<b>Bude</b>	Bude		1924	1942				
1921	Davis Chapel	Merigold		1922					
1921	<b>Fame</b>	Fame							
1921	Johnson Grove	Summit		1924					
1921	Marie			1921					
1921	<b>McCall Creek</b>	McCall Creek	McCall	1924	1929				
1921	<b>Moorhead</b>	Moorhead		1927	1931				
1921	Norfield			1923					
1921	Old Field			1921					
1921	Pisgah Springs	Eupora		1922	1925	1944			
1921	Richburg	Hattiesburg	Sandy Run	1998					
1921	Smyrna			1921					
1921	Cotton Mill	Starkville		1923 (went COGOP)					
1921	Summer Set School			1921					
1921	<b>Thorn</b>	Houston							
1921	<b>Winona</b>	Winona		1924 (went COGOP)			1933	1940	1958
1922	Causey's Chapel	Gloster		1924 (went COGOP)					
1922	<b>Cleveland</b>	Cleveland	Joseph Chapel						

Church name in ***Italic Bold*** = Current congregation;

\* = African-American congregation





Church name in ***Italic Bold*** = Current congregation; \* = African-American congregation

Organization Year	Church Name	Church Location	Also Known As	Disbanded	Reorganized	Disbanded	Reorganized	Disbanded	Reorganized
1927	<b>Pleasant Hill</b>	Carthage							
1927	<b>Rocky Hill</b>	Sebastopol							
1927	<b>South Shady Grove</b>	Magee							
1927	<b>Waco</b>	Mize							
1928	Baltzar*	Rome / Tutwiler		1937	1940	1941			
1928	Darnell*			1930					
1929	<b>Corinth</b>	Corinth		1934	1952				
1929	Crowder			1930	1936	1938			
1929	Lambert	Lambert	Lambert's Chapel	1929	1946	1948	1972	1980	
1929	<b>Magnolia</b>	Magnolia		1929	1992				
1929	Mars Hill	Longview		1945					
1929	Rome*	Tutwiler		1940					
1930	Bellview			1933					
1930	<b>Benndale</b>	Benndale / McLain							
1930	<b>Bethany</b>	Poplar Creek		1937	1942				
1930	Verndale	Eden		1931					
1930	Wesley's Chapel	Meadville		1988					
1931	Cagles Cross Roads	Clarksdale		1932					
1931	<b>Trinity Heights</b>	Hattiesburg							
1931	King's Chapel	Perkinston		1934					
1931	<b>Leakesville</b>	Leakesville		1934	1943	1945	1982		
1931	Winborn	Winborn	Good Hope	1937					
1932	Belzoni	Belzoni		1934	1976	1998			
1932	Hickspur			1934					
1932	Neely	Neely	Old Washington	1937					
1932	<b>New Life</b>	Greenville							
1932	Red Hill	New Augusta		1940					
1932	Strait Bayou			1934					
1932	Walker House (Golden)	Golden		1937					

\* = African-American congregation



Church name in ***Italic Bold*** = Current congregation; \* = African-American congregation







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Church name in ***Italic Bold*** = Current congregation; \* = African-American congregation



Organization Year	Church Name	Church Location	Also Known As	Disbanded	Reorganized	Disbanded	Reorganized	Disbanded	Reorganized
1998	<b>Amazing Love Ministry Ctr</b>	Pass Christian	Vidalia Road / Ark of the Covenant						
1999	<b>New Bethel Holiness</b>	Cascilla							
1999	<b>New Beginnings</b>	Walls							
2000	<b>New Beginnings*</b>	Belzoni							
2000	Church of Deliverance	Coldwater		2000					
2000	<b>Open Door Worship Center</b>	Fulton							
2000	<b>Prayer &amp; Praise Fellowship</b>	Lumberton							
2000	<b>Magee Hispanic</b>	Magee							
2001	<b>End Time Harvest*</b>	Byram / Canton							
2001	<b>Harvest Time</b>	Pontotoc							
2002	<b>Iglesia Nueva Vida</b>	Houston							
2002	<b>New Horizon</b>	Charleston							
2002	<b>Fuente de Agua Viva</b>	Forest							
2003	<b>Harvest Temple</b>	Waynesboro							
2004	<b>True Vine*</b>	Bruce / Calhoun City							
2004	<b>New Covenant Fellowship</b>	New Augusta							
2004	<b>New Beginnings, Gospel Hr*</b>	Leland							
2004	Diamondhead	Diamondhead		_____					
2005	<b>Immanuel</b>	Durant							
2005	<b>New Life*</b>	Marks							
2005	<b>Ambassadors for Christ*</b>	Picayune							
2005	<b>Rivers of Living Water*</b>	Gulfport							
2005	Bethel Fellowship*	Gulfport		_____					
2006	<b>Anointed Dove*</b>	McComb							
2007	<b>Bread of Life Family Worship</b>	Kiln							
2007	<b>del Dios Vivo</b>	Tupelo							
2008	<b>Open Door*</b>	Columbus							
2008	<b>New Vision Worship Center</b>	Nettleton							
_____	<b>People Mission*</b>	Gulfport							

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\* = African-American congregation

# Acknowledgments

## **Special Thanks To:**

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Morgantown Church of God  
Stonefield Church of God  
Grenada Church of God  
Lee University



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- <sup>42</sup> Priest, *My Life Story as a Christian*. 2. Audrey Allison Morgan, charter member of Stonefield Church of God, interview by Opal V. Morgan, undated, Morgantown, MS: audio recording.
- <sup>43</sup> Priest, *My Life Story as a Christian*.
- <sup>44</sup> Ithiel C. Clemmons, "Charles Harrison Mason" in Stanley M. Burgess, ed., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Revised and Expanded ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan): 865-867. 2. David D. Daniels, "Charles Harrison Mason: The Interracial Impulse of Early Pentecostalism" in James R. Goff Jr. and Grant Wacker, eds., *Portraits of a Generation: Early Pentecostal Leaders* (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 2002): 255-270.
- <sup>45</sup> Paul S. Carter, *Heritage of Holiness: An Eye-witness History, First Assembly of God Church, Memphis, TN* (Memphis, TN: Paul's Press, 1991).
- <sup>46</sup> Dan Woods, "Daniel P. Awrey" in Stanley M. Burgess, ed., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Revised and Expanded ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan): 344.
- <sup>47</sup> Charles W. Conn, "Church of God (Cleveland, TN)" in Stanley M. Burgess, ed., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Revised and Expanded ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan): 530-534. 2. Charles W. Conn, *Like A Mighty Army*, Definitive ed. (Cleveland, TN: Pathway
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- <sup>51</sup> C. M. Robeck Jr., "Azusa Street Revival" in Stanley M. Burgess, ed., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Revised and Expanded ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan): 344-350.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid. 2. C. M. Robeck Jr., "William Joseph Seymour" in Stanley M. Burgess, ed., *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Revised and Expanded ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan): 1053-1058.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid. 2. See also reprinted issues of *The Apostolic Faith* newspaper published by Seymour in *The Azusa Street*

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- Evangel* between 1914 and 1920 provide details concerning this relocation of church members.
- <sup>167</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>168</sup> Ibid.
- Digging New Wells Despite Persecution**  
(pages 20-25)
- <sup>169</sup> Melissa Evans Siler, daughter of Warren and Nancy Evans, interview by Louis F. Morgan, 24 January 1996, Long Beach, MS.
- <sup>170</sup> Ministerial application of Warren Edward Evans on file at the Church of God International Offices, Cleveland, TN.
- <sup>171</sup> Janis Pearson Stringfield, *Aaron Beard and Kizziah (Carter) Beard of South Mississippi: History and Descendants* (Columbia, MS 1993).
- <sup>172</sup> Siler interview, 24 January 1996.
- <sup>173</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>174</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>175</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>176</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>177</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>178</sup> Ibid. 2. McQueen, Beaty and Morgan, *Index to the Roster of Ministers, 1886-1921*.
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- <sup>180</sup> W.E. Evans, "Branford, Fla." *Church of God Evangel* 6, no. 26 (1915): 4.



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God in Mississippi and widow of former state overseer  
Grant Williams, interview by Louis F. Morgan, 25  
November 2001, Morgantown, MS.

<sup>225</sup> Williams interview, 25 November 2001.

<sup>226</sup> Williams interview, 25 November 2001.

<sup>227</sup> E.B. Culpepper, "Notice" *Church of God Evangel* 10, no. 18 (1919): 3.

228 Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Stringfield interview, 30 July 1997.

<sup>230</sup> *Minutes of the Church of God General Assembly* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1912-1920).  
2. *Church of God Local Church Organizational Date Ledger* (on file at the Dixon Pentecostal Research Center, Lee University campus, Cleveland, TN).

<sup>231</sup> Stringfield interview, 30 July 1997.

<sup>232</sup> C.A. Magee, "Foxworth, Miss." *Church of God Evangel* 10, no. 8 (1918): 3.

<sup>233</sup> Stringfield interview, 30 July 1997.

<sup>234</sup> See the *Church of God Evangel* for reports published by J.T. Priest and new converts in Texas between 1914 and 1916.

<sup>235</sup> Stringfield interview, 30 July 1997.

<sup>236</sup> Mamie Parker Williams, early member of the Church of God in Mississippi, interview by Louis F. Morgan, August 1996, Morgantown, Mississippi: video recording. 2. Mamie Parker Williams (as told to Louis F. Morgan), *My Journey Home: 100 Years of Walking with the Lord* (Cleveland, TN: Dexter Press, 2004).

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Mickey Crews, *The Church of God: A Social History*.  
(Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press,

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- 287 Ibid.
- 288 Williams interview, August 1996. 2. Williams, *My Journey Home*.
- 289 Ibid.
- 290 Ibid. 2. J.C. Lentz, original handwritten ledger on file at the Mount Sinai Church of God, Foxworth, MS.
- 291 Lentz ledger.
- 292 Ibid.
- 293 Ibid.
- 294 Williams interview, August 1996. 2. Williams, *My Journey Home*.
- 295 Ibid.
- 296 Ibid.
- 297 Ibid.
- 298 Ibid.
- 299 Ibid.
- 300 Ibid.
- 301 *Minutes of the Church of God General Assembly* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1926).
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- 306 Ibid.

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annual General Assembly services according to the *Minutes of the Church of God General Assembly* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1915-1923)

<sup>334</sup> Mary Elsie Blackwood Powell, daughter of Robert and Arena Blackwood and early member of the Church of God in Mississippi, interview by Louis F. Morgan, 1997.

<sup>335</sup> Mary Elsie Blackwood Powell interview, 1997.

<sup>336</sup> Doyle Blackwood. "Little Boy Enjoys Salvation" *Church of God Evangel* 16, no. 41 (1925): 2.

<sup>337</sup> Mary Elsie Blackwood Powell interview, 1997. 2. The *Minutes* of the Church of God General Assembly provide information concerning Roy Blackwood's appointments and ministerial rank.

<sup>338</sup> James Blackwood, original member of the Blackwood Brothers Quartet and son of Carrie Blackwood, interview by Louis F. Morgan, 27 June 1998, Atlanta, GA. 3. Mary Geneva Morgan interview, 25 March 1997.

<sup>339</sup> James Blackwood interview, 27 June 1998. 3. Allen Dennis. *James Blackwood Memories: By Some of His Best Friends*. (Brandon, MS: Quail Ridge Press, 1997).

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> S.J. Heath. *Life and Writings of S.J. Heath* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1932): 8.

<sup>342</sup> Heath. *Life and Writings*.

<sup>343</sup> Mary Geneva Morgan, member of the Morgantown Church of God in Mississippi, interview by Louis F. Morgan, 25 March 1997, Morgantown, Mississippi. 2. Williams interview, August 1996. 3. Williams, *My Journey Home*.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid. 2. The early *Minutes* of the general assembly also provide an order of service noting Annie Heath's

participation in those meetings.

<sup>342</sup> Mary Geneva Morgan, member of the Morgantown Church of God in Mississippi, interview by Louis F. Morgan, 25 March 1997, Morgantown, Mississippi.

<sup>346</sup> S.J. Heath. "Traveling Through Mississippi" *Church of God Evangel* 20, no.44 (1930): 2. 3. Stringfield interview, 30 July 1997.

<sup>347</sup> Mary Geneva Morgan interview, 25 March 1997 .  
2. Williams interview, August 1996.    3. Williams,  
*My Journey Home*.

348 Ibid.

349 Ibid.

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<sup>351</sup> *Church of God Bible Training School, 1932-1933 Catalog*, 4, 6, 14.

<sup>352</sup> S.W. Latimer. "Death notices" *Church of God Evangel* (1933, December 16): 13.

<sup>353</sup> *Minutes of the Church of God General Assembly* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1934)

<sup>354</sup> “Heaven’s Bells Are Ringing,” *Tears With Joy* (Cleveland, TN: Church of God Publishing House, 1920): 27-28.

355 Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Conn, *Like A Mighty Army*, 1996.

<sup>357</sup> This information was taken from the original handwritten ledger of attendance for the Church of God Bible Training School (on file at the Dixon Pentecostal Research Center, Lee University campus, Cleveland, Tennessee).

<sup>358</sup> Ibid. 2. Conn, *Like A Mighty Army*, 1996.

<sup>359</sup> Steward, *L.A. Moxley: A Crown Awaits*, 1973.

360 Ibid.





[illegible]

Please record your own spiritual journey here as a testimony to the faithfulness of God so that you (and those you love) will remember your story.