

J O Y  
O F  
B E L O N G I N G

BY

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The story of a great church  
from a very humble beginning

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To each person who volunteered important data and/or pictures, I am deeply grateful.

Mrs. Einar (Rachel Crane) Peterson, life-long acquaintance and friend, has been most helpful in assisting in the editing of this work. Rachel Peterson has had a distinguished ministry in foreign missions in Hispanic countries and is a competent author in her own right. She has spent an inestimable amount of time and effort in behalf of this project.

With his skill in writing, T. Olai Hageness, life-long friend and associate, essentially a member of our family, has rendered invaluable service.

The assistance of my brother, Paul A. Gray, who is one of my best friends, is greatly appreciated.

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Last but by no means least, my dear wife, Alma, has encouraged and supported the project from the very beginning. She has accepted without complaint, neglect of companionship for untold dozens of hours. My deepest gratitude is expressed.

To these and a multitude of others, I am deeply indebted. Thank you!

*Harold F. Gray*

## FOREWORD

After expressing an interest and concern with the lack of documentation and preservation of important parts of this church's history, I received an invitation from Pastor Fulton W. Buntain and the Boards of the Church to "write a book that would cover the 70 years of the existence for *First Assembly of God Life Center*." I accepted.

The amount of work and time necessary to meet the deadline of the publishers so the books would be completed in time for the Joy of Belonging celebration on October 28, 29 & 30, 1988, was underestimated. However, after having accepted the assignment there was no other course of action except to proceed to the best of my ability.

I feel extremely fortunate to have had a close relationship with each of the seven pastors of the church during these seventy years, particularly with the founding pastor, my father, Dr. Frank Gray and the current pastor, Dr. Fulton W. Buntain. The combined years of service of these two men are substantially more than half of the years of the existence of the congregation.

In response to my appeals, many persons have provided pictures, ranging from small snapshots to large professional photographs. Thanks to each one who responded. There are other photographs somewhere that would be of great value but have not been located. The ones selected were felt to be the most appropriate. To each one who provided photographs and/or assisted with important data, as well, thanks is hereby expressed. It has been a difficult project and without the cooperation of so many, the task would have been impossible.

The information contained herein is not purported to be historically accurate. For many parts of the book, my memory and impressions have been relied upon, only part of which has been corroborated by documents. (The fact that I have attended this church for all except three of the seventy years of existence has been most helpful.) The destruction of irreplaceable documents by the 1975 fire has increased the problem of finding confirmable data. Undoubtedly, there are events and/or photographs that were inadvertently omitted. I have proceeded to the very best of my ability with what was available and regret any omission or inaccuracy that occurred.

In looking to the future, it is my hope that the task of recording historically important events will continue as this church diligently pursues its mission.

Sincerely,

*Harold F. Gray*

# PASTOR FULTON W. BUNTAIN'S MESSAGE

## GOD INSISTS ON CONTINUITY

It is impossible to go a split second in nature without seeing the word *continuity* stamped upon creation. The survival of species is seen in animal and plant life. Every springtime, God expresses His demand for the continuance of life.

Continuity is expressed in the Biblical panorama of history. In the description of Genesis 1:1 - *In the beginning God*—we see the scroll of time and eternity unfold. It pleases God the Father to perpetuate the revelation of Himself and what He chooses to do through humans. Jesus reminds us that the requirement of a good steward is *to be found faithful*. Faithful to the perpetuation of revelation of His love to the whole world.

When our church celebrates 70 years of continued ministry, we can be confident that we please the heart of our Heavenly Father. The 70 years of continuity represent an unbroken line of pastoral ministries to every part of our community. The church has, in the name of Jesus, brought love and comfort to the poor and homeless, to the college campus, to children and the young adults, to widows and the elderly, to people of all races and national origins. Together with thousands of hours, volunteers through the years have visited the sick and ministered in homes for the elderly. Those in prison have not been forgotten but have had the love of Christ brought to them.

The admonition of our Lord to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, has been obeyed. Millions of dollars have been invested in home and foreign missions over the years. Missionaries have been recruited, trained and financed. Millions of hours of intercession in prayer have ascended to God's throne on behalf of a lost world.

From the humble beginnings in 1918 to 1988 the ministry of our church has experienced what God has promised to bless—faithfulness and continuity.

Today there is not a state in the Union that does not receive via television something of the ministry of our church.

To God be the glory!

*Pastor Fulton W. Buntain*

1965 -



## DEDICATION

Seven pastors have served First Assembly of God Life Center during the seventy years of its existence. All seven have made noteworthy and significant contributions to the development of the congregation and in its mission *to go into all the world to preach the Gospel*. In spite of what may appear to be the appearance of favoritism, the writer can do no other than to dedicate this book to its founding pastor, Dr. Franklin Joshua Gray. (1883 - 1966)

Being led of God, he sold his wheat farm in Eastern Washington and came to Tacoma to pastor a relatively small group of believers—hungry for all that God had for them. It was rough, sticking it out, when during his first year in the city, his wife died and his two children were separated from him for what turned out to be more than three years.

Yet, Frank Gray went on! There was little to follow except the leading of the Lord and good common sense. He had both. Serving as chairman of the council of ministers in the northwest as well as pastor, his life influenced directly and indirectly tens of thousands of people. He was humble. He made very few demands on his congregation. He accepted what he received as a gift from the Lord.

He left this life for his eternal reward more than twenty-two years ago. His influence and the memory of what he was and what he did, lives on.

To him who continually tried to avoid being made an object of praise and admiration, this volume is sincerely and affectionately dedicated.

## PREFACE

Three score and ten (seventy years) is the appointed lifetime of man, according to the Psalmist. Nothing is said about the life-span of church congregations. *First Assembly of God Life Center*, has reached this three score and ten span. We not only rejoice because of past victories and achievements but longingly await the Second Return of Jesus Christ.

I feel privileged and honored of God to have been a part of this congregation for these seventy years. Franklin Joshua Gray, as did Abraham, obeyed the call of God, not knowing what the future might hold. There was nothing, in the natural, that would indicate his move to Tacoma to be a wise one. But, he was not following natural inclinations. He listened to the voice of God. When God said, "Go", Frank Gray went.

Within a few months of our arrival in Tacoma, my brother, Paul, and I lost our mother during the influenza epidemic. We then had to move to the far side of the State, Spokane, and thus be separated from our one remaining living parent, but God knew all about it.

No one has had a greater heritage than the children of Frank Gray, who was the most consistent human individual I have ever known. When we reach heaven, we will be even better able to measure the impact of this life. Since 1938 (fifty years ago), when Frank Gray resigned the pastorate of this congregation to again accept the call of the Northwest District of the Assemblies of God to become superintendent, during a time of crisis, there have been six pastors. All served with distinction. I appreciate the close personal relationship I have had with each of them. I respect them as "men of God" who were deeply committed to their responsibilities.

Since the founding and development of this congregation during the past seventy years seem so significant, I felt that it would be unfortunate not to record some of the history during the era in which the few remaining persons from the very early days were living and accessible.

During the last twenty-three years under the leadership of Dr. Fulton W. Buntain, the congregation, ministries and outreach of this church has multiplied many times in seeking to fulfill His commandments. There is no thought of reaching a plateau and resting but to continue until the Lord returns, which may be very soon.

*Harold F. Gray*

# THE JOY OF BELONGING - FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD LIFE CENTER

This pastor, board and congregation desire to not only be a witness to those who have not yet found Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, but to sustain and strengthen those who do believe and need the help and encouragement of the church. The goals and objectives of this church can best be summarized by including the contents of a special brochure issued in this celebration of 70 years of ministry in this community:

**Fellowship** - The bonds of fellowship are strong at Life Center. It is a place where you can find unique and caring friendships. In a world that is hectic and impersonal, Life Center enjoys genuine, loving fellowship among its people. For children, youth, single adults, couples and senior adults, opportunities abound to get to know others better. Weekend retreats, Bible studies, CARE groups, all provide wonderful ways to meet and enjoy the company of others.

**Enrichment** - Life Center fosters learning and spiritual growth through Bible study classes, special seminars, retreats and speakers. Sunday School classes for all ages run parallel with the 9:30 A.M. and 11:00 A.M. church services. "Singles Alive!" meets every Monday night. A "Taste of New Wine" for those chemically dependent meets every Thursday at 7:30 P. M. Children's classes blend Bible basics and the Christian faith with fun activity. Life Center library provides a world of books, tapes and study material. Wherever you are, Life Center has a place for you to grow.

**Belonging** - This one word tells you much about the spirit of First Assembly of God Life Center. Life Center is a community of God's people who worship in joy, serve in joy and believe that God wants people to enjoy life to its fullest potential. Jesus said, *"I have come that you may have life and have it more abundantly."* (John 10:10). Since its beginning in 1918, Life Center keeps growing and reaching out to our community. The people of Life Center share their excitement through fellowship, worship, enrichment, ministries and outreach. You are warmly welcomed and encouraged to take part in the new dawning of this fellowship and experience the joy of belonging.

**Worship** - The services of Life Center are planned with purpose, but seek the spontaneous movement of God's Spirit in the hearts of the people. The Sunday morning worship services at 9:30 A.M. and 11:00 A.M. are a blending of beautiful music and a positive message by the pastor, Dr. Fulton Buntain. Dr. Buntain has the unique style of applying Biblical truths to the everyday problems that people face. His messages offer hope and encouragement along with a fresh challenge for each person to live the dynamic and exciting Christian life. On Sunday evenings at 6:00 P. M. and on Wednesday at 6:15 P.M. and 7:30 P.M. there are additional opportunities to worship and grow. Come and be a part!

**Ministries** - To broaden the church's outreach the television ministry carries a message of hope to people who do not or cannot attend church. A music ministry includes adult, graded children and youth choirs, orchestra and handbell choir and special musical productions. The Singing Christmas Tree reaches the entire community. Women of the Word gather weekly for Bible study, fellowship and luncheons. Men have a special breakfast, monthly. Youth and children have activities for learning and fun year round. Professional and Business Women of Life Center meet monthly. Couples and families strengthen relationships through CARE group ministry, individual counseling, and "'Romance Renewal' seminars. At Life Center there is a ministry to touch your life. (Special support groups for the Widowed, Bereaved Parents, Loved Ones of Inmates, Asian, Deaf and Spanish Church Services.)

**Sharing** - Love—it is the greatest commandment. Through the sharing of faith and friendship, Life Center is committed, with God's help, to encourage men, women and children to become the people God wants them to be. Life Center members are seeing the bond of Christ's love grow as they share the excitement of Life Center.

**Growth** in numbers, in spirit and in structure indicates that a church is reaching out and ministering to the real needs of people. Life Center has experienced rapid growth because the people who attend discover an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness. Life Center is committed to "building a dream that will endure."

**FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD LIFE CENTER**  
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**As of September 1, 1988**

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Mr. Kenton Lee  
Director of Music

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Activities, Adult Ministries

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Mr. Frederick R. Fay  
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# THE JOY OF BELONGING

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

"I can feel surely the presence of the Lord within this place,  
I can feel His mighty power and His grace,  
I can feel the brush of Angels' wings,  
I see glory on each face.

I can surely feel the presence of the Lord within this place," sings the 80-voice choir accompanied by piano, organ and orchestra led by Director Kenton Lee.

As the choir concludes, Dr. Fulton W. Buntain, senior pastor, moves to the podium and invites the congregation to join the choir and instrumentalists as they continue in the song of praise.

It's Sunday morning at First Assembly of God Life Center, Tacoma, Washington. It is the first of two morning services attended by 3500 and more, expectant worshippers.

It is a beautiful song, beautifully rendered—but more than a song. The Holy presence of God is manifest as the participants join in both audible and silent uplifting of the Christ of Calvary in whose name they are gathered.

This church, located at South 18th and Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington, is well known throughout the community, especially as the Church of the Singing Christmas Tree, which ministers to packed auditoriums at sixteen performances each December to bring to the more than 30,000 that attend, the "true meaning of Christmas" and the Christ that came into this world to redeem us from the penalty of sin.

During the years that Pastor Buntain has led this congregation, its influence throughout the entire community has been greatly expanded. Thousands of people have come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ adhering to the great commission of *Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature—he who believes and is baptized will be saved but he who does not believe shall be condemned. Mark 16:16 NKJV.*

How did such a congregation come into being? The normal factors which contribute to the building of influential organizations were not present in the early days of this congregation.

The story of First Assembly of God Life Center goes back seventy years to 1918—and even before that.

## **FROM WHEAT FARM TO SECOND STORY MISSION**

Franklin Joshua Gray was born in Greene County, Missouri, on August 6, 1883, to Joshua and Clara Gray—the youngest of four children. The family moved to Spokane County, Washington territory, while Frank was still an infant. Joshua Gray had been a farmer and a lay Baptist minister near Spokane. Frank followed in his father's foot-steps in the ministry. He married Estelle Thompson on October 28, 1908.

Frank and Stella had a moderately-sized wheat farm near Deep Creek—20 miles west of Spokane. Frank ministered to a small congregation on Sundays in the Coulee Baptist Church. Life was moderately serene with the normal kind and number of problems. After a very significant experience, Frank Gray was no longer to have a quiet, normal life.

Into the community came a black preacher by the name of Hawkins, who had a most unusual message. It related to a most unusual experience which he called the "Baptism of the Holy Spirit." There were physical manifestations that accompanied this experience, of which probably the most astounding and least understood was the speaking in tongues. Here farmers and their families were earnestly seeking God and many were speaking in languages they had never learned and did not understand.

In addition to the speaking in tongues an equally amazing phenomenon occurred when another would interpret (or translate) into the English language what had been spoken in the foreign tongue. This was a most exciting and noteworthy thing to happen in that community. A number of the staid and conservative members of the community and the church which they attended sought the Lord for this experience and many received.

Others, however, refused to believe that this was of God and rejected this new experience. They not only rejected it but also became incensed and their hearts were filled with resentment and hatred towards those who had brought this new doctrine and this new experience into this stable community. Frank Gray listened and believed. Frank Gray was not an impetuous individual and did not move hastily. The Holy Spirit of God had spoken to him and he sought for the fulness of the Spirit and received the infilling of the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance as described so beautifully in Acts 2:4. That became the last straw as far as some of the people of the community were concerned.

It was on a Saturday night in 1917, when there was a knock at the door of the Gray farm house. Some of the neighbors had come to make a call on Frank Gray. Upon opening the door, Frank found himself being escorted out of the house with this committee of community men. The elements had all been prepared—tar and feathers. A sack of chicken down and a bucket of tar had been warmed sufficiently to make it slightly fluid. It was then applied to Frank's body some distance from the house.

Stella Gray was frightened. Her six-year old son was sleeping in the upstairs bedroom. She was alone. These men had seized her husband and taken him away. After a period of time which seemed interminable to Stella, Frank came back to the house with the tar and feathers applied to his skin.

What to do? Stella was so happy to see her husband back in the house again, but, what about the tar and feathers? The galvanized wash tub that was used regularly for laundering the clothing for the Gray household was again called into action—this time for laundering the body of Pastor Frank Gray. The noise downstairs awakened Harold, who was sleeping in a second floor bedroom. When he opened the door so very slightly, he witnessed his mother tenderly bathing her husband's body with the mild soap and warm water to try to remove the tar. It was not an easy task. The tar had now begun to set and it clung stubbornly. It took some time for all of the tar to be removed.

Some in the community were asking the question, "What will Frank Gray do now about this fanatical doctrine and practice of speaking in tongues?" It was just those who didn't know Frank Gray very well who would ask such a question. Those who knew him well, need not ask or speculate. Frank Gray had received a mighty infilling experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit and neither demons nor men nor persecution would dissuade him from what God had bestowed upon him.

With a call like Frank Gray had received, how could he continue raising wheat? God placed a very strong call on Frank for a new harvest field. As the Apostle Peter was called from his fishing to become a a fisher of men, so Frank Gray was called from the harvest of wheat to the harvest of men and women, boys and girls.

Frank and Stella Gray heard and obeyed the call of God and disposed of their farm and moved temporarily into Spokane where they ministered to a small group of Pentecostal believers, awaiting God's direction for their next move.



## FRANK GRAY ANSWERS THE CALL TO TACOMA

As Horace Greeley had advised young people many years earlier to "*GO WEST, YOUNG MAN, GO WEST*", so that was to be the fate of Frank Gray. As the people from Macedonia called Paul to come to them and tell them about the things of God, a group of people, mostly Scandinavians, had been meeting in individual homes to share this new found Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It was too good to keep to themselves. They wanted a shepherd to minister and lead them. They had heard of this man, filled with the Spirit, who had recently been a wheat farmer, and invited him to come to Tacoma to be their minister.

There wasn't a wealthy person or even a modestly wealthy person in the entire group. They didn't have much of "this world's goods" but they had the Spirit of God in their hearts and wanted more of God and to share their experience with others. Thus, Frank Gray, left Spokane County and Eastern Washington. He sold much of his household goods and traveled across the Cascade Mountains with his wife and two small sons. He was given a cordial welcome as he came to join these Scandinavians—most of whom were of Norwegian extraction.

After searching for a meeting place, they secured a small second-story room on Sixth Avenue near Pine Street. The offerings were very meager, but the rent reasonable. The blessing of God was present with this dedicated group of believers who also had received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. This occurred during the latter part of World War I. Frank Gray arrived during the summer of 1918; the war ended on November 11, 1918, a few months later. Inflated prices as a result of the war did not make conditions any easier.

These war years not only created inflationary prices, but an epidemic of influenza struck the country. The hospitals were having a difficult time in finding beds and space for all those who needed care. The Frank Gray family did not escape this dread disease. Mrs. Frank (Estelle) Gray and son, Harold, were both attacked by this virus and found themselves confined to the Tacoma General Hospital, where they were attended by one of the finest internists in the city, Dr. Christian Quevli, Sr. With the absence of penicillin and other anti-biotics and wonder drugs, pneumonia frequently accompanied the influenza. Both Stella and her son contracted pneumonia. The finest care possible was afforded but it was not enough. Prayers ascended to the Heavenly Father in behalf of these very ill persons, but God, in His infinite wisdom, saw fit to take Stella Gray to be with Himself, on February 2, 1919.

With a heart full of sorrow, Pastor Frank Gray laid his beloved wife to rest in Spokane, Washington, where she had lived practically all of her life. While the funeral service was being conducted, Harold was still very seriously ill. Some wondered if he would survive the influenza and pneumonia. But, he did survive. God spared his life. Without a wife but with a seven year old son and an infant son eighteen months old, it was no longer possible for

Frank Gray to maintain a household in Tacoma.

God had called Frank Gray to Tacoma to minister and in Tacoma he was going to stay until God moved him elsewhere. One of the first deacons of this congregation and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Anderson, invited Pastor Gray to come and stay at their house as they had space available. Harold did not know of his mother's death until ten days after the funeral. He was too ill to be told earlier. Finally, one day while his father was sitting on the edge of the bed, Harold, whose earlier questions about his mother's whereabouts had been evaded, asked directly, "Is mama dead?"

A very sad father nodded his head. "Yes, mama went to be with Jesus," he said in choked words. It's not much fun for a seven year old boy to be told that his mother has died, and surely no fun for the father to tell him. What to do? Mrs. A. M. (Hannah) Anderson was very happy to provide a place for the pastor to live, but it was not possible to care for these small boys. Pastor Gray arranged for Harold and Paul to be taken back to Spokane County, where his brother-in-law and sister, Lew and Mary Shriner, agreed to care for the boys. For three and one-half years Frank Gray lived without his family in Tacoma. His wife had gone to be with her Lord and his two sons were living over three hundred miles across the mountains—not a short distance in those days.

Both of the boys lived with the Shriners for two and a half years. For the final year in Spokane, Harold went to live with his widowed grandmother, while Paul remained with the Shriners. Furthermore, joining Grandmother Gray was another grandson, Frank Bentley, whose mother had also died.

After Pastor Gray's boys were settled in their new temporary home, he returned to Tacoma to resume the ministry to which God had called him. Many would have taken the position that somehow he must have missed the will of God or these human tragedies would not have occurred. Many would say that if he had been in God's will things wouldn't have been so difficult. But Frank Gray had heard the voice of God—he had obeyed—he was prepared to "hold out to the end."

The little second-story room on 6th Avenue soon became quite inadequate to serve as a church home for this little group of Pentecostal believers. Properties suitable for their needs and within their reach as to rental costs were investigated. They discovered a vacant church building on the Southeastern corner of South 25th and "J" Streets, less than a block away from the home of the A. M. Andersons, where Pastor Gray was living. This building did provide more space than the 6th Avenue location, but lacked room for Sunday School classes and other auxiliary services. So, the search was on again for a building.

## TACOMA AVENUE MISSION SECURED

They rented a second floor room at 943 1/2 Tacoma Avenue. This facility was considerably larger than either of the two previous buildings. In addition to the largest room, there were smaller rooms to subdivide, thus providing facilities for a more orderly Sunday School program for the adults and the increased number of children that had come into the congregation. There was no contracted labor to prepare this new facility into a sanctuary. It was all volunteer labor, as the men of the assembly assisted by some of the women came to paint, sweep, dust and polish. The furniture was similar to that which more elite churches were discarding. Obtaining janitorial services created no particular problem, since Pastor Gray served as janitor on Saturday and preacher on Sunday. (Harold was also pressed into the janitorial service and recalls that he received a salary of five cents per week.)

But Pastor Gray and the dedicated saints knew that what was needed was not fancy furniture but a place where they could join spirits and voices together to worship and be led by God.

Pastor Gray was reunited with his boys when in 1922, his mother, who was caring for Harold and Frank Bentley, agreed to sell her home in Spokane and move to Tacoma. Pastor Gray and his mother then purchased a house jointly on "L" Street in Tacoma. Grandmother Gray kept house for her son and grandsons until she went to be with her Lord in 1938.

After moving some of Grandma Gray's furniture from Spokane to Tacoma and acquiring a few used pieces locally, a family unit was established. Grandma then was 65 years of age and began the responsibility of helping to raise boys that were eleven and five years of age. Since her son, Pastor Frank Gray, was occupied so much of the time with the affairs of the Assembly and with his duties as superintendent of the Northwest District of the Assemblies of God, Grandmother Gray had a great deal of responsibility associated with the rearing of the two boys.

Clara C. Gray had been raised strictly and had raised her own family in that same manner. Therefore, strictness in behavior was her basic philosophy. The two grandsons tried her patience on many occasions but she endured until her death in 1938, by which time both of the boys had left home.

Frank Gray was a stern disciplinarian but his discipline was administered with love. A stern look from him delivered the message. After the sale of the farm and having to bear the expenses associated with moving



***Pastor Frank Gray,  
Harold and Paul***

from Spokane to Tacoma, followed by heavy expenses related to his wife's illness and death, he was dependent on the small amounts of money placed in the box at the rear of the hall as his salary from his little flock.

Pastor Gray and his mother were both very cost conscious so that they could "make ends meet" with their meager income. Discount stores as we now know them, did not exist, but they searched out the best bargains. Harold recalls that on a shopping trip down town, Grandmother was looking for a badly needed pair of shoes for him. She discovered a genuine bargain and made the purchase. As Harold took the shoes to try them on, he discovered to his great disappointment that they were "button shoes," which were totally out of style. His remonstrances were largely disregarded. He was directed to wear the shoes.

As Harold walked on to the school grounds, one of his schoolmates immediately observed the button shoes and called attention to this fact to the others on the playground. Harold quickly acquired a new nick-name of "shoe-buttons," which he carried for some time, much to his dismay.

One of Paul's characteristics was a habit of staying on the school grounds to watch the boys play marbles, rather than to immediately come home from school, which he was implored constantly to do by his frustrated grandmother. Paul, however, was of a very gentle nature and caused few concerns.

Harold's schooling had been interrupted frequently during the early years. He attended ten different schools in his first ten years. Although he was not a brilliant scholar, he was able to adjust to these frequent changes well enough to be promoted each year.



***Missionary Hagli Family***

After high school, Harold attended Pacific Lutheran College (now University) for three years and began a career in public school teaching and administration which continued for 44 years. Paul attended Northwest Bible Institute (now College) and began a career in business. Both Harold and Paul have lived in the Tacoma area since 1922 except the years of 1938 to 1941 and 1945 to 1959, during which time Paul and his family lived in Seattle.

## **CHURCH SERVICES**

Church services were conducted a minimum of four times a week—Sunday morning and evening, with prayer meeting on Tuesday night and the weekly fellowship meeting on Thursday nights. Services were not short—Sunday morning began with Sunday School at 9:45 A. M. followed by the morning service at 11:00 A. M. This service normally continued until 12:45 or 1:00 P. M. accompanied by considerable squirming on the part of the

children. For a period of time Sunday afternoon services were also conducted. The Sunday evening service commenced at 8:00 P. M. and was dismissed slightly before 10:00 P. M. for the prayer service that followed. Tuesday and Thursday evening services also began at 8:00 P. M. (After the first meeting with Charles Price in 1930, whose meetings commenced at 7:30 P. M., it was determined that the earlier time would be more appropriate.)

During the early days of the Assembly a number of ministers would visit from time to time. Former Missionary Martin Hagli was a frequent visitor. C. C. Douglas, Eastern Washington pastor, visited occasionally. He had received very little education and his usage of the English language was far from proper, but he had a wonderful spirit and an anointing from the Lord. Dewey and Jennie Crabb were quite active in the church and its outreach ministries. They left for Africa as missionaries in the late 1920's, but remained only a few years.

The Pierce County Poor Farm was the scene of Sunday afternoon meetings conducted by members of the Assembly on the 3rd Sunday of each month. Mrs. A. M. Anderson had a great interest in these lonely people living at Sumner (later at Orting) and never failed to attend these meetings.

Members of the congregation were thrilled to have the opportunity to join in fellowship away from the elements of this world that were so difficult. The services began with several congregational songs, each sung in its entirety. Ample time was allowed for prayer requests for those with special needs. Seldom was a service concluded without the opportunity to testify of the goodness of God and answers to prayer. Some of the saints drifted off into details of some of their problems, but, by-and-large, the testimony services were a real blessing to the people attending.

Frank Gray's policy was one of STRICT PUNCTUALITY. He NEVER BEGAN a service even one minute after the announced starting time. His basic philosophy was to be at the meeting house a minimum of fifteen minutes prior to service time to spend the time in prayer. Pastor Gray was not an orator by any manner, but he was a TRUE SERVANT OF GOD.

In the earliest days there was no designated song leader. The Pastor would announce the songs and would stand at the pulpit, singing with the congregation. The pianists actually controlled the tempo of the songs more than anyone else. It was the



***To the Poor Farm***



***Between Services at Wright's Park***

practice to sing every verse of every song that was announced. Certain choruses became very popular. Ordinarily, someone in the congregation would begin a chorus at the conclusion of one of the hymns and be joined by the other members of the congregation.

There weren't many parking spaces on Tacoma Avenue, but that created few problems since not many of the congregation owned automobiles. The proximity of street car lines interested most of the people. This met the criteria of convenient street car service. The Tacoma Avenue trolley traveled north and south on Tacoma Avenue. More important, the cable car made its loop from "A" Street to "K" Street, up the hill on 11th Street and down on 13th Street. This very convenient cable car line was able to take most of the passengers to and from the major street car lines to transfer to reach their destinations.

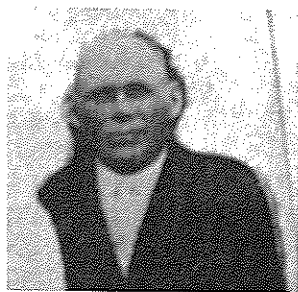
The cost of going to and from church on the street car system was less than seventeen cents, round trip, since "tokens" could be purchased three for twenty-five cents. (Children who needed to ride the street cars to school on school days fared even better with ticket books being offered with forty tickets for one dollar, which made it two and a half cents per ride.)

Thrift was a way of life. Every proposed expenditure had to meet the test of necessity. In those days money was extremely scarce in most families. When weather permitted, a number of the congregation would walk to Wright's Park between the Sunday services for fellowship and to save the extra street car fare.

## THE CHURCH ORGANIZATION TAKES FORM

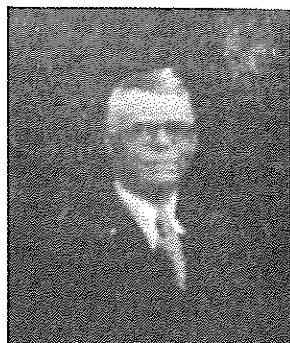
Early in the history of the Assembly it became evident that a form of organization was needed. Decisions had to be made concerning necessary financial arrangements. Offerings taken at the meetings of the congregation were meager, even for those times. The pastor received whatever was placed in a little box at the rear of the mission, marked "For the Pastor." Never was any kind of an appeal made for offerings for any source other than for FOREIGN MISSIONS. The offerings on the third Sunday evening of the month were designated to support foreign missionaries. Pastor Gray regularly encouraged the congregation to sacrifice for the cause of sending the Gospel to foreign lands.

Following the Biblical teachings, early in its history, the congregation selected three deacons: A. M. Anderson, co-owner of East Tacoma Manufacturing Company, a sash and door manufacturing company on East side of Tacoma; Martin Lund, retired; and Martin Kvamme, owner of a retail buttermilk distributing company. These three Christian brothers counseled with Pastor Gray regarding the East side of Tacoma; Martin Lund, retired; and



**Deacon A. M.  
Anderson**

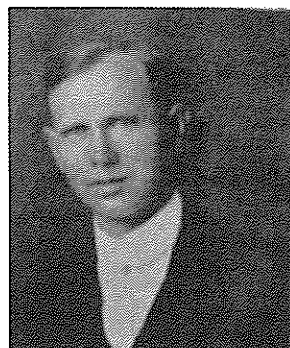
Martin Kvamme, owner of a retail buttermilk distributing company. These three Christian brothers counseled with Pastor Gray regarding the progress and welfare of the Assembly. In 1922, Martin Kvamme and his wife, received a call from God to sell their business and go to Manchuria (then a part of China) as foreign missionaries. They were approved by the Northwest District Council of the Assemblies of God, November 1921, and left the next year. When the Japanese over-ran Manchuria, the Kvammes then went to other parts of China. By 1938, Martin Kvamme was considered a veteran missionary, since the Assemblies of God had only been organized since 1914.



***Deacon Eldor  
Arntsen***

After Martin retired from active overseas missionary work, he devoted much time to securing, packing and shipping used clothes to the Chinese people and hunger for them to hear the gospel never diminished. He passed away in Tacoma on July 21, 1966.

When Martin Kvamme obeyed the call in his heart to go to China, as a missionary, Eldor Arntsen was selected to fill his assignment. Also, early in the church's history, Martin Lund felt it advisable to withdraw from his assignment. Thomas W. Breiwick, a fisherman who had recently come to Tacoma from Norway, was selected to serve as deacon. (Of the three original deacons, Karlene Davis, granddaughter of Martin Lund, and Donald Anderson, grandson of A.M. Anderson, worship at First Assembly of God Life Center. The Martin Kvammes had no descendants.)



***Deacon Thomas W.  
Breiwick***

The joy of the Lord filled the hearts of the believers as they came together to worship, seek God and enjoy fellowship with others. Music had an important part in the worship of this assembly of believers. There weren't many accomplished musicians, but those who had musical instruments and some musical ability shared their talents in praise to our Lord. Eric Rukan, one of the staunch members of the congregation, led the congregational singing during some of the early days. He also served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Assembly.

Arvina Ekebom, Agnes (Lund) Hagman, Molly (Lund) Texstrum, Agnes Rinard and Ruth Arntsen shared their talents on the piano from time to time. Ellen Martinson Berg played the organ when there was a reed pump organ to play. Paul Berg was a great inspiration as he sang and played the guitar. Many recall how the blessing of God was manifest as Paul Berg played and sang, "Will there be any stars in my crown?" Signe Hagen played the guitar as did Deacon Tom Breiwick, who also sang. Nellie Fredlund Woll played the

banjo, and her husband Robert Woll played the trumpet as did Herbert Hassler. Mandolinists included Victor Fredlund, Vivian Fredlund Christianson, Clara Fredlund Knudson and Molly Lund Texstrum. Others joined from time to time. The music, technically wasn't always great, as the world measures greatness, but it was rendered with "great gusto."



## **SUNDAY SCHOOL IS EMPHASIZED**

As soon as space could be made available, Sunday School classes were established. Volunteer teachers and workers made available to everyone from the tiny tots to the adults, instruction in the Word of God. In those days, the literature was not very sophisticated, but the Gospel Publishing House, Springfield, Missouri, was publishing literature for varying ages of pupils. Realizing that people needed this teaching ministry, attendance at Sunday School was emphasized. The number of pupils present and the amount of the Sunday School offerings for the two most recent Sundays were posted in a prominent place. There was a consistent, continuous effort to encourage Sunday School attendance.

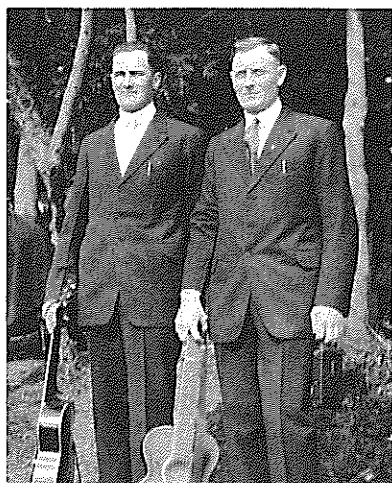
In the early days of the mission on Tacoma Avenue, a Swiss man, Mike Stauffacher had recently come to this country and to the Tacoma area. He fell in love and married a lovely, quiet Norwegian young lady by the name of Octava Woll, sister of Robert Woll. When Mike Stauffacher stood to testify in the service, there could never be a doubt about his experience and his commitment to God. Despite early unfamiliarity with the English language, Mike Stauffacher never left any doubt in the mind of a listener about his Christian commitment. He worked in the dairy business. Later he began his own dairy, greeting every one of his customers with a cheery good morning as he delivered his milk and other dairy products house to house.

Mike Stauffacher served as Sunday School superintendent for a period of time. He was succeeded by Emma Smuland (Johnson) who carried this responsibility for many years during the time when the Sunday School was more adequately housed in the church building at South 12th and "G" Streets. Mike Stauffacher also served as a quasi assistant pastor, presiding at services while Pastor Gray was called away in connection with his duties as district superintendent.

## **DEDICATED BROTHERS BERG**

Fred and Paul Berg together with their mother, Mrs. Bertha Berg, were devoted Christians. Both played the guitar and sang in the services of the church and wherever else they had the opportunity.

Fred Berg answered the call of God and left in the early 1920's for China on to his eternal reward after less than two years on the missions field. As stated elsewhere, Paul married Ellen Martinson. They had five children, the youngest, Rodney, was only two years old when his father passed away.



***Fred and Paul Berg***

# PORTRAIT OF A FAITHFUL SAINT

## Ellen Martinson Berg

Of the multiplied thousands of persons who have attended the First Assembly of God Life Center congregation during the past seventy years, there have been many prominent in the public ministry of the church. In addition to these leaders and administrators, many faithful saints have supplied the hard work and stability that contribute so greatly to the goals and objectives of the church.

There likely are many others who will be provided special commendation by the Lord after this life is over. In the opinion of the writer, few if any will be greeted with a more hearty welcome through the Pearly Gates than Ellen Martinson Berg. Mrs. Ellen Berg has never held an administrative or prominent position in the church. But she did what she could and filled each assignment faithfully, punctually and efficiently.

Ellen Berg was born in Tacoma in 1902. Her father passed away when she was twelve years of age, so her mother was responsible for raising Ellen and her younger sister, Marian.

While attending this mission, she met a young man with a guitar, Paul Berg. They were married in 1924. They had

five children—Margaret, Evelyn, Richard, Marilyn and Rodney. Paul and Ellen had been married seventeen years when Paul passed away, on December 7, 1941, the date of the bombing of Pearl Harbor, leaving Ellen with the five children, the youngest of whom, Rodney, was two years old.

She was the bread-winner and raised these children in a beautiful manner. (Rodney currently is in the ministry and is the Youth for Christ Director in Salem, Oregon.)

Ellen's Christian service commenced in 1917, when at the age of fifteen, she was primary grades Sunday School teacher in South Tacoma. (This was a year prior to Frank Gray's coming to Tacoma.) Later, she began



*Ellen Martinson Berg*

a Sunday School work in Ruston together with Dewey and Jennie Crabb, which continued for one a half years. She began attending the Assembly of God Mission on Tacoma Avenue in 1922 and was immediately asked to teach a primary age children's Sunday School Class.

She took a temporary leave of absence while she bore her five children but always reported back to resume her Sunday School teaching. After the death of Paul, she refused to allow the heavier burden of taking care of her family interfere. She continued faithfully in the Sunday School. Faithfulness and punctuality describe Ellen Berg. She never attracted attention to herself, but served faithfully for nearly sixty years. For a large portion of this time she served with Mrs. Frida Gerla, outstanding educator and leader in Sunday School and Daily Vacation Bible School.

Ellen Berg took the time to become well acquainted with every child in her charge. Ellen recalls "George" who came into her class as a problem child. He delighted in picking up a chair and throwing it to the other side of the room. This continued for a very short time until Ellen sternly disciplined him. After this incident, George became a model student.

Among the thousands of children she has taught, some have become missionaries, pastors and teachers, while others chose equally fulfilling careers while influencing people for God. Ellen has seen many changes in the Sunday School programs over the years, but has always remained faithful.

She worked with her sister, Marian, in her dress shop beginning in 1935, six years before her husband died. Marian passed away in 1959, which left Ellen Berg as the proprietor of the shop. Though the shop is smaller in size than originally, this beautiful lady of 86 years still makes top quality clothing, working five days a week.

Although Ellen Berg isn't the only Godly, faithfully consistent person in this church, on behalf of all those who have contributed to the solidity and permanence of First Assembly of God Life Center, we honor this true Saint of God.

## **WEDDINGS IN THE EARLY DAYS**

During the early days of the Assembly of God (Mission) at 943 1/2 Tacoma Avenue, there were some weddings of note. Thorvald Breiwick, brother of Deacon Thomas Breiwick joined his brother in migrating to the United States. Soon after his arrival in this country, Thorvald married Miss Florence Hanson. Very shortly thereafter Paul Berg (brother of Missionary Fred Berg) and Ellen Martinson were married at the mission. A double wedding followed with Sigurd Hagen and Grace Bentley being united in marriage by Pastor Gray at the same time as Herbert Hassler and Catherine Hagen. These weddings all occurred between March 7 and December 5, 1924.

## **VISITING MINISTERS**

Other Pentecostal ministers visited the Mission on Tacoma Avenue and ministered from time to time. The newness of this Pentecostal experience provided great impetus for ministers and believers to have fellowship with like-minded brothers and sisters "in Christ." Pastor Frank Gray was very generous in sharing the pulpit with visiting ministers who came along, Martin Hagli, who had served some years in China, as a missionary, ministered occasionally. Rev. Stoleson pastored a church in the Ballard section of Seattle, but came to Tacoma to minister and to fellowship from time to time. Tommy Griffin, a fiery Irish evangelist, held several weeks of services in a tent at South 11th and "M" Streets. When John Goben came to Tacoma, Normanna Hall at South 15th and "K" Streets was rented since there were many visitors who came to hear him preach the Gospel and tell of the Infilling of the Holy Spirit.

## **WATER BAPTISM FOR BELIEVERS**

These believers embraced the Baptist doctrine and practice of baptism by immersion. This created a problem, since obviously there wasn't a baptistry at the mission on Tacoma Avenue. But as Jesus, Himself, was baptized in the River Jordan and the Eunuch was baptized in a lake by Philip, so these believers were immersed in Surprise Lake or Wapato Lake, to "follow the Lord" in water baptism. What joy was experienced by them when they came out of the water!



***Baptismal Service, Surprise Lake***

## **OUTREACH MINISTRIES**

Church financial resources did not permit any kind of an advertising program that required an outlay of money. Therefore, the spreading of the good news of the power of the gospel had to be accomplished by members of the group.

Ellen Martinson Berg and Mrs. Dewey (Jennie) Crabb were instrumental in starting a Sunday School in Ruston, which later became Glad Tidings Assembly of God. Thomas Whitehead conducted a Sunday School on McKinley Hill. A group, inspired by Mrs. A. M. (Hannah) Anderson, who had a burden for the unfortunate, went to Sumner and later to Orting to the County "Poor Farm" monthly on a Sunday afternoon to share the good news of the Gospel. The Crane family with daughters Rachel and Irene (both of whom dedicated their lives in foreign missions) were active in outreach work.

## **STREET MEETINGS**

On Sunday evenings, prior to the service at the Assembly of God Mission, street meetings were conducted (unless the weather was too inclement.) At first, the group held their street meetings on the corner of South 11th and Tacoma Avenue. The format consisted of songs, accompanied by instrumentalists, with their stringed instruments, testimonies of God's saving grace and power by members of the congregation, followed by a short salvation message and an invitation to attend the evening service. A few persons did come to the mission to hear what this was all about and some conversions resulted.

Later, the location of the street meetings was changed to South 14th and Pacific Avenue and South 11th and "K" Streets. Unsympathetic passers-by sometimes called out uncomplimentary comments and ridicule. Since there were usually some intoxicated men on the streets, disruptions did occur but the faithful witnesses continued on, week after week.

## **JAIL SERVICES**

Permission was granted by both the mayor of Tacoma and the commissioners of Pierce County to conduct services in the City and County jails on Sundays. A number of the mission group felt a strong burden to witness to those behind bars. On Sunday evenings during the testimony service, regular reports of the results from the morning's jail services would be provided by the workers. Almost always there would be reports of persons who had accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. Follow-ups were made with certain prisoners upon their release from the jail.

Since the Federal Penitentiary at McNeil Island was relatively near by, people took the prison boat from the dock at Steilacoom, as Pastor Gray had obtained permission to hold services on scheduled Sundays at the prison. Accompanying the pastor were singers, instrumental musicians and

persons called upon to testify of their conversion and their faith in Jesus Christ, Savior, Healer and coming King.

## COTTAGE MEETINGS

Pastor Gray encouraged his members to do their very best to fulfill the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:18-20) Opportunities became open to visit homes not easily accessible to the Mission. Mrs. P. N. (Anna) Hageness invited Pastor Gray and some of his workers to come to Wollochet Bay twice a month to conduct services. Mr. P. N. Hageness was sympathetic but Mrs. Hageness assumed the leadership in continuing the meetings.

Since Wollochet Bay is on the Gig Harbor Peninsula and the means of getting there from Tacoma was either by ferry from Titlow Beach to Wollochet, or the impractical means of driving around the end of the sound, the small ferry was chosen.

Mrs. Hageness would prepare a supper for the participants prior to the service. When in season she would serve huckleberry pie, the favorite of Pastor Gray and a number of others.

Olai Hageness, son of the family, recalled Pastor Gray as an extremely kind person who always thought about advancing the Lord's work. He never used idle words nor engaged in irresponsible talk. The calling of the Lord was uppermost in his heart. Pastor Gray did not believe in hopping around from church to church. He believed that people should be loyal to their home church.

Pastor Gray was well-acquainted with each of the regulars in his congregation. Almost without exception he could call the name of every child regularly attending the Sunday School. He would note in his mind persons who missed a service and would call it to their attention. Pastor Gray took his Christianity seriously, Olai Hageness recalls. "He was loyal—a 'team player.'" He further stated that he was not accusatory toward non-Christians, but his Christian walk seemed narrow by today's standards.

Mrs. Hageness would invite interested neighbors to join the visiting group in her home. Later, a nearby abandoned school house was secured for these meetings. Thus began the congregation now known as Harbor Heights Assembly of God. This congregation occupied as of August of this year, a new sanctuary, seating 250 persons. The Hageness' daughter, Maria Hageness, still remains active and is the sole surviving member of the group which began cottage meetings more than sixty years ago.

Other groups visited Ruston, South Tacoma, Milton, University Place, and Spanaway and conducted meetings when and where possible. An impressive number of those attending the Assembly of God Mission on Tacoma Avenue were conscientiously trying to obey the Great Commission.

Fellowship meetings commenced during the early days of the full gospel work in Tacoma. These were held on Monday evenings. Various congregations in the area would host the meetings. An afternoon meeting convened for those who were able to attend on a week day. A lunch would

be served by the host church followed by an evening fellowship meeting. Persons prevented from attending an afternoon meeting because of employment or other reasons, would come for the evening. The tone of the meetings was that of encouragement, testimonies of victory, and an inspirational message from one of the ministers.

During the course of time, services were held in a number of outlying communities. Mrs. Ellen Berg recalls a series of Saturday night services at Black Diamond. She and her husband, Paul, often joined in the services. She recalls that the fabric tires on the cars were of such poor quality that their failure caused many problems for travelers. One particular day, in the course of Paul's buttermilk delivery routes, he had four incidents of flat tires. He went to Black Diamond that night and had three more flat tires before reaching home. At one point, after nearing home, he traveled the additional distance on the tire rims.

## **PLANNING FOR A PERMANENT CHURCH HOME**

The group of believers attending the mission on Tacoma Avenue, were in their 3rd location in the few years since the work started and were desirous of a stable church home. They had moved from Sixth Avenue to South 25th and "J" Streets to 943 1/2 Tacoma Avenue but were still in essentially temporary quarters. They kept asking themselves and each other how they might find a permanent meeting place. The section of the city in which they were located appeared to be very satisfactory and relatively easy to reach by street car. The feeling prevailed that when a move was made, it should be near-by.

Finding a permanent church home appeared to be practically an impossible task, in the natural. In the first place, there was a real struggle to pay the \$50.00 per month rental on the Tacoma Avenue Mission, support the Pastor and pay necessary expenses; let alone purchase a permanent site.

Up to this time, although the congregation had elected deacons to assist in the spiritual direction of the mission, there was no legal entity. After much prayer and serious discussion, it was decided in September, 1924, to create a corporation to represent the congregation. This corporation was approved by the Secretary of the State of Washington as PENTECOSTAL ASSEMBLY OF GOD. Following were the 32 signatories to the incorporation agreement: Frank Gray, A. M. Anderson, Hannah Anderson, J. F. Anderson, E. Arntsen, Ruth Arntsen, H. W. Attlesey, Paul Berg, Ellen Martinson Berg, T. W. Breiwick, Dagmar Breiwick, T. E. Breiwick, Florence Breiwick, Dewey Crabb, Jennie Crabb, Bertine Dahl, Edna Dahlberg, Anna Ekebon, Arvina Ekebon, Peter Elstad, Olav Fjermedal, Sander Fredlund, Victor Fredlund, Mrs. L. Hagen, H. E. Hassler, Mrs. D. Jacobsen, Marie Kvam Nilsen, Florence Pate, Eric Rukan, M. Stauffacher, B. Wingard and Robert Woll. Of these, four are living at the time this book was written: Ellen Martinson Berg,

H. E. Hassler, Florence Breiwick Hulo and Robert Woll.

Trustees named were: A. M. Anderson, H. W. Attlesey, E. Arntsen, Paul Berg and Eric Rukan.

This was only a first step but it was a step. After all the options were carefully considered, it was determined by pastor and members of the corporation, that the purchase of property and construction of a church building was the only viable option.

This took money. Although several years prior to the great depression, funds were extremely limited. Much time was spent in prayer, seeking the leading of the Lord in this regard.

## **SITE SELECTION AND DECISION TO BUILD**

After a thorough search for property in the immediate neighborhood of the Tacoma Avenue Mission, four lots were located for sale on the Northeast corner of South 12th and "G" Streets. These lots had two very poor buildings one of which would have to be razed prior to any construction. They were purchased on contract. This was a beginning. The biggest challenge was still ahead. The lots would require payment in full and the old building razed before any construction could begin.

The prospects of having a permanent church home, both inspired and challenged this fledgling congregation. Through much prayer and sacrifice, clear title to the property was obtained in early 1925. Next were plans prepared, funds raised for materials, labor and the securing of the workers on the building.

## **FINANCING THE CONSTRUCTION**

Three members of the congregation, Trustees A. M. Anderson, Eldor Arntsen and Eric Rukan, mortgaged their homes and loaned the congregation \$2,000 each—a substantial sum of money sixty-three years ago. A local savings and loan association agreed to loan \$10,000. This made possible starting the project. An additional \$2,000 was borrowed from other members of the congregation thus resulting in the entire cost of the building being paid for with borrowed funds. All principal and interest had to be repaid. Some wondered, "Where is it all going to come from?"

A young architect, Silas Nelsen, consulted with the trustees and building committee and agreed to prepare the plans for the building. The auditorium at Normanna Hall at South 15th and "K" Streets (which had been rented for the John Goben meetings in 1924) was used as a model for the church sanctuary—a balcony on each side and at the rear.

In addition, the plans provided for a small nursery adjacent to the ladies rest room, a prayer room that doubled as the women's choir assembly room, and a pastor's study that doubled as the men's choir assembly room. At both ends of the balcony was a Sunday School classroom. In the



basement, the large room immediately under the sanctuary was designated as the prayer room. One additional Sunday School room and a kitchen for preparation of the elements for Holy Communion also was used as a Sunday School classroom.

At the front of the building on the basement level beneath the speaker's platform was the furnace room. The furnace burned wood, which required frequent stoking during cold weather.

The platform was approximately sixteen inches higher than the main floor of the sanctuary. There were three risers at the rear portion of the platform to elevate the choir (when and if a choir was organized). Under the back (top row) of the choir risers was a water baptismal tank. Access was gained to it by lifting up one large door on either side. The tank, made from galvanized steel, had limited capability for heating the water. Inside the tank were built-in steps. Women being baptized changed their clothing in the prayer room and the men in the pastor's study. These arrangements were somewhat primitive but far better than having to go to one of the nearby lakes for the baptismal service.

## **SECURING LABOR FOR THE BUILDING**

Funds were at a premium. Materials for the building necessitated payment on delivery. The largest unsolved problem was how this congregation could find and pay a contractor for the materials and labor to construct the building? As discussions progressed, Eldor Arntson, whose occupation was that of a builder, agreed to serve as building superintendent at very modest wages. Two other members of the church also worked for extremely low wages. Much of the labor was donated and volunteer labor was provided by members, who reported to the construction site after their day's work was completed, working until dark.

Pastor Frank Gray not only was interested in the progress of the building but he worked every day he was in the city. Sunday was the exception when all work ceased. There was much praying that God in his infinite mercy would provide a way to see this project through.

## CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

What a THRILL it was on Thursday, March 18, 1926, when excavation for the church began. It took three days with the total cost being \$120.00. By Thursday of the following week pouring of the concrete for the footings of the foundation began, which was finished the following afternoon. On Monday, April 12, pouring of concrete for the basement walls was done.

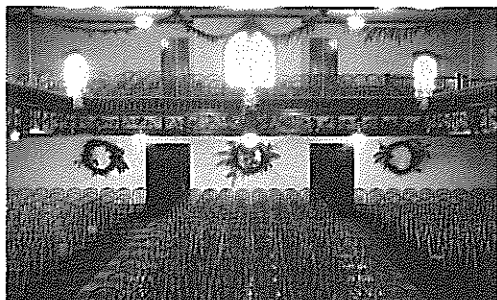
Toward the end of April the brick masons commenced the brick walls and completed them at the end of May, in spite of the fact that on a number of days work stopped because of rain and inclement weather. A month later saw the exterior work completed, framing for the platform begun and progress on the sheet metal work. In early July, the men who installed the lath for the plaster were nearly finished.

Now that the weather made working easier, the first big goal was to finish the basement so that the mission on Tacoma Avenue could be vacated and the operations moved to the new building. On Thursday, August 5, the basement was sufficiently finished so that the Thursday evening service was held there. What a joy for Pastor Frank Gray — just one day before his 43rd birthday — to OCCUPY THE NEW BUILDING— even though it was only the basement.

This progress motivated the pastor, the women from the church and the contractors to accelerate their efforts to have the total building completed, hopefully by the first of September — Labor Day. Could they meet that deadline? Every day except Sunday was full of a multiplicity of tasks to be done. The finishing of the wood took an extra amount of time from what what had been estimated.

Finally the decision was announced. The dedication service was scheduled for Sunday, September 5, in the afternoon so that persons who attended other churches in the area would be able to come. (Pastor Gray emphasized so greatly that Christians should be loyal; consequently he would be the last person to encourage people to neglect their own services. Being the District Superintendent to these other ministries, he must set the example.)

More finishing touches were needed prior to occupancy of the whole building than anticipated. The balance of chairs, 288 in number, were received just the week before dedication. Actually, they were "kitchen chairs" as described by Pastor Harry J. Steil after he assumed the pastorate in 1938. But, they were chairs and cost only \$1.00 each. A total of more than 700 chairs, held together by a board fastened to the bottom of each row to keep them in relative order, were there ready for Dedication Sunday.



***Pentecostal Tabernacle with  
"kitchen chairs".***

## ***Pentecostal Tabernacle D***



## ***Northwest District Coun***



**ation, September 5, 1926**



**acoma, June 17-23, 1930**



## DEDICATION OF THE NEW CHURCH

Sunday morning dawned bright and sunny on September 5, 1926. This was the day everyone had hoped for, had dreamed about, had worked for and more than anything had PRAYED FOR.

On many occasions, this group of people during the building process would ask each other, when they surveyed the enormity of these facilities and compared them to the mission on Tacoma Avenue, "Do you think we will EVER FILL THE CHURCH TO CAPACITY?" It looked so large. But in they came from the city and surrounding areas. The main floor was filled! The balcony was filled! It wasn't so much that they wanted to have people. They wanted to be able to share their thrill at last having their own church facilities so they could now concentrate on their goal — to fellowship and receive strength — and to reach out for those lost in the darkness of this age.

A number of visiting ministers gave their greetings and shared in the thrill of this dedication day. Eight years had passed since Frank Gray and his little family had come from Eastern Washington to pastor this small group of believers — to challenge them and to lead them.

When the total cost of the building was assessed, it was "big money" in the minds of these faithful common people — \$18,600, including the electrical wiring, plumbing and fixtures, chair and other furniture. Now repayment of the borrowed money confronted them. With these new facilities, wouldn't God make it possible for this congregation to reach out and bring many new people into the fold to share this responsibility? The loan from the savings and loan company had to be paid at the rate of \$175.00 per month — more than three times the monthly rent for the mission on Tacoma Avenue.

The loan WAS PAID OFF — ON TIME. Without exception, every payment for the duration of the loan reached the office of the financial institution on or before the due date.

The mission on Tacoma Avenue had been called "Assembly of God": although the congregation was not affiliated with the Assemblies of God at this time, but they were in fellowship with the national and district organizations of the Assemblies of God. When the move was made to South 12th and "G" Streets, the pastor and congregation voted to change the name to PENTECOSTAL TABERNACLE. This would identify a pastor and group of people that had experienced the New Testament Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The initial evidence was the speaking in other tongues as described in the Acts of Apostles and pastor and congregation were anxious to share it with others.

The early days in the new Pentecostal Tabernacle were exciting but also involved much work in performing the final touches to the building and adapting the services of the church to the new facilities. There was greater opportunity to organize members of the Sunday School into groups by age. There was one continuous praise of thanksgiving to God for providing a permanent home.

## REACHING OUT TO THE LOST

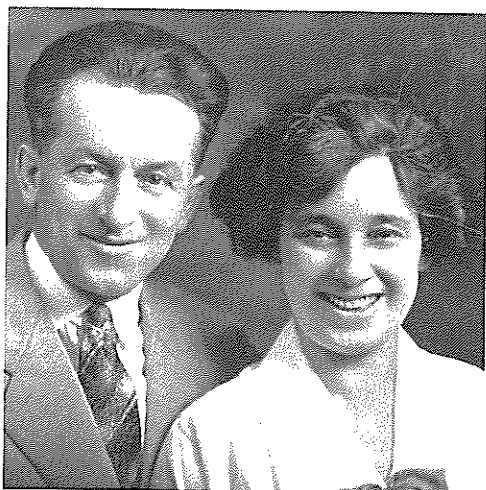
In the days, weeks, months, yes... years to come there was a constant desire to reach out and share this blessed gospel and the fullness of the Holy Spirit with those who had not been privileged to receive. The new church building was a testimony, but the size of the congregation did not increase rapidly in spite of the new building. There had been special evangelistic efforts to reach out to the unsaved, but with the new facilities a greater initiative was needed.

Pastor Gray invited a Canadian couple to the Pentecostal Tabernacle to conduct special revival meetings the next year after the dedication of the building. They were Cecil and Mollie Perks. Mrs. Perks was the preacher in the team and Cecil Perks was the song leader, soloist and choir organizer. The meetings continued for several weeks with services every week night except Monday and Saturday.

The power of the Holy Spirit was present in the meetings. Mollie Perks presented a loving God who would forgive every transgression. Cecil Perks led the song service with his saxophone, sang solos and was joined by his wife for duets. His enthusiasm was contagious and many people came to the services and received wonderful spiritual experiences.

Following the services, appeals were made, for people to surrender their lives to Christ, to lead a more Holy walk and to seek the infilling of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4. People sought God diligently. Prayer services frequently lasted until midnight—a time of spiritual blessing.

Cecil Perks urged Pastor Frank Gray to allow to him to organize a choir. Now that there was ample room on the platform for a choir he proceeded to invite participation. The sopranos



***Evangelists  
Cecil and Mollie Perks***



***Pentecostal Tabernacle Choir,  
1932***



***Evangelists  
Perks, Pastor and  
Grandma Gray***

sat on the left (North) side and the altos on the opposite side. Tenors and basses sat across the back row. The question of appropriate clothing to be worn by ladies sitting on the platform was thoroughly discussed. Mollie Perks regularly wore a white ironed uniform type dress with a large yellow tie or bow. This was determined appropriate for women choir members and so the custom began.

The ladies' dresses must assure modesty as to length. A rigid regulation was established by Pastor Gray that no woman would appear on the platform unless her arms were modestly covered. The young girls in the choir were asked to let their hair grow. Many put their hair up with bobby pins across the back as it grew out.

## **DR. CHARLES S. PRICE COMES TO TACOMA**

Pastor Frank Gray and his growing congregation were ever grateful for the people that were newly saved and serving the lord. However, there was a deep consciousness and burden for those who knew nothing of the *Saving Grace of Jesus Christ*. Earnest prayer ascended to God asking for guidance and direction in finding additional ways of reaching the community with the Gospel.

After completion and occupancy of the Pentecostal Tabernacle in 1926, this desire for a major effort was accelerated. Dr. Charles S. Price, former Methodist and Congregational minister, who had a spectacular experience of Salvation and the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, was conducting meetings throughout the Northwest and Western Canada. As far back as 1923, Pastor Gray had visited Dr. Price's meetings in Vancouver, to explore the possibility of securing him for a major evangelism effort in Tacoma.

Several years transpired before conditions made it possible for Dr. Price to respond to this invitation. In 1929, a successful campaign was conducted in Yakima, Washington. At this time, Pastor Gray renewed his previous invitation for Charles Price to come to Tacoma. Dr. Price agreed to come in the late winter, 1930, for a series of meetings. There was no available auditorium in Tacoma large enough to accommodate the crowds anticipated for such a meetings. (Two years earlier, in 1928, a wooden tabernacle had been erected at South 11th and "L" Streets for a series of meetings by the Philpott-McKee team. These meetings were sponsored by the Tacoma Ministerial Association.)

The few Pentecostal churches in the area together with the Tacoma Christian and Missionary Alliance Church agreed to cooperate with this series of meetings with Dr. Charles S. Price. Cooperating churches cancelled all of their local services with the exception of Sunday mornings and urged their members to attend the special meetings being held in the tabernacle. When Pr. Price conducted major campaigns, he normally held thirteen meetings a week, often speaking to crowds of several thousand without any means of amplification of his voice. In addition, in some cities, a dirt floor covered with wood shavings provided handicap in obtaining oxygen for breathing. Dr. Price's meetings were held seven nights a week.



Morning meetings were conducted every day except Saturday and Sunday. A Sunday afternoon service saw the tabernacle filled with persons, many of whom had driven many miles to attend the services.

The Price meetings became a very noteworthy and significant event in the city, although the local newspapers were very sparing in the space they devoted to it. The crowds heard from a variety of sources about the meetings and how God was using this man to miraculously reach people with the message of salvation, healing for the physical bodies and the infilling of the Holy Spirit as described in Acts 2:4. The word was spread among friends and acquaintances. Focus was directed toward Tacoma for the eight weeks these meetings continued. Pastor Gray was the chairman of the local committee.

## **CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH OF CHARLES PRICE**

Charles Sydney Price was born in Sheffield, England, in 1884. His father had been denied higher education due to the lack of finances in the family. His father determined that he would not permit Charles to also be denied an education and made great sacrifices so it would be possible for him to receive advanced training. He attended Wesley College and Oxford University, where he studied law. He passed his intermediate law examination and left college. Although his parents had been godly people, Charles began to stray from his early teachings and became quite sophisticated, being employed by a Sheffield (England) law firm.

He became restless and left for Canada. After his arrival in Canada, he was unable to find employment in the field of his preparation so he accepted employment as a laborer. As this wasn't exactly what he had been expecting, he moved South across the border to Spokane, Washington. Soon he returned to Western Canada where he worked hard at physical labor. Not satisfied with this, he came to Spokane a second time.

## **ENTERING THE MINISTRY**

Charles was invited by a Godly woman to attend a mission service at which time he responded to the invitation to commit his life to the Lord. He continued at the mission and became involved and preached his initial sermon at a street meeting one evening when Pastor Ett Strayt was unable to reach the mission due to severe weather conditions.

Charles Price continued ministering and was introduced to the Free Methodist church and even served as Superintendent for a time in that area. One of the workers told Charles Price of the falling of the old-time power in Los Angeles. He determined that he would travel to Southern California and investigate this report. However, a conservative fellow-minister advised him against getting mixed up with this fanaticism so he abandoned the trip.

He then moved to Seattle and was employed in a candy factory. His presiding elder soon sent him to Sedro Wooley, Washington, to pastor a



church, where he earned a salary of \$30.00 per month. He was restless and moved from place to place and was finally admitted to the Methodist conference in Spokane. During the passage of time, Charles Price became more intrigued with the modernistic trend of doctrine and ministry. He withdrew from evangelism. His philosophy had changed to the point where he no longer felt comfortable with the narrow Methodist-Episcopal dogma.

His presiding elder chided him for his liberal, modernistic doctrine. Charles did not take kindly to the counsel and increasingly became convinced that he needed a less restrictive church organization, so he became associated with the Congregational Church, where individual ministers and their congregations were given more autonomy in determining the doctrine to be taught.

Charles Price then left for Valdez, Alaska, as a Congregational minister. He thoroughly enjoyed the scenery, hunting and fishing. There was a scarcity of attorneys and judges in this bleak U.S. possession. His having received a law degree, resulted in his appointment to the United States Floating Court while he was in Valdez. He was very popular and served as Chaplain to a number of lodges.

Due to family illness, he moved to San Francisco, California. In the course of his travels in Alaska, he had accumulated thousands of outstanding photographs. He became very popular as a theater and chautauqua speaker. Later, he became pastor of the prestigious Lodi Congregational Church, where God arrested him. Although Charles Price had drifted from the old-time gospel, God had not abandoned him.

## **AIMEE SEMPLE McPHERSON COMES TO SAN JOSE**

A member of his Congregational church excitedly informed Charles about a meeting being held in nearby San Jose, where multitudes were being saved and healed. Even so, Charles told himself that this was just mob psychology. But, after another member of his church became insistent, Dr. Price reluctantly agreed to attend the meeting so that he could debunk all of this hysteria. In fact, he announced his sermon topic for the next Sunday morning as "Divine Healing Bubble Explodes."

As he went to San Jose that evening to fulfill his promise, he discovered that a woman by the name of Aimee Semple McPherson was conducting meetings in a huge tent, under the auspices of Dr. William Keeny Toner. Charles was almost unbelieving. He had known Dr. Toner when they both lived in Oakland as a well-respected preacher — not the kind to sponsor an old-fashioned Holy Ghost revival meeting.

Aimee Semple McPherson had received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and had constructed a large church in central Los Angeles, known as Angelus Temple. She preached what she termed as the Four Square Gospel which included salvation from sin through the efficacy of the shed blood of Jesus Christ, healing for the body, the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as

evidenced by speaking in tongues and the soon return of Jesus Christ to receive his church.

Mrs. McPherson was not content to restrict her preaching to her own church, so traveled to various parts of the nation, particularly in the West, to spread the Four Square Gospel. In some cities large auditoriums were secured for the meetings. Since none existed in San Jose, a large tent was erected. Wood shavings and sawdust were spread on the ground with a large platform being erected on one side to serve as a speaker's stand and for choir members and musicians.

Dr. Towner noted the presence of Dr. Price and as several hundred persons crowded the altars, he greeted Charles. Dr. Price was unable to sleep that night as he compared the evident power of the Holy Ghost in these meetings with his own modernistic theology. He attended a second and then a third meeting in the tent. The seats were all occupied when Dr. Price arrived. Dr. Towner saw him and invited him to sit on the platform

## **CONVERSION OF CHARLES S. PRICE**

As the great crowd stood to their feet they sang enthusiastically, "There is power, power, wonder-working power, in the Blood of the Lamb." Charles Price was smitten. That was it! The stately august, dignified, proud Dr. Charles Sydney Price was arrested with the convicting power of the Holy Spirit to the point where he stood to his feet when the evangelist asked for sinners to stand.

A prominent Presbyterian minister, wishing to help Dr. Price avoid embarrassment, advised him that sinners were being invited. Dr. Price brushed him aside and said "I know it," and pushed his way to the top of the stairway and proceeded down the sawdust trail to the roughly constructed altar. It was there that the prestigious Dr. Price surrendered his heart to God. He had such joy and was so overcome that he began running all over the tent, shouting, "I am saved! I am saved! Hallelujah, I am saved."

Later, he visited Dr. Towner's church in San Jose, where he joyfully received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, accompanied by speaking in other



***Charles S. Price***

tongues. The sermon, "Divine Healing Bubble Explodes" was never preached. In its place he gave an old-fashioned altar call to his fashionable congregation.

## **CHARLES S. PRICE BECOMES AN EVANGELIST**

After this new message had taken Lodi by storm, Dr. Price felt God's call to enter the evangelistic ministry. The response to meetings conducted in Albany, Eugene and Roseburg, Oregon, was unparalleled. There were mighty outpourings of the Holy Spirit in each of these cities.

Dr. W. J. Sipprell, pastor of the Metropolitan Methodist Church in Victoria, B.C. visited one of Dr. Price's meetings and invited him to come to his church, seating 3,000, to conduct a campaign. After many miraculous healings in Victoria, papers throughout the United States and Canada reported on the miracles of these meetings.

From Victoria, Charles Price went to Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Brandon and Winnipeg. (It was while he was conducted meetings in Winnipeg that Rev. D.N. Buntain, father of Dr. Fulton W. Buntain, attended the meetings. He, too, received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in other tongues, and shortly thereafter, resigned his pulpit in this prestigious Methodist Church to preach the full gospel.)

## **TACOMA TABERNACLE MEETING IN 1930**

Following correspondence and conversation, Dr. Price agreed to come to Tacoma in February, 1930, to hold a series of city-wide meetings. Attempts to find an available, suitable auditorium in the city were in vain. There was simply nothing available. Also, there was not much interest among other churches in the city to cooperate in such a meeting, although the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church agreed to be a co-sponsor and to cooperate in this city-wide effort.

Experience in other cities indicated that people's hearts were hungry for the truth as Dr. Price presented it and there must be some way to find a place large enough to accommodate the estimated number of people that would attend the meetings.

The solution agreed upon was for temporary frame building to be erected on a suitable site in the central area of the city. The site was on the Southwest corner of South 11th and "L" Streets. The entire block was vacant at this time. The site was rented, plans similar to those used on other occasions by Dr. Price were agreed upon and construction was begun. Rev. Oscar Lewis was associated with Dr. Price as the advance man for his meetings. Rev. Lewis would move into a city several weeks ahead of scheduled dates for meetings to make preparation.

Supervising the construction of this tabernacle was one of Rev. Lewis' most important assignments. After the footings were completed, load after load of lumber was brought to the site in preparation for construction.

Mr. N. Rody, who had been associated with the Salvation Army for many years became thrilled and excited at the news of the special meetings.

Mr. Rody had a long, white beard and was widely known around the city, particularly in Christian circles. For several years, he had volunteered during the pre-Christmas season in the downtown area, to attend one of the Salvation Army "Christmas pots" soliciting money for the needy at the Christmas season. He came to the grounds and with great joy, dedicated the lumber for the building that was going to be used as a site by God for reaching many in this community.

Employed men and volunteers helped to erect the tabernacle, the wooden benches that seated nearly 3,000, and the platform on the West side of the building. In the rear, on the East side was a literature stand where song books and copies of Dr. Price's magazine, *Golden Grain*, and other books he had authored were sold at the meetings.

Special prayer and tarrying meetings were arranged to pray that God would honor this special effort with a visitation of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Price, as a talented speaker, had no equal among the ministers who had come to this section of the country, but the need was for more than that outstanding talent. It was for the "Power of God" to confirm his Word with signs following.

A large staff of ushers was selected and trained to handle the seating,



***Price Tabernacle Exterior, 1932***

the receiving of the offerings and other necessary services. Provisions for a volunteer orchestra and choir were made. Meetings continued for eight weeks, making a total of more than 100 separate meetings during the campaign.

Dr. Price maintained personal control over the services. He personally led the congregational song services as well as the prayer service and the message followed by the altar call. Instrumentalists were invited to play their instruments during the song services. A special paper-covered song book called *Golden Grain Melodies* was sold and the songs contained therein were used for congregational singing. John Torgerson, accomplished trombonist, pianist and orchestra director at Pentecostal Tabernacle, conducted the orchestra for the first year.

A young man by the name of Albert Knudson travelled with Dr. Price in his campaigns as the pianist. He was a very consecrated and dedicated young man with an outstanding talent at the keyboard. This added a great deal to the services. He later entered the ministry and settled in the

Northwest District, serving the Chehalis and Kirkland congregations as pastor for a considerable number of years.

On Sundays the tabernacle was well filled — sometimes to overflowing. The weekday morning meetings were sparsely attended but the rich teaching from the Word of God by Dr. Price brought significant spiritual growth by those who attended.

## **MIRACLES OF DIVINE HEALING**

One of the features of Dr. Price's meetings was the ministry of praying for the sick. There was an unusual phenomenon that accompanied the healing services. In most instances persons being prayed for would feel the power of God in their bodies they would "fall under the power." This commonly-used term perhaps describes better than anything else what



***Price Tabernacle Interior, 1932***

occurred in these meetings. Needless to say, it created great attention in the community. Members of many old-line protestant churches in the city were warned against Dr. Price and his meetings. Charges of hypnotism, being possessed of the devil and fakery were directed at Dr. Price and his ministry.

But, the people came! Some came out of curiosity to see what was exactly happening. Some then heard the Gospel in a way they had never experienced before and believed and were SAVED! Others presented themselves with physical afflictions to be prayed for by Dr. Price at one of the special healing services which were held two nights a week. Miraculous healings did occur — some that were very startling. One case in mind was that of Marquita Engemoen. She had sustained poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis as it was called in those days) and was required to wear a very cumbersome brace. She was eight years of age. When presented to Dr. Price by her parents at one of healing services, many in the audience wept when they saw the twisted body of this beautiful girl.

Sometimes, God does not heal instantaneously, but gradually, But

in this case it was INSTANTANEOUS! After Dr. Price laid his hands on Marquita, and anointed her with oil and asking God to heal the body of this beautiful child, HE DID EXACTLY THAT. In just a few seconds her body began to return to its normal shape. The bone structure, the joints and other parts of the body underwent a tremendous transformation. The braces were removed and little Marquita was HEALED BY THE POWER OF GOD. That brace remained in the tabernacle on display for the balance of the meetings that year as a testimony of the HEALING POWER OF GOD and to encourage others to trust God and to believe. The Word tells us that ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE TO ONE THAT BELIEVES.

Persons who desired to be prayed for at one of Dr. Price's special services were required to attend a special preparatory service where they could be given instructions as to how to proceed so that this phase of the service could be conducted in an expeditious manner. Miss Evelyn Carvell, who managed the literature booth and assisted Dr. Price in many ways, conducted the advance healing preparatory services.

Prior to the beginning of the meetings, it was not determined as to the number of weeks it would continue. Both evangelist and pastors felt that God would lead when the time came to terminate the series. There was much work and expense in building the frame tabernacle and so from the financial point of view there needed to be enough funds received in the offerings to meet the necessary costs. The blessing of God was very evident, so each week's blessings made easy the decision to go on for another week. Finally, it was determined that the eighth week would be the last for 1930.

The dismantling of the building was just the reverse of the construction. The lumber was preserved as well as possible and due to the great depression which was just beginning, there was a market for good used lumber. At the conclusion of the last Sunday night's meeting, Dr. Price moved to the site of his next meeting.

Spirits were high among people who attended Pentecostal Tabernacle. There were many new people who had been converted in the special meetings. This increased the size of the congregation considerably. Also the inspiration from this mighty move of God made the congregation eager to serve Him better and to continue to bring the unsaved into acknowledge of the saving power of God.

## **CHARLES PRICE RETURNS IN 1931 AND 1932**

Because of the success of the 1930 meeting, cooperating pastors and their church boards, together with Dr. Price, agreed that it would be profitable to come to Tacoma again in 1931. So, for approximately two months, the meetings were again held — at the same location in a frame tabernacle constructed to the same specifications as the first one. Enthusiasm and interest did not wane. The same format was continued with services in the large wooden tabernacle held seven nights a week and every day except Saturday.

People came from far and near. Dr. Price had previously conducted

very successful meetings in Vancouver, B.C. Many from that city came to receive blessings by again sitting under the ministry of Charles S. Price.

Some questioned the idea of inviting the evangelist back for a third year, in 1932. But the preponderance of opinion favored inviting Dr. Price to return. Thousands of people from the local community and from throughout the region came to Tacoma to attend these meetings and to receive blessings from God. There were large numbers of sick and crippled that came to Tacoma as a Mecca. Again, the healing power of God was manifest as people rejoiced at being able to participate in the blessings of God that were being poured out in such copious quantities. There was a special sadness that prevailed during the last Sunday night meeting as many sensed that they probably would not be renewed the next year.

The question was often asked as to whether or not the results of these meetings and the salvation and healing received by many hundreds of people was just a temporary thing or did it endure the test of time. In years that followed, ten, twenty, thirty, forty and more years after the conclusion of these meetings, when members of this congregation who had received Christ as a savior during the meetings of Charles S. Price in Tacoma were asked to indicate that fact by the raising of hands, pastor and congregation alike, were amazed at the large numbers who responded to the inquiry. God's power was manifest in a most unusual way. It was genuine and it DID LAST.

At the conclusion of the 1932 meeting, Rev. Oscar Lewis remained in the city. He gathered together a group of people, most of whom had newly experienced the fullness of the Holy Spirit. They named their congregation, Faith Temple. They met for a period of time in a church on the corner of South 21st and "I" Streets in Tacoma. They moved to other locations and at the time of this writing are holding their services in a church building on the corner of South 10th and Yakima Avenue. Other smaller congregations emerged and some existing congregations in the city were revitalized by the power of the Holy Spirit that had far-reaching effects throughout the city.

## **TACOMA HOSTS THE N.W. DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The increase in the number of churches in the rapidly growing Northwest District of the Assemblies of God made the leadership a very time-consuming ministry. Frank Gray had served in the dual capacity of Pastor of Pentecostal Tabernacle and Superintendent of the Northwest District. He found that it was not possible to function effectively simultaneously in both these ministries. The ministers and delegates voted overwhelmingly at the District Council meeting Tacoma in 1930 to make the superintendency a full-time position. Frank Gray was elected for the twelfth consecutive year as superintendent.

He asked the council to allow him until the following day to make his decision. He had been the founding pastor of this fine church congregation and the first superintendent of the Northwest District. But, now the time had come when he had to relinquish one of these ministries. There was much

speculation as to what his choice would be. When he returned the next day after spending much of the night in prayer, asking God's guidance in this matter, he thanked the members of the District Council for their love and for their loyalty and support of him while he ministered in the capacity of superintendent. He then announced that he felt that it was God's will that he remain as pastor and decline accepting the superintendency for the thirteenth consecutive year.

It was a great time for seeking God's will. These ministers had never known a superintendent other than Frank Gray. Even though a number of them were as old or older than he, they looked upon him as a father. It wasn't an easy decision for Frank Gray but he yielded to what he felt that God was leading him to do. The influx of people into the church following the first of the three meetings led by Charles S. Price, had a heavy impact on his decision.

After much prayer and counseling, they selected Rev. Samuel Swanson, a sweet-spirited pastor, who had recently moved into the Northwest District. He soon came to be loved and respected by the ministers of the District. Rev. J. E. Rasmussen, secretary-treasurer of the District for more than ten years requested the Council that he not be selected for another term in that position. Rev. Thomas A. Sandall, formerly pastor of the Puyallup Assembly of God Church, but more recently serving as pastor of Stoneway Tabernacle in Seattle, was selected as secretary-treasurer. To this time these responsibilities were borne on a part-time basis.

With the increased attendance, augmented by many who had found Salvation during the Price meetings, there was a great amount of instruction and counseling that needed to be done. The new converts and the nominal Christians who had come into the fullness of the Holy Spirit needed to learn what is taught in the Bible concerning the Christian life. There were some who had accepted Christ as Lord and Savior but were for all intents and purposes illiterate concerning the teachings of the Word of God. Others had a very narrow and formal concept of God's grace and power and needed help to understand what is available to God's children.

With many new persons joining the congregation, challenges were presented. (In those days, joining the congregation meant attending the services regularly, since there was no formal church membership. The original signers of the incorporation agreement were the only persons that had a legal or formal relationship with the congregation of the Pentecostal Tabernacle.)

Officers such as deacons and trustees were elected each year on staggered terms at the annual business meetings of the congregation. There was no formal control over who was eligible to vote, although the teaching and exhortation by Pastor Gray clearly outlined the conditions that the Boards of the Church had decided. Occasionally persons who were not regular attenders at the services would come to a business meeting and attempt to vote and participate in the discussion of matters of business sometimes taking positions quite diverse from that of the large majority of the legitimate congregation. Pastor Gray, who presided at all business meetings,



was able to manage the meetings without serious disruption.

Since there was no legally adopted constitution and by-laws, there were no formal procedures. At the beginning there were three deacons and five trustees. Later, the number of deacons was increased by five and then to seven and again to twelve where it remains at the present time. The pastor's tenure was voted on each year by the congregation by secret ballot. The vote was not always unanimous but each year Pastor Gray was re-elected by a substantial majority.

Following the 1930 Northwest District Council in Tacoma, when Frank Gray no longer held the responsibilities of the superintendency, he was grateful to be able to spend more time serving his congregation. However, the new superintendent, Samuel Swanson, made it a practice to counsel frequently with the former superintendent. Frank Gray, who had headed the District from its inception in 1919 until 1930, understandably had a keen interest in the success and progress of the rapidly growing number of churches in the Northwest District. The geographical boundaries of the District being so widely spread, posed a problem even for a full-time superintendent.

## **REV. J. N. HOOVER COMES TO TACOMA**

Following the 1932 city-wide campaign in Tacoma with Charles Price, J.N. Hoover (a distant cousin of President Herbert Hoover) accepted a second invitation to conduct special meetings at the Tabernacle. Rev. Hoover had been a Baptist minister for 28 years prior to his having received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. His practice and preaching concerning the Baptism of the Holy Spirit disqualified him from continuing to preach to Baptist congregations. Rev. Hoover was no stranger to this congregation since he had made a total commitment to God.

J.N. Hoover's preaching style was quite different from Pastor Gray and Dr. Price. He had a manner of holding a small black notebook in his left hand and gesturing with his right hand while he was preaching to the congregation. Although his style was unorthodox compared to most others, he preached solid doctrine with the power of the Holy Spirit and created within many people a strong desire to draw nearer to God and tarry for the blessed experience of the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

Rev. Hoover had as his traveling companion, a young minister by the name of Emil Balliet, who was a recent graduate of North Central Bible College in Minneapolis. Emil was a talented violinist and soloist. He led the congregational singing frequently while playing his violin. His talents and his beautiful spirit and love for J.N. Hoover were of great benefit to the services and J.N. Hoover came to lean heavily on Emil Balliet.

The evangelist ministered each night except Saturday and twice on Sunday. The special meetings continued for several weeks accompanied by a feeling of spiritual strengthening. The obvious interest among many in the congregation and the desire to seek the Lord for the infilling of the Spirit,

did not cease at the close of the meetings with Rev. Hoover. Days of intense desire to seek more of God continued on. Rev. Hoover returned the next year to continue to exhort believers to receive all that God had for them.

One of his favorite Scriptures and which he frequently asked the audience to repeat in unison with him was a thrice repeated passage in Psalm 107: *Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men.*

## **THE MIDDLE 30'S**

Following the final city-wide revival meeting in 1932, in the large wooden tabernacle with Charles S. Price and for the next six years, Pastor Frank Gray concentrated on consolidation of the gains that had been made. Dozens of peoples had accepted Christ as Savior in the Price meetings and became regular attenders at Pentecostal Tabernacle. A sizable number of them had a minimal knowledge of the Bible. The Christian walk was totally new.

Heavy concentration was placed on Bible studies so that new converts could develop a solid base of the Word of God. Attendance in the Tuesday evening Bible study increased substantially. Prayer meetings were well attended. The auditorium in the lower level was used more frequently for prayer than any other church function. It was affectionately referred to as the *Prayer Room*.

Although the great depression created serious problems because of difficulty in finding employment, the increase in attendance helped to offset the reduced amounts contributed in the offerings by those without employment. The financial obligations of the congregation consisted primarily of the monthly mortgage payment of \$175.00, the commitment to foreign missionaries being supported by the church and the pastor's support.

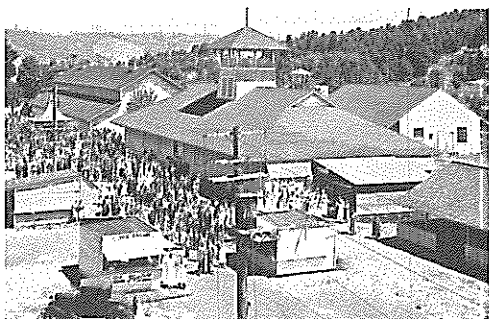
The payroll was not large. Pastor Gray's remuneration consisted of an offering on one Sunday night each month, received in a very routine manner, by a simple announcement that the offering was for the pastor. (Later, during Pastor Steil's service, each Sunday morning offering was designated for the pastor. The amounts received became out-of-balance on the "high-side" in comparison with offerings taken for other needs, so the method of pastoral support was changed to a weekly stipulated salary.)

As stated elsewhere, problems created by Superintendent Thomas Sandall's departure from the Northwest District Council, required a greater portion of Pastor Gray's time and attention. He did not, however, neglect the needs of the church. Rev. Alan Ellis, Rev. Lillian Holm and Lay Minister Mike Stauffacher supplied during occasional absences by Pastor Gray. Frank Gray remained as pastor from the organization of the congregation in 1918 until his resignation precipitated by his acceptance of the responsibilities of the Northwest District Council Superintendency in 1938.

## CENTRALIA CAMP MEETINGS

During the course of the years, in the 1930's, a need for meetings and gatherings of a larger number of believers than in individual congregations, was felt. Fellowship meetings were scheduled in each section of the various districts on Mondays, once a month. Sections were small enough geographically so that attendance did not require overnight stays even though travel by automobiles took substantially longer than in today's cars.

However, many Pentecostal believers sensed the need to have longer periods together to fellowship and to worship God and study His word. A camp meeting appeared to be the answer. The officers and presbyters of the District approved the investigation of the organization of a District Camp. Since the boundaries of the District were large, the goal was to secure a location within reasonable distance of the larger population centers. Investigation revealed that a site was available during late June and early July at the Southwest Washington Fair Grounds located midway between Centralia and Chehalis—about an equal distance from Seattle and Portland. (Oregon was a part of the Northwest District at this time.)



*Centralia Camp Meeting, 1935*

Facilities were quite primitive for such an event but the hunger for Christian fellowship and Bible teaching expressed by many people and the lack of a more suitable site within the financial limitations of the District, influenced the District Presbytery to select this location.

The first camp meeting was held during late June and early July, 1935. There was much enthusiasm as a larger-than-expected group of people attended. Housing accommodations were very sparse and those that did exist were quite primitive. Fair grounds buildings were utilized as separate dormitories for men and women. There was no charge for children. However, persons over the age of ten paid twenty-five cents per week. Camp cots were rented for ten cents a night or one dollar for the full fifteen days.

For the more affluent, new tents, 10 by 12 feet, with board walls and floors could be secured for \$9.00 for the full two weeks. The problem of feeding the campers required that kitchens and dining rooms be improvised. Meal cards for the two weeks were sold for \$5.00. As menus were not prepared by a dietician and since the least expensive foods must be purchased there was some discontent as to the menus because of the extensive use of starchy foods. However, it became a successful operation.

A grocery store and ice cream stand were provided for the convenience of the campers. (The author recalls the interesting experience of managing the ice cream stand during the first year of the camp. Bottled soft drinks were

banned and cans for soft drinks were not in common use. There was to be no suggestion of intoxicating liquor in any manner, so orange-ade was dipped from a vat into paper cups. Choice items in the ice cream stand for those that could afford the twenty cents price were three varieties of milk shakes.)

The Northwest District Council was scheduled concurrently with the first part of the camp. Pastor Frank Gray was named camp chairman and C. T. (Kelly) Wallberg, Centralia pastor, was camp director. Camps were conducted annually at the Fair Grounds for a number of years. Later, they were transferred to Borst Park in Centralia, which had considerably better facilities. Silver Lake south of Everett, Washington, was selected as the camp site after World War II.

The camp speaker in Centralia for the first two years was Dr. Charles S. Price, who had conducted successful meetings for three years in Tacoma as well as in other cities in the District. Persons with musical instruments of any kind who attended the camp were encouraged to sit on the platform and play during the song services. Usually, the orchestra would play a well-known gospel song while the offering was being received. There were as many as 100 persons who joined the orchestra during the camp. Attendance during week-ends when some persons would commute for the day, reached more than 1,000.

The popularity of this type of camp diminished in the 1950's. Replacing them during current times are a series of retreats for various age and interest groups.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **FRANK GRAY — THE MAN**

Frank Gray was a true pioneer in the Pentecostal faith in the Pacific Northwest. There were no precedents which he could follow in his leadership. His total trust was in God. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit was his guide and compass. In spite of the pressures he sustained during these years in which he was responsible for such a multiplicity of duties and decisions, he maintained a kind and forgiving spirit and demonstrated that truly he was being led of the Spirit.

Many people who had left their previous churches and joined this group of Pentecostal believers were castigated with a wide variety of names—most of which were not intended to be very complimentary. They had a tendency to be non-conformists. These characteristics were transferred to their behavior in this new-found faith and doctrine. Some people took the position that if one of the mainline protestant churches accepted a certain thing that it obviously was wrong. At times there appeared to be as little tolerance on the part of the Pentecostals toward the mainline protestant churches as there was by them toward the Pentecostals.

### **FRANK GRAY RECOGNIZED BY HIS PEERS**

Pastor Frank Gray was recognized as a man of "high standards". He was not only a parishioner's pastor but a pastor's pastor. Serving in the dual capacity of pastor of a growing church and district superintendent of a growing district, he had a good opportunity to demonstrate to other pastors in the District how a good pastor should conduct himself.

Frank Gray had not received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit as early as some of the other ministers when the Northwest District of the Assemblies of God was founded in 1919. But his outstanding qualities of character, spirituality and leadership were recognized by his peers. He was elected as the founding superintendent of this council, a position he held for eleven years until he had to choose one or the other in 1930. By then the responsibilities required a full-time superintendent and Pastor Gray felt that God would have him remain with the pastorate. However, in 1938, when some problems arose in the administration of the District, the members requested that he reconsider leaving his pastorate and again resume the responsibilities of superintendent. This he did.

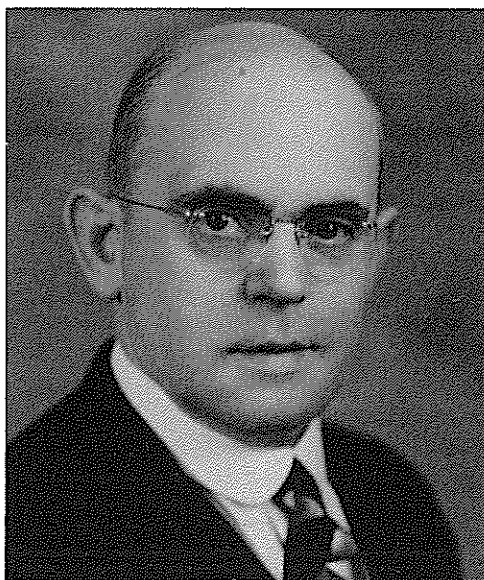
He was an early chairman of the board of directors of Northwest Bible Institute which has now become Northwest College. (It is interesting to note that his youngest son, Paul, followed in his footsteps and has served on the college board for thirty years. One of the residence halls at Northwest College is named "Gray Hall" in honor of Frank Gray.)

Frank Gray served for many years as a General Presbyterian of the General Council of the Assemblies of God and for a time, as Executive Presbyterian. He was extremely humble about honors that were accorded him. His oldest son happened to inadvertently notice a paper on his desk that listed him as an executive presbyter, a very high honor and responsibility. Had it not been for this incident, probably his family would never have known of his appointment to this position.

In 1961, he was bestowed the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the board of directors of Northwest College—the first ever by this school. As usually occurred when he was given recognition or accorded an honor, he “down-played” it. He refused to ever use the title and tried very hard to discourage others from calling attention to it.

Frank Gray provided the leadership and inspiration, starting with a small group of people near the end of World War I in 1918, through the depression until a year before the beginning of World War II in 1939. He had no role models to follow except Jesus Christ, the apostles and the teaching of the Word of God. Yet, he was not hesitant in his convictions. He took a position and firmly remained in that position. This writer, in the course of his responsibilities on the board of Evangel College many years ago, would constantly be questioned as to “how Brother Gray is” and then being told what a great man he is by many persons who knew him well.

If Frank Gray were still living, he would be very anxious to avoid such accolades. He was looking to the Heavenly Father for his reward not the adulations of this world.



*Pastor Frank Gray*

## **PASTOR GRAY MARRIES ANNIE MALM**

Following the death of his wife, Stella Gray, in 1919, Pastor Frank Gray resided with Deacon and Mrs. A. M. Anderson, until 1922 when his mother, Clara Gray, moved from Spokane to Tacoma together with his two sons who had been living with relatives in Spokane. A home was then created for the pastor, his mother and the two sons.

After both Harold and Paul had married and left home Grandmother Gray died following an accident accompanied by pneumonia. Pastor Gray was left alone. In October 1938, he married Miss Annie Malm, a faithful worker in the Pentecostal Tabernacle Sunday School and church. They had one child, Carolyn Ann. Carolyn is married to Jerry Krenelka and together with her two children, they reside in Vancouver, Washington.

Rev. and Mrs. Frank Gray continued to reside in Tacoma for several years after his acceptance of the District Superintendency. When the Northwest District Office was moved to Seattle, Superintendent and Mrs. Frank Gray also moved their residence. Annie Gray although considerably younger than her husband was a great companion and comfort to him as he traveled about the District in connection with his duties.

After Rev. Gray retired from the District Superintendency in 1950, he accepted the pastorate of the church in Tonasket, in North Central Washington. Following his retirement from the ministry in 1958, they moved back to Tacoma and spent their remaining days here. Frank Gray passed on to be with his Lord on March 26, 1966, followed by the death of Annie Gray on September 29, 1973.



***Rev. Frank and Annie Gray***

# FRANK GRAY GOES TO HIS ETERNAL REWARD

God called Frank Gray to his eternal reward on March 26, 1966, following surgery, from which he did not recover. The sanctuary of First Assembly of God, 12th and "G" Streets was completely filled at the memorial service of that church's first pastor and first district superintendent. More than forty ministers of the District, to whom he gave so much, paid their respects by their presence, sitting on the platform during the funeral.

Frank Gray is no longer with us in body but his influence lives on. Pastor Everette Ewing paid a very appropriate tribute to Frank Gray by the statement, "*He being dead yet speaketh.*"

## THE TACOMA NEWS TRIBUNE *Editorial*

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 1966

### A Builder Passes

The death of the Rev. Frank Gray, honorary national general presbyter of the Assembly of God, has taken away one of the distinguished builders of this great Pacific Northwest.

The Rev. Mr. Gray not only was the founder of the Tacoma First Assembly of God Church and the first Northwest district superintendent and a national officer; he was a minister in the Assembly when there were only six of its ministers in the entire Pacific Northwest. The area included all of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Alaska then. Now there are 300 pastors of the Assembly of God in the Northwest district, which includes only Washington and upper Idaho.

Illness kept him from attending the recent groundbreaking for the new First Church, which occurred almost 40 years to the day after he broke ground at the church's present location. And the District Council meeting, soon to be held in Spokane, will be the first he had missed in 47 years.

Mr. Gray never ceased to work in the church. Although retired from the active ministry, and 82 years of age, he taught Men's Bible Class in the Tacoma church every Sunday forenoon.

He was one who helped build a small group of worshippers into a large congregation and a great force for good in our community, a stalwart leader who witnessed the building of his denomination in the Northwest. His passing is mourned by the Tacoma community and a host of friends throughout a wide area.



*"Rev. Frank Gray being dead yet speaketh."*



## FRANK GRAY SENSE OF HUMOR

Paul Gray recalls that Pastor Frank Gray, preaching following his return from General Council in Houston, Texas, stated concerning some particular event, "It made my hair stand on end." (He was completely bald.)



During one of Pastor Gray's sermons, he was exhorting the congregation to be united. He challenged them by saying, "Let's all stand together." (Most of the congregation began to rise to their feet when they sheepishly discovered that he was asking for hearts and souls to stand united rather than their physical bodies.)



During the early days of Pentecostal Tabernacle, when "kitchen chairs" were used for seating in the sanctuary, most of the rows of seats were fastened together with a piece of 1" x 4" board on the bottom of a row to maintain a more orderly arrangement. A few, because of their locations in the church, were left "loose". During hot weather when people were perspiring in this non-airconditioned church, occasionally a man when standing would embarrassingly discover that the varnished chair had stuck to his posterior and lifted from the floor.



One evening in Hollywood (now Calvary) Temple of Seattle, at a special meeting, a number of ministers were seated in the front row when the speaker challenged the congregation by saying, "Some people are neither black nor white, but DIRTY OLD GRAY". District Superintendent Frank Gray didn't immediately catch the "pun" but many in the congregation did until the entire congregation responded with mild laughter.

## EARLY SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTORS

From the beginnings of First Assembly of God Life Center and for the dedicated people who made significant contributions towards its formation as a viable force in the Kingdom of God, there should be some recognition in this book. The launching of the Full Gospel Message in and about Tacoma by many faithful and courageous people is most significant. There is no way that we can identify precisely who will receive the greatest rewards. Jesus, himself, upon watching the rich and the poor make contributions to the Temple, stated that the widow with but one mite had "given more than them all."

The list that follows is not intended to list people who will receive the greatest heavenly rewards, but a few of those "unforgettable personalities," memories of whom are etched in the mind of the writer. They are only representative of so many who well could have been included:

**A. M. Anderson** (*deceased*) - co-owner of a wood manufacturing company who served as chairman of the original Board of Deacons from the beginning of the organization of the assembly.

**Mrs. A. M. (Hannah) Anderson** (*deceased*) who, with her husband, provided a home for Pastor Frank Gray for three and a half years following the death of his wife in 1919. She had a special interest in ministry for elderly people, going monthly to the County Poor Farm for services.

**Eldor Arntsen** (*deceased*) a long-time member of the Board of Deacons. He replaced Martin Kvamme, when the latter answered the call to China as a foreign missionary. He was very devoted and conservative, by nature. At personal sacrifice he supervised construction of the Pentecostal Tabernacle in 1926.

**Herb Attlesey** (*deceased*) was converted through lay ministry at the Northern Pacific shops in South Tacoma. He became a very outspoken advocate of the Full Gospel and ministered in jails. In his testimonies, he would frequently state that when he arrived in heaven there would be, "Saint Peter, Saint Paul and Saint Attlesey." He was an active member of the Board of Trustees.

**Frank Bentley**, nephew of Pastor Gray, became a very active and substantial member of the church. He played the violin in the church orchestra. Frank served on the church boards for many years. He also served as secretary, and later as treasurer for more years than any other in the history of the church. He was a member of the building committee for the construction of the first building. He served as treasurer and member of the Board of Golden Opportunity Living Development for many years.

**Ellen Martinson Berg** - one of the four living original signers of the incorporation agreement in 1924, prior to the building of Pentecostal Tabernacle. She has been faithful and devout for her entire life. It is difficult to find anyone who can remember a time that Ellen Berg wasn't teaching a Sunday School class until the very recent years.

**Clara Fjermedal Bohrman**, eldest daughter of Deacon Ole

Fjermedal. She loved people, particularly children, also the elderly and missionaries. She was very active in the leadership of the Daily Vacation Bible School. She served as missionary secretary. She was truly a key person in the church prior to her marriage, following which she moved to California.

**Thomas Breiwick** (*deceased*) long-time member of the Board of Deacons. He replaced Martin Lund upon the latter's retirement from the Board. He sang and played the guitar. He was extremely loyal and dependable and had a delightful sense of humor.

**Arthur W. Burk** active in a variety of ministries and served on many boards and committees. He was an effective Sunday School teacher and administrator, serving on the Board of Deacons for 46 years, much of that time as secretary of the church and of the Board of Deacons and Trustees.

**August A. Drath** (*deceased*) a huge "hulk of a man" with a very tender spirit, who loved the Lord with all his heart. He had a deep, deep bass voice and would regularly precede his public testimony in the church services with a song which obviously was the expression of his heart.

**Olav Fjermedal** (*deceased*) served very capably for many years on the Board of Deacons and as a most-effective head usher. His consistent friendliness to all—regular members or strangers—was a continuing inspiration. He was the father of Clara Fjermedal Bohrman.

**Burt Foos** (*deceased*) together with Herb Attlesey, received salvation through the ministry at the Northern Pacific shops. He had very strong convictions on how "things should be run." Although he was never elected to any official church position, he did serve for a time as pastor of a small church.

**Victor Fredlund** (*deceased*) and his father, Sander Fredlund, served on the Board of Deacons for a number of years. Although Victor had little formal education, he was self-taught and became a competent scholar of the Bible. He was very effective as a Sunday School teacher. He served as song leader and was the first director of the choir after its organization in 1928. He also was gifted in playing the mandolin.

**Frida Tayet Gerla** - the "middle" of the three Tayet sisters. An excellent public school teacher, she became an outstanding Sunday School teacher and administrator. She worked with primary-grade children as departmental superintendent and teacher. She provided outstanding leadership in the Daily Vacation Bible School and was a faithful member of the choir.

**Rosie Gerla**, related to the Rody-Gerla family, came to this country from Germany in the late 1920's. She loved God and was an enthusiastic, faithful and devout member of the choir, usually leading the choir on to the platform prior to the beginning of a service. She returned to Germany prior to World War II, having made an impact at Pentecostal Tabernacle during the time she was here.

**Paul A. Gray**, youngest son of Pastor Frank Gray. During both youth and adulthood he was faithful and conscientious to the cause of Christ and to the church. He attended Northwest College following high school. He

sang solos, in a quartet and played the clarinet in the church orchestra. He served on the Board of Deacons for many years and as chairman of the Board of Life Christian School. He also has served for more than thirty years on the Board of Northwest College, six years as its chairman. Currently he is treasurer and chairman of the finance committee.

**Florence Breiwick Hulo** was one of the original signers of the incorporation agreement in 1924. Although she has not held many formal offices, together with her husband, Thorvald Breiwick, she made significant contributions to the advancement of the church from near its beginning to the present day.

**Emma Smuland Johnson** came to Tacoma from Canada in 1922 with her sister, Mary Smuland Rody. She soon began attending Sunday School and the church services. She was an original member and participated as a member of the choir for 50 years. She had a deep interest in children and served as Sunday School superintendent for 17 years. At the time of the departmentalization of the Sunday School she served as adult department superintendent. She was an active member of the missionary groups and in great demand as a soloist in the church services and at funerals. She also served for a number of years as missionary secretary to the congregation.

**Conrad Konsmo** can be described as "Mr. Faithful." He has sung in the church choir longer than anyone in the history of the church. He has made significant contributions as a member of the Board of Deacons for many years. He has played an active part in every building construction project on the present site, beginning in 1967. He served as foreman of the last two construction projects.

**Detmer Ketler** (*deceased*) received a miraculous healing, from a disease which the medical community had determined to be incurable and terminal, at the occasion of his salvation. He immediately became active in the choir, a long-time member. He was chairman of the Board of Trustees for many years and served as assistant superintendent and later as superintendent of the Sunday School for many years. Later, he served on the Board of Deacons. He was the director of volunteer labor in the construction of the first church building on the present site as well as during the rebuilding following the fire.

**Arnold Loen** (*deceased*) a very dedicated member of the church and a long-time member and chairman of the Board of Trustees, during the years of substantial church growth.

**Helmer Malm** (*deceased*) an outgoing long-time member of the Board of Deacons. His testimonies reflected the happiness that he found in his relationship with Jesus Christ. He frequently led the song service.

**William Pointen** (*deceased*) had no children of his own but together with his wife, Myrtle, served as foster parents to a large number of Sunday School children. He served for many years as Sunday School Superintendent, on the Board of Deacons and in many other ministries. He was a devoted "prayer warrior" and could be found in the prayer room long after many others had finished praying.

**Nicholas Rody** (*deceased*) the father and grandfather of a number of prominent members of the church. He had a long, white beard and was well-known in the city for his service to the Salvation Army at Christmas time attending the solicitation of gifts for the needy. At the beginning of the first meeting with Dr. Charles S. Price at South 11th and "L" Streets, he prayed and pronounced a blessing on the first piles of lumber. He could usually be identified by his hearty "amens" throughout the preaching services.

**Melchoir (Mike) Stauffacher** (*deceased*) a Swiss immigrant who came to this country in the 1920's. He married Octava Woll, a quiet young Norwegian lady. Mike became an outstanding witness for his Lord. He owned a dairy and delivered milk and other dairy products house-to-house. He took advantage of every opportunity to witness for his Lord. He served as Sunday School superintendent for a period of time and became a part-time lay minister and occasionally conducted the week-night services when Pastor Gray was called out of the city because of Northwest District Council responsibilities.

**Alfred Swanstrom** a faithful member of the congregation from an early age. He played the cornet, beautifully, and together with his brother, Joseph, and Robert Deacon (later, William Heidecker,) became much in demand in Christian circles as a cornet trio. He also directed the orchestra, later the band, and led congregational singing. He served as a member of the Board of Trustees for many years and served on the building committees of both major construction projects on the present church site.

**Carl Swanstrom** (*deceased*) a devoted Christian wherever he found himself and who did not hesitate to witness to that fact. He had been in the leadership of the Swedish Salvation Army but became a faithful member of Pentecostal Tabernacle during and after the Price meetings. He truly was an unforgettable person. He invariably knelt in prayer adjacent to his regular seat on the aisle when he came into the sanctuary for a service.

**Frithjof (Fritz) Tayet** (*deceased*) outstanding educator, who accepted the responsibility of organizing instructional and other reading material into a church library and directing its operation. He suffered an untimely death at a prime age in a boat tragedy while on a family outing.

**Molly Lund Texstrum** (*deceased*) attended the congregation from her youth, her father having been an original member of the Board of Deacons. She played the mandolin and the piano, effectively and faithfully. She served as secretary to Pastors Ewing, Keener and Buntain for a number of years.

**Thomas Whitehead** (*deceased*) a very enthusiastic Christian and member of Pentecostal Tabernacle. He was a member of the Board of Deacons for a number of years and was employed as the head gardener at Pt. Defiance Park. In his high-pitched voice during testimony meetings he often relayed the conviction he had that he would be alive at the second coming of Christ.

**Harold E. C. Wick** a reliable and important member of the Pentecostal Tabernacle from the beginning of his attendance at the church. In his earlier days, he was a fisherman but commenced a very successful career as a

building contractor. He served for many years on the Board of Trustees. He made it possible for the congregation to obtain the site where the church is presently located. He served as chairman of the building committee both for the original church on the present site and for the rebuilding of the sanctuary building after the former one had been destroyed by fire. Harold also serves as vice-chairman of the Life Manor Board. At the beginning of the Manor construction, when it appeared the project might have to be discontinued due to the inflation rate and the delay in securing government approval to proceed, he joint-ventured with Contractor N. E. Sommers Co., making it possible to successfully complete the project.

**Robert Woll** emigrated from Norway in the early 1920's while the congregation was meeting at the mission on Tacoma Avenue. He is one of the four living signers of the original incorporation agreement in 1924. He played cornet in the orchestra. Together, with his wife, Nellie Fredlund Woll, they raised two outstanding children, one of which is an Assemblies of God pastor in Eastern Washington. They became role models of a successful Christian family.

## CHAPTER 3

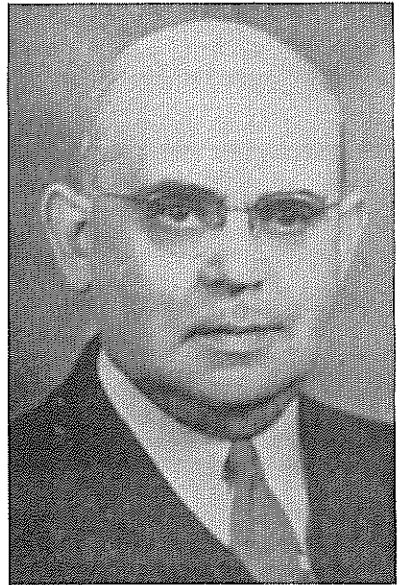
1938 - 1954

### FRANK GRAY RESIGNS FROM THE PASTORATE

Samuel Swanson, who had succeeded Frank Gray as superintendent of the Northwest District of the Assemblies of God in 1930, served for five years. In 1935, he was suddenly stricken and passed on after a short illness. Samuel Swanson, a sweet-spirited man was well-accepted throughout the Northwest District of the Assemblies of God. Following Samuel Swanson's death, Pastor Frank Gray was again called to fill the office of district superintendent on an interim basis although he was still carrying the responsibility of the Tacoma church. Although deeply involved in a thriving Pentecostal Tabernacle, he did not refuse.

This was a key period for the Northwest District of the Assemblies of God. On June 25, 1935, the District became incorporated as a non-profit religious organization. After a few months of this dual responsibility for Frank Gray, the District Council met and elected Thomas A. Sandall, then secretary-treasurer, to be superintendent. Rev. Sandall had earlier served as pastor of the Puyallup Assembly of God Church and following that as pastor of Stoneway Tabernacle in north Seattle. As a result of problems, the office of superintendent again became vacant. On June 25, 1937, Frank Gray was once more called to fill the office of district superintendent, though he was still carrying the responsibility of the Tacoma church. By 1938, there were 219 ordained and licensed ministers in the Northwest District making it virtually impossible for the superintendent to maintain pastoral responsibilities concurrently.

At this point Frank Gray was faced with the choice: continue as pastor of Tacoma's Pentecostal Tabernacle or serve as full-time superintendent of the Northwest District. In 1930, when he had been confronted with this choice, he chose to remain as pastor. Eight years later he reluctantly resigned the pastorate of the church he had led from its infancy to become a thriving congregation.



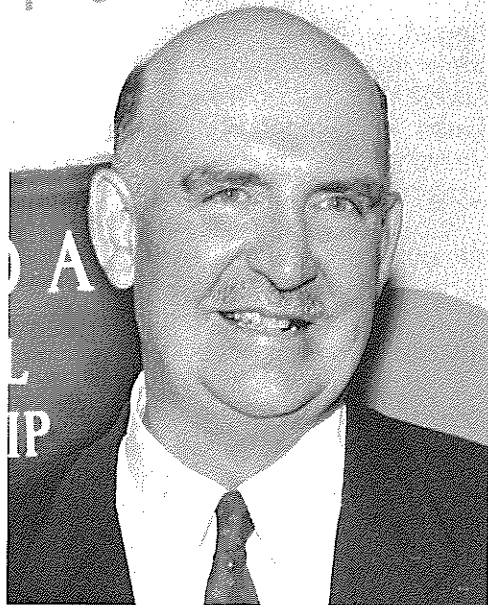
*Rev. Frank Gray*

# HARRY J. STEIL YEARS

## 1938-1943

During the summer of 1938, Tacoma Bethel Pentecostal Assembly (begun many years earlier as a Scandinavian congregation) invited an East coast evangelist to be the speaker at meetings conducted in a large tent. Rev. Harry Steil, a gifted speaker, had studied the Bible intensively and was considered an authority on Bible prophecy. At the time of his coming to Tacoma for these special meetings, he was pastor of Calvary Assembly of God in Washington, D.C.

Y OF GOD



Much interest was created by Rev. Steil's preaching and a considerable number from the Pentecostal Tabernacle attended the services. He was "in-mind and at-hand" when Pastor Gray's resignation from the church was announced.

Frank Gray had been pastor for twenty years. His ministry was not spectacular, nor was he an orator, such as Charles S. Price, but his words of exhortation and teaching of the scriptures were solid doctrine.

Harry Steil's ministry was quite different. His skill in speaking and his competence in dealing with Bible prophecy, made his ministry very attractive. At a special business meeting in July, 1938, Harry J. Steil was invited to become the second pastor of Pentecostal Tabernacle. He accepted and promptly resigned his pastorate in the Nation's capital. After a period of time in which he disposed of some of his possessions on the East coast and shipped the balance across the continent, he became a resident of Tacoma. (He secured a rental house almost directly across South "L" Street in Tacoma from the man he succeeded as pastor and who was now his district superintendent.) Superintendent Gray continued to live in Tacoma and maintained the District office in his home for several years. Later, the District headquarters was transferred to Seattle, located in a building purchased by the District.

***Pastor Harry J. Steil***

Pastor Steil's wife, Ethel, his daughter, Winifred, and son, Bobby, joined him as he began his ministry in Tacoma's Pentecostal Tabernacle.



Mrs. Steil was a very supportive individual. She didn't participate a great deal in the public services of the church, but always was helpful to the pastor, the church and lent her assistance wherever needed. Winifred was a teenager and a blessing to the family. Bobby, a child when he came to Tacoma with his parents, was the joy of his father.

Pastor Steil's skill in preaching, demonstrated earlier in the year in the tent meetings, was very evident in the services. His sermons were carefully and thoughtfully prepared.

## **WORLD WAR II**

One year from the beginning of Harry Steil's pastorate, World War II began, as Adolph Hitler and his Nazi army invaded Austria. Two years and three months later the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, by the Japanese suddenly brought our country into the war. These were new and different times. The United States had been in World War I for twelve months just 23 years earlier, but this war was assuredly going to be much longer and far greater in casualties and costs.

Up to this time, the feeling in the Assemblies of God, in general, and the congregation of the Pentecostal Tabernacle, in particular, was that war amounts to premeditated killing—one of the gravest of sins. There was much prayer and discussion in the congregation as to what should be the attitude and position of the church.

Many civilian industries were being forced to curtail and some even to discontinue operation so that all reasonable effort could be directed toward readiness in this now global war. Even prior to Pearl Harbor, many industries were converting from peace-time pursuits to those supporting readiness for war. What should a pastor do under these circumstances? Should he encourage his people to resist the government by not cooperating with its effort to survive in this mad world?

Another matter, even more grave: What position to take as to joining the armed services—army, navy, army air corps, marines, coast guard and related organizations. By law, every male was required to register with the Selective Service system, to determine how and whom to select for the Armed Services. This would provide the number needed to augment the volunteers. But the need for armed services personnel was so great that large numbers were being drafted.

From information circulated, volunteers would likely receive preferential treatment to those who waited until called by the Selective Service. For instance, during the early part of the war, the Army Air Corps was not drafting men. Therefore, if a man's preference was for that branch of the service, it would almost seem to his best advantage to volunteer.

What should Pastor Steil say to these young men who were faced with such decisions? There were substantial differences of opinion within the congregation. The constitution and by-laws of Pentecostal Tabernacle took a rather rigid stand against war. After much prayer and counseling

together, the by-laws were amended to approve cooperation with necessary defense effort of the Nation, while maintaining that the church's position was to support the honoring of the sacredness of human life.

Much soul-searching was done by families of the congregation and throughout the nation as the agony and pain of war affected most in one way or another. Except for a very few defense businesses the realities of sacrificing the usual way of life were felt very keenly. It called for much readjusting in families throughout the entire nation

There were many young men who answered the call either by the Selective Service draft or by volunteering. Most of the men from the church who participated in the war, returned. One did not! Ted Dickson, intelligent, handsome and talented young man was lost in a mission while in the Pacific.

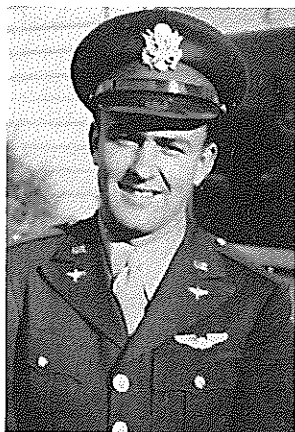
## PENTECOSTAL TABERNACLE MEN IN WORLD WAR II

Persons who regularly or occasionally attended Pentecostal Tabernacle and served the country during World War II are:

Harold Burmark	Navy
Richard Cole	Army
Robert Deacon	Navy
Ted Dickson	Army Air Force

### **LOST IN ACTION**

Leon Erickson	Army Air Force
Haakon Larsen	Navy
Alvin Lindstrom	Navy
Arnold Loen	Navy
Dallas Martin	Navy
Henry Peterson	Army
Donald Prideaux	Navy
Donald Seeley	Navy
Alfred Swanstrom	Army
Roy Swanstrom	Army Air Force
Richard Tabell	Army
Emil Texstrum	Army Air Force



***Ted Dickson,  
Talented Musician,  
M.I.A.***

## SACRIFICES DURING WORLD WAR II

Every person, young and old, came face to face with the realities of all-out-war. The axis nations, Germany led by Adolph Hitler, Italy by Benito Mussolini and Japan by Emperor Hirohito, engaged in aggressive action in all except the New World until that fateful day of December 7, 1941. Hitler

constantly boasted that although Germany had been defeated in World War I, this was going to be the time when Germany and the Aryan race would conquer and rule the world. The Allies had other ideas. Industry after industry began converting from normal peace-time manufacturing and distribution to the defense effort. Wholesale and retail dealers were experiencing shortages of their normal inventories.

The defense effort created shortages of many kinds of goods. Imported gasoline now became in short supply. Much of the rubber from Indonesia was curtailed. In order to provide fair distribution of critical supplies, a very comprehensive program of rationing was instituted. One of the things that affected the lives of most was gasoline rationing. Very hurriedly, the government issued gasoline cards, based on one factor—the degree of urgency to the war effort of the driving to be done.

Since attendance at religious services was not classified by the government as a war-essential activity, persons who had the most restrictive cards and who lived some distance from South 12th and "G" Streets had a very difficult time in making their allotment of gasoline stretch for all their needs. Many sold their cars in favor of the transit system. Since the street cars used electricity for power obtained from hydro-electric sources, this did not create as much of a problem. However, church attendance, particularly at the Tuesday and Thursday night services was affected.

Pastor Harry Steil became frustrated at his lack of gasoline. He sold his car and used the street cars to make his pastoral calls. This limited the number of calls he could make. Parishioners who had become accustomed to receiving calls from the Pastor keenly felt this change. Still, in spite of the major disruption in the lives of practically every family, the work of God in the Pentecostal Tabernacle continued.

One of the full-gospel churches in the city invited an evangelist by the name of Jerry Owens for special revival and out-reach services. Rev. Owens had gained much attention in his ministry through a phenomenon of being able to quote extensive passages of scripture which he claimed were written in words of fire that he could read while preaching. The novelty of this attracted many people to listen to this man with such a wonderful gift. Pastor Steil wasn't at all impressed. He took the position that this was a subterfuge being imposed on gullible people, some of whom were members of his congregation.

Pastor Steil provided teaching and guidance to his congregation, warning them against being fooled by Jerry Owens. (Owens claimed to have been a University of Southern California football star. Investigation verified that he had attended that University less than three months in his freshman year.) Pastor Steil not only denounced this from his pulpit, but sent a series of warnings to his congregation by mail. This disconcerted some members of the congregation who felt the pastor should concentrate on his own congregation and not be involved in other church's problems. Several members of the church left during this time. After a while, Jerry Owens left town and the Pentecostal Tabernacle addressed itself to its objectives and facing the impact of World War II.

During the latter portion of Harry Steil's pastorate, there came into the church from the defense and military camps in the area, particularly Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base, many members of the Armed Services. Of particular blessing to the congregation was the preaching ministry of Captain Stiles, who had pastored a full-gospel church in Colorado. He had volunteered for the chaplaincy and was now assigned to Fort Lewis.

Families in the church were gracious in showing hospitality to these service people, many of whom were far from home and faced the probability of becoming involved in the hostilities. There were a number of service people in uniform at each Sunday service. This was a great opportunity for members of the congregation to show Christian love and hospitality to these men who were risking their lives for our country. There were always enough invitations to accommodate these visitors for a Sunday dinner at their homes or to be taken to a restaurant to fellowship with Christians.

Pastor Steil recently stated, "I can recall numerous occasions when these homesick and heartsick boys would pour out their hearts to me about the distress they suffered when they had to learn and practice the savagery of using their bayonets, knives and weapons on their fellow-human beings. It became an especially sober time when they learned that their regiments were soon destined to embark on overseas duty, many thousands of miles away from families and loved ones. They didn't know whether or not they would be gone one year, two years, three years or never to return, from overseas duty. (Fort Lewis was the embarkation point for hundreds of thousands of service people during the course of World War II.) What altar services we had in those solemn, heavy-hearted days!"

Pastor Harry Steil's family experienced the direct impact of the epidemic of poliomyelitis epidemic during their years in Tacoma. Over 240 people were stricken with this dread disease in the area. It became very personal for the Harry Steils. Son Bob became very ill and was taken to the hospital. After thorough examination, at midnight, the doctor informed the Steils that their son had become afflicted with this feared disease. It wasn't just something that affected somebody else in another state or across town. The pastor's only son had polio. Pastor Steil recalls making his visits to the hospitals and witnessing many persons in the grim-looking iron lungs. There was the promise, *I am the Lord that healeth thee*. Bob's polio attack began in his neck, shoulders and throat. Later it attacked his legs and feet, impairing his arches.

But God heard the prayers of Pastor Steil, the family and the congregation. His arch braces were required for less than two years. The neck, throat and shoulder impairment returned to normal. Today he is a healthy, strong "giant"—six feet eight inches in height. He didn't become a basketball player, but when he was ordered to report for a physical examination during the Korean war, he went through the normal procedures. Finally, on one occasion, while standing in line, a medical corps colonel asked him his height. When given the information, he told him to "fall out"—he was too tall and they wouldn't have uniforms to fit him. He was ready to

serve his country, but God willed otherwise.

During the war, Pastor Steil received a call from the Rock Church on West 59th Street in New York City. He felt led of God to accept and move back to the Eastern part of the country. After a farewell service, the family packed their belongings and left Tacoma. The church had been in existence for twenty-five years, with but two pastors. Now a third one must be selected. Members of the boards of the church were acquainted with few persons who might be considered for the pastorate.

# DWIGHT H. McLAUGHLIN YEARS

## 1943 - 1950

Following Pastor Steil's resignation, District Superintendent Frank Gray was called by the Board of Deacons for counsel in selecting the next pastor. Superintendent Gray identified a number of pastors that he felt had qualifications to be considered. In order that the members of the congregation might be involved in the selection process, the list of prospects was narrowed to three men. Dwight H. McLaughlin had served for a number of years as pastor of the Walla Walla, Washington, Assemblies of God Church. A committee of board members drove over to Walla Walla for one Sunday service. They intended to slip into the service unnoticed so as to witness the pastor in a normal situation. But, in a small congregation, such was an impossibility. When the Pastor recognized one of them, the reason for their coming thus became apparent.

After their attendance at this service, they drove home and gave a positive report. The Board then sent an invitation for Pastor McLaughlin to come to Tacoma on a Sunday to preach to the congregation. He accepted the invitation for a Sunday in September, 1943. His wife, Ruth, and their three children, Louise, Virginia and Delford, accompanied him.

Soon after that, a business meeting was called to proceed with the pastoral selection process. Voting was performed by secret ballot. Some members of the congregation inquired as to how they could compare Dwight McLaughlin with the other nominees, since they had not seen the other two. That question was not satisfactorily answered, but note was taken of the fact that if in the future the congregation was going to vote on pastoral candidates they should have opportunity to meet all nominees.

Superintendent Frank Gray, when asked, gave a fine recommendation regarding the work Pastor McLaughlin had performed in Walla Walla. He stated that, in his opinion, he would make a very fine pastor in Tacoma although he was careful not to show favoritism since he highly respected all three nominees. When the votes were counted Dwight H. McLaughlin received more than the necessary two-thirds majority and was declared pastor.

Pastor Harry Steil had become responsible for his own housing. He rented a house for the five years he was in the city. Since the trend in some of the Assemblies of God churches was toward the church providing a parsonage, the Pentecostal Tabernacle board and congregation agreed that they would follow this procedure. They purchased a house near South 11th and Ainsworth Avenue for the use of the McLaughlin family while serving as pastors.

## **PASTOR McLAUGHLIN SPIRITUAL AND MUSICAL**

Dwight McLaughlin was a pleasant and easy person with whom to work. He did not have strong pre-conceived ideas about a wide variety of things other than basic doctrine of the Bible and his personal integrity.

He was a native of North Carolina, and took great delight in letting people know he was a "Tarheel." (It didn't appear that too many people were as impressed with the "Tarheel State" as was Pastor McLaughlin, however.) He had a delightful sense of humor. He was devout, kind, and loved to sing. Sometimes he would sing a solo during the service, accompanying himself on his banjo. One of his favorites, which became a favorite of many in the congregation, was, "I Won't Have to Cross Jordan Alone." What a feeling of victory could be sensed as he triumphantly sang and talked of the Christ who cares for us while we are on this earth and who will take us to be with Him forever when we leave this life—and we "won't have to cross Jordan alone."



***Pastor Dwight McLaughlin***

Pastor McLaughlin's wife, Ruth, was a quiet, unassuming lady but strong in spirit. She played the piano and the violin. Without much formal training, God had given her talents which she developed and used for His glory. She participated in the various activities of the church in a very unobtrusive manner.

The eldest daughter, Louise, immediately enrolled in Stadium High School. The talents received through father and mother contributed to unusual competence on the violin, contributing greatly to the services of the church. Upon graduation from high school, she chose to enroll in Central Bible Institute (now College) in Springfield, Missouri, location of the headquarters of the Assemblies of God. There were other regional Bible schools and colleges throughout the country, (including Northwest College of the Assemblies of God, now located in Kirkland, Washington), but she thought there was something extra about attending Bible college in the headquarters city.

While attending CBI, Louise became acquainted with Paul Greisen, a member of a well-known Assemblies of God family in the Mid Section of the country. Their acquaintance became more than casual and in due time they announced their intention of being married. The wedding was planned

for Louise's home church. Pastor McLaughlin was not only the father of the bride at the wedding, but he also read the vows and performed the ceremony on September 9, 1949. After their marriage, the Greisens engaged in gospel work in this country and then obeyed their call to go to Hong Kong as Assemblies of God missionaries where they still serve at the time this book was written. Before being appointed to a foreign missions assignment, they obtained experience in this country, including serving as pastors of the South Tacoma Assembly of God at an important time during the early years of its existence.



***The Musical McLaughlins***

Paul and Louise Greisen have served with distinction and honor in Hong Kong for many years, working largely with the training program in radio work and with the International Correspondence Institute (I.C.I.)

Delford, the only son in the family, was quite different in personality from his sister, Louise. He played the trombone in the church orchestra. Del developed into a very fine young man and was a credit to his family. One Sunday evening after the service, Del and his father were engaged in some private conversation outside the front door of the church. After Del left his father's presence, Pastor McLaughlin turned and remarked, "Look at him! He knows more today than he's ever known before or will ever know again." (Most boys growing through adolescence transit a similar stage in their lives, but most fathers don't describe it quite as colorfully or forthrightly.) Delford found a career in education and resides in the vicinity of Portland, Oregon.

Virginia, the youngest, acquired special talent in playing the organ. The church had installed an Orgatron some years before, a sophisticated reed organ with loud speakers in the ceiling. She enjoyed playing. The congregation appreciated her ability and cooperative attitude. With both daughters and parents blessed with musical talent, the services were special.

The United States had been engaged in World War II for nearly two years when Pastor McLaughlin began his ministry in Tacoma. An additional two years elapsed before the final surrender of the Japanese in 1945. Pastor McLaughlin had a very tender and sympathetic heart for those who experienced loneliness and pain. As the fighting intensified and casualties grew, the hardships of being in a global war affected everyone. The pastor, with his wife, comforted and lent their friendship to those who were hurting—families whose father or husband, son or daughter were in a high-risk area, far from home.



## **PENTECOSTAL TABERNACLE BECOMES ASSEMBLY OF GOD**

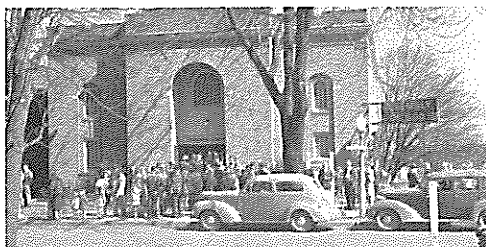
Dwight McLaughlin was convinced that great benefit ensued for a full gospel church to formally affiliate with the Assemblies of God. His church in Walla Walla was a member of the Assemblies of God. The Tacoma congregation had been worshipping together independently, since many felt more comfortable that way. The mission on Tacoma Avenue had been named Assembly of God without formal membership.

A number of the lay leaders had left the Lutheran Church because they felt it lacked vitality and did not embrace the full gospel. The mainline churches, generally speaking, did not teach that healing for our physical bodies was purchased on the Cross of Calvary by our Lord as a part of the atonement. They did not subscribe to the belief that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, as evidenced by the speaking in other tongues, was available for today. Realizing the strict control most of the large denominations maintained over their member churches, they feared "getting caught in the same trap again."

This congregation was content with having their pastor associated with this organization, whose beliefs were compatible with that of the congregation. (That was fortunate, since Pastor Gray had been superintendent of the Northwest District for his first eleven years as pastor. Obviously, he was required to be a member of the Assemblies of God.)

As time went on, it became more evident that a formal affiliation of the church with the Assemblies of God would become more of an advantage than disadvantage. A number of those who were originally responsible for the organization of the church had either passed away or were no longer active in its government.

Harry Steil, while being a minister loyal to and in good standing with the Assemblies of God, was not a strong organization man. Dwight McLaughlin, being convinced of the benefit to both the church and the national organization, enthusiastically recommended that it was time for membership in the parent body. After much discussion and evaluation of the relative benefits and disadvantages, the board of deacons recommended and the congregation ratified, in 1944, the application for affiliation of Pentecostal Tabernacle with the Assemblies of God. The application was approved by the national organization during that same year.



***Assembly of God, 1942***

## **CHANGE NAME TO FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD**

Upon further study and examination it seemed desirable to identify this church among other Assembly of God churches in the city of which there were several. Some of them, University Place, Milton, South Tacoma, Ruston and Spanaway had received their start through the service of Christian workers and/or construction help from the Pentecostal Tabernacle/Assembly of God. Don Rogne gathered a group of Full Gospel believers and began a church on the corner of South 13th and "K" Streets. This congregation's doctrine corresponded to the Assemblies of God. Rev. Rogne became affiliated as an Assemblies of God minister. With the generic name, Assembly of God, it might lead to confusion as to which Assembly of God.

Pastor McLaughlin again counseled with the Board of Deacons concerning another change. They agreed with his reasoning and recommended to the congregation that the name be changed again, to First Assembly of God, to distinguish it from other congregations that were affiliated with the Assemblies of God. (This name remained until the dedication of the building that replaced the burned sanctuary on South 18th and Puget Sound, when it became First Assembly of God Life Center, as it is at the time of this writing.)

Following World War II, Pastor McLaughlin felt an increasing burden for the German people who had suffered so greatly during the war, especially the Christians. He prepared himself for going to Germany, first of all by studying the German language. He attended classes at Pacific Lutheran College (University) to gain a proficiency in conversational German.

He would practice his German by conducting conversations with practically anyone he met who spoke the language. He made good preparation for the first of several trips to West Germany. He raised funds and secured goods to ship to Germany, to be there when he arrived so he could personally supervise the distribution to those in such great need. The love in his heart for these distressed people was an inspiration to his congregation in Tacoma.

The years of Pastor Dwight McLaughlin's service as pastor of First Assembly of God witnessed a stability and growth in the congregation. He, along with his fine family, was deeply loved and highly respected.

Pastor McLaughlin had a great love for the ministry. He often expressed the delight and the honor he felt by being able to be counted as a "minister of Jesus Christ." He also had a burden to interest the finest of the young men he knew to devote their lives to the Gospel.

## **PASTOR McLAUGHLIN INSPIRES YOUNG MEN**

After the war was over, Pastor McLaughlin, who had taught a Sunday School class of young married people, which he called the Searchers Class, resigned to begin to teach a class of high school boys. He developed an outstanding rapport with the boys and an excellent relationship developed among them. Several members of that class were called to the ministry. There is little doubt but that Pastor McLaughlin's influence made them more responsive to the call of God.

Certain of the boys in his class, needed encouragement and some financial help to be able to realize their calling. In order to respond to this need, Pastor McLaughlin and a committee sought to find a way to encourage these boys to respond to the call of God. A scholarship program was adopted by the Board of Deacons and a committee was appointed to establish guidelines, to accept and examine applications so that some financial aid could be provided where needed and deserved. This scholarship program continued for a number of years. Although it is not now functioning in the same form as previously, there has been a consistent effort to assist those needing help to attend Bible school. Financial help is still available for those young people who have a definite call into the ministry and who are in financial need.

Pastor McLaughlin ministry was beneficial and challenging. The church prospered under his leadership.

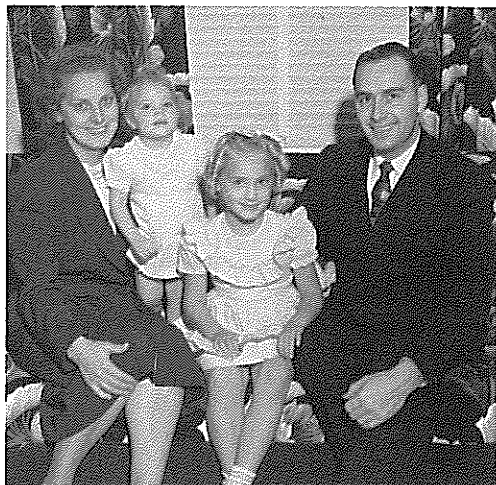
## **MASON YOUNGLUND JOINS MINISTERIAL STAFF**

Although World War II had many devastating effects, a blessing came to First Assembly of God in the form of Mason Younglund. Mason had been stationed at Fort Lewis the latter part of the war and attended the church regularly. Mason felt a call to the ministry. Before his entrance into the Armed Services he attended Southwestern Bible Institute for three years and received a certificate.

After being discharged from the Service, he attended Southern California Bible College for two years. He earned a Bachelor of Theology degree in 1948. Mason and his lovely wife, LaVerne, were married at the close of a Sunday morning service while Mason was still in the service.

Mason Younglund was invited to join the church staff as an assistant pastor in 1948. He remained for three years, including the first year of William Kirschke's pastorate. During the intervening years he has pastored in Napavine, Bremerton and Shelton where he remained for 23 years. For the last eight years he has been an associate pastor with Glen Cole, Capital Christian Center, Sacramento, California.

In 1950, Pastor McLaughlin advised the Board and congregation that he felt led of God to resign his pastorate and to enter the evangelistic ministry. A farewell service was held and the McLaughlins bade farewell to their Tacoma congregation, as pastors, although they were to remain within Washington State for another eight years, most of which time he served as district superintendent.

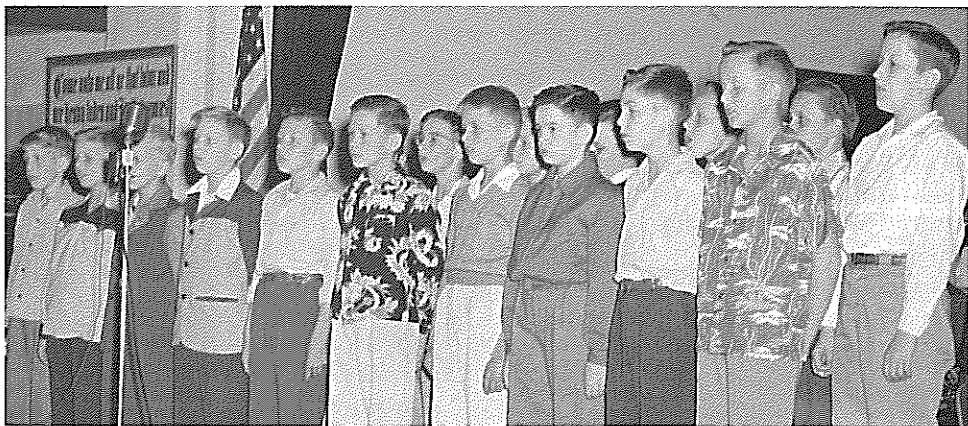


*The Mason Younglund Family*

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Beginning in 1945, First Assembly of God conducted a Daily Vacation Bible School, normally conducted for two weeks each year following the dismissal for summer vacation of the public schools in the area. The church's three buses were used extra hours in driving to various parts of the city to bring them in to the church for DVBS. This concentrated effort resulted in many conversions. Bible school leaders, who carried a heavy load, were Frida Gerla, Clara Fjermedal Thrane and Myrtle Pointen.

During these years Daily Vacation Bible Schools were performing a valuable ministry and many unchurched children attended, as well as those



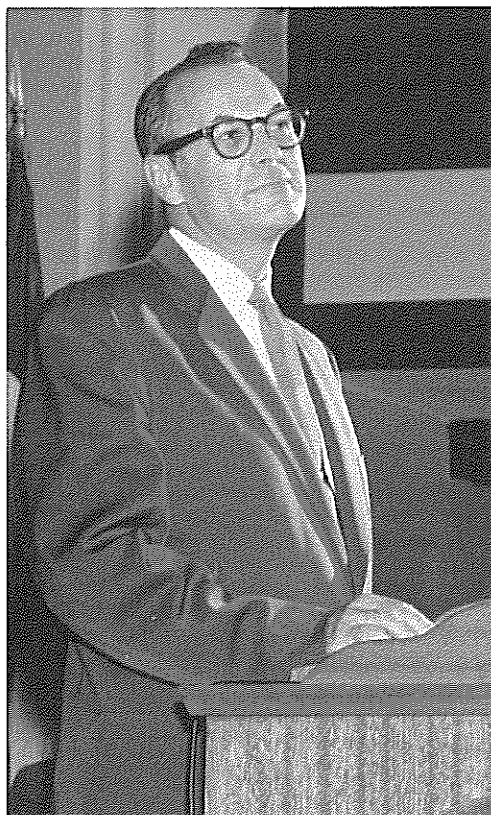
from First Assembly of God. Each of the pastors were enthusiastic and cooperative in the program and in the operation of the schools for two weeks each summer—usually the first two weeks of vacation.



## **THE WILLIAM E. KIRSCHKE YEARS 1950-1954**

Following the resignation of Pastor D. H. McLaughlin in 1950, search began to find the 4th pastor of First Assembly of God. Christian education with strong emphasis on the Sunday School had always been a most important aspect of the church schedule. William E. Kirschke, nationally known Sunday School leader and enthusiast, made known his availability for a pastorate. Rev. Kirschke had recently served as executive secretary of the National Sunday School Association with headquarters in Chicago, Illinois. For a number of years he headed the Sunday School Department of the Assemblies of God with offices in Springfield, Missouri. With knowledge, experience and great enthusiasm he helped churches develop strong Sunday School programs.

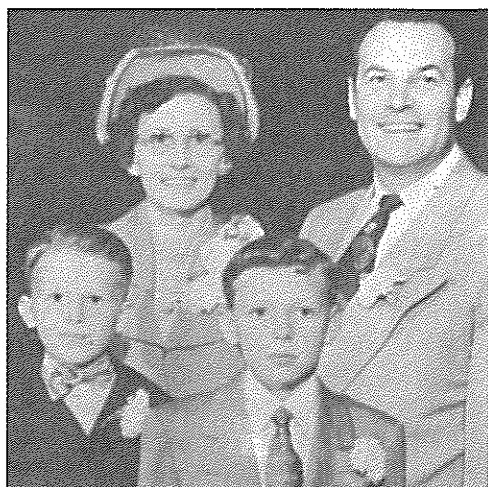
William Kirschke and his wife, Dorothy, had two sons, Billy (William) and David. During their short term as pastors of First Assembly of God, a daughter, Beverly, was born. (This is the only instance in the 70-year history of the church of a baby being born into the home of the pastor.) What joy and excitement when Beverly became the fifth member of the Kirschke



***Pastor William E. Kirshke***

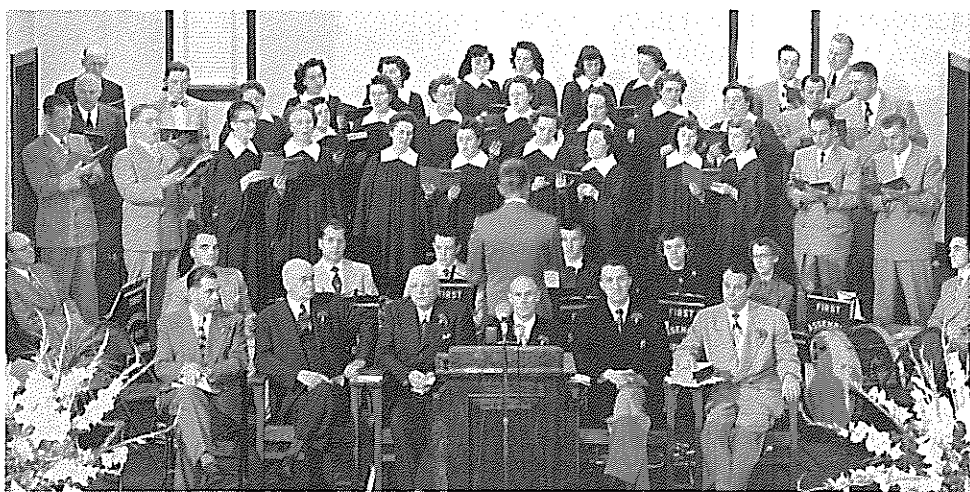
household. The church members rejoiced over this great event.

Pastor Kirschke was a gifted speaker, a very conscientious and dedicated minister. He sincerely wanted to provide leadership and other pastoral attributes to First Assembly of God. His well-prepared sermons provided a challenge to the congregation in the Christian walk. Pastor Kirschke spent a part of his life in Spokane, Washington, and had come from a family which could not provide him with many advantages.



***Pastor Kirschke and family***

The greatest burden on Pastor Kirschke's heart was for children. He was a Sunday School enthusiast and supporter without peer. Much of his previous experience had been directed toward church education, of which he was a strong advocate. Although the earlier pastors emphasized the importance of Sunday School attendance and the development of a strong Christian education program, Pastor Kirschke brought a new approach.



***25th Anniversary 1926 - 1951***

Since all available space in the church had been converted into classrooms, the only alternative was to construct additional facilities. The church site was small. Present buildings filled the lots except for a small portion in back of the annex originally built as a home for the elderly but had since been converted into Sunday School rooms. Pastor Kirschke

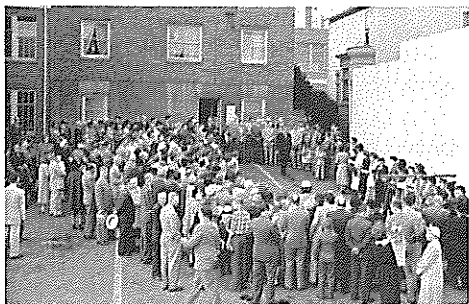
enthusiastically and convincingly persuaded the deacons, trustees and the congregation that a Sunday School classroom addition was a high priority item.

Pastor Kirschke maintained that large numbers of children would be able to profit by Sunday School attendance with the expanded facilities and transportation. Many children beyond reasonable walking distance of the church that had no means of transportation would be able to secure Christian education. Their parents needed prodding. After approval by the congregation, planning for the building and raising of funds commenced. Concurrent with the plans for the building was the purchase of additional buses for use in transporting many of these children from and to their homes.

With convincing promotions, Pastor Kirschke was able to successfully encourage the congregation to give the extra dollars to provide more Sunday School classroom space. Extensive search was made to find used buses that could be converted to appropriate transportation. The buses needed to operate only a few miles during the week, but they did need to be reliable. Inexpensive and reliable—was a combination not easy to find. But Sunday School Superintendent William Pointen, formerly an automobile mechanic, together with Pastor Kirschke began a search for appropriate equipment.

After inspecting available buses in the vicinity, they purchased two, making a total of three. With a three-fold increase in the number of bus seats and new Sunday School classrooms, the recruiting of new students began. House-to-house solicitation for Sunday School students started in a former government housing project of World War II on Portland Avenue; also in the Salishan Housing Development.

William Pointen's service as Sunday School superintendent appeared tireless. He and his supportive wife, Myrtle, with no children of their own, became "father and mother" to a host of other children, as they extended their love and generosity to those who lacked. William Pointen, spent long hours making certain that the building, the buses, the teaching staff, and the Sunday School literature were all ready to provide the very best teaching environment for these children. Many of these received but one hour per



***Ground Breaking,  
Sunday School Addition***



***Cadets for Christ***

week of any kind of education and encouragement in the Christian walk. The positive support provided by Pastor Kirschke and Sunday School Superintendent Pointen made a very effective team.

During Pastor Kirschke's service as pastor, Mary Burmark, Gwen Hansen and Dorothy Kirschke served as church secretaries.

## **DAFFODIL PARADE FLOATS**

During the 1950's, there developed an interest among a sizable number of the young people and adults to build a float each Spring and enter it in the annual Puyallup Valley Daffodil Parade. Although some of the floats in the parade were constructed at a high financial cost and containing a vast number of daffodils, the First Assembly of God Sunday School made a creditable showing. Beginning with a donated chassis and engine and the superstructure built with donated labor and materials, some very attractive floats represented the Sunday School.



***Daffodil Parade Float***

This provided an excellent opportunity to provide a witness for Christ as well as to let people know of the Sunday School. Preparing the floats for the parade required a great deal of concentrated effort, particularly the night before the parade when the daffodils were placed on the float. William Pointen, Superintendent, and Detmer Ketler, Assistant Superintendent, assumed the responsibility for this annual project.

## **CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS**

Interest was spreading throughout the nation in Assemblies of God Churches to provide a more effective program for the young people. They needed to have profitable activities in which they could participate to assist them in becoming more effective Christian witnesses. In the early days of the church, Pastor Gray discouraged the separation of the young people from the balance of the congregation. He believed that the creation of an artificial division based on age differentials was not profitable. In the earlier days the numbers involved were few so that it would have been less effective to divide the group.

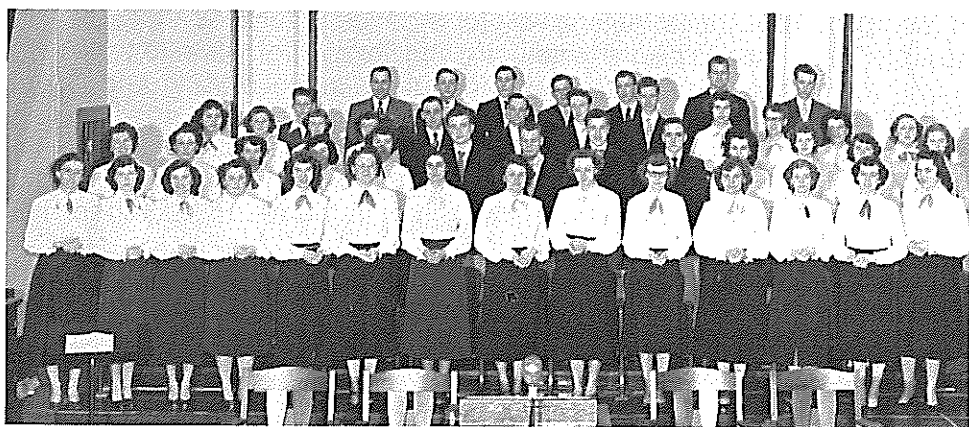
In the 1950's the enthusiasm of the young people made it important



to provide diverse activities in which they could participate to maintain their own identity. The age span for the Christ's Ambassadors was generally considered to be 13 to 35, although those in their 30's were in the minority. Gwen Hansen, eldest daughter of Missionaries Harold and Lettie Hansen, was living in Tacoma at this time and was selected as the C. A. President. She was a delightful and spiritual young lady and provided excellent leadership.



*C. A. 's Meet with Pastor Kirschke*



*C.A. Choir, Dorothy Kirschke Director*

## CHURCH LIBRARY DEVELOPED

During the first ten years in Pentecostal Tabernacle, Victor Fredlund, secretary of the church and member of the Board of Deacons organized a library in the church. Victor had a studious and inquiring mind. Although he did not have the privilege of advanced formal training, he was an avid reader. The education he had came as a result of his studious nature and diligent application.

The need for a library of Christian books was apparent, but Victor Fredlund began to make things happen. He began accumulating good Christian material, fiction and non-fiction. Persons attending the church were encouraged to borrow and read this material. After the Victor Fredlund family moved to the Yakima area, progress slowed in the development of the library.

During Pastor Kirschke's service in Tacoma, and because of the enthusiasm and the expertise for the further development of the church library, Frithjof (Fritz) Tayet, an educator in the Tacoma Schools, assumed the leadership of further developing the library. Fritz was principal of Mason Junior High School. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Tayet, pioneers in the Assembly of God Mission on Tacoma Avenue. He had great enthusiasm for the improvement of the church library. Under Fritz Tayet's leadership, the library consistently increased in size and scope, until it became a very integral and popular ministry of the church. Fritz Tayet was untiring in his efforts to make this church library a significant part of the church ministries.

After Fritz Tayet's untimely death in 1959, the further development of the library proceeded quite slowly for a period of time. Various people accepted the responsibility of managing the library, from time to time.

When the first church was constructed at South 18th and Puget Sound, a library room was provided. This room also served as a meeting place for boards and committees as well as a Sunday School classroom. Many of the books were damaged or destroyed in the 1975 fire which destroyed the building. Provision was made in the rebuilt church for the library.

At the completion of Fulton Buntain Learning Center in 1985, a room which also served as a school classroom was set aside as a combination church and school library, designated the Tayet Memorial Library. Because the location of the library was not convenient to where most of the people traveled it was not widely used. Of recent months, the church library has been transferred to a more convenient area, formerly occupied for church offices. Marilyn Wick and Dorothy Sturdivant have performed valiantly in the management of the library and supervising the movement of the books and other materials, cataloging them and making preparation for circulation. The library at First Assembly of God currently is named the Fritz Tayet Memorial Library in honor of the man who contributed so much.

## **CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND MINISTRIES**

Originally, the spiritual phase of the work was directed by the Pastor with the advice and assistance of three deacons. Later when events were beginning to transpire which would culminate in purchasing of real property, a corporation was formed and a board of trustees of five men was elected by the vote of the members of the corporation. Later, the number of trustees was increased from five to seven, and then to nine, the number there are today.

The original board of deacons consisted of three men. As the congregation increased in size, the number of deacons was increased from three to five and then to seven. While Frank Gray was still pastor in the 1930's, the number was increased again to twelve. Some of the reasons presented to the membership when this change was made that the number of people now attending church had increased so dramatically that twelve would provide better representation. The thought also was advanced, that with twelve deacons living in various parts of the city a geographical assignment could be made with each deacon being responsible for visiting members of the church in his assigned area of the city, when sick or when other needs arose. (This concept was never totally satisfactory in its application.)

Deacons serving in 1951 were: Frank Bentley, Norman Burmark, Arthur Burk, Rollie Burke, E. W. Cutler, Morris Fields, Ralph Frederick, Harold Gray, Edward Hansch, Conrad Konsmo, Helmer Malm, and Noah Rich. Trustees were: Manuel Becker, Harry Cole, Thoralf Hagen, William Johnson, Detmer Ketler, Harold Wick and Elmer Youngberg. Secretary Arthur Burk and Treasurer Frank Bentley served on the trustee board by virtue of their offices.

Harold Gray served as choir director from 1935 to 1950, while Dorothy Kirschke led the Christ's Ambassadors Choir. Alfred Swanstrom was director of the "Silver Band" as Pastor McLaughlin affectionately called them. Burt Foos held the responsibility of directing the Ministry of Prayer.

Gwen Hansen, Mary Burmark and Dorothy Kirschke served as office secretaries. Grace Rody was head hostess at the Servicemen's Christian Center. Herb Crowder, former minister, who returned to the ministry shortly after this time, became Director of Development of Northwest College, a position he competently filled for many years. Emma Johnson, very efficient chairman of floral arrangements and her husband, William Johnson, head usher for many years after the death of Ole Fjermedal, were a great blessing to the congregation. Custodian was Otto Niskanen.

# **PENTECOSTAL TABERNACLE THROUGH THE EYES OF A BOY**

*Impressions received from interview with Northwest District Council  
Superintendent Frank Cole*

Most historical accounts are viewed from the perspective of adults. While these may vary from person to person, they likely are more similar than the comparison between adults and children.

Harry and Marie Cole were converted during the meetings in Tacoma with Dr. Charles S. Price in 1930. As soon as they had surrendered their hearts to God, they became diligent and faithful Christians, attending the Pentecostal Tabernacle and becoming actively involved in the ministries of the church. They had three children, all boys— Richard, Marshall and Frank. The family attended Sunday School and church together. Often, when church time came, the family prepared to take the street car so that they could attend the service. Later they secured a more reliable family automobile which made transportation to and from church much easier. Even so, with gasoline rationing during World War II, it was difficult.

The three Cole sons entered widely diverse vocations. Richard, the eldest, entered the field of medicine, while Marshall became a boat builder. The youngest, Frank, entered the ministry. Frank enrolled in Northwest Bible College, Seattle, Washington. His first ministry was as assistant pastor at the Ketchikan Gospel Tabernacle in Ketchikan, Alaska.

In his earlier days, he became interested in observing Pastor Steil in his efforts to have the sanctuary "kitchen chairs" replaced with opera seats. It is true that they were simple wooden chairs. Pastor Steil did succeed and fabric-covered opera seats were installed. Because of the space requirements of these seats with the arm rests, it reduced the effective capacity by about 100 seats but seating was infinitely more comfortable.

Frank recalls in the lower auditorium, that the prayer room also served as Sunday School classrooms. Drapes were secured to partition the various classrooms to provide some degree of sound and sight insulation. Godly men who loved boys made a real impact on this young man. Martin Tayet was a loving, kind teacher. Ralph Fredrick exhibited a genuine love of boys—not easily forgotten.

As to most persons in the earlier days of the church, Emma Johnson, Sunday School Superintendent, made a strong impression with her diligent, conscientious and capable leadership, together with a love for boys and girls. She provided the leadership for the annual New Year's Eve Christmas-Missionary Program, for which the children saved their pennies during the year to give them to the missionaries on the last night of the year.

Pastor Frank Gray believed that during the Christmas season the emphasis should be placed on giving back to God. How proud were the boys and girls as they marched down the aisle to the altar to leave their offerings.

Frida (Tayet) Gerla made a lasting impact as an "outstanding Sunday School Teacher," as well as Superintendent William Pointen who served for

many years, with the able support of his wife, Myrtle.

Frithjof (Fritz) Tayet, educator, had a special interest in books and was responsible for the further development of the church library.

As with most children and youth, long church services were not the favorites. District Superintendent Cole recalls that on days that communion was served, the morning service would frequently extend until 1:00 P. M.

It also was recalled that Harold Richards was engaged in ministry in Gig Harbor and that Frank Cole and some others traveled by bus and by ferry to participate in the services.

Through the influence of Pastor Dwight H. McLaughlin, a sizable number of the young people studied for and entered the ministry. Included are:

Charles Arden Anderson  
Alfred Christensen  
Clifford Christensen  
Jean (Becker) Clark  
Frank Cole  
Glen Cole  
Marvin Cole & Dolores Wright Cole  
Mildred (Cole) Tangen  
Herb Crowder (returned to the ministry)  
Wayne Haun (*deceased - automobile accident*)  
Douglas (Clayton) Johnson  
Louise (McLaughlin) Greisen  
Glen Dean Rich (*deceased*)  
Norman Sorenson  
Ruby (Stauffacher) Freeman  
Maurice Trimmer  
Cecil Wingard  
Kenneth Woll

The memory of Bill Hansch is etched in Frank Cole's memory because of his tremendous love for boys. He had great influence on Frank Cole and his cousin, Glen Cole. He also recalls the times that Don Seeley prayed with him. The District Superintendent had great admiration for Pastor and Mrs. Kirschke and the influence they exerted on him to enter the ministry.

Frank Cole's father, Harry Cole, sang solos, in a male quartet and was the "anchor" in the bass section of the choir for 40 years. The trumpet trio of Alfred Swanstrom, Joe Swanstrom and Robert Deacon was always a source of inspiration and blessing. August A. Drath in his deep, deep bass voice would sing his testimony, usually followed by remarks. N. "Daddy" Rody, with his long white beard created an impact when he stood to testify as to his faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Marie Cole's interest and diligent work in the missionary council of the church continued for many years. She served as coordinator among the various age groups and was constantly seeking opportunities to be of support and help to the missionaries in foreign lands as well as in the homeland.

For several years, First Assembly of God entered a float in the annual daffodil parade. This was an exciting event for the young people to help in the preparation and decoration of the floats.

Camp meetings were events to anticipate. The Northwest District Camp Meetings at Borst Park in Centralia were times of relaxation and spiritual refreshing.

One of the greatest impacts in Frank Cole's life was the fatal accident suffered by Gene Wright who was involved in a head-on collision with a truck. This occurred in 1950, the year that Pastor Dwight H. McLaughlin left the pastorate in Tacoma. Frank recalls that this "really shook up" a number of the young men in the church. Frank had been slowly drifting away from God. After this incident, he rededicated his life to God and to the ministry and began by enrolling in Northwest College.

As he reviewed his childhood, he could see the leading of the Lord. His parents provided him with the guidance and encouragement to enter into full-time ministry with the first step being to enroll in Northwest Bible College. As he entered the doors that God opened for him, he is grateful for the goodness of God. Superintendent Frank Cole would admonish all young people who have the call of God on their hearts not to turn a deaf ear but to follow where the Master leads.

First Assembly of God Life Center rejoices for its influence on Frank Cole and for the teaching and inspiration he received in this congregation.

## CHAPTER 4

### EVERETTE EWING YEARS 1954-1963

Everette Ewing spent most of his life in the middle western part of the country. For many years, he lived in Nebraska and Kansas. He came from an average family, economically. Several family members engaged in farming. They lived a happy but simple life. Everette pastored smaller churches until invited to the pastorate of the Assembly of God in Coffeyville, Kansas. He soon came to be loved by his congregation and derived much joy in witnessing its development.

Pastor and Mrs. Ewing had four children. Karen, the oldest in the family, was seventeen years of age and a senior in high school when the Ewing family moved to Tacoma. Joyce, Glenn and Dorlyn completed the family.

Following consultation with officers of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, in Springfield, Missouri, for recommendations for persons who should be considered by First Assembly of God, Tacoma, Washington, for pastor, this writer stopped in Coffeyville, Kansas, to interview Everette Ewing concerning the pastorate. Viola Ewing prepared a delicious chicken dinner that Sunday afternoon. The family and invited guest sat around the table following the morning worship service to enjoy the dinner and to become better acquainted.

Pastor Ewing took special pride and interest in each of his children and was delighted that the children were well-behaved, progressing well in school, loved the Lord, and had hobbies which were healthful and absorbing.

When the report was made to the pulpit committee concerning the visit with Everette Ewing, the committee, having considered names of other ministers, selected Everette Ewing's name to recommend to the Board of Deacons. The Board considered the report of the pulpit committee and invited Everette Ewing to come to Tacoma for a week-end, to preach at both the Sunday morning and evening services so that the congregation could meet him and listen to him minister.

This was accomplished on a Sunday in early May, 1954. Everette Ewing preached very simple but sincere messages at both services. Viola Ewing accompanied her husband and had the opportunity of meeting a number of church members. After the Sunday evening service, Rev. Ewing met with the Board of Deacons. They discussed matters pertaining to the relationship should both the church board and Pastor Ewing agree that it be God's will for him to accept the pastorate. Everette Ewing and the board were mutually satisfied with what they had learned about each other. The procedure established for the first time (and has been used in calling of all subsequent pastors) was to call a special business meeting of the membership

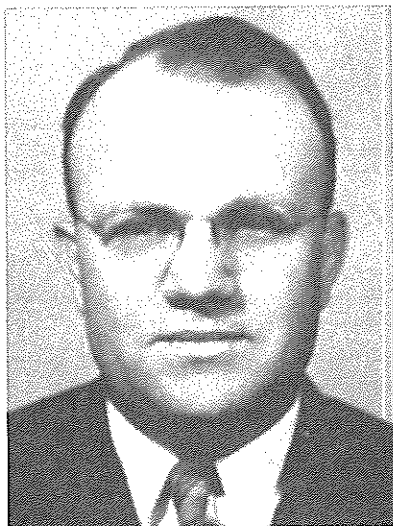


to receive the recommendation of the church board to invite Everette Ewing to be pastor.

After having allowed the advance notice as provided in the by-laws, the meeting was called.

Following a short devotional service, the business-at-hand came before the meeting. Since the church, at the time of selection of the three previous pastors, had considered three nominees from which the congregation could select, some questioned the wisdom of the change in procedure of not giving the congregation a vote except in favor or against the single nominee presented by the Board. The pulpit committee having initiated this procedure explained about the many aspects to be considered in the selection of a pastor other than his pulpit ministry. They further explained that it would neither be possible nor wise to relate to an entire congregation many of the private and confidential aspects of a person's life and ministry considered in such a decision.

After each member was given an opportunity to express an opinion



***Pastor Everette Ewing***



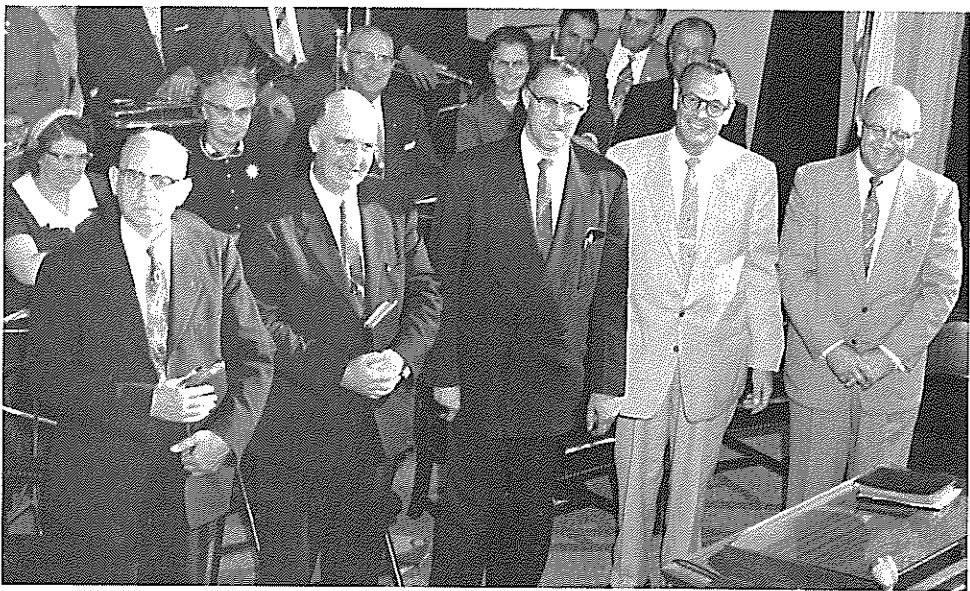
***30th Anniversary, 1926-1956***



***30th Anniversary, Original members***

either on the procedures being followed or on the pastoral nominee, a vote was taken by secret ballot. The tellers committee counted the votes and announced that Everette Ewing had received the required two-thirds favorable vote on the first ballot. The chairman of the meeting then declared him elected pastor.

Following notification, Pastor Ewing presented his formal letter of resignation to the church board in Coffeyville, Kansas. That board and the congregation reluctantly accepted his resignation. Property and some personal belongings needed disposal before the family could move to Tacoma.



***30th Anniversary 1926-1956 First Five Pastors***

They arrived in July, 1954, at which time Everette Ewing began his

nine-year service as pastor of First Assembly of God. One of Pastor Ewing's first appearances was at the annual Sunday School picnic, where he had the opportunity of informally meeting many members of the church congregation.

During the interim since Pastor Kirschke left the pastorate, the parsonage had been occupied by the Missionary Einar Peterson family. During the two-week interim while the parsonage was being prepared and the Ewings' furniture shipped from Coffeyville to Tacoma, the Ewing family lived in a near-by motel. This was a very exciting experience for both parents and children, locating in an entirely different part of the country.

The Ewing family then moved into the lovely nearly-new brick parsonage completed during Pastor Kirschke's service as pastor. It had been built under the careful supervision of Trustees Harold Wick and Arne Reyier and was located at 4011 North 11th Street, near Franklin Park.



***Cornet Trio  
30th Anniversary***

The Ewings took immediate steps to become acquainted with their new congregation. They were cordially accepted into various activities and groups. Pastor Ewing's sermons were concise. The Sunday morning services which in the past had frequently extended until 12:30 or later, were usually dismissed by 12:15 P. M. much to the delight of the children who had been sitting most of the time since Sunday School convened at 9:45 A. M.

## **BOAT TRAGEDY STRIKES**

This lovely, sunshiny Sunday in Tacoma, April 26, 1959, was an ideal day for a boat ride on Puget Sound. Walter Johnson arranged to host a number of family members and friends from Tacoma to ride to Seattle on his beautiful new 43-foot cruiser and enjoy the beautiful Sound. Walter and his son, Rolf, had worked diligently to complete this boat in time for the 1959 boating season. There were twelve, including the skipper, who departed for this lovely day together on the water. However, as they neared their destination at about 2:30 P.M., the weather performed as it occasionally does in April, this time very violently. The wind suddenly increased and a squall developed. The boat began to list in the winds and waves: (probably somewhat the same as Jesus and his disciples encountered the night on the Sea of Galilee when a great storm arose.)

The skipper became concerned when the winds and waves did not abate but seemed to grow stronger. An effort to turn the boat to better weather the storm, was of little effect. The skipper ordered his passengers

to immediately put on their life preservers, but there wasn't enough time before the boat began taking on water and sank. Panic prevailed when all had to abandon ship. With one infant girl and one small boy aboard, the task of escaping was made even more difficult. This was a tragedy of inconceivable dimensions.

Seven lost their lives in Puget Sound, on this last Sunday in April, 1959. Those lost were Frithjof (Fritz) Tayet; his wife, Gwen Hansen Tayet; their infant daughter, Janna Lynn; Martin Tayet, father of Fritz; Lois Ann Johnson, only child of the late Gordon Johnson and Bergliot (Tayet) Johnson; Maybelle Craig Torgerson, sister of the skipper, and her newly married husband, Ruben Torgerson. (Ruben and Maybelle had been married just three weeks to the hour when tragedy struck.) As the news spread by word of mouth among the congregation it became most difficult to comprehend. What a loss! Three of the four members of the Fritz Tayet family were gone. Only four-year old Rodney Tayet survived together with Walter and Solveig Johnson, their son, Rolf Johnson (who courageously saved Rodney from drowning) and his friend, Janet Wick.

Fritz Tayet, prominent principal and educator in the Tacoma School District, had played an important part at First Assembly of God. He had a keen interest in making available good spiritual reading material by organizing books, magazines and other materials into an improved church library. Tirelessly, he worked to increase the amount available. He continued his efforts to the day of his death. (In honor of his contribution, the library in Buntain Learning Center, First Assembly of God Life Center is named the Tayet Memorial Library.) His wife, Gwen Hansen Tayet, whose parents, Harold and Letta Hansen, had been missionaries to China, were temporarily living in Tacoma. Gwen was very active in the church, having served as president of the Christ's Ambassadors Youth Group and also as church office secretary.

The others too, were important members of the congregation. On that Sunday evening as the members of the church gathered for the service, the question arose in people's minds, "How will Pastor Ewing conduct the service under these overwhelming circumstances"? When the time came, the pastor made a few comments for the benefit of any who may not have known about the tragedy. He expressed his deepest sympathy to the friends and relatives of those lost. Pastor Ewing was scarcely able to speak because of the shock and grief the episode caused. The organist played some soothing hymns as members of the congregation prayed either silently or in low tones, asking for grace and strength, especially for the surviving members of the families.

A mass funeral was conducted in the church sanctuary. Officiating were Pastor Everette Ewing, founding Pastor Frank Gray, former Pastor Dwight H. McLaughlin and Rev. Wayne Ridout, uncle of Gwen Hansen Tayet. There were five caskets for the six bodies at the funeral. Four-month old infant, Janna Lynn Tayet, was nestled in her mother's arm. The body of Martin (Pa) Tayet was never found.

The funeral for the members of the Tayet family had an aura of shock

and unbelief as it still seemed as though this was a bad dream from which the mourners would awaken and have their loved ones back again. However, the impact of this did not soon depart.

Pastor Ewing was visibly distressed. Lois Ann Johnson was the dearest friend of his daughter, Dorlyn. He had dedicated tiny Janna Lynn to the Lord on a recent Sunday morning. He had married Ruben and Maybelle Torgerson just three weeks prior to the accident. His compassion overflowed to the mourners assembled.

Pastor Frank Gray stated, "There are no words adequate." He then likened this happening to that sustained by Job in the old Testament, a man tested and tried, but did not "sin with his lips or charge God foolishly."

Pastor Dwight McLaughlin stated, "Perhaps the ones who have gone on will stand on the shores with outstretched hands to beckon us."

Following the service, burial coaches carried the bodies of the deceased to three Tacoma area cemeteries to be interred.

Little Rodney Tayet became an "instant orphan". The members of the Tayet family drew even closer together. (Mother Tayet had died in August, 1952, in an automobile accident in which daughter, Frida Gerla, had been injured.) The three surviving sisters supported and sustained each other as did the husbands of Solveig and Frida. (Gordon Johnson husband of Bergliot had died earlier, so Bergliot was now completely without immediate family.) They banded together to take over the responsibility of raising this beautiful little boy. It wasn't easy since Frida was teaching school and Bergliot was employed as a nurse. Through a plan they devised, Rodney was lovingly and tenderly cared for and grew up. His father had been very highly respected in the school system and in the community. Scholarship funds were established and liberally subscribed to, so that Rodney, now an orphan, would be able to prepare himself for his life's work. (His three aunts were very effective in their efforts with Rodney in spite of the shared responsibility. He has now reached manhood, has a lovely wife and two beautiful children and is the sole proprietor of a successful moving company.)

Clara Fjermedal Bohrman, long-time active and devoted member of First Assembly of God who was a co-worker in the church with Frida Gerla, now was living in California. She and Frida Gerla had worked together as a team in many ministries of the church and were dedicated and capable workers. She made the following evaluation of the Tayet family and the effects of this tragedy.

"We recall that Bergliot's husband, Gordon, had died so suddenly. In addition, in August, 1952, a reckless driver hit the car in which Frida Gerla was driving while she was escorting her mother on an errand. Mother Tayet died and Frida was injured seriously. The three sisters, Bergliot, Frida and Solveig took no leaves of absence at the time of the boat tragedy. They just kept on being faithful in choir, Sunday School and church.

"Instead of nurturing bitterness in the loss of her only child, Bergliot continued to be a friend in need to hundreds of suffering, discouraged people, including her only daughter's teen-age friends to whom she is still an

angel of mercy.

"Frida's world was shattered. She was particularly proud of Fritz, Gwen and their small children. But, she continued in her Sunday School administrative and teaching ministry, as she has for over a half century. But these remarkable sisters have truly distinguished themselves in the raising of Rodney. Rodney, his wife and their children are like precious jewels to the courageous sisters as this family continues to uphold and strengthen each other."

There is no way that this writer or any of those present during these events could begin to reflect in words the many effects, implications and results of this tragedy of tragedies, as the world interprets such events.

## **PLANNING FOR LARGER CHURCH FACILITIES**

The congregation stabilized at approximately 600 persons in attendance for the Sunday morning services, although new persons were beginning to attend regularly. During the years since Pentecostal Tabernacle had been first occupied, a number of modifications had been made to the building to make it more suited for the changing needs of the congregation. The adjacent building to the North, known as Bethel Home, had been constructed in 1934 to provide housing to a number of the elderly members of the congregation. Due to changing conditions, this facility no longer served its original purpose and was converted into Sunday School classrooms.

In addition, a Sunday School classroom complex had been constructed during Pastor Kirschke's term as pastor between the rear of the former Bethel Home building and the alley. The space between the two buildings was utilized with additional construction. This included an office for the pastor and secretary, as well as a Sunday School office and additional Sunday School classroom space. The needs for an expanded church and Sunday School program made necessary additional and more adequate facilities for continued growth.

When Pentecostal Tabernacle was constructed in 1926, the location was very desirable for a church. Street car service was excellent. Parking for those who owned automobiles was adequate. Across "G" Street from the church was an undeveloped piece of property, owned by the Tacoma School District, that included tennis courts and playground apparatus. In the meantime, however, the character of the neighborhood changed substantially. The Tacoma School District initiated a program to construct facilities for a newly-approved vocational school. This brought an increasing number of people into the neighborhood, as well as an escalation in the number of automobiles that required parking spaces. (Since there were not many classes during the evening hours at the vocational school at this time and since the school did not operate on Sundays, this construction did not create an immediate problem.)

Finding space for adequate parking, however, did become an increasing concern. There was a very limited number of vacant lots within the

radius of a block from the church, but the accessibility of these pieces of property to the church and the inconvenience that would be created, made the church boards determine that purchasing this property for a relatively high cost was not the best alternative. The Pierce County Courthouse, following demolition and replacement by the County-City Building, had some parking facilities available for Sundays and evenings. Due to a change in the demographics of the neighborhood, it was not considered a safe place to park during hours of darkness, particularly for the women and the elderly.

Months and years elapsed but still there was no apparent solution to the numerous problems that were escalating in their impact on the church and its mission. Discussion relative to the advisability of relocating increased among the leaders and members of the congregation as solutions to the problem confronting the church did not appear to have a reasonable solution at this location, even though the church was seldom filled to capacity except on special occasions or during times of special meetings.

At one of the business meetings in which the advisability of relocating was under discussion, one very staunch member of the church stated unequivocally, "I don't think we should even consider building a new and larger church until we are able to consistently fill our present building". This sentiment was reflected by a few others who nodded their heads in assent.

However, the pastor and most of the lay leaders of the church became increasingly convinced that the future of a successful First Assembly of God was not likely to be reached at this location. Pastor Ewing acknowledged this challenge and gave it his full support. Finally, in 1961, at a business meeting, a majority vote authorized a committee to search for a site suitable for projected new church facilities.

The lack of finance was the immediate problem in the purchasing of a building site. Previously, there had been no authorization for solicitations of funds for building purposes nor had any general fund offerings been placed in reserve for this. Following this action, appeals were made to the congregation and offerings received for the building fund for the express purpose of purchasing a site and constructing new facilities. In making plans to search for a new site, wide differences of opinion were expressed as to the most desirable and practical section of the city in which to locate and construct new facilities.

After discussion, a solution to the problem was presented. Harold E. C. Wick, member of the board of trustees and successful building contractor, made a proposal. His company was constructing commercial buildings as well as residences. He had purchased and obtained options on more than four acres of land in the central area of the city composed largely of unimproved property. It was located north and east of South 18th and Union, a busy intersection, and two miles west of the present South 12th & "G" Street location.

Although this property had substantially appreciated in value since he had purchased and secured options on it, and since availability of this large a site or other highly desirable locations was extremely limited. Harold Wick offered it to his church for the exact price he had paid for it—an

amazingly small amount of less than \$50,000. This seemed like a large sum to some of the members who had been involved with construction of a church building at South 12th and "G" Streets for \$18,000 more than 35 years earlier. However, after considering other options, it became increasingly evident that the generosity of Mr. Wick provided the best alternative for the selection of a new church site.

Pastor Ewing was understandably and demonstrably excited. He had prayed much for God's leading in this matter (as did the boards and the congregation.) Authorizing the purchase of property was one thing but securing the necessary funds, not only for the purchase of the site but for the construction of the new church facilities, was another. The Pastor encouraged sacrificial giving and a congregation-wide commitment to the newly approved project. There still remained a few hesitant about entering into such an expensive project by a congregation that did not totally occupy all of the seats in the present facilities at the regular Sunday services.

The appointment of a building committee came next. Their first assignment: make a final recommendation of a church site. The committee inspected the recommended site, which appeared to be mostly hills and scotch broom. After a thorough inspection of other available sites, the offer of the property at South 18th and Puget Sound was obviously more desirable and practical than any of the other proposals. Therefore, during Everette Ewing's service as pastor of First Assembly of God, authorization for the purchase of the site was finalized. The liberal terms for payment of the site made the task substantially easier.

In special recognition of the leadership and contribution of Everette Ewing's nine years as pastor, the *Fireside Room* of the new church building was designated Ewing Hall. After the destruction by fire of the first building at South 18th and Puget Sound, the present reconstructed building again has a beautiful fireside room named Ewing Hall.

## **PASTORAL ASSISTANTS**

During the term of Pastor Ewing's service as pastor of First Assembly of God, he had a number of pastoral assistants, to help care for the expanded ministries.

(1) Albert and Dolores Davis came to the church during Pastor Kirschke's term as pastor and remained for a period of time while Pastor Ewing was in Tacoma. His ministry was very well received. Later, he was called to a pastorship in McMinnville, Oregon, where he had a very successful ministry. Later Albert Davis was elected to the position of assistant superintendent of the Oregon District of the Assemblies of God and has subsequently retired from the full-time ministry. He now travels to minister in mission fields.

(2) Cal Robertson impressed the congregation as a vocalist. The young people, the Christ's Ambassadors, with whom he worked were delighted with his deep bass voice. He remained for a relatively short period



of time.

(3) Dave Womack had an excellent relationship with the boys of the congregation and was a very effective leader. His primary calling was missions. After leaving Tacoma, he served as a missionary in Colombia, South America. He became editor of the Missionary Challenge publication, which is now known as Mountain Movers. A prolific writer, he has had several books published.

(4) Don Duncan, a successful leader of Youth for Christ ministry in Tacoma, felt called to minister in a local church. The church received him cordially. A fine musician, with the cornet being his specialty, he also directed the choir. At this particular time, few churches created stands in the shape of a Christmas Tree, with places for singers to stand and sing Christmas songs. This was known as a Singing Christmas Tree. Don Duncan initiated this beautiful program on a very modest scale at First Assembly of God in 1964. During the intervening 25 years the tree expanded to the point whereby nearly 30,000 people witness it each December.

## **EVERETTE EWING RESIGNS AS PASTOR**

After having served First Assembly of God as pastor for nine years, Everette Ewing received a call to return to the Middle West where he had lived most of his life. The invitation came from Calvary Temple in Springfield, Missouri. Calvary Temple was one of the larger of the several Assemblies of God churches in Springfield, headquarters city of the General Council of the Assemblies of God. During the summer of 1963, the family bid a sad farewell and moved to Springfield.

Karen, the eldest, married David Coomber of Tacoma, a bank manager so remained in Tacoma. She met David on September 18, 1955, the same day her father's car was stolen, the two concurrent events impressed the date on all the family. In 1957, Karen gave birth to twin girls, Cathie and Kristy. They became the "apple of his eye" to Pastor Ewing.

Joyce married an old family friend, John Burnett. They were called to the mission field. (Joyce and John Burnett served as foreign missionaries in the Philippine Islands for many years. Currently they are in Brussels, Belgium, where they are on the staff of International Correspondence Institute.)

Glenn, with exceptional talent in mathematics and science, was interested in receiving an appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland. His efforts were successful. He obtained his appointment, completed his studies, received his commission and served in the Navy for a number of years. He currently lives in the Seattle area and is a computer specialist.

Dorlyn, the youngest, accompanied her parents to Springfield. She volunteered for the U. S. Army and is currently an army optometrist, stationed in Washington, D. C.

After serving Calvary Temple in Springfield for a year, Everette

Ewing sustained a heart attack making it impossible for him to continue the responsibility and strain of the pastorate of a large church. He then moved back to Washington State. His health improved and he accepted the pastorate of the Assembly of God church in Des Moines, Washington. (Anton Nilsen, builder and long-time member of Tacoma's First Assembly of God built a home for the Ewings in Federal Way.) They lived there until Everette Ewing passed on to be with his Lord on April 18, 1969, at the age of 55 years. His funeral on Monday, the first day of the annual Northwest District Council convention, was attended by more than 35 fellow pastors.

Viola Ewing, the pastor's Queen of the Parsonage, very quiet by nature, was a most effective, loving, supportive help-mate for Pastor Ewing. The death of her dear husband was a great shock to Viola Ewing. She has been without her husband for more than nineteen years and has not enjoyed the best of health in recent years. She presently resides in Issaquah, Washington.

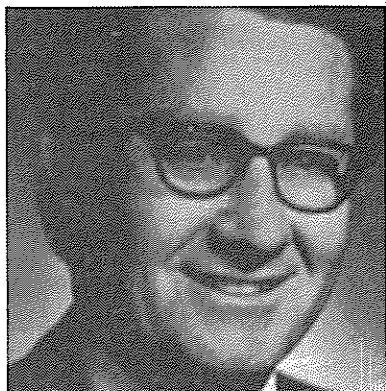
Everette Ewing was a tender, compassionate and loving pastor. He loved his family and frequently reminded his congregation of this fact, both in action and in words. Fellowship with Christian people was one of the great joys of his life. On several occasions, he would recount to the congregation that when he would go to visit with one of his unsaved brothers, he would discover after two or three hours, that they would run out of things to talk about, but when he was with his brothers and sisters in the Lord they could talk indefinitely concerning the goodness of God. His memory is very precious to those who knew and loved him.

## OTIS KEENER YEARS 1963 - 1965

Following Everette Ewing's resignation in 1963, the Board of Deacons determined to follow the same procedure used for the calling of Everette Ewing by appointing a pulpit committee. First Assembly of God had purchased the site for a new church and had determined to build as soon as plans could be completed and the necessary funds made available. Therefore, the importance of obtaining the services of a pastor who could provide leadership for this development took priority.

General Council and District Council officials were again consulted for suggestions of persons having the qualifications to assume the leadership of this rapidly growing church during this critical time in its history. The pulpit committee, after considering the names of several persons, reduced that number to three. The name of Otis Keener was presented to the Board of Deacons by the pulpit committee. Otis Keener carried a burden to bring the gospel into foreign lands. His father had been an Assembly of God minister in the Middle West and also was a strong supporter of foreign missions.

Otis Keener, credentialed by the Assemblies of God for eighteen years, received his first license to preach from the Illinois District Council in 1945. He was first assigned to a home missions church in rural northwestern Illinois. This experience blended with his studies at Central Bible Institute, Springfield, Missouri. At C.B.I., Otis Keener met and became very interested in Miss Irene Buckley from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The relationship between Otis and Irene flourished and they married in 1947.



***Pastor Otis Keener***

Otis and Irene spent the first two years of their married life in evangelistic ministry in the Central States. Irene with her beautiful contralto solo voice contributed to the meetings conducted by Otis. In 1949, they accepted a small pastorate in Erie, Pennsylvania. While here, their only child, Fred, was born. After five and a half years as pastors in Pennsylvania, they accepted a call from Irene's home church in Oklahoma City where they ministered for nearly eight years. In the Spring of 1962, they were requested to accept a special assignment overseas, by the Department of Foreign Missions of the Assemblies of God. Pastor J. L. McQueen, Central Assembly of God, in the headquarter city of the Assemblies of God suffered a heart attack in early 1963. Otis and Irene accepted the invitation to serve as interim pastor during the period of convalescence of Pastor McQueen. It was at this time that First Assembly of God, Tacoma, was seeking a pastor to succeed Everette Ewing. The name of Otis Keener was given to the Pulpit Committee to

consider as pastor. After correspondence and telephone conversations, the pulpit committee recommended to the Board of Deacons that Otis and Irene Keener be invited to come to Tacoma for a Sunday to enable both the church and the Keeners to become acquainted with respect to the pastoral vacancy.

During July, 1963, the Keeners spent a Sunday at First Assembly of God, ministering in both services. Otis had a very deliberate delivery in his speaking manner with soothing feelings of assurance. He knew God. He trusted God and he wanted his congregations to know what God could do for them. Irene's talent as a contralto soloist was of great blessing to the congregation. Singing an appropriate song prior to her husband's message was a beautiful prelude.

After the Sunday evening service, Otis and Irene met with the Board of Deacons to discuss their willingness to accept the pastorate in the event the congregation authorized a call. The Keeners then returned to their home. At a special business meeting of the church, the congregation authorized calling them as pastors.

The church rejoiced as they welcomed Otis and Irene to Tacoma. The many rainy days that first winter did not add to their joy in being in the Northwest, but they survived.

Just as Frank Gray had been so unwavering in punctuality for every meeting or appointment with which he was involved, Otis Keener had little or no patience with tardiness. He occasionally made the statement that if Irene had been even five minutes late for a date, he would never have married her. That's punctuality! Otis and Irene Keener were loving people and almost immediately made friends. Otis was naturally very athletic. Fred inherited much of that ability and interest in sports. Fred was well-liked by young people and adults alike. He was a "real-guy" and at the same time a Christian gentleman.

After moving to Tacoma and locating temporarily in an apartment, the Keeners and the church membership soon established a very fine relationship. Pastor and Irene Keener selected one of the fine builders of the congregation, Alfred Swanstrom, to construct a home for them in a new development in the city. An air of excitement prevailed as pastor and congregation became acquainted and prepared for the days ahead. Special emphasis continued with the planning for new church facilities on the site purchased during Everette Ewing's pastorate.

A church building committee was appointed to manage and direct the entire building process and its accompanying activities. Harold E. C. Wick, member of the board of trustees of the church, a talented builder, whose experience included construction of commercial buildings, agreed to accept the position as chairman of the committee without salary. It was he who made it possible for the church to acquire the site at South 18th and Puget Sound during the time Everette Ewing had been pastor. Other members of the committee in addition to Harold Wick and Pastor Keener were: Frank Bentley, Harold Gray, Conrad Konsmo, Detmer Ketler, William Pointen and Arne Reyier.

It had been 37 years, in 1926, since this congregation had been

involved in the construction of a new church sanctuary. None of the members who had assumed the responsibility for the construction of Pentecostal Tabernacle were now living, so the church boards and committee were treading on unfamiliar ground.

With the coming of Pastor Keener, the first item of business was the selection of an architectural firm that could translate the desires and needs of the congregation into plans for this exciting new venture within the established budget. The committee agreed to appoint the firm of Nelson, Krona and Ziegler as architects. The senior member of this firm, Silas Nelson, had been the architect for the South 12th and "G" Street Pentecostal Tabernacle. Although he did not attend First Assembly of God Silas Nelson was well acquainted with the ministry of the church and with a number of the leaders of the church congregation. His son-in-law, Bud Krona, and Russell Ziegler, completed the team of competent architects. The committee inspected a number of buildings planned by this firm and felt comfortable with the choice.

The task of drawing up program specifications for this new church occupied a good share at the start of the planning process. Numerous ministries of the church required adequate facilities. Various sub-committees were assigned to communicate with the building committee the specific needs of their interests and responsibilities. Among the committees appointed were Sunday School, Christ's Ambassadors (youth group), music ministries, women's missionary groups, nursery facilities, prayer room, and daily vacation Bible school.

Naturally, it became impossible to accommodate everyone's wish list because of financial constraints; so compromises had to be made in the allocation of space, quality and quantity of equipment. During Pastor Keener's term in Tacoma, final payments were made on the purchase of the several segments of the site. Accumulation of funds in the building fund toward the construction of the building commenced. Pastor Keener rejoiced with the congregation at the announcement of finalization of the site acquisition. The building at South 12th & "G" Streets had cost \$18,600 to build. When an estimated cost of several hundred thousand dollars was mentioned, it was accompanied by considerable feelings of apprehension by persons not accustomed to an undertaking this large. The committee normally met on Saturday mornings at the offices of Nelson, Krona and Ziegler on Center Street.

This placed an extremely heavy burden on Pastor Keener. He was striving to become acquainted with all his parishioners, to minister publicly and individually and to provide pastoral leadership on the building committee. It was assuring to realize that although extra appeals were made for the building fund, missionary giving and offerings for the general fund increased during the time Pastor Keener served the church.

It seemed as though a shock wave had passed through the congregation when the announcement was made on Easter Sunday morning that Pastor and Irene Keener were leaving Tacoma's First Assembly of God to accept the pastorate at First Assembly of God, Bakersfield, California. (A

number of highly-regarded ministers had served as pastor of the Bakersfield Church, including C. M. Ward, long-time Assemblies of God national radio program, revival time speaker, and former pastor D. H. McLaughlin.)

Pastor Keener regretfully informed the Board and the congregation that he felt called of God to move to Bakersfield and thus resign the pastorate in Tacoma. (Since Otis left Tacoma, he has "with tongue in cheek" remarked that he had just conducted a long revival meeting in Tacoma.)

Otis and Irene Keener remained in Bakersfield for about two years after which they pastored at Pacific Grove, California. During this time, the Keeners were requested by the Foreign Missions Department to accept periodic missionary assignments in various parts of the world. In 1973, they accepted a special assignment in the Orient. They moved to Hong Kong, where they opened the first hotel-church in Asia. This new missionary concept soon spread to other major cities in that continent.

After three years in Hong Kong, the Keeners were invited to pastor the Rockwood Park Assembly of God, Fort Worth, Texas. During the five and a half years they were in Fort Worth, the Assemblies of God International Correspondence Institute (I.C.I.) opened offices in this country to complement the world-wide headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. In 1985, the Keeners were again invited to accept a missionary appointment and to work on special assignment with I.C.I., worldwide, where they are at the time of this writing.

Rev. Don Duncan, who had formerly ministered with Youth for Christ in the Tacoma area, joined Otis Keener as assistant pastor, with special emphasis on youth work and music. Don and his wife, Allison, had a special ministry and provided a blessing to the church. It was Don Duncan who organized and directed the first Singing Christmas Tree in 1964, which has now become one of the most significant religious events of the Christmas season in the Tacoma area. The late Molly Texstrum served faithfully and efficiently as church and pastor's secretary during Otis Keener's pastorate.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FULTON BUNTAIN YEARS - 1965 - 1988**

#### **SEARCH FOR NEW PASTOR**

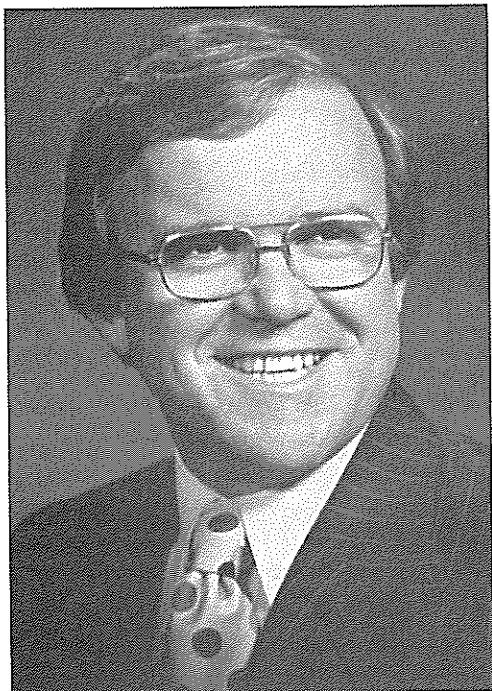
For the second time in less than two years, the church board needed to search for a pastor. Many pastors dreamed of receiving a call from the First Assembly Board. A few candidates after having heard of the vacancy indicated their interest in being named pastor. Also, a number of suggestions came from a variety of sources to the committee of likely candidates for this position. Executive officers of the Northwest District and the General Council of the Assemblies of God submitted their evaluation of each of the persons requested by the pulpit committee. The committee also asked them to submit names of suitable and qualified persons.

No doubt, this was one of the most important choices the church ever had made in the pastoral selection process. A new church building was in the immediate future. The site had been purchased during Everette Ewing's tenure as pastor. When Otis Keener assumed the pastorate, continued preparation for the building process continued. Therefore, the congregation was delighted to see rapid progress being made in the selection of a pastor. The process was completed and Fulton W. Buntain became the new pastor.

#### **FULTON BUNTAIN COMES TO TACOMA**

Great anticipation accompanied the arrival of the Fulton Buntain family to Tacoma. Excitement regarding the construction of new church facilities added to the feeling of urgency. Church members and especially the building committee were anxious to see continued progress on the plans and construction of the new church. In late August, 1965, the Buntain family arrived to assume leadership of this 47-year old congregation.

The family consisted of Pastor Fulton Wesley Buntain, his wife, Lorraine Hime Buntain, and their four children, Robyn, Kathleen, Timothy and Michelle, twelve, ten,



eight and four years of age, respectively. They located a rental house while awaiting occupancy of a new home built by Trustee Arne Reyier at South 15th and Geiger, in the west end of Tacoma. (It is interesting to note that both Pastor Buntain and Pastor Everette Ewing had families of two daughters, a son and a daughter, in the same order.)

Fulton Wesley Buntain was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada on December 16, 1925. His parents were the Rev. D. N. and Kathleen Buntain. Rev. Buntain was a highly respected pastor in the Methodist Church. However, when Dr. Charles S. Price came to Winnipeg and conducted a gigantic, city-wide revival in the ice arena the crowds were so large that traffic, during the time people were going to and from the arena, was practically at a standstill.

When D. N. Buntain listened to the message that Dr. Price proclaimed of (1) a genuine born-again experience of salvation, (2) healing for the body included in the atonement of Christ on the cross of Calvary, (3) the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, by the initial evidence of speaking in tongues as reported of the early church in the book of the Acts of the Apostles and (4) the soon return of Christ to receive his waiting church in the rapture of the Saints, he believed. He sought and received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in other tongues. As he attended the meetings and witnessed the miraculous physical healings of many who sought prayer, he could no longer reject the full gospel.

D. N. Buntain preached with unction. There was no compromising in his messages to his congregation. He now had the most exciting message that he had ever experienced in his years in the ministry. D. N. Buntain received a similar reception from his denomination as had other pastors who had accepted and preached the full gospel. His wife, Kathleen Buntain, also sought and received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Rev. Buntain soon became associated with a recently formed Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada: the counterpart to the General Council of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri, in the U. S. A. Stalwart in the organization, D. N. Buntain was elected to the position of General Superintendent of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God, Canada.

The D. N. Buntain family had three children, of whom Fulton Wesley Buntain was the youngest. Alice Buntain, the eldest, married Rev. Ed Southard, Assembly of God pastor. The eldest son, D. Mark Buntain received the fullness of the Spirit and entered the ministry immediately on completion of his education. He married Huldah Monroe whose parents had been missionaries in Japan. After some time in the evangelistic ministry, God placed a call on him to become a missionary. Since Huldah had been in Japan, Mark surmised that Japan would be his mission field. Wrong! God had different plans for Mark and Huldah. Mark was called to Calcutta, India, where he and Huldah have served for 35 years, establishing the largest foreign missions work in the Assemblies of God.

Fulton W. Buntain moved with the family from Winnipeg to Toronto where he completed high school. He attended Torreyville College in Toronto for a time; then transferred to the University of Toronto, where he took



courses in medicine. During World War II, he was called as a reserve into the service with the Canadian Army. This wasn't his choice of a career, but he did his very patriotic best and received an honorable discharge. (One of the experiences that he likes to recount: how to surrender if captured by an enemy.)

During his earlier years, whenever there would be a suggestion that Fulton should be a preacher, he immediately diverted the conversation elsewhere. Clearly, he had no intention of following his father in the ministry although he had the greatest respect for both his father and his mother. Fulton began to drift away from the teachings he had received from his family. However, one night while he was attending a meeting in which his brother, Mark, was the preacher, he was convicted by the Holy Ghost of his unbelief and rebelliousness and surrendered his heart to God. This changed his whole life.

Fulton Buntain felt the leading of God to enroll at Central Bible (Institute) College in Springfield, Missouri. (This was the leading institution in the training of ministers in the Assemblies of God organization.) Fulton took many fine attributes with him to college. Money was not one of them. In 1945, the year World War II ended, he arrived in Springfield, a shy freshman from another country (Canada), very much overpowered by the lofty upperclassmen.

With a very limited amount of funds, he immediately sought employment at the school, such as many other students were required to do. He picked up odd jobs and was able to complete the school year. The fall of 1946 saw Fulton Buntain enrolled for his second year at C. B. I. In that same year, three young ladies from Tacoma, Louise McLaughlin, Olive Anderson, and Lorraine Hime, daughter of Gus and Marie Hime, of Milton (suburb of Tacoma) Assembly of God, also matriculated at Central Bible Institute. The three girls traveled together to Springfield via train. Arriving from the West Coast and never having seen Missouri, they were "all eyes".

Fulton Buntain had arrived a few days earlier and was waiting for his future wife to arrive (although he didn't know it at the time.) Fulton and Lorraine Hime met the day she arrived in Springfield and they began going together. In fact, they were steadies from the first date. The classes were intense and the requirements precise. But there was a song in the heart of Lorraine Hime and Fulton Buntain as they attended their classes, prepared their assignments, performed all their necessary duties. Then...they could meet and talk and hold hands with their commitment to each other increasing every passing day. During Fulton's final year, he was given the opportunity of preaching at an out-station church in the Ozark Mountains. He had one assignment at Foose, Missouri, where he diligently prepared for the Sunday services. The congregation not being accustomed to sophisticated sermons, young Fulton Buntain's ministry proved acceptable. He was also given other assignments in connection with his preparation for the ministry.

After completing the second year, in 1948, Lorraine Hime's relationship with Fulton Buntain was in the forefront of her attention. She returned home to Milton, Washington. Having had Bible training, she worked in the Milton

Assembly of God Church which had begun in the living room of her parents, Gus and Marie Hime. The congregation commenced with Wednesday night services. Later, a small church building was constructed with assistance of a group of workers from First Assembly of God, Tacoma, headed by William Pointen. At this time, the Milton Assembly of God was pastored by Lawrence Steller, followed by William McNutt.

Lorraine obtained employment at the Internal Revenue Services in Tacoma, but she was separated from her companion, Fulton. After completion of his work at C. B. I., Fulton joined his elder brother, Mark Buntain, in evangelistic work, largely in the State of Washington. Fulton as song leader, encouraged his brother to accept meetings not too far from a very special attraction in the little town of Milton. Alice, sister of the Buntain brothers, and wife to Pastor Ed Southard in nearby Auburn, Washington, often acted as hosts to her brothers during the days they were between meetings. Understandably, Fulton found his way to Milton quite frequently. Even though he loved his brother and sister very much, there was a powerful attraction in Milton, a half hour drive from Auburn. Gus and Marie Hime were hospitable whenever Fulton came and were not displeased that their daughter, Lorraine, had an interest in this young preacher.

Fulton Buntain recalls that on one occasion at a church function while traveling with his brother, Mark, a man accosted him to inquire if his name was Buntain. When Fulton assured him that was correct he invited him to a neighboring church to conduct revival services. Fulton was unaccustomed to being alone in special meetings—in fact this was the first time he had ever received such an invitation. He asked Mark what he should do. Mark advised him to accept. Fulton accepted. So, Fulton Buntain's preaching ministry was launched. He had learned much from observing his brother as well as his attendance for three years at C.B.I. The two Buntain brothers combined for a few additional meetings but mostly they ministered in their own individual meetings.

By the time 1951 arrived, Fulton decided that his life was not complete traveling alone to conduct special revival meetings. Lorraine Hime, living in Milton, Washington, also felt it was time for her to find her life's partner. She had dated other young men, but Fulton Buntain was different from all the rest. On one of Fulton's between weeks in August, 1951, he drove to Milton to visit Lorraine and invited her to become Mrs. Fulton W. Buntain. Although both Fulton and Lorraine had dated others occasionally after leaving Springfield, there was that special bond between them which now would be consummated in marriage. Lorraine could feel that their relationship was causing both of them to give more attention to each other and less to others of the opposite gender. Fulton's proposal was not entirely unexpected to Lorraine. She answered him in the affirmative. The Himes gave their blessing and the wedding set for December 10, 1951.

Since friends and relatives from both sides of the family would be invited, the Evangelistic Tabernacle, South 13th and "K" Streets was secured for the wedding. Fulton's father, Dr. D. N. Buntain, performed the ceremony.

What happiness exuded from Fulton and Lorraine as they began their home, their family and their ministry 37 years ago!

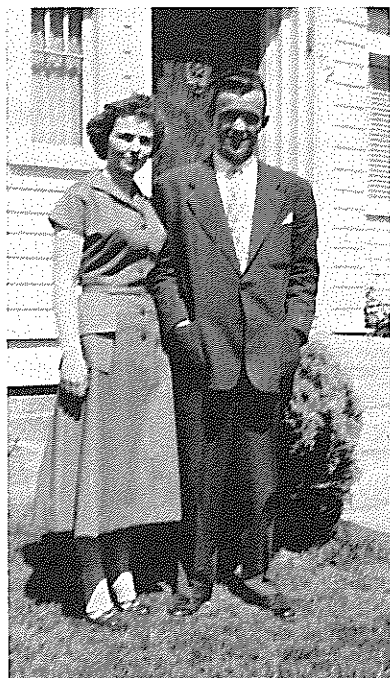
The Fulton Buntains immediately commenced a series of evangelistic meetings which took them to many Washington cities, including Kelso, Toppenish, Grandview and some other Yakima valley cities. Lorraine participated in the music ministry of the meetings and supported her husband in many other ways. Two years later, September, 1953, baby daughter Robyn was born, so now there were three. The evangelistic services which took them to a different city every few weeks became much more difficult with an infant.

While in Northern California in 1955, Fulton Buntain received a call from Bethel Assembly of God, Oakland, California, to become their pastor. Though this appeared to be a fine opportunity, the Fulton Buntains discovered that the congregation consisted of approximately 18 persons. This left considerable room for growth. One of the significant developments in the Bethel Assembly of God came when Orin Duncan, evangelist, ministered to the growing congregation. The church grew in number to several hundred and a new facility was secured. Fulton and Lorraine Buntain remained in Oakland for three years, leaving to accept the pastorate at Long Beach, California, in May, 1958.

The size of the Buntain family increased while they were in Oakland. They arrived with daughter Robyn. Kathleen was born in September, 1955, and Timothy arrived in September, 1957, just two years later.

The Fulton Buntain family of three that came to Oakland in 1955, left for Long Beach in 1958 as a family of five. Their new challenge in Long Beach proved to be fruitful, as the congregation in Long Beach's First Assembly of God grew substantially during the seven years of their ministry. The fourth child, Michelle, arrived in Long Beach in May, 1961, completing their family. During the ministry in Long Beach, two assistant pastors with specialties in music, Merle Bade and Don Galloway served at different times and were blessings to the church. Lorraine's musical ministry also contributed much.

When Fulton W. Buntain received the invitation from the Board of First Assembly of God in early June, 1965, to come to Tacoma, Lorraine had mixed emotions. Some thought, "What an outstanding opportunity to serve as pastor's wife in such a prestigious church right near her original home." Lorraine had been well-known as a young girl in the Tacoma area, but to



***Evangelists Fulton and Lorraine Buntain***

return as the pastor's wife was something else again. She remembered the scripture which states that "a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country." How difficult would it be to change her image from the young girl living out in the country to the wife of the senior pastor of one of the larger churches in the district, she would ask herself. Each time she posed the question, she felt that reluctance to face the challenge with her four small children.

Not so with Fulton Buntain. He was excited about the challenge. He felt confident that if God called him there He would supply the necessary tools and abilities. (They had been married in Tacoma, at Evangelistic Tabernacle, just five blocks from First Assembly of God.)

Fulton and Lorraine Buntain were invited by the pulpit committee of First Assembly of God to minister in both Sunday services and then meet with the Board of Deacons to discuss the Tacoma pastorate. A satisfactory agreement was reached between the Buntains and the church board. Two weeks later, at a special business meeting, Fulton W. Buntain was elected to be the seventh pastor of the church. The progress of the building program was thoroughly discussed. Fulton Buntain was shown the preliminary plans for the church and inspected the church site. He was obviously challenged and felt that God was calling him to this ministry.



***Buntain Family  
comes to Tacoma 1965***

One of the plus factors for Lorraine was that she would be able to be closer to her parents and other members of her family. However, even during the process of moving to Tacoma, Gus Hime died.

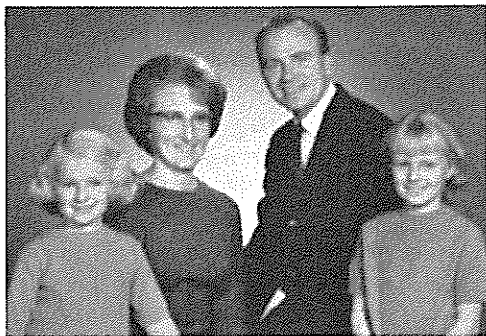
Fulton and Lorraine Buntain and their four beautiful children arrived in Tacoma, August, 1965. Upon their arrival a multiplicity of things absorbed their time and attention. It was no small task to get settled in their temporary home and prepare the three older children for entrance to school very soon thereafter. As Lorraine strove to adapt herself to the new congregation, she recalls with joy the great help she received from Emma Johnson and Marie Cole.

Assistant Pastor and Music Director Don Duncan left shortly after the arrival of the Buntains, so Lorraine was immediately thrust into very active participation in the music program. She directed musical groups, sang, played the piano and saxophone. Her ministry was a great blessing to the church. She carried this responsibility for quite a while until Merle and Dorothy Bade came from Southern California some months later to lead the music department.

Lorraine Buntain, having spent the seven previous years in Southern California, had witnessed the "turnover" of people in the church congregations.

Partly because of weather favorable to outdoor activities, many members of the congregation attended less than regularly. Lorraine noticed the significant contrast and observed that the Tacoma congregation was composed of solid, consistent attenders. She attributes this partially to the stability from the Scandinavian heritage of many.

The annual Singing Christmas Tree, begun on a small scale by Don Duncan during the Keener years in Tacoma, continued with Merle Bade, after his arrival. Much to Lorraine's dismay Merle became ill just prior to one of the presentations. Lorraine was then required to substitute for him on very short notice—a very interesting experience to say the least! But, she did very well and the change in directors had no noticeable effect upon the presentation, as the performers gave an extra measure



***The Baunsgard Family***

of effort and cooperation. For several years after this time, Lorraine handled the planning and directing of the lighting on the Singing Christmas Tree.

After Don Duncan left the church for another call, in 1967, Pastor Buntain and the Board invited Allen Baunsgard to First Assembly of God in the ministries of youth and music. Al Baunsgard had eight years of experience in pastoral ministries in Wyoming and at Beacon Rainier Assembly in Seattle. He provided excellent leadership in his assigned ministries. In 1969, he accepted a Northwest District assignment as youth director. Since that time, he pastored the Anacortes church for twelve years, followed by his current assignment as pastor of Hillcrest Assembly of God in Bremerton.

## **BUILDING OF FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD IN 1966-67**

In the early Fall of 1965, soon after Pastor Fulton Buntain began his service as pastor, he met with the building committee. He studied the preliminary plans which had been submitted earlier by the architects, Nelson, Krona and Ziegler. Harold E. C. Wick, building committee chairman, worked closely with Pastor Buntain. The Pastor submitted some suggestions to the committee for modifications of the plans for the new building. After studying the proposals, most were incorporated in the final building plans.

The site had a few parcels not included in the original acquisition so successful efforts proceeded to negotiate with the owners to obtain these parcels to complete the site.

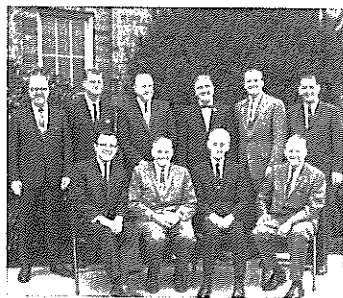
The building committee met regularly on Saturdays at the office of the architects to study and analyze the various aspects of the plans. Silas Nelsen, senior member of the firm, had prepared the plans for Pentecostal Tabernacle forty years earlier, in 1926. The relationship between the architects and the committee remained cordial and cooperative throughout the project.

Before plans were completed the committee made a comprehensive analysis as to the most economical means of construction. Submitting the plans to contractors to obtain firm bids was considered. However, the committee realized that there likely would be numerous change orders to the plans after the awarding of the contract making the utilization of volunteer labor of little benefit since change orders invariably add to the cost of a project. (The owner has little or no protection as to the additional amount charged by the contractor on change orders. Hence, the committee decided against proceeding with a general contract.)

Although the site was now fully paid for, there was little in the building fund with which to finance construction. Construction could not commence



***Pastor Buntain, 1966***



***Building  
Committee, 1966***

until a sufficient amount of cash was in hand and provisions completed for borrowing of the balance. Cost estimates ranged as high as \$500,000. After the financial struggle to construct the former building at South 12th and "G" Streets forty years earlier, costing \$18,600, this seemed to be an almost unsurmountable task.

Sacrificial giving by the the congregation and friends of the church provided sufficient funds to encourage the committee and the boards of the church to commence construction. A loan from a local savings and loan association was negotiated and work commenced in 1966.

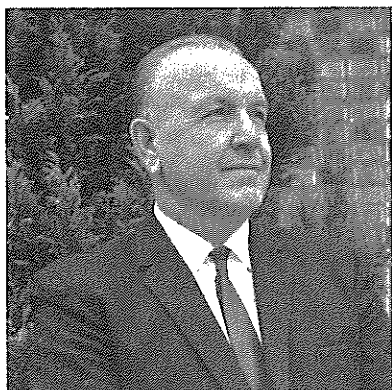
Committee Chairman Harold E. C. Wick, who was partially retired from the construction business, agreed to assume a prime responsibility for the supervision and mangement of the project in his role as chairman of the building committee.

Financial plans were predicated on the assumption that funds would be realized from the sale of the facilities at 12th and "G" Streets. This, however, would be of little immediate help until the property was vacated and made ready for sale.

A substantial savings in construction labor costs had been realized through the use of volunteer labor at 12th and "G" Streets. A comprehensive plan for the solicitation and organization of volunteer labor for the construction of this new facility was established in concert with Detmer Ketler, Sunday School Superintendent, who agreed to supervise volunteer workers. The time for volunteers to work had to be restricted mainly to evenings and Saturdays to avoid interference with the regular day employees. Pastor Buntain informed the congregation each Sunday as to the particular types of skills that were needed the following week. A show of hands was called for so that an estimate could be made as to the numbers that could be expected. This project created much enthusiasm and an excellent response normally was received.

Al Klapstein, experienced local building contractor who was partially retired from contracting, was selected by the committee, upon the recommendation of the chairman, to be the superintendent. He was capable and worked harmoniously with Detmer Ketler in coordinating work of his staff of employees and with volunteers in the evenings. Conrad Konsmo, deacon and builder, worked very capably on the project. (Con Konsmo has been involved in the construction of every church building project, beginning with this.) Burlis Walker, who had recently moved into the city, also worked full-time on the project.

The committee selected Joseph Swanstrom, brother-in-law of Chairman Harold Wick, as project accountant. He had provided the accounting for Mr. Wick in his construction business for many years. Joe



**Harold Wick,  
Builder Supreme**

provided accurate, timely information thus enabling the committee to make wise fiscal decisions.

Ground breaking services were scheduled for Sunday, March 18, 1966. (Founding pastor of the church in 1918, Frank Gray, was now retired and living in the city. He supported the church and regularly taught the men's Bible class. He was active to the degree that his health permitted. He was enthusiastic concerning the plans for construction of new and larger church facilities. However, he became ill in the early Spring of 1966 and was confined to the hospital on the day of the ground breaking, March 18, 1966. He recorded a message of joy and congratulations to Pastor Buntain and the congregation. This recording was played to the congregation at the ground breaking. However, Frank Gray did not recover following his surgery and became the first former pastor to leave this life for a Heavenly Home, on March 26, 1966.)

Since this particular portion of the city was largely undeveloped, the new project created much interest. This site had recently been covered with scotch broom, weeds and rocks. A substantial amount of site work was necessary. One time-consuming task was to gain approval from the various departments and bureaus of the City of Tacoma for vacating of streets and alleys and easements over certain sewer and water lines. The site originally was very uneven, topographically. Therefore, a large amount of dirt movement was required. Puget Sound Avenue, which passed through the site, north to south, was largely unimproved prior to the beginning of construction.

There were few members of the church who had been present during the construction of Pentecostal Tabernacle in 1926, forty years earlier, so this became a totally new experience.

The services of numerous capable professional people and workers were required. Whenever possible, members of the congregation were employed. The Rupp brothers and the Podruchny brothers performed very high quality sheetrock finishing and painting service.

Numerous persons volunteered their ideas and recommendations concerning the interior decorating scheme of the sanctuary and various other portions of the church. In order to avoid differences of opinion that would likely occur if such decisions were made by non-professionals, a competent interior designer from a firm whose owner was a member of the church, was selected for this service. The building committee and many members of the congregation expressed satisfaction with the quality of work and the choice of colors selected.

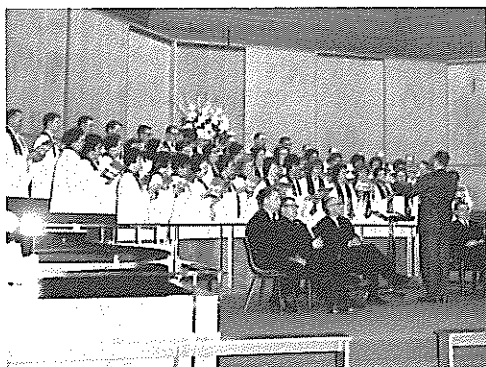
The pipe organ was built and installed in the First Assembly of God building at South 12th and "G" Streets by organ builders from Seattle, Balcom and Vaughn. They were requested to recommend to the building committee and the boards the type of organ that should be installed. Some members of the committee favored the purchase of one of the new electronic organs which were becoming popular as a means of obtaining high quality music reproduction for reduced cost. Other members of the committee were equally strong in their recommendations that the substitution of an



electronic organ for the genuine pipe organ at 12th and "G" Streets would be retrogression. Agreement was reached to retain the present organ and to move it to the new building. Additional sets of pipes were included which would triple its capacity and versatility.

After the organ was placed in service in the new church, most agreed that the decision to retain the genuine pipe organ was the correct one. A set of carillon bells installed at the top of the building was gratefully received as a donation by a member of the church. These bells announced to the community the hour of the services of the church.

The 28,000 square feet of floor space included, besides the richly appointed sanctuary, complete Sunday School facilities designed to employ the latest in teaching techniques, a chapel seating 60 open daily for prayer, a beautiful fellowship hall highlighted by a massive fireplace and solarium, capable of handling 300 persons for banquets, a completely furnished kitchen, spacious offices for pastors, departments and church secretary.



***First Meeting, New Church***

The building contained a unique blend of types of heat to provide the ultimate in comfort. Modern air-conditioning and electronic aids added to the comfort and efficiency of the building.

Adequate parking was planned, north of the church. Parking lots were hard-surfaced and lighted by modern mercury vapor lighting. The unique design of the building and its functionality drew favorable comment from many who inspected the building.

Detmer Ketler continued as the Sunday School Superintendent. He worked cooperatively with the Board of Christian Education to plan an improved and expanded Christian education program in this new facility. Members of the Board were: Pastor Buntain, Arthur Burk, Detmer Ketler, Reuben Kvamme, Dean Stageberg and Dee Swanstrom. In addition to the Sunday morning Christian education program, a Wednesday night series of classes and activities were arranged by the committee.

The limited nursery facilities at the former church were replaced with beautifully appointed facilities with uniformed nursery attendants. The senior high school Wednesday night program met in the new chapel. An expanded library facility was available to house adult classes, especially college and career age people. Expanded programs for Royal Rangers, Missionettes, Christ's Ambassadors and adult Bible studies were also provided.

In addition to Pastor Fulton W. Buntain and Associate Pastor Al

Baunsgard, Rev. Roy Rupp served as Minister of Visitation. Molly Lund Texstrum, who had served capably as church secretary during Otis Keener's term as pastor, continued as secretary to Pastor Fulton Buntain during his early years in Tacoma. (Molly's father, Martin Lund, was one of the original deacons of the Assembly of God mission at 943 1/2 Tacoma Avenue.)

Serving on the Board of Deacons on completion of the building were:

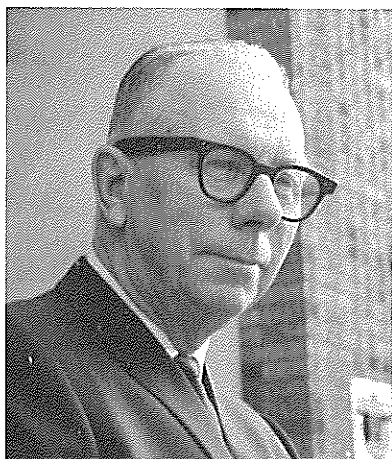
Frank Bentley, Arthur Burk, Norman Burmark, Leon Erickson, Paul Gray, William Heidecker, Detmer Ketter, Ivor Killinger, Conrad Konsmo, Ole Kvamme, Reuben Kvamme and William Pointen.

Anders Dahl, William Johnson, Marshall McKee, Kenneth Oas, Kenneth Rupp, Alfred Swanstrom and Harold Wick composed the Board of Trustees.

During the summer of 1967, work accelerated on the building as the end appeared to be in sight. Finally, the first Sunday of December, 1967, was established as moving-in day. The congregation gathered at South 12th and "G" Streets for the last time. With a caravan of cars and buses, and with horns sounding, the procession drove west on 12th street to the destination of 17th and Puget Sound where the new church building was awaiting their arrival. Excitement prevailed as songs of rejoicing were raised to the Heavenly Father for this new victory. It wasn't yet fully paid for but that was coming in the future with the anticipated influx of new people who would help share the financial burden.

Preparations were carefully made for dedication Sunday, January 21, 1968. Founding Pastor Frank Gray had since passed away but all other former pastors were alive and well and attended the dedicatory celebration. Each participated during the week. On both Sunday morning and evening services on January 14, Rev. William Kirschke brought inspiring messages.

On Monday evening, the Sectional Christ's Ambassadors and Fellowship Rally was scheduled with music by the Northwest College Choir



***Visitation Pastor Roy Rupp***



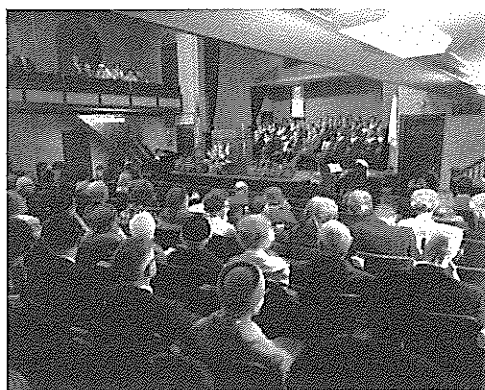
***Dependable Molly Texstrum***

followed by an inspiring message by Pastor Dwight H. McLaughlin. The church's second pastor, Harry J. Steil, brought a stirring message on prophecy on Wednesday evening. On Thursday, layman's night, the Honorable Philip A. Gaglardi, former Assembly of God minister and currently minister of highways in British Columbia, brought a challenging message.

Friday night was World Missions Night. The most recent former pastor, Rev. Otis Keener challenged the congregation to keep alive and active the desperate needs of missionaries serving throughout the world.

Sunday, January 21, was the formal dedication of the building and facilities. The invocation was offered by Rev. Frank McAllister, Assistant Superintendent of the Northwest District of the Assemblies of God followed by Dave Rowlands, city manager of Tacoma, who gave greetings from the City. Deacon Reuben Kvamme made a special plaque presentation, followed by the announcement of the Frank Gray Memorial by Rev. A. S. Ellis. Former Pastor Otis Keener announced the offering with the offertory being played by Rev. Merle Bade, Church Music Director. Rev. Lyle Spradley read the scripture and offered prayer.

Rev. Thomas F. Zimmerman, General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God, delivered the dedication sermon followed by the Act of Dedication. Rev. Frank Funderburk, District Presbyter, delivered the benediction. The 3:00 P. M. Sunday afternoon dedication service was scheduled to permit interested persons from other churches to attend without the necessity of missing their own Sunday morning services. At the conclusion of the Sunday evening service expression of great thanksgiving



*Last Meeting, South 12th & "G"*

to God was uttered for what He had wrought for this congregation. Forecasts were made for the future with the expectation that this would be but the beginning of an outreach into the community and to the uttermost parts of the earth with the Gospel of Salvation. Great enthusiasm and confidence was expressed for the continued leading of God and the attainment of great victories under the inspired leadership of Pastor Fulton W. Buntain.

**The dedication program listed the members of the First Assembly of God Missionary Family as:**

Mrs. Edna Ahlberg	Mindanao, Philippines
Rev. Mark Buntain	Calcutta, India
Miss Irene Crane	Nigeria, West Africa
Rev. Roy Dalton	Ronda, Spain
Rev. Morris Devin	Argentina
Rev. Royal Freeman	Maracaibo, Venezuela
Rev. John Friesen	Furlough
Rev. Robert Frivold	Kobe, Japan
Rev. Paul Greisen	Hong Kong
Miss Marie Johnsrud	Ouagadougou, West Africa
Rev. Leonard Lanphear	Manila, Philippines
Rev. Einar Peterson	Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Rev. Fred Seaward	Singapore, Malaysia
Miss Edith Wight	Juneau, Alaska
Rev. Earl Wilkie	Kirkland, Washington
Trasher Orphanage	Assiout, Egypt

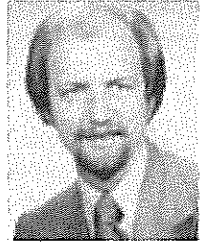
# THE GREAT FIRE AND REBUILDING

Youth Pastor Joseph Fuiten gave the message on Sunday evening, November 30, 1975, following a water baptismal service. Members of the congregation departed for home as usual, prepared for a good night's rest before resuming their normal Monday activities. The building first occupied just eight years earlier, had a capacity of 1200. It was normally filled for the Sunday Services.

But then **IT HAPPENED!** At 11:40 P. M. a passing motorist detected fire in the building. He immediately called the Tacoma Fire Department. Nine engines and three truck companies responded together with several dozen fire fighters. There were four injuries to firemen—none serious.

The Tacoma Fire Department under Chief James W. Reiser performed valiantly. The organization and coordination of the fire fighters from the various companies that responded were performed in an efficient and orderly manner. Chief Reiser observed that it was "an exceptionally fast-burning fire" which was very difficult to contain because it was being fanned by the Southwest wind. Unfortunately, the church did not have an automatic sprinkler system.

A large crowd of spectators gathered at the scene, including many



**Associate  
Pastor  
Joseph  
Fuiten**



**"On Fire"**

members of the church who had been notified through an informal, voluntary telephone chain. Much sadness gripped the hearts of members and friends who stood helplessly by as the wind drove the flames toward the Christian education addition and, beyond that, to Life Manor, a 158-unit retirement complex, that was now fully occupied, having been completed less than two years earlier.

Following notification, Pastor Buntain reached the burning building in a very few minutes. Members and friends had given sacrificially to pay for this beautiful trophy of God's grace only to see it consumed by a powerful fire. Every piece of available fire equipment at the command of the Tacoma Fire Department was used with all the expertise that constant diligent training could provide. However, the wind blew relentlessly. Being a higher structure than others in the surrounding area made this building especially vulnerable to the winds.

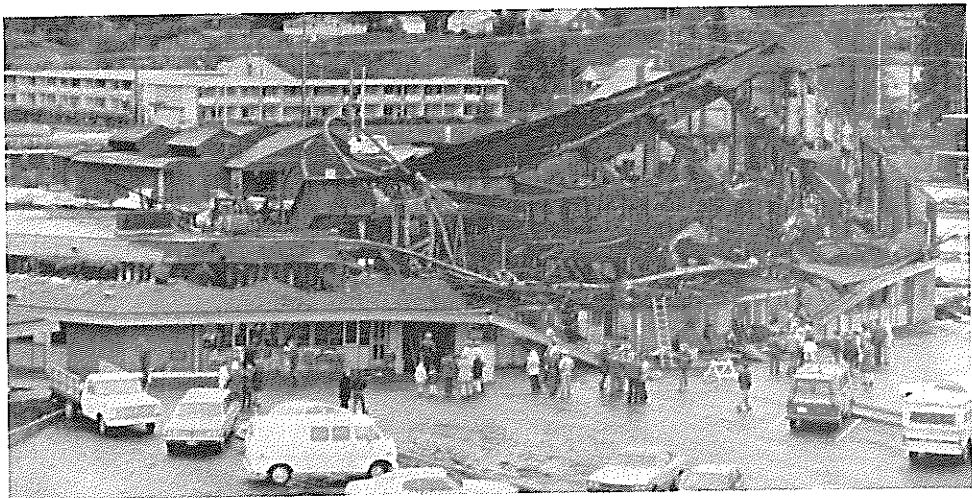
In 1974, Pastor Buntain and the boards of the church agreed to construct an addition on the East side of the building as a multi-purpose unit including a number of class rooms for Life Christian School, (which was now very overcrowded,) a multi-purpose room to be used for a number of purposes, including a large room to be used for gatherings, playroom for the school and a multi-purpose gymnasium.

The members of the building committee who planned and directed the construction of this new complex were Conrad Konsmo, chairman; Pastor Fulton W. Buntain, Donald Henning, Donald Huber, Detmer Ketler, Arne Reyier and Ronald Wick.

This facility, completed just eight months prior to the fire, appeared to have little chance of escaping the roaring blaze. However, just as the fire reached the west wall of the new complex, the winds miraculously shifted from the southwest and the new addition was saved. Hundreds of prayers had ascended from the assembled spectators. God heard and answered. Chief Reiser announced at 2:00 A. M. that they considered the fire to be



***Twisted Remains***



***The Morning After, December 1, 1975***

under control. The next morning, the chief and his investigative team searched the ruins of the building to try to determine the cause and origin of the fire. After several weeks of investigation, they announced that it would have to be recorded as "from undetermined origin."

The opinion was expressed by some that possibly it could have been caused by a short circuit in the water heater that had operated for that evening. Evidence of arson was never substantiated.

Not only was the building with its value of more than \$600,000 destroyed, but furnishings estimated at \$150,000 were lost. The large steel cross which had stood at the very top of the steeple was twisted by the extreme heat and fell to the ground. Congregation members began asking each other, "What now?"



***Pastor Joe Fuiten and the Cross***

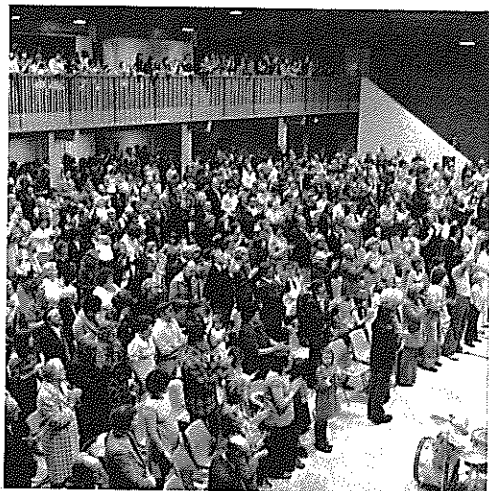
The next morning saw Pastor Buntain and many of the church leaders and members again assembling at the scene of the previous night's disastrous conflagration. When asked for a statement by the press, the pastor aptly observed that "it was only a building; it was built with the faith and the sweat of our congregation—a lot of it was built with volunteer labor—and the faith is still there." Pastor Buntain observed that his congregation is not composed of rich people but of "fantastic people, loyal and dedicated."

The pastor didn't need to call an official meeting of the Board to



determine the course of action. He knew his people. He confidently proclaimed, "tomorrow a contractor will come to knock down the walls that remain. We will clear away the ashes, then **we will begin to build again.**"

Following this, Pastor Buntain and the church leaders combined their judgment concerning the immediate course of action. The most urgent matter to be resolved was to locate a temporary facility that could be used for services and church activities during a rebuilding period. Inquiry was made to the Tacoma School District as to the possibility of leasing a nearby school auditorium, at least for the Sunday Services. However, after taking all factors into consideration this option was eliminated.



*First Wednesday night  
after the fire*

"Let's use the gymnasium," Pastor Buntain concluded. "We can squeeze several hundred people into this room by securing portable bleachers for the 'shelf' that can be converted into a balcony. We will install folding chairs in the gymnasium, wall-to-wall," the pastor suggested, trying to convince himself at the same time. So it was done. It was only two days after that fateful Monday morning until the next scheduled service—the regular Wednesday family night. Members of the church staff—ministerial and operational—worked tirelessly to prepare the gymnasium for that first post-fire Wednesday night service, December 3, 1975. (Earlier, some members of the church had questioned the decision to construct the Christian education addition that included a gymnasium. They expressed the thought that the church was possibly being diverted from its announced objectives by building recreational facilities. After the fire, this special facility that had been disparaged, was converted into an auditorium for church services. Now, the church did not have to move from its campus. There was much thanksgiving that this facility was available.)

At 7:30 P. M. Wednesday, the gymnasium was completely filled with people. Not a tear was shed. The congregation led by their courageous pastor came, not to mourn a loss but to celebrate a victory! How could there be victory in defeat? How could this people do anything but mourn their fate? Pastor Buntain set the tone!

The scene that Wednesday night can perhaps best be described by an outside observer—Kerry Webster, staff writer for the Tacoma News Tribune who wrote:



"It began almost as a whisper, swelling slowly from the throats of a thousand people, linked arm in arm, until it became a joyous hymn that rang the rafters of the packed gymnasium.

"Alleluia! Alleluia! We give You praise!" the people sang, swaying gently in unison.

"Lord, you're getting all the glory!" shouted someone.

"Amen!" roared the people, and they squeezed hands and smiled.

Columnist Webster continued, "It didn't sound much like a congregation whose church had just burned to the ground. But just outside, a bitter, chilling rain swept the charred hulk of the 8-year old First Assembly of God main building.

"The fire burned the building, but not the Church," said Pastor Fulton Buntain, and the congregation cheered.

Pastor Buntain was greeted with thunderous applause when he entered the gymnasium to take his place on a makeshift rostrum beneath a basketball score board. What should he say and do next? The pulpit from which he preached in the sanctuary was destroyed. But escaping the fire was an antique lectern once owned by D. N. Buntain, his father, a minister. This was the pulpit for the next months. What nostalgia was experienced by Pastor Buntain as he stood back of that sacred desk.

"Bless the Lord," he cried!

"Amen!" the congregation shouted back. Then a hush fell.

"These have been the most traumatic moments of my life," the pastor began. "You can't invest the hours and love and muscle into a church, working with men and women you love so much, and see it all go up in smoke without feeling a great big ache inside."

The pastor told the congregation that the disaster signaled "a momentous occasion for us and our church."

"We will rebuild our church," he said, and was unable to continue as applause swept the packed gymnasium. A man in a gray business suit stood and pledged \$5,000. Three others quickly followed and nearly a dozen pledged \$1,000 each. One man offered two rental houses, and a young student pledged half his savings account.

"It's not much," the young man said, "but it's all I have."

The Pastor encouraged the congregation by exhorting them that this fire could become a turning point in their lives as Christians and the church family.

For two hours, the congregation, packed onto the basketball floor in folding chairs, clapped and sang, as the pastor marveled later, "like you've never sung before."

Ushers scurried to find more chairs for people who kept arriving all evening long.

"Praise God!" said one harried usher. "We're down, but we're not out. By God's grace, with the leadership of Pastor Buntain and the cooperation of the people, there is no way that any fire can hold us back now."

## REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

Just as Pastor Buntain announced, "We're going to build again," so it happened. There was not one discouraging word among the decision makers of the church. The question was never asked, "Are we going to rebuild?" Instead it was succinctly put, "how rapidly can we get started?"

The congregational meetings and the curtailed program of extra activities required adjustments. This they did. No one even suggested giving up.

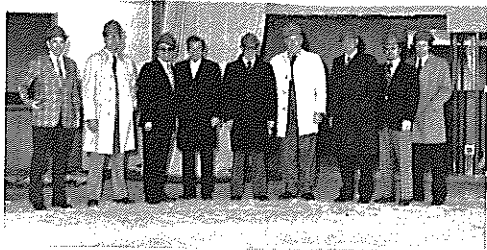
Pressing forward as quickly as possible was the challenge.

Immediately, a building committee was appointed and charged with the responsibility of proceeding with the planning and building of new church facilities as expeditiously as possible. There wasn't a question in any one's mind as to who would be chairman of the committee. Harold E. C. Wick, chairman of the building committee for the planning and construction of the

burned church, was the obvious and unanimous choice. Appointed to serve with him were Conrad Konsmo, vice chairman; Donald Huber, secretary; Pastor Buntain, Detmer Ketler, coordinator of volunteer labor; Harold F. Gray, Carl Kanz, Albert Lade, Arnold Loen, Kenneth Oas and Alfred Swanstrom.

The members of the combined boards of deacons and trustees during this time were Ray Barckert, Arthur Burk, Norman Burmark, Dennis Dalan, Leon Erickson, Paul A. Gray, Bruce Hamilton, William Heidecker, Donald Henning, Ivor Killinger, Albert Konsmo, Conrad Konsmo, Albert Lade, Arnold Loen, Marshall McKee, Kenneth Oas, Clifford Paulson, Stanley Seely, Wayne Streich, Alfred Swanstrom and Harold E. C. Wick.

### UTV for ASHES



***New Challenges for the Building Committee***



***Detmer Ketler,  
Multi-talented and willing***

Since it was urgent that the new building be constructed and occupied by the earliest possible date, the building committee met immediately following their appointment to organize and establish a plan of action. The first step was to select the architect.

Silas Nelsen had been the architect for the construction of the Pentecostal Tabernacle in 1926. His firm of Nelsen, Krona and Ziegler had drawn the plans for the building that burned. Although Silas Nelsen had retired from the business and Bud Krona was deceased, Russell Ziegler, now operating the firm, was selected by the building committee to serve as architect. Acquaintanceship with the needs of the congregation and the rapport that had been established during the construction of the previous First Assembly of God building, weighed favorably with the building committee to name Krona and Ziegler to provide the architectural services.

It was called to the attention of the committee that an Assembly of God Church had recently been constructed in Santa Rosa, California, that contained basic features First Assembly was seeking. Therefore the committee arranged on January 2, 1976, to fly with the Architect Russell Ziegler, to San Francisco and drive to Santa Rosa where Pastor Watson Argue, Jr. had agreed to meet with them and interpret for them the features of his building. The committee and the architect took extensive notes and made a careful analysis of the building.

Some of the features that were of special interest were (1) the arrangements of drive-up areas for discharging and picking up passengers under shelter, (2) choir facilities on the platform combined with an identical configuration in the choir rehearsal room, (3) the shape of the auditorium with an absence of support posts, (4) functional nursery facilities, together with a number of other desirable features. While in Northern California, the committee also inspected other buildings and returned the same evening after having spent a strenuous day.

Shortly after their arrival home, the committee began developing specifications to assist the architect identifying the requirements for the various ministries and departments of the church. Russ Ziegler was a very cooperative architect. He sought to make certain that the building would achieve the goals established by the committee. After careful consideration, the building committee again determined not to let the contract out on the basis of firm bids. The committee realized that it would be highly desirable to be able to make changes from the plans as the building progressed and not have to negotiate change orders with a general contractor. Building Committee Chairman Harold E. C. Wick, who had served in the same capacity for the building of the burned church agreed to accept the responsibility of directing the construction to perform the duties of a general contractor.

Mr. Wick recommended that N. E. Sommers Company, General Contractors and Consultants of Anchorage, Alaska, and Mercer Island, Washington, be selected to oversee and direct the construction. (This company had constructed Life Manor two years earlier.)

Conrad Konsmo, builder, long-time member of the church board and

vice chairman of the building committee served as building superintendent. He had been involved in the previous three building projects at First Assembly of God.

The committee and architect both worked diligently to accomplish the completion of the new building at the earliest possible date. As expected, the insurance settlement fell far short of the funds necessary to rebuild the church. Since the auditorium of the burned building had reached its capacity, there was no other choice but to expand the capacity of the new sanctuary and related facilities to meet the challenges of the future.

The committee labored diligently in their efforts to provide the optimum as far as service and administrative areas were concerned. Architect Ziegler cooperated with the committee by making frequent modifications to the plans as it became evident during the progress of the building that changes were needed. The wisdom of employing the contractor to construct the building on a time and material basis was also confirmed, as the costs of change orders under a firm contract would have made changes expensive to execute.

It took several weeks for the site to be cleared and cleaned preparatory to start of construction. One of the clean-up crews prepared to haul away the twisted steel cross that had been placed prominently at the top of the burned church. "Not so," said Pastor Buntain. "I have selected a place for that cross." And, so he had! It is now mounted on the inside wall of the Frank Gray Memorial Chapel in the new church as a memento of the building that was consumed by fire and as a reminder that the Cross of Jesus Christ will withstand any attack by demons or men.

Very shortly after this time, Carl Kanz resigned his bank position and accepted a position as a member of the church staff. His assistance in the management of the activities of the building committee was of tremendous benefit. Other members of the congregation gave liberally and unselfishly of their time and skill in seeking an expeditious and successful conclusion to the building project. Detmer Ketler, long-time superintendent of the Sunday School and member of the Board of Trustees of First Assembly of God, agreed as during the building of the burned church, to be the supervisor of volunteer labor. Work was not scheduled on church meeting nights. However, on certain designated evenings and on Saturdays, volunteer labor was solicited. Many members of the congregation reported for duty. There was work for every one—for those with special skills and for semi-skilled and unskilled labor.

Detmer had a very kind nature and demonstrated much patience which at times was sorely needed. Without the services of Detmer Ketler and the many volunteers, the completion of the building would have been delayed and constructed at a much higher cost.

Although the church was built on the same site as the burned church, a ceremonial ground-breaking was observed, appropriately, on Easter Sunday, April 18, 1976. The adopted theme, "Beauty from Ashes," became the watchword as the celebration ceremony attracted the interest and

imagination of people over a wide area. Pastor Buntain again reminded the people that "it was only a building—it was built with faith and the faith is still there."

Could good ever result from a burned church building? Pastor Buntain believed so. He stated that many churches because of this seemingly disastrous event have updated their wiring, checked their insurance and have taken precautionary steps they might not have done otherwise. "So, it wasn't all for nothing," the pastor added.

In spite of the fire, in spite of the crowded facilities, in spite of the fact that the Sunday morning congregation had to be divided into two separate services at 9:30 A. M. and 11:00 A. M., it was conservatively estimated that the congregation grew by 150 persons during the five months between the fire and the ground breaking on Easter Sunday.

Pastor Buntain further observed, "I think that what makes a church grow is when the church meets the needs of the people—the family.

"We have large youth programs for both boys and girls, six summer camps this year, retreats and much more. I think this congregation woke up one morning to realize how important the church was to them. A lot of them had been feeling that the church was down the street and that it would always be there. Suddenly, it was burning and it wasn't going to be there any more.

"I think the fire changed some family values. People who were attending the services only casually, now attended regularly. Their church became important to them—that is what a fire in a church means." He used this opportunity to let people understand how this congregation had come back from disaster.

Fulton Buntain concluded by saying, "Great people are ordinary people with extraordinary determination. We will owe a lot more money now, but our philosophy is that there will be many more people." The prediction came true. A lot more people did come. In 1988, the 2000 seat auditorium is more crowded TWICE on Sunday morning than the 1200 seat auditorium was at a single Sunday morning service just before the fire. This means the congregation has more than trebled.

Church services continued in the gymnasium, which was converted into a sanctuary each Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday evening. The uncomfortable folding chairs and backless bleachers in the



***Pastor Buntain at work***

balcony did not discourage the worshippers from coming to First Assembly of God. A number of modifications were made in the conduct of the services to adjust to the restricted facilities. But, the strength of this congregation was not in the sophisticated environment and/or form of worship but in the hearts that came to meet God and were not disappointed.

God was not responsible for this fire. God did not punish this congregation by allowing the fire to consume the sanctuary, although He does ALLOW adversities to come into the lives of Christian congregations and individual Christians. Pastor Buntain often reminds his congregation that "All things DO work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose." Did this work together for good? The evidence is found in what has happened to this pastor and congregation during the ensuing twelve and a half years. God's manifest blessing on Pastor Fulton W. Buntain and his expanding congregation gives undeniable witness to God's blessing.

The chapel in the burned building had been designated as the Frank Gray Memorial Chapel, in honor of the founding pastor. Upon completion of the rebuilt facilities, the Board again designated the beautiful new chapel as Frank Gray Memorial Chapel. (The author was privileged to have read the dedicatory message at a special designated time in a morning service of the church.)

Persons passing by the church on the west side are almost certain to notice the beautiful stained glass window which forms one of the side walls. This piece of art is a gift from Mrs. Edmund (Margaret) Roberts in memory of her husband. (He died quite suddenly in 1974. He was an associate of the author, Mr. and Mrs. Roberts were admirers of Pastor Fulton W. Buntain. Because of the relationship between Edmund Roberts and the author, Mrs. Roberts determined to make as a gift an antique car owned by Mr. Roberts, designating that the proceeds be used to purchase this stained glass window for Gray Memorial Chapel.) A beautiful stained glass door installed between the sanctuary and the baptismal tank was presented by the family of Mrs. Ole (Olivia) Kvamme in her memory.

The "fireside room" in the burned church had been named in honor of Pastor Everette Ewing, as Ewing Hall. It was during Everette Ewing's pastorate that the property for the new church had been purchased and so he was given this recognition in memoriam. At the conclusion of construction of the rebuilt church, the fireside room was again named Ewing Hall in his honor.

## **FACILITIES IN REBUILT CHURCH FUNCTIONAL**

The anguish resulting from the destruction by fire of the relatively new building and facilities was heart-rending. So much expense, effort and love had been freely given only to see it all destroyed. Pastor Fulton Buntain set the tone beginning on the night of the fire by his oft-repeated

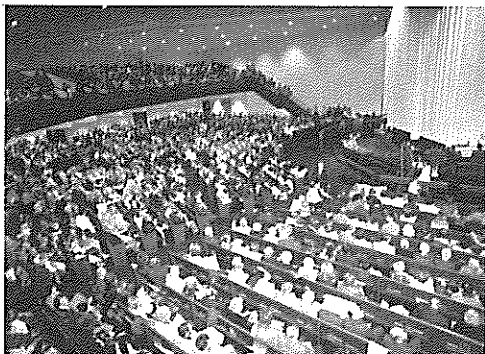
encouragement by reminding the congregation that the "church didn't burn—only the building."

There was that determination by pastor and people that this fire was not going to be a defeat, but a victory. The church would be rebuilt, larger and better, to accommodate the increased numbers of people that would be seeking spiritual blessings.

The sanctuary capacity was increased from 1200 in the burned building to 2000 in the rebuilt facilities. Comparable increases in size and facilities for all other church ministries were included. Sunday School classrooms, missionary groups, women's ministries, youth ministries, music ministries, chapel capacity, Christian day-school were provided with enlarged and improved facilities.

First Assembly of God Life Center does not seek to be competitive with any organization, church or other, but to impact and reach for Jesus Christ every possible soul in this city and around the world.

As is true with every program that increases in size and in scope, modifications and enlargements have necessarily been made from time to time. If Jesus should tarry, this pastor and congregation are prepared to meet whatever challenges there may be in the future.



***Sanctuary of Rebuilt Church***

## **PIPE ORGAN IN REBUILT CHURCH**

The facilities in the original church constructed at South 18th and Union were substantially larger and more functional than the building on 12th and "G" Streets. This building had seemed so large and imposing when it was first constructed, but had now become inadequate for the requirements to fulfill the mission of the congregation.

The pipe organ was modest in size (relating to the numbers of sets of pipes to provide variety in tone) when moved from South 12th and "G" Streets to the new building. However, at the time of its installation, additional sets of pipes increased its output considerably. The resonant tones of the organ, when played with skill, proved to add a great blessing to the services.

The "great fire" of 1975 destroyed the pipe organ as well as the rest of the main building. The selection and securing of an adequate pipe organ for the increased size of the rebuilt building was an important decision.

The previous organs had been secured from a Seattle organ builder. Upon investigation it was discovered that Dr. R. Byard Fritts, organist-choir master at another church in the city and a former associate professor of music at Pacific Lutheran University, was a very competent organ builder. He, together with his son and another associate, contracted for the purchase and installation of the new organ.

The handmade lead and tin pipes were custom-built and imported from Holland by Fritts. The organ consists of 50 "ranks" (compared to four in the first pipe organ at 12th and "G" Streets.) Carl Kanz, church organist worked closely with Dr. Fritts in assuring that the finest possible performing organ would be provided. The family of Building Committee Chairman Harold E. C. Wick donated the organ as a memorial. It has been of inestimable value to the services of the church.

## **THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGE OF THE NEW CHURCH**

The church building at South 12th and "G" cost \$18,600 to build in 1926. The greatly expanded and improved building and facilities at South 18th and Puget Sound with its enhancements, came to a total of \$600,000 besides an additional \$150,000 for furnishings. Members of the building committee, finance committee, church boards and members tried to estimate the cost of the rebuilding project. Inflation had increased building costs substantially.

Not only would the cost of replacing the old building in its exact form have been much higher, but the size of the burned building was inadequate in size to provide for the increased congregation attending First Assembly of God. The new building must be enlarged to provide for continuing growth in the congregation.

The fire insurance claim must be filed with the companies that had insured the burned building. Yet there was still a sizable mortgage on the building which encumbered a portion of the insurance settlement. Not only had costs risen but interest rates had also increased substantially. The original First Assembly of God building at South 12th and "G" Streets had been sold to another congregation on contract. This meant that there would be a delay in the time that the amount due on that contract would be realized.

In 1970, after thorough investigation of all aspects of the plan, it was decided to develop a Revolving Fund, financed by members and friends of the church making deposits with the Development Department of the church. The interest paid to depositors was substantially higher than that being paid by most financial institutions. At the same time, the rate was substantially lower than the church would have to pay to borrow money from a financial institution, thus benefitting both the church and its depositing members.

The church boards appointed a Development Department Committee which had the responsibility and authority to oversee the management and operation of this new development department. As funds were required for building projects and equipment, this self-financing program served all parties concerned.

Carl Kanz, branch manager of a local bank, accepted the responsibility of heading the organization and implementation of this new division of the



church. Careful research was applied to every aspect of the operation to make certain that the interests of all parties were being properly safeguarded. The concept and the objectives of this system of supporting the development of the church by members and friends of the church, while at the same time paying ample interest rate on the money invested appealed to many in the congregation.

A back-up line of credit was always maintained with a local bank in the event of a need for money. All decisions were made in a conservative mode so that there never was need for concern on the part of the pastor and the boards responsible for the management of the church's assets nor for any person who had deposited funds with the department. Adequate provision was made to assure the ability to liquidate any request for withdrawal.

Four months after the fire, a settlement with the insurance companies was finalized by the acceptance of an adjustment of approximately \$700,000. These funds were immediately invested at a very favorable rate of interest just prior to a sudden drop in interest rates. This indicated that the trust and faith in God by those responsible for managing these funds resulted in a most beneficial investment return to the church.

The investment program totalled \$1,600,000 in assets at the close of the 1975 fiscal year. Increased interest on the part of the members of the congregation has caused this amount to increase to \$10,000,000 by 1988. Funds needed for a number of large and small building projects has been financed through the Development Department. The favorable investment return to depositors and the savings in interest paid out by the church for improvement projects has amounted to savings of many hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Persons of good judgment and knowledgeability in the management of monies serve on the Development Department Committee. In addition, members of the executive committee of the church who serve on the Development Department Committee, assure that the prime interests of the church are always kept in focus.

Over the past number of years an exchange of temporary surplus monies between First Assembly of God Life Center and Northwest College of the Assemblies of God, Kirkland, Washington, has been maintained. Again, this has benefited both the church and the college.

Efforts such as this have provided assurance that monies are being managed with skill and good judgment. Jesus Christ, while on earth, commended the persons who had received talents from the Master and had invested them wisely, while the person who buried his talent and received no interest on it was rebuked and found that his talent was being taken from him. First Assembly of God Life Center, Tacoma, Washington, has had leadership which consistently has made wise judgments.

(Note: A list of the members of the Development Department Committee is found elsewhere in this book.)



**Carl Kanz,  
Business  
Administration**

## CHAPTER 6

### MUSIC MINISTRIES DURING THE 70 YEARS

The beginning group of believers who met together as a congregation in 1918, when Frank Gray joined and led them, were largely Scandinavians. They loved to sing and play their instruments. Some were more talented than others but the degree of skill was not nearly as important as the spirit, reaching out to God.

An organized orchestra did not exist for many years, but those that had portable instruments and a reasonable amount of skill would sit on the platform or in a designated area close to the platform. They would join the congregation in "making a joyful noise unto the Lord."

The first organized group was the choir, begun in 1928 by Evangelist Cecil Perks. He, together with his wife, Mollie, conducted a series of evangelistic meetings at the Pentecostal Tabernacle. He was an enthusiastic musician with a specialty on the saxophone. During the series of evangelistic services, he organized the first choir. Upon the conclusion of the special meetings, Victor Fredlund, who was musical and played the mandolin in the orchestra, was appointed choir director. It required a few months of rehearsals and becoming used to singing as a group, before a degree of proficiency was reached. The choir became a great blessing to the services. Victor Fredlund was not only choir director but the principal song leader as well.

The instrumentalists played during the song services but it was a number of years before they played as an orchestra. John Torgerson, a highly skilled trombonist and pianist, was a faithful member of the orchestra. During Dr. Charles S. Price's first meeting in the wooden tabernacle beginning in February, 1930, an invitation was given to instrumentalists to join in an orchestra, seated on the large platform. John Torgerson, orchestra director of the largest of the cooperating churches, was the logical person to direct this group of musicians and was appointed to do so.



***Pentecostal Tabernacle  
Orchestra, 1932***

He continued to direct the orchestra at Pentecostal Tabernacle and at the second Price meeting in 1931. Following his resignation, in late 1931, the pastor's son, Harold Gray, was appointed as Tabernacle orchestra director. He had had some formal instruction in music theory and in applied music and accepted the challenge. He also directed the large orchestra at the final meetings with Dr. Price in 1932.

There was a variety of instruments in the orchestra with each person volunteering to play an instrument to which he had access and on which he was reasonably skilled. When someone played a "sour note", people might

wince, but it did not discourage, since the object was to give glory to God and not be overly concerned about technical perfection. Included in the instruments that comprised the orchestra were violins, guitars, banjos, accordions, cornets, trombones, baritone horns, clarinets, drums and occasionally a flute. During a portion of the time, a marimba was added. The piano helped the musicians play the same notes at the same time. When the first organ was installed in the Pentecostal Tabernacle, it sometimes replaced the orchestra for special numbers when the size and variety of instruments were below standard.

After World War II, Alfred Swanstrom, a member of a musically talented family, returned from service in the Army and was appointed orchestra director. Alfred began playing in the orchestra immediately after his family started to attend Pentecostal Tabernacle regularly. He was physically so

small that Director John Torgerson questioned whether or not he was qualified and suggested that perhaps he should have an audition. Alfred also had some difficulty in being able to see the song leader because of his small size and the fact that cornet players did not always sit in the front row.

Alfred Swanstrom also directed the "Assembly of God Silver Band" as Pastor Dwight McLaughlin called it. (Pastor McLaughlin was an enthusiastic lover of music and encouraged vocalists and instrumentalists to participate in praising the Lord with their talents.)

In 1935, the Victor Fredlund family moved from the city and Harold Gray was appointed to direct the choir. Some of the experience he had gained in working with groups was the result of his work with the orchestra. A number of changes evolved as the years passed by. While Pastor Frank Gray did not wish to take the lead in recommending his son be appointed either as orchestra or choir director, he did not oppose it. He was appreciative of his family becoming involved in the Lord's work.

Harold remained as choir director for fifteen years, until 1950. During this period of time a number of changes were made. Choir robes worn over the members' street clothes, were initiated. The location of the various sections of the choir was altered. In order to make a contribution toward the two special seasons of the Christian year—Christmas and Easter, the choir began to sing cantatas, which were well received by the congregation. They became a stimulus for choir members, motivating them to attend rehearsals to make a suitable presentation, acceptable to God and the congregation.

The number of persons who gave of their musical talents to the Lord in the ministry of music was quite large, therefore it is not possible to name them. However, one person that made a tremendous contribution to the choir and as a soloist was Soprano Betty Curry. She had a beautiful voice and loved the Lord with all her heart. Her participation added greatly to the blessings of the meetings. Harry Cole, bass, sang in his deep bass voice songs of encouragement.



***Male Quartet, 1940***

Mason Younglund served as choir director as well as band director for a time after he became an assistant to Pastor McLaughlin. Although he had not been highly trained as a musician, he performed well. He resigned from his position at First Assembly of God to accept a pastorate shortly after Pastor William Kirschke came to Tacoma.

During the period of time that Pastor Kirschke was in Tacoma, his wife, Dorothy, was very active in the musical ministry of the church. She was accomplished as a pianist, organist and vocal soloist. She also led groups, and developed a large youth choir. Together with Pastor Kirschke, she inspired many folk, young and old, toward a closer walk with God.

Donald Sundquist, originally from Grays Harbor, moved to Tacoma in the 1950's and became an important part of the musical ministries of the church. He determined to enter the field of education, and enrolled in Western Washington College of Education (now known as Western Washington University) to secure his teacher training. (The writer, at that time, a high school principal, inquired of Don Sundquist what teaching subject he was training for. When he replied, "industrial arts", the writer urged



***First Assembly Silver Band***

him to reconsider since there was great need for talented music teachers. He transferred to music and has become a well-regarded vocal music teacher in the Tacoma Public High Schools. Whether the writer helped influence him to change his mind, may or may not have been a factor.)

During the period of 1957 to 1962, when Don Sundquist directed and managed the vocal music ministries of the church, he directed the sanctuary choir, the youth choir, the men's chorus and special ensemble groups. A men's quartet composed of Joe Swanstrom, Alfred Swanstrom, Don Seeley and Don Sundquist contributed substantially to the services in which they participated. A women's trio of Doris Martin, Doris Janke and Marolyn Heidecker was a great blessing to the congregation and to other groups to which they were invited to sing.

Don Sundquist was responsible for the arrangement of special music for the services (as were most choir directors in the past). He also served as leader for congregational singing and ministered as a soloist. Others who served as song leader during this period were Alfred Swanstrom, Helmer Malm and Harold Gray.

Persons who ministered as vocal soloists included Emma Johnson, Olga Bentley, Doris Martin, Marian Erickson, Eunice Robeck, Shirley and Jim Nicodemus. Marshall McKee—flute, Kathryn Sundquist—violin, Marolyn Stageberg Heidecker—saxophone, and William Heidecker—trumpet, were of great blessing to the congregation. Visiting guests possessing special talents who ministered to the congregation were Heimo Heito, violinist and

Peter VanWorder, organist.

Don Duncan remained with the church for a time when Pastor Buntain came to the city, following which he accepted a pastorate of his own.

During the latter 1960's, the Bade family came from Southern California to Tacoma to assume the responsibility for the music program of the church. Rev. Merle Bade had served with Pastor Buntain in Long Beach, California. He provided excellent leadership with the choir, orchestra and ensemble groups. Merle's wife, Dorothy, an extremely gifted pianist and musician, strengthened the music ministries of the church. Daughter Raylene had the rare gift of perfect pitch. She was a soprano soloist of the highest quality as well as being an outstanding violinist.

Following the service of the Bades, Don and Virginia (Ginger) Galloway came from Southern California to participate in the music ministries of First Assembly of God. Don had outstanding musical ability. Under his leadership the membership of the choir expanded substantially. For a number of years, Meridee Curtis was the principal church pianist. She also assisted in the direction and served as pianist for the "Singing Christmas Tree" and "Songs and Scenes of Easter" during Don Galloway's service.

## **THE SINGING CHRISTMAS TREE**

The Singing Christmas Tree was begun in 1965 under the leadership of Assistant Pastor Don Duncan. The frame for the first singing tree was constructed of wood. After additional experience and the evidence that this would be an annual event, steel frames, which could be assembled and dismantled more easily, were made.

In the early days, there were less than one-third as many as the 125 singers who currently form the tree. From its inception under Don Duncan, the Singing Tree has continually expanded in scope and quality. Lorraine Buntain assumed a very important role in the management of the lights for the production, a position she held for a number of years.

Pastor Fulton W. Buntain was an enthusiastic supporter of this ministry and for its potential for community outreach with the gospel of Jesus Christ. No one will know for sure, in this life, which outreach efforts are the most productive for the Kingdom of God. However, it appears certain that no other effort made during a given year has the impact of the Singing Christmas Tree as a means of reaching the community.

The initial interest of members and friends of the church rapidly extended to the community, attracting many thousands to the programs. Performances combine vocal and instrumental music, drama and the Gospel narration. Choir members are situated on the "branches" of the huge tree which is decorated with thousands of colored lights, controlled from the light and sound booth. The lighting effects, decorations and props combine to provide a most suitable background for the presentation of the true Christmas story.

At the first performance, there was no need to control the size of the crowd as First Assembly of God Sanctuary, South 12th and "G" Streets, was

ample in size to accommodate the number that came. Very quickly the news of the beauty of these performances spread. When the congregation moved to the first building on the present site at South 18th and Puget Sound, even with a capacity nearly double that of the previous building, it soon became apparent that some further means of monitoring attendance was necessary. One method of solving the problem was to have multiple performances to accommodate the extra people. This required issuance of tickets so that the size of the crowd at each performance could be controlled.



**Don  
Galloway,  
Minister of  
Music**

However, the demand for these free tickets became so intense that another means of control, the sale of tickets, had to be instituted, to avoid chaos in managing the crowds that wished to come. There was some early complaint that members of the church should never be charged admission to attend a ministry of the church. Pastor Buntain, always sensitive to the needs of all the people, announced that no regular member of the congregation would be denied admittance to view the Singing Christmas Tree because of lack of funds to purchase a ticket. This provision has continued to the present.

During the years that Don Galloway was the music director of the church, the Singing Christmas Tree increased in size and sophistication. Experience from previous years helped make the entire production more efficient and effective. Each year, new enhancements added to the tree and a modification of many portions of the format, gave incentive for people to wish to return, annually. However, the basic theme, the true Christmas story, never changed and never can.

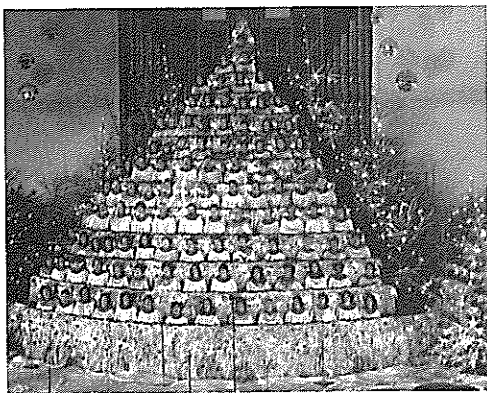
The most effective part of each year's presentation, is provided by Pastor Buntain. With some variations, he normally speaks for a few minutes to the audience two or three times, before, during and/or after the performance. The correlation of the true Christmas story to the everyday lives of the audience and a clear outline of the plan of salvation, completes the goals and objectives of the presentations. A card or folder is placed on each viewer's seat prior to commencement of the performance. It contains a space for members of the audience to enter their names and addresses and "to tear off the corner" of the card to receive more information as to how the Savior can be received. Thousands of people, each year, show their interest in learning more about Jesus Christ who came into this world and died that we might have eternal life.

As the years progressed through the late 1960's and early 1970's, interest in the Singing Christmas Tree accelerated. It became necessary to increase the number of performances to respond to the request of those wishing to view the production. Then, it happened! The November 30, 1975, fire which totally destroyed the sanctuary, muted the Singing Christmas Tree that December. The new church building was only partially constructed for the 1976 Christmas season. In order that the continuity and the ministry of the Singing Christmas Tree not be lost by two consecutive years of non-

performance the auditorium of the Temple Theater in downtown Tacoma was obtained. Technical problems accompanied the use of a strange auditorium so far removed from the church, but the performances were well-received by the audiences.

When the 1977 Christmas season arrived, occupancy of the rebuilt church made it possible to commence an uninterrupted series of annual presentations.

At the beginning of the Singing Christmas Tree, there was a very limited number of instrumental musicians supplementing the pipe organ. As the Tree increased in scope and size, additional musicians selected from the greater Tacoma area were added to the orchestra. For many years, the orchestra, although not a "full symphony", has provided outstanding instrumentation and balance as background for the glorious Christmas message.



***Singing Christmas Tree***

The rebuilt church has a larger platform and the ceiling is considerably higher than that of the previous building. This has permitted the extension of the size and numbers of persons involved.

The presentations are of high professional quality. The philosophy is that the presentation of the Gospel to the community should be done as attractively and effectively as possible. The prime goal is not entertainment. It is to bless, and cause to rejoice, those who truly serve God and to reach out to those who have not as yet accepted Him as Savior and Lord.

At the beginning, Carl and Ruth Kanz were deeply involved in the music program of the church, including the Singing Christmas Tree. Carl, being an accomplished organist, provided support and help to each of the directors. Ruth Kanz, extremely talented pianist, for many years contributed her talents to the Singing Christmas Tree and the music ministries of the church.

The demand for tickets to view the annual Singing Christmas Tree is truly phenomenal. During the most recent year, there were sixteen performances. The church sanctuary seats approximately 2,000 persons, so it was conservatively estimated that approximately 30,000 people received this ministry during the 1987 Christmas Season.

Choir members are required to make a substantial commitment of time and effort. Before summer ends each year, the choir begins rehearsals for the presentations scheduled several months hence. Prior to this time, the director and his assistant(s) have prepared the music, the narrations, the drama, plans for the stage and lighting and an outline for the orderly organization of that year's performances.

Appearance for numerous rehearsals and sixteen performances at each Christmas season requires an outstanding commitment. Director Lee has arranged a schedule whereby choir members are present for thirteen of the sixteen performances during the season. One notable exception is that long-time member of the choir, Frances Bowman, holds the record of never having missed a single performance since the origin of this program.

It has been a frequent experience of many that, when talking with persons in the community about First Assembly of God Life Center there may not be ready recognition. However, as soon as it is identified as the "Church of the Singing Christmas Tree," recognition is established. The large majority of persons in the Tacoma area have seen or are acquainted with this great annual event. It is not the goal of Pastor Buntain and the church to become famous or well-known except to be able to reach out and present the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to a hurting community.

It is God's will that the church should "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." This congregation and pastor minister to many people in many ways. One of the most effective ways has been through the music ministries of the church.

## SONGS AND SCENES OF EASTER

Following the success and interest in the Singing Christmas Tree, it appeared that a special music-based outreach to the congregation and community need not be confined to that season of the year. Special music for the Easter season had always been emphasized to joyously proclaim the resurrection from the dead of our Savior, Jesus Christ. For thirty-five years, a special Easter presentation in the form of a cantata had been the regular practice.

In order to expand the outreach of First Assembly of God during the happy Easter season, the first *Songs and Scenes of Easter* was composed, organized and directed by Don Galloway in 1971. Drama depicting the abuse, persecution and finally crucifixion of Jesus Christ was beautifully but realistically prepared. Some of the depictions were so realistic that many people wept as the crucifixion and resurrection were reviewed. There was considerable variety in the format from year to year but with the same central theme. The size of the crowds increased so substantially that it became necessary to control the crowds through the use



*Songs and Scenes of Easter*



*Independence Day Celebration*



of tickets and multiple performances.

After the 1975 fire destroyed the sanctuary, the 1976 Easter presentation was scheduled in the Bi-centennial Pavilion in downtown Tacoma. The environment did not lend itself to the spirituality of the occasion nearly as much as the church sanctuary, but it was an effective presentation and well-received by those that attended.

After completion of the present church facilities, the environment for this presentation was greatly improved. Kenton Lee, after assuming the responsibilities of music director, created new formats with many musical selections either composed or arranged by him. Although the attendance is not as large as the Singing Christmas Tree and not as widely known in the Tacoma area, it has a tremendous impact. Many persons have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord through the Singing Christmas Tree and the Songs and Scenes of Easter.

One of the marvels of these special programs is the cooperation and enthusiasm of the participants to make the commitment necessary to have a successful presentation. Each person participating must contribute literally dozens of hours—at the times specified by the director and not necessarily convenient to the participant. The dedication of commitment of time and effort by hundreds of persons in all aspects of both the Singing Christmas Tree and the Songs and Scenes of Easter continues to amaze.

Not content with two major presentations during the bicentennial year, 1976, a patriotic presentation was made for the first time and continued annually. Although it occurs during the summer holiday season, Independence Day, July 4, was the logical time to schedule this program. The preparation of the script, the securing of the participants, including appropriate representatives from the Armed Services and preparation for the stage properties and decorations all had to be performed.

Kenton Lee, who appears to have practically unlimited energies and talents, readily accepts this challenge in addition to a full production schedule. The presentations to date have demonstrated all of the skill, high quality of music and professionalism that can be found anywhere. The leadership and “unflappable” disposition of Kenton Lee combined with his character, interest and love of God, is well worth guarding.

## **KENTON AND BENITA LEE COME TO TACOMA**

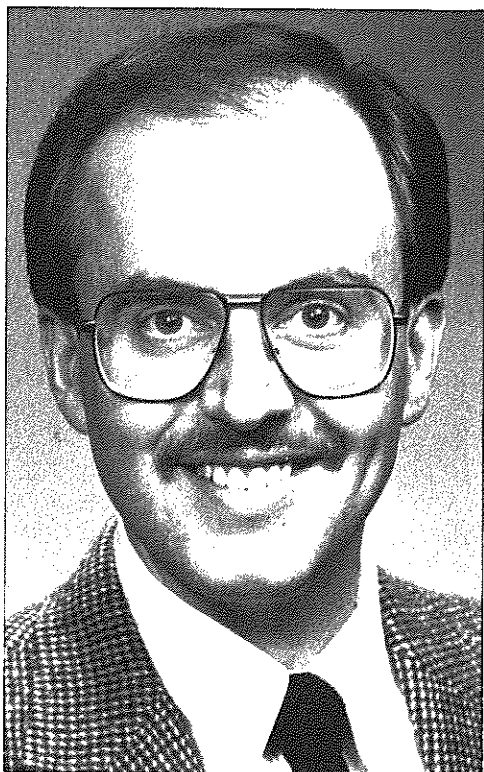
In 1981, Don Galloway resigned his position at First Assembly of God Life Center, to accept an assistant pastorate in another city. Pastor Buntain was not unaware of this possibility. He communicated with the Minister of Music of an Assembly of God Church in Southern California regarding this position. After some period of negotiation, Kenton Lee together with his wife, Benita, and their children accepted the call to Tacoma.

There was little doubt that Don Galloway had contributed greatly in the progress of the music ministries at First Assembly of God Life Center. There was doubt in many people's minds that a suitable replacement could

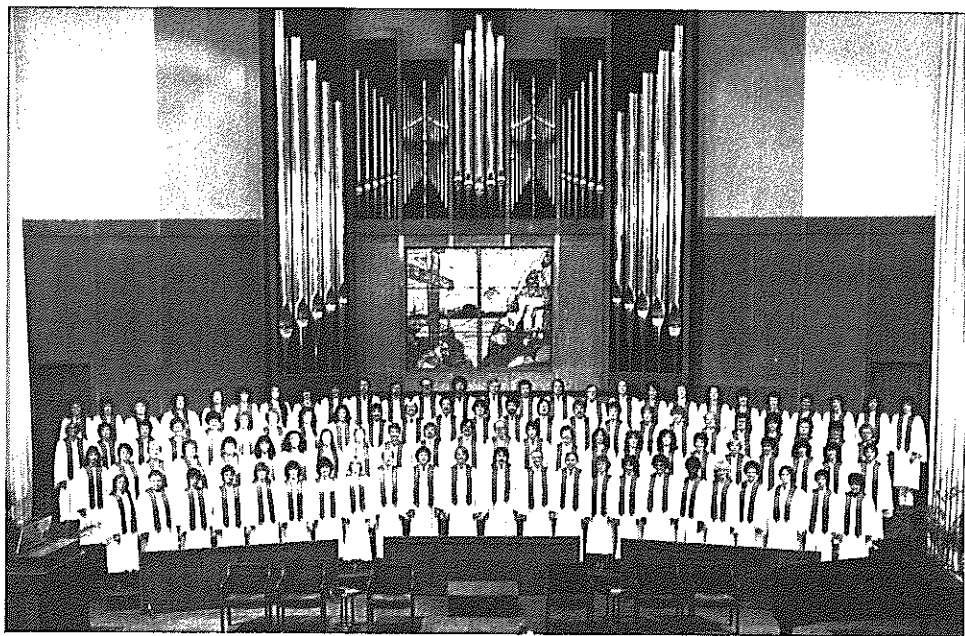
be found. Many choir members, particularly, were apprehensive of the continued progress of the music ministry with a change in the minister of music.

It was not long, however, until doubts were dispelled. Kenton Lee and his wife, Benita, an artist at the piano, in her own right, brought to the church a quality of musicianship, pleasing personalities, cooperation and spiritual depth that gave them immediate acceptance by those involved in the music ministries, as well as the entire congregation.

Kenton Lee, tenor vocalist, pianist extraordinary, composer, arranger, and director has blessed First Assembly of God Life Center in a most unusual way. During recent years, outstanding Christian instrumentalists have been added to the music ministries of the church particularly in the Sunday morning



*Musician Supreme Kenton Lee*



*Chancel Choir*

and evening services. Considering there are dual Sunday morning services, this is a genuine commitment of time on the part of these dedicated people.

Benita Lee's capability and sweet, cooperative spirit complements that of her husband. The ability to create, to improvise and to perform by both Kenton and Benita Lee makes their presence in the church a great blessing. Not only do they minister, themselves, but the amount of dedicated Christian talent that has been drawn to the church is a cause for rejoicing.

Since Sunday morning services are conducted at 9:30 and 11:00, the individual members of the sanctuary choir, for the most part, participate in but one of the two services. Therefore, to the causal observer, the size of the choir appears to be about half of its actual membership.

Director Kenton Lee does not intentionally select difficult music, but the most beautiful music normally has a fairly high degree of difficulty. Therefore, care must be used in the selection of choir members and participants in other musical groups who are adequate for the music selected. (Not so, in the early days. Anyone who could "carry a tune" was welcomed with the hope that those with the better voices would overshadow the others.) Children, youth choirs and other musical participation are a very important part of the ministries of the church. Realizing that the medium of music can be of tremendous benefit and blessing both to those participating and to those who hear, special emphasis is given.

Some of the groups that perform are Young World Singers, Small World Singers, Wee World Singers, Love Chapter and Spirit Wind. In addition bell choirs perform occasionally in the public services.

Music is an international language. First Assembly of God Life Center has as one of its goals to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ in an appealing way, to upbuild the saints and to attract those that have not yet received the gift of salvation.

The dedication of quality born-again musicians is of inestimable value to the services and ministry of First Assembly of God Life Center.

# **LEADERS OF VARIOUS AREAS OF PUBLIC MINISTRIES 1918 - 1988**

## **LEADERS IN THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC**

In the early days of meetings of the congregation, there were no designated song leaders. The size of the group was small. If a piano or reed pump organ was being used, it was easier to keep the group singing in unison. If not, a guitar sufficed.

The pastor or leader of the meeting normally would stand at the podium and announce the songs followed by a spontaneous beginning. Pastor Frank Gray enjoyed music, singing and playing of instruments, although he was not a musician. He was not hesitant or reluctant to sing or to lead the singing, because it was being done as worship to God and not to impress the people present.

Eric Rukan, original trustee of the congregation, was perhaps the first lay person to assume the role of song leader. He had an excellent tenor voice and he delighted in worshipping God in song. After Evangelists Cecil and Mollie Perks conducted their first meeting at the Pentecostal Tabernacle in 1928, Victor Fredlund became the song leader as well as choir director.

It should be noted that during the week-nights when the congregation was usually smaller, there would be no special song leader. The person conducting the meeting would announce the songs. Following is a random and incomplete listing of those involved in the various ministries whom the author recalls:

### **SONG LEADERS**

Eric Rukan, Victor Fredlund, Emma Johnson, Harold Gray, Alfred Swanstrom, Mason Younglund, Paul Gray, Don Sundquist, Albert Davis, Cal Robertson, Merle Bade, Don Galloway, Kenton Lee and numerous others.

### **CHOIR LEADERS**

Victor Fredlund, Harold Gray, Mason Younglund, Alfred Swanstrom, Paul Gray, Don Sundquist, Lorraine Buntain, Don Duncan, Don Galloway, Merle Bade and Kenton Lee.

### **ORCHESTRA AND BAND LEADERS**

John Torgerson, Harold Gray, Paul Gray, Alfred Swanstrom, Mason Younglund, Don Duncan, Merle Bade, Don Galloway, Kenton Lee

## **LEADERS IN OTHER AREAS OF CHURCH MINISTRIES**

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL GENERAL SUPERINTENDENTS**

Mike Stauffacher, Emma Johnson, William Pointen, Harold Gray and Detmer Ketler. (Since the re-organization of the Christian Education program there is no longer a Sunday School Superintendent, as such. The youth pastors assume a large part of the responsibility in the direction and management of the Sunday School program. Departmental superintendents have not been included due to the lack of sufficient reliable information.)

### **CHRISTIAN TELEVISION IN TACOMA**

Television was suspect from its inception by many Christian people because of its potential for the invasion of homes with the corruption often carried with it. Articles in religious publications warned against "Hollywood coming into your living room." It was true. Its invasion was slow but insidious. Assemblies of God ministers who had long preached against motion picture theatres as being one of the tools of the devil, found at the beginning of the 1950's that this new menace was beginning to take hold. Many Assembly of God families declared that television sets would never gain entrance to their homes. In some instances, motion picture projectors were purchased so that the projection could better be controlled than could a television set with a wide selection of programs.

First Assembly of God, Tacoma, Washington, was no exception to the fear of this new threat. The pastors handled it discreetly, making comments from time to time, warning people against this impending device which had so much potential for evil. Some of the members of the church were even more vocal about these new dangers. Burt Foos, who had been saved while working at the Northern Pacific shops in South Tacoma together with Herb Attlessey and some others, took a particularly dim view of the prospects.

Some churches, including Assemblies of God congregations, were finding that the use of slides and motion pictures of missionaries and mission projects in foreign lands were a far more effective way of motivating people to pray and to contribute to the financial support of the missionaries. Not so with Burt Foos who was very vocal in his condemnation of anything that moved on a screen. He kept insisting that this thing was of the devil. Through his impassioned pleas, action was taken in a business meeting, outlawing the showing of any projected motion picture in the church.

Burt Foos later entered the ministry during the latter years of his life. It is certain that missionary motion pictures were not shown in the church in which he pastored. However, it became evident that this visual aid was not going to disappear because of the opposition of certain people but it did delay its entrance into Pentecostal Tabernacle. When television programs were first shown, they were quite innocuous for the most part but many people saw the potential for danger and rightfully so.

Most people subscribed to the belief that the technology of television was and is not evil—it is the programming that causes the difficulty. Far-sighted Christian people could see the potential of “spreading the Gospel” through this medium. Jesus said “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to *every creature.*” Jesus didn’t tell the disciples that nineteen centuries later they would have tools for reaching people who could otherwise never come under the influence of the Gospel. Television and radio although having been used as tools by Satan, also are being used as tools for the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to countless millions around the world.

Pastor Fulton W. Buntain, among others, identified some of the potential for good that Christian television could provide. He is committed to spread the Gospel and to reach hurting and needy people by whatever means is and can be made available. When he learned that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) had not assigned all of the channels reserved for the Tacoma area, he initiated a movement to secure a channel for Christian Broadcasting.

Ultra-high frequency channels 20 and 28 were both available. The Tacoma School District, which had for a number of years been producing and releasing educational programs through channel 62, made application for channel 20. An interested group of people, who, with Pastor Buntain’s assistance and urging, negotiated with the Tacoma School District. Consequently, the School District agreed to apply for channel 28, which provided a substantial improvement over their present channel 62. Business interests had also expressed an intention to attempt to obtain this channel. (The lower the number of the channel, the more powerful its signal since broader bands generate stronger signals.)

This committee was encouraged when they discovered that there was a good chance they could be successful in being assigned this channel if all the conditions were met. Those conditions were quite imposing. It required money—substantial money. First Assembly of God Life Center, because of its financial needs as well as the implications involved, was not a likely applicant. There could be misunderstanding should the church attempt to use the tithes and offerings of its congregation to invest in an uncertain project. Pastor Buntain although anxious to be successful in the quest for the assignment of the rights to this channel, agreed that it would not be wise to expend church funds in this manner, at this time.

The committee consisted of a number of business people, some of whom were members of the church, agreed to carry the matter further if investigation should deem it the prudent thing to do. Paul A. Gray was selected as chairman of the board. Other members of the board were Pastor Fulton W. Buntain, Don Huber, Kenneth Rupp, Clifford Paulson, Mrs. Barbara Brown (wife of Pastor Leo Brown), Associate Pastor Joseph Fuiten, John Miller and Mayor Mike Parker. The risk involved not only the amount of time members contributed to this potential enterprise, but, the expenditure of a substantial sum of money to complete the application process in accordance with the rules of the Federal Communications Commission.

The first step required an application for a construction permit. The

Commission, before granting the permit, investigated carefully the qualifications of the applicants to reasonably assure that the successful applicant would be able to successfully complete the project and not deprive other interested parties of the opportunity to obtain the license. After the board was granted the permit it was required to complete the construction of the station of such quality as would meet the requirements and specifications of the Federal Communications Commission before a license could be granted. Locating suitable sites for studios and offices as well as a proper location for the antenna, in themselves, created a considerable challenge. After extended work and investigation, an antenna site near Bremerton was selected, requiring substantial work to secure the ground and to transport and install the tower and other equipment in the approved location.

Temporary studio and office facilities were located in Tacoma. This required a competent full-time leader. Paul Gray, chairman and station manager, fulfilled that responsibility. The station manager was required to be in full-time employment on the project. Employed engineers and consultants provided the necessary expertise in this highly technical field. Five members of the board invested a total of \$150,000.

The goal of the committee was achieved. The station was constructed and the license was obtained in early 1984. Although there were lucrative offers made to purchase time on the station for non-religious purposes, the committee had agreed earlier that this would be an exclusively Christian television station. However, the arrangement, production and release of 168 hours of Christian programming each week posed a difficult problem. There were not many alternatives.

To fulfill the goal to the Board that they would maintain high quality in the presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the audiences, an opportunity arose which could solve the dilemma. Trinity Broadcasting, Channel 40, Orange County, California, for some time, had sought to obtain an outlet in the Pacific Northwest. Family Broadcasting Company, the name of the Tacoma organization that had received the license, had as its goal to project and encourage the Christian image in its telecasts. Chairman Paul Gray was commissioned by the corporation to establish negotiations with the ownership of Channel 40, Orange County, California. Channel 20 was now fully operational and on the air for approximately eight months prior to the completion of the transaction that would transfer its ownership and control. The ownership of Channel 20 became convinced after several months of operation that it would require substantially more capital than was immediately available to reach and maintain a high level of programming on a full-time basis. Since Channel 40 was already producing the programming, the major portion of the programs would be released on Channel 20, Seattle-Tacoma simultaneously. As a result of the sale, the original investors of Channel 20 were able to recover the funds they had originally invested.

Brief as it was under local ownership, it became possible for the station to be fully operational for Christian programming thus providing an outlet and an encouragement for Pastor Buntain and First Assembly of God Life Center television ministry.

## WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

During the early years of the church, the numbers were small and their was little need for ministries for various groups. As the numbers increased and the range of opportunities for groups grew, an expansion of ministries and activities occurred.

As early as the 1930's women's missionary groups were organized. Their principal function was the securing and preparing for shipment, items needed by missionaries on the field. This consisted primarily of clothing, for the missionary families and also for members of their congregations. The ladies in these groups would normally meet at the church and work together to prepare the materials to be shipped.

In 1951, largely through the influence of the pastor's wife, Mrs. William (Dorothy) Kirschke, a greater emphasis was placed on participation in the women's missionary work. Four separate organizations were established: Tabitha, Fidelas, Bykota and Mission Teens. They were divided largely by age groups. Each group had its own officers and specific goals. They became a great blessing not only to the participants who enjoyed the Christian fellowship but to the recipients of their efforts. Retired Missionary Martin Kvamme assumed the responsibility of heading the effort to prepare completed materials for shipping.

Of recent years during Pastor Buntain's service, a greater effort was launched to provide a wider-based and more highly defined program of ministries for women of the church.

In February, 1978, Mrs. Ed (Goldia) Anderson was added to the ministerial staff of First Assembly of God with a specific assignment to develop the program of Women's Ministries. Goldia Anderson was well qualified for this assignment. She formerly headed the Department of Women's Ministries for the Assemblies of God, with offices in Springfield, Missouri. Following completion of that assignment, she held a similar position in the Northern California/Nevada District of the Assemblies of God.

She arrived at the decision to minister in one local area and not be required to travel so frequently. Since her two daughters, Marlene Hamilton and Dolly Boyd, resided in Tacoma, she was responsive to the invitation to join the staff at First Assembly of God. Her leadership in the development of this department was very effective. Her kind and gracious manner, her spirituality, as well as her experience in this ministry, gave impetus for the department to grow. She planned for a variety of ministries to meet the needs of the women of the church and those who would come into the church.

Goldia Anderson was a tireless worker. She plunged into whatever needed to be done with little restraint. During an especially important program, August, 1982, she became ill and reluctantly resigned from this responsibility.



**Pastor  
Goldia  
Anderson,  
Women's  
Ministries**



Following Goldia Anderson's resignation, Lorraine Buntain, the pastor's wife, assisted by Goldia Anderson's daughter, Marlene Hamilton, and Robyn Buntain Wilkerson, assumed the responsibility for this ministry. The scope of these ministries which provide strength and encouragement steadily expanded. Added to the program was an organized, systematic study of the Word of God.

## **WOMEN'S MINISTRIES PROGRAMS**

**Women Alive** - This program is conducted usually on Monday nights on a monthly basis except during the summer time. Outstanding women speakers from throughout the Nation have shared their testimonies and spiritual experiences. These inspirational meetings have received a wide response from both women employed during the day and others.

**Women of the Word (WOW)** is conducted weekly, Tuesday mornings, during the Fall-Winter-Spring seasons. An intense study of portions of the Bible are conducted on a continuing basis throughout the season, as well as participation by inspirational speakers.

**Business and Professional Women** - Women employed during the day and thus precluded from attending weekday activities meet monthly. Inspirational speakers and opportunities for becoming acquainted with other Christian women highlight the program, which has become a very important part of Women's Ministries. Alice Buntain Southard and Alma Gray direct this ministry.

**Christian Fellowship Guild** has been in existence for more than forty years. Impetus for this organization which originally met in individual homes, was provided by Mrs. Paul (Viola) Gray. It is currently meeting in the Fireside Room (Ewing Hall) in the church. The objective is for fellowship. An interesting speaker is normally included.

**Fidelas and Tabitha Women Missionary Councils** meet on alternate Tuesday evenings. During the thirty-seven years of existence, aid in the form of materials for home and foreign missions projects as well as the fellowship enjoyed by the participants, has made this a vital activity. Marie Cole, mother of Assemblies of God Northwest District Superintendent Frank Cole, coordinated this program for many years.

**Single Women of Life Center** provides women without mates an opportunity to meet and fellowship. A broad schedule of activities are planned by Audrey Hansen, coordinator. Recently, a sizable number participated in a one-week cruise through Alaska's inside passage.

**Missionettes** have a long history of providing activities and spiritually motivated service for the teenage girl. Effective leadership and a wide range of missionary activities continually emphasize the place and function of foreign and home missions.

**Firm Believers** a high intensity, low impact aerobics program for women is conducted several times each week in the gymnasium. This too provides an organized opportunity in a Christian setting for those women

who wish to participate in a physical exercise program, led by Keely Villaharmosa.

**Free to Be Thin** program is conducted weekly to assist those who struggle with weight control. (Men are also permitted.) It is very effectively conducted and directed by Billie Jean Fisher.

**The Lord's Handmaidens** is a prayer-based program. The time is spent in concentrated intercessory prayer twice each week.

During past years, attention to the specific needs of women received very minimal attention. Pastor and Mrs. Buntain have shown outstanding leadership in making provision for these needs. The number of women who participate gives evidence of the value they place on these opportunities.

## **MINISTRY TO THOSE IN THE GOLDEN YEARS**

### **Golden Heirs**

Of special significance in recent years is the ministry to those in the "golden years" of life. A program recently launched is named, *Golden Heirs*. This ministry is coordinated by a husband-and-wife team, William and Marolyn Heidecker. There had been substantial participation by the members and friends of the church in a wide variety of activities organized to provide Christian fellowship to those of this group.

Activities range from group meetings at the church, or elsewhere, on special occasions, many times in connection with dinner, trips to destinations in the immediate area or beyond. Recent trips to spiritual retreats, train ride to Portland and a cruise through the "inside passage" to Alaska have elicited much interest and heavy participation. The ministry is very capably and conscientiously directed by the leaders.

## CHAPTER 7

### FOREIGN MISSIONARIES

#### MARTIN KVAMME

From the beginning of the small congregation in 1918, the prime consideration and goal was to implement the "Great Commission" which stated, "Go ye into ALL THE WORLD and preach the gospel to EVERY CREATURE; he that believes and is baptized will be saved; he that believes not shall be condemned." Martin Kvamme, one of the original three deacons of the church, owned and operated a small retail buttermilk dealership. He delivered buttermilk to his customers in his little truck. He was not wealthy, but was successful in his business. As he drove along the streets on his routes, he waited on God in prayer, asking for direction in his life. God spoke to Martin and gave him a call to become a foreign missionary to China.

When Martin came home and told his wife about the call, she rejoiced in her heart. So, no more buttermilk deliveries, but deliveries of the word of God in a foreign land.



*Missionary and  
Mrs. Martin Kvamme*

#### ADOLPH WINGARD

Adolph and Clara Wingard also felt the call of God on their hearts to share the wonderful gospel in far-away China. They served there for more than twenty years. They were Norwegian, as were the Kvammes, and called to a land where the language was very strange and where it required a great deal of self-discipline to learn it. They worked in cooperation with the Kvammes for a number of years.

## ARTHUR AND EDNA AHLBERG

Although Arthur and Edna Ahlberg had very little formal Bible training, the call of God was on their hearts to minister from the Word. They ministered in the local area for several years, including University Place and Ruston but felt the call of God to go to China. When hostilities made it impossible to serve in that country, they then transferred their ministry to the Philippine Islands, where they stayed until the death of Arthur. A builder by trade, Arthur was of great blessing in the application of his knowledge and skills in connection with mission church building projects in the Philippine Islands. After the death of Arthur Ahlberg, Edna's burden for the people motivated her to continue her work in the Islands, even for a number of years after retirement age.



*Missionaries  
Arthur and Edna Ahlberg*

## VERENA RICH

Verena Rich was serving as a missionary at the Bettiah Girls School, in India, when her parents, Noah and Clara Rich, moved to Tacoma from the Middle West. Verena then adopted the First Assembly of God Church as her church and the church adopted her. As she periodically returned home to visit her parents, she became beloved among the people of the church.

## IRENE CRANE

Irene Crane, younger sister of Rachel Crane Peterson, missionary to Latin America, moved with her family to Battle Creek, Michigan, at an early age. Her parents were Godly, devoted first of all to God and then to their family. Their burden for foreign missions was so intense that they instilled in both their daughters a willingness to receive a call from God. Although Rachel was called to Latin America, Irene's call was to Nigeria, Africa, where she served for thirty-five years before retiring in the Tacoma area.

## OTHERS

During the course of the seventy years there have been many other dedicated persons who served in the foreign missions field. Some had a relationship with this congregation, either through attending the church during their youth or prior to being called to missions work. Others became associated with the congregation through attendance of family members or relatives.

## WOMEN'S MISSIONARY GROUPS

The organization and operation of women's missionary groups reached a height never before attained in the church. Dorothy Kirschke was an enthusiast for the involvement of the women in the ministries of the church, as well as being a missionary enthusiast. Through her promotion and organization, four separate groups were formed and met separately: *TABITHA* which included the mature ladies of the church; *FIDELAS* for the middle-age ladies; *BYKOTA* (Be Ye Kind One To Another) for the younger married ladies; and the *MISSIONARY TEENS*.

By the early 1950's, these groups had made multiplied hundreds of garments of varying sizes and styles. These were shipped to the foreign fields, where they were gratefully received by the missionaries and natives that were fortunate to receive garments distributed by the missionaries. Their motto was, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these, you have done it unto Me."

In 1951, the Tabitha President, was Edith Phill; Fidelas President, Thelma Brown; Bykotas President, Emma Gerla; and Missionary Teens Supervisor, Doris Wright.

## MISSIONS SECRETARIES

With an ever-increasing number of missionaries on the foreign fields and the great importance of continuing communication between the church and the missionaries, an important assignment was that of Missionary Secretary. Clara Fjermedal (Bohrman) and Emma Johnson, maintained correspondence with each of the missionaries associated with First Assembly of God. Later, when Clara moved out of the city, Molly Texstrum filled her position. She, with Emma Johnson, proved to be a very effective combination. Each month prior to the missionary offering on the third Sunday night, the missionary secretaries would read excerpts from letters they had received from our missionaries to awaken interest in the congregation to pray for and give to the missions program.

## **WOMEN'S MISSIONARY COUNCILS 1953**



***TABITHA***



***FIDELAS***



***BYKOTAS***



***MISSIONARY TEENS***

## WAYDE GOODALL

Wayde Goodall accepted Jesus Christ while serving in the U. S. Navy in Guam during the years of 1967 to 1971. This was a total conversion for Wayde and his surrender was complete. Upon his discharge, he enrolled at Southern California College where he received his B. A. degree. Upon further studies at Central Michigan University he received his Master's degree in counseling and guidance one year later.

Additional studies at Columbia Pacific University resulted in his being accorded a Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1983. Wayde served as youth pastor at both Calvary Temple, Seattle, and at Capitol Christian Center, Sacramento, California. It was while he was assistant pastor at Neighborhood Church, Portland, Oregon, that he was able to enroll in courses toward his doctorate.

In 1982, Wayde came to First Assembly of God Life Center, where he served as an assistant pastor, with a specialty in Counseling and Guidance, individual and group. He left Tacoma in 1987, following a call to the missionary field. He is on his way with his wife, Roz, and their two children to Vienna, Austria, to establish the first Assembly of God Church in that city.



***Dr. and Mrs. Buntain,  
Dr. and Mrs. Goodall***

# MARIE JOHNSRUD

## Missionary to Africa - A Portrait

Goodbye, Tacoma! Hello, Ouagadougou! No, Marie Johnsrud didn't jet from the local airport to her newly assigned mission station in Africa. Marie came from very humble beginnings. Family finances were very limited and Marie didn't enjoy luxuries that some neighboring children took for granted. She took every advantage of what education was made available to her. She constantly sought God as to how she could be used in the advancement of His kingdom. As she waited, she often pondered in her heart what God would have her to do. She was unmarried so was free to leave when God let her know her time had arrived.

The amount of support pledged while on the mission field was very meager, and the promise of that did not come easily. Finally, she received the official word that her time to leave had arrived. Marie did not speak French language so her first barrier was to attain some degree of proficiency in French. She spent four months of highly concentrated language study in Eastern Canada before embarking on a small Portuguese freighter which took one month—thirty days—to cross the Atlantic, but that was just the beginning. For seven weeks she waited for transportation from Lisbon, Portugal. This was right at the close of World War II and civilians with low priorities were at the bottom of the list.

When Marie finally arrived in North Africa, she traveled by car to her station in Ouagadougou in a French truck, more than four months after she had left home. She arrived at the mission station on Christmas day. She was so thrilled having been called by God to go to these people that she claims it to be the "happiest and most satisfying Christmas of my life."

Before long she found herself washing ulcers and wrapping sores. Since no bush clinics were available, the people streamed into the yard every morning. The head missionary taught her how to care for snake bites. After sixteen lessons in the Moore' language she was on her own, learning as she worked. English was not allowed in their ministry in this French territory, so she disciplined herself to learn this new language quickly in order to be useful.



*Missionary Marie Johnsrud*



The senior missionary's health was delicate. After listening to her teach the girls reading for two days, Marie says, "She handed me a carbon copy of the dictionary and told me to do what I could. Then she went to bed." During these struggling days the girls learned to read and Marie learned the language. She also taught Daily Vacation Bible School classes to thirteen missionary children on the station. Two of them, George and Warren Flattery later became renowned missionaries in the Assemblies of God. George was the founder of the International Correspondence Institute (ICI) and Warren was a missionary for a time to the Islamic world and later in Western Europe.

The first independent missionary project given to Marie was to manage the girls' home. Many of these girls married pastors and became real helpmeets for them. Later she became involved in literature and printing. She learned to operate a multigraph after which she taught one of the natives to use it. When a printer imported an offset print plant, she worked on Bible School textbooks, quarterlies and stories.

Eva Radanovsky, co-worker of Marie Johnsrud, began the project of translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew. They then moved out into a bush country. Besides the work on the translation, they started six new churches and ministered to them and some of the existing ones. They prepared booklets for ministers and completed the translation of the entire Bible in the native language.

Marie Johnsrud, after 34 years of strenuous but devoted service to the unlikely place that God had called her, was told that she had reached retirement age. They took Marie Johnsrud out of the mission but they couldn't take the work of God out of Marie Johnsrud. She lives in a very modest one-room apartment at Life Manor. She is a constant source of encouragement and help not only to those that come across her pathway but to those that she seeks out in the highways and byways of life. Few people burden themselves with as heavy a schedule as Marie. Her dedicated Christian life and the spirit of a servant bless hundreds of lonely, handicapped, and even some in jails.

God has his own rating scale which will be disclosed as we reach His Heaven. There isn't much doubt but that Marie Johnsrud will have a crown sparkling with the jewels she had laid at the foot of the Master.

# EINAR AND RACHEL PETERSON

## Missionaries to the Hispanics - A Portrait

Einar Peterson was raised in Tacoma one of five children of Mr. and Mrs. I. K. Peterson. Mrs. Peterson worshipped faithfully at the mission on Tacoma Avenue and then at South 12th & "G" Streets after the new building was completed. Einar attended church when his mother insisted. He liked the people at that church. When the call for volunteer labor was announced, Einar came quite frequently during the six months of construction, but he had never surrendered his heart to God.

About six months after completion of the church, Einar was spectacularly converted. When he received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, God made it very clear to him that his vocation in this life was to be a missionary to the Hispanics.

Rachel Crane with her parents also attended the mission on Tacoma Avenue and at the church at 12th and "G" Streets. Surprisingly, although the congregation was quite small, Rachel and Einar never really became acquainted. In the meantime, the Crane family, which included not only Rachel but a younger sister, Irene, moved to Battle Creek, Michigan.



*Missionaries  
Einar and Rachel Peterson*

Both Einar and Rachel had God's call on their lives to prepare for the work he had selected for them. Consequently, they both enrolled at Central Bible Institute at Springfield, Missouri. Irene Crane had previously been accepted as a student at C. B. I. and so Rachel joined her.

By the end of the second year of school, God led Einar and Rachel to join their lives and submit to his call for the specific field. Rachel left for San Antonio, Texas, to assist with the Mexican missionary work. Einar returned home in Tacoma for the first time after leaving for Springfield. By correspondence they planned their wedding in Battle Creek. In the meantime, Pastor Frank Gray advised Einar to pastor the work in Gig Harbor.

After their marriage, they went to San Antonio, Texas, to assist in the Mexican work and to further improve their command of Spanish. In 1941, they received a missionary appointment to Cuba from the Foreign Missions Department of the Assemblies of God. They then had two children, Lois and Paul. They worked in Eastern Cuba in Palma Soriano. The temporary pastor arranged a farewell service for himself which was interrupted at the

close by a shooting spree down the street which made it quite difficult to keep minds focused on the dismissal prayer.

God prospered Einar and Rachel Peterson. In less than two years the first Assemblies of God church in Cuba was dedicated. The work grew in Palma Soriano and chapels were constructed in several villages. Later they expanded their ministry to other cities. Although there was opposition from the Catholics and the doctors, God continued to heal and save souls with a miracle congregation emerging from this effort.

Dozens of young people from this work went to Bible school to prepare for the ministry. By this time Fidel Castro was able to make things so difficult that the Petersons had to leave. Their young people were pastoring or married to pastors in many parts of Cuba—many of whom became internationally known and respected.

After the necessity of leaving Cuba, the Foreign Missions Department asked that they go to the Dominican Republic. Einar became the director and administrator of the Bible School. The job was difficult. The conditions were discouraging but God had called Einar and Rachel to this country. He blessed them and their work. Some of the graduates of this school have become very important in the Assemblies of God work in this area.

After two score years on the mission field, Einar and Rachel weren't yet ready to lay their armour down but accepted the decision of the Foreign Missions Department to return from the field. They have not retired. They find themselves occupied in a variety of ways, especially in ministering to Hispanic people in the Tacoma area. At the beginning they sang the song, "I'll go where you want me to go, Dear Lord." They're still singing it. They presently live at Life Manor, close to Life Center, where their services are very much appreciated.

## CALCUTTA MISSION OF MERCY

Pastor Fulton W. Buntain has the heart of a missionary. This is not strange since his elder brother, Daniel Mark Buntain, has served in Calcutta, India, for more than 34 years. D. Mark Buntain, born and raised in Canada, although most of his ministry in this continent has been in the U. S. A., is affiliated with the U. S. Assemblies of God and has chosen the Northwest District as his home district. The demand for his ministry has kept him occupied for as much as his health has permitted.

In his early 20's, Mark conducted evangelistic campaigns in local churches, with his younger brother, Fulton, accompanying him as song leader and associate until Fulton began receiving invitations on his own. After the brothers had gone their separate ways, Mark continued with the company of his wife, Huldah. God called Mark to the mission field. Since Huldah's parents had been missionaries to



***Missionaries  
Mark and Huldah Buntain***

Japan, Mark thought it likely that he and Huldah would go to that oriental island country. Not so. God had a different idea. He called Mark to Calcutta, India. Calcutta has been termed the "cesspool of society" by those who have traveled throughout disadvantaged countries. No one has successfully contradicted that indictment.

Thirty-five years ago, in 1953, Mark and Huldah left for Calcutta. They threw themselves into the ministry of physically and spiritually starving people who had no hope in this world, particularly those of the lower castes. Mark and Huldah proclaimed the message of Jesus Christ as the Savior of their souls. Many believed and were saved. How could they proclaim the love of God to people, literally starving to death, if they were insensitive to their physical needs! They began a feeding program, which at the time of this writing ministers to 25,000 hungry people, mostly children, 365 days a year.

Mark's vision caused him to construct a beautiful seven story general hospital in the center of that pitiable city on a site miraculously provided by God. An outstanding nurses' training program is conducted in the hospital. Ministering to thousands of people through the in-patient and out-patient programs has given the opportunity to demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ to save the souls and heal the bodies of people in Calcutta, India.

Many people sacrificially and generously contributed finances to support this great work. But, there were always more hungry people who

needed food for their bodies and salvation for their souls who were not able to be reached in this city of more than 10,000,000 people.

Fulton Buntain, seeing the great need, determined that there must be a way that more support could be raised to ease the suffering of these dear people. He was implanted with the idea of a "mission of mercy," that could support missionaries who were ministering to starving people—first of all in Calcutta and eventually in other parts of the world, as finances permitted.

Starting with a small nucleus of people an informal organization of persons within his own church structure, Calcutta Mission of Mercy was launched. In order to proceed in an orderly manner, the founding committee selected officers. The writer, Harold F. Gray was selected as chairman, Assistant Pastor Joseph B. Fuiten, vice-chairman, Alma N. Gray, secretary, Carl Kanz, treasurer. Pastor Buntain completed the membership of Calcutta Mission of Mercy. Joseph Ellis, an Assemblies of God minister who was temporarily working in the printing industry, was invited to become the executive director.

Calcutta Mission of Mercy began in very humble circumstances. For a short period of time the office during the summer of 1977 was located in one of the portable classroom buildings used by Life Christian School.

Kathy Buntain, daughter of Fulton and niece of Mark, agreed to work in the office as secretary and assistant to Administrator Ellis. There was an immediate need to commence the fund-raising program not only to provide much needed help for the work in Calcutta, but to pay the modest costs of staff salaries and related expenses.

Pastor James Hammond, of Faith Tabernacle in Seattle, being a strong admirer and supporter of Mark Buntain, presented from his church a gift of \$10,000 which provided the start-up costs. The growth of the ministry and fund-raising of Calcutta Mission of Mercy was very encouraging and gave strong indication of its future success. Mark and Huldah Buntain were thrilled that this effort was being launched to enable them to minister to thousands more needy people of Calcutta and East India.

Joseph Ellis' experience in publications and printing contributed greatly to the initiation of the monthly magazine, *Cry of Calcutta*, which is circulated throughout the United States and to certain other parts of the world. Approximately 15,000 copies of the *Cry of Calcutta* were sent out. Each issue contains reports on the work in Calcutta, a message from Mark Buntain, a column from the executive director and other articles and photographs appropriate to the goals of Calcutta Mission of Mercy.

Rather than having the organization function and be considered as a "local" effort, the board, in consultation with D. Mark Buntain, expanded membership by including board members from other parts of the country. Raymond Neill, Long Beach, California, an avid supporter of Mark and Huldah Buntain graciously accepted the invitation to join the Board. Raymond Neill was a leader in the Southern California *Light for the Lost* program, one of the most effective in the entire nation in raising funds so that missionaries would have better tools with which to work.

Hugh Rosenberg, pastor of the great Tri-County Assembly of God church in the Cincinnati, Ohio, area also joined. Hugh Rosenberg has served as missions secretary for the Ohio District for many years and has members of his family on the mission field.

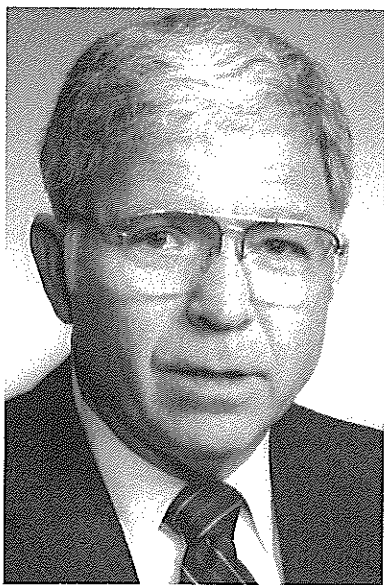
John McDuff, pastor of Faith Temple in Pasadena (suburb of Houston), Texas, has served joyfully as a member of the Board. John McDuff's burden for foreign missions and his deep admiration of the work of the Buntains in Calcutta serve to make him an effective member. Rick Claxton, layman, with whom Mark became acquainted in Springfield, Missouri, who lived in Colorado and later in Texas, served the first few years after the expansion of the Board.



***Alice Buntain  
Southard***

Dr. Alan Holderness, orthopedic surgeon, formerly of Akron, Ohio, and more recently of Tulsa, Oklahoma, has provided excellent service to Calcutta Mission of Mercy. He has visited the hospital and other parts of the ministry in Calcutta, India. His understanding and interpretation of the medical needs in Calcutta, particularly in the hospital, have been invaluable. He has been able to secure donations from pharmaceutical firms for the work in Calcutta that have proved to be of substantial assistance.

A more recent addition to the Board, David Burdine, Colorado Springs, Colorado, has proved to be a valuable member. He formerly was chairman of the board of Bethesda Care Centers located in several Rocky Mountain and plains states. Largely through the influence and vision of David Burdine, this organization makes significant gifts to a variety of foreign mission projects. David Burdine travels throughout the world and examines missions' needs and makes recommendations to the board. The special and significant interest of David Burdine of the work in Calcutta, has made it possible for the work of Mark and Huldah Buntain to become the recipients of substantial financial assistance. One of the most recent Calcutta projects was the donation of funds to make possible the complete "finishing" of the top floor of the hospital for the nurses' training program.



***Executive Director B.  
W. Corpany***

Rev. Edward Nelson Jr., newly appointed pastor of the Neighborhood Church in Bellevue, Washington, and formerly an administrator in the Foreign Missions Department of the Assembly of God, was elected in 1988.

Alice Buntain Southard, sister of Mark and Fulton Buntain, has served in the Calcutta Mission of Mercy office as a liaison with churches all over the nation. She is the widow of the late Rev. Ed Southard and is widely known and admired for loyalty and commitment to the cause of Jesus Christ and in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

A recent member of the Calcutta Mission of Mercy Board is Richard Wilkerson, whose wife, Robyn Buntain Wilkerson, is Mark Buntain's niece. Richard Wilkerson has become a nationally known and sought-after evangelist. His services are in great demand throughout the land. In his crusades he is able to relate to a wide variety of audiences about the work in Calcutta, India. In June of this year he went to Calcutta, at the invitation of Mark Buntain, to speak to the All-India youth conference.

Although Calcutta Mission of Mercy is not a First Assembly of God organization, members and former members of the church serve as officers of Calcutta Mission of Mercy.

In 1980, Joseph Ellis left Calcutta Mission of Mercy and accepted the position as director of the Tacoma Rescue Mission. B. W. Corpany, former missionary to the Middle East and director for a time of the Lillian Trasher orphanage in Egypt and later served in Lebanon, succeeded Joseph Ellis. Carol Corpany, who served with her husband in both Egypt and Lebanon is a member of the office staff at Calcutta Mission of Mercy. Their personal experience in working on the mission field and their acquaintance with policies and procedures of the Assemblies of God Foreign Missions Department have proved valuable.

B. W. Corpany has traveled to Calcutta on seven occasions since holding this position. He has established a strong liaison with Mark and Huldah Buntain.

Fulton W. Buntain, the "dreamer of dreams" as to how the work of God can be extended during these perilous times at what must be close to the end of this dispensation, has seen another dream take wings. There is much yet to be done. Finances flowing to Calcutta are far inadequate to accomplish the potential. Further, there are the other parts of the world facing desperate circumstances and literally untouched by the ministry of Calcutta Mission of Mercy.

## **Members of the Mission of Mercy**

Board of Directors in 1988:

Harold F. Gray, Chairman, Tacoma, Washington

Dr. Fulton W. Buntain, Vice Chairman, Tacoma, Washington

Alma N. Gray, Secretary, Tacoma, Washington

Joseph B. Fuiten, Treasurer, Kirkland, Washington

B. W. Corpany, Executive Director, Tacoma, Washington

David Burdine, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Dr. Alan Holderness, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Dr. John McDuff, Pasadena, Texas

Rev. T. Edward Nelson, Jr., Bellevue, Washington

Dr. Hugh Rosenberg, Cincinnati, Ohio

Dr. James Swanson, Pomona, California

Rev. Richard Wilkerson, Tacoma, Washington



## CHAPTER 8

### LIFE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Throughout the state and nation, there has been an increasing concern expressed by Christian people relative to the growing un-Christian influence in public schools. The trend toward total elimination of anything pertaining to God and to the Christian faith in the public schools is very distressing.

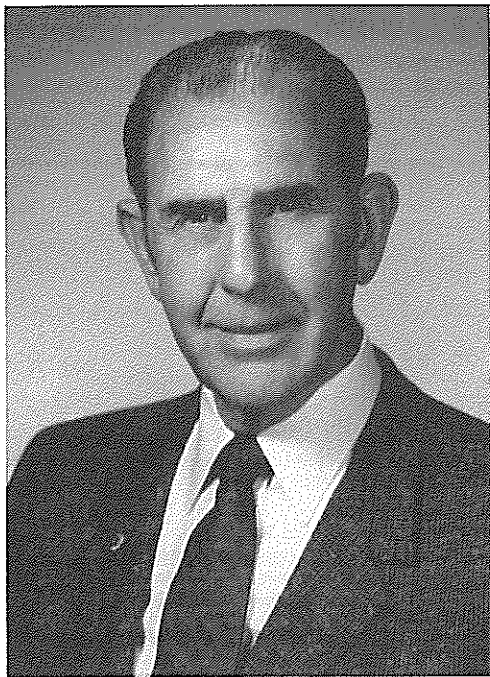
Pastor Fulton Buntain, sharing these concerns and recognizing the need for action, determined to use his influence and leadership to provide truly Christ-centered education. With the concurrence of the Board of Deacons, in 1972, a program was launched from a very small beginning. Pastor Buntain appointed Nancy Hansen to begin a day-care program in the church. It began with one child. As soon as this service became known, additional parents, needing children's day-care services, began to avail themselves of the opportunity.

Two years later, September 1974, a kindergarten program combined with the day-care program began. Children attended the kindergarten classes for a half day and the day-care program for the balance of the day, thus being cared for during their parents' employment hours.

This was the beginning of Life Christian School. In 1976, a first-grade curriculum was combined with the kindergarten program, and thus the elementary school program was launched. One grade was added each year so that children in the school could continue, in this excellent Christian environment, being taught by dedicated born-again Christian teachers.

An organizing committee, which later became the school board, was appointed. The original members of the committee were

Stanley Seely, chairman; Carl Kanz, Harold Gray, Tom Pendleton and Pastor Fulton W. Buntain. During the course of the first year Ron Wick, Gladys Hardy and Bruce Hamilton were added. In subsequent years a significant number of church members served on the board of directors.



**Paul A Gray**  
*Faithful with many talents.*

Paul A. Gray, held the responsibility of chairman of the board for a majority of the years of the school's existence and has the distinction of having served longer on the board than any person other than Pastor Fulton W. Buntain. Others who have served are Beverly (Burmark) VanHoy, Judy (Popineau) Wick, Dr. Dean Simmons, Dan Mullen, Barbara May, Joe Bickley, Ruth Parks, Dr. Wayde Goodall, Glenn Ash, James Chatman, Robert Towell, Suzanne Corrigan, Henry Millner and Ron Schmick.

There was a great desire to serve as many children as possible. However, such took more than desire. Tuition that could be charged to parents of the students would account for only a portion of the cost. Although, tuition was kept as low as reasonably possible, it still imposed a hardship on many parents who were accustomed to having their children enrolled in the public school without tuition. Had tuition sufficient for the total cost of the school been charged, it would have excluded many families who needed and desired that their children attend a Christian school.

To serve children from families not able to pay the moderate tuition charged, a student-aid scholarship program was established in conjunction with the tuition schedule. (Such programs are historically difficult to administer since many persons are reluctant to divulge personal, fiscal information concerning their family finances.) In spite of such limitations and handicaps, Pastor Buntain and the Board of Christian Education selected by the Board of Deacons of the Church, initiated and operated a tuition and scholarship program as equitably as they could with the view of making it possible for many deserving children to attend Life Christian School.

Although financing of Life Christian School posed a real difficulty, there were other areas of concern, as well. The establishment of a curriculum which would meet the necessary requirements for the basic subjects such as the "three R's: readin', ritin' and 'rithmetic" and such other necessary basic education subjects, plus the special reason for the school's existence—Bible and Christian education—required much planning.

Carl Fynboe, who was for a number of years on the staff of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, assigned to the supervision of private elementary and secondary schools, provided invaluable service to Life Christian School. Carl, himself a Christian, was sympathetic to the needs and goals of the School. Since his retirement from his position with the State Superintendent's office, he is now the executive director of an organization of Christian schools that works cooperatively toward assisting these school to better achieve their goals.

One of the very critical areas in the development and maintenance of Life Christian School is staff recruitment. Teachers are required to meet state certification standards and to hold valid teaching credentials as well as possessing spiritual qualifications. In order to have a "balanced" teaching staff, there must be a wide variety of expertise, experience and interests among the teachers. Specialists in music—vocal and instrumental—art, science, physical education and other fields must be recruited—all of whom must meet personal and Christian standards. As the school increased in

enrollment, the need to recruit additional teachers for the additional students and to replace teachers resigning, a constant program of recruitment had to be maintained.

The establishment and maintenance of a quality school program that receives no support from tax sources requires many sacrifices. It is a vital and far-reaching decision for families of limited means to make the financial sacrifice to pay this amount of tuition for their children's education. The teachers and other staff members in a church-sponsored school make significant financial sacrifices compared to those in the public schools. Their salary level in most cases is substantially lower. Retirement pension programs are rare, indeed. It requires the dedication and commitment of these people to make it possible to have a quality program.

Procurement of adequate facilities was one of the more difficult problems. There were Sunday School classrooms in the church not in use during the week. But, many of these were insufficient in size to house the necessary number enrolled in a regular day school. (In Sunday School where teachers are non-paid volunteers, small classes are a genuine advantage. However, in day schools the greatest single expense is teachers' salaries. Therefore, a reasonably high teacher-pupil ratio must be maintained due to budgetary limitations.)

Pastor Buntain continually reminded the Deacon and Trustee Boards of the importance of Christian education. Approval was given to provide plans for additional facilities as the enrollment and scope of the school increased. During the early years of the school growth, additional lots, adjacent to the church property were secured as they became available for purchase. Temporary portable buildings were secured and erected in the area East of the Christian education addition of the church. Although space for playground facilities are not extensive, good utilization permits them to be adequate.

Rev. Thomas Pendleton, was appointed by Pastor Buntain and the church board to oversee the day education program and remained in that responsibility for several years, until 1975,

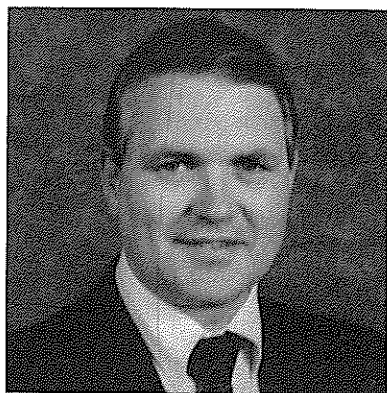
When the day care center began with a minimal number of children, the attendant could manage the program under the direction of the pastor and the church staff. However, as the program received ready acceptance enrollment increased to 100 children, ages thirty months through five years, during the 1972-73 school year.

Again, with small beginnings, a kindergarten class was started in September, 1974. For the first two years it operated on a full day, five-day-a-week program. Because of the large number of applicants, it then converted to half-time classes. Thereupon, about half of the students enrolled in the day care program for the balance of the day.

In September, 1975, Clint Borders was added to the staff to teach and manage. He remained with the program for three years. In September, 1976, a first grade was added to the kindergarten program. Mrs. Norman (Carol) Taylor was the first elementary teacher. In September, 1977, an important decision was made—to increase the school from one to four grades.

When the school added a fifth grade in the fall of 1978, Leon Stansfield was employed as elementary principal. During his time of service, school enrollment increased to 245 pupils. With the goal of expanding to include a junior high school (grades 7-9) one junior high school grade was added for each of the next three years. Finally by 1982-83 the school included a kindergarten through junior high program.

Leon Stansfield served as principal of Life Christian School from 1978 to 1980. He was succeeded by Brian Van Wagner who was recruited from a Christian school in Ohio. Brian has held the responsibility ever since.



***Administrator  
Brian Van Wagner***

Brian is a very conscientious, dedicated, capable administrator. Under his leadership, the school has continually progressed in quality of education, growth in enrollment, improvement in curriculum and faculty recruitment. (This writer who served for sixteen years as a high school principal, had many guidelines and role models to observe in administration. The Christian school administrator facing these matters has a new type of challenge.)

Initially, the school shared classroom space with the Sunday School in the educational wing. Four temporary, portable classrooms were secured in 1976. Two additional portable classrooms were built (on loan) for the beginning of the 1979-80 school year. At this time plans began for the construction of a permanent facility to allow for expansion of enrollment in both Life Christian School and the Sunday School. The purchase of additional property to the east of the educational wing of the church from Gloria Dei Lutheran Church was completed during early 1979.

With enrollment increasing rapidly, it was determined to discontinue the day-care program in 1980, so that more children could be accommodated in Life Christian School. An enrollment of 330 greeted Principal Van Wagner and the faculty. That number increased to 450 students while at the same time, the 8th grade was added. The departmentalization of the school provided a primary, middle school and junior high school. Construction commenced on Phase 1 of a three-phase building program.

To complete the junior high school, a ninth grade was added in September, 1982. By Thanksgiving, Fulton Buntain Learning Center was completed and occupied, much to the relief and joy of pupils and teachers alike, since they had been housed in constricted environment. With the enrollment over 500, Mrs. Ruth Parks became an assistant principal and Lloyd Zook was employed as business manager.

During the 1983-84 school year, an instrumental program in stringed instruments was instituted. The beginning of a computer instructional program commenced in 1984-85 when four personal computers were purchased and installed.

Also, during the 1985-86 year physical education, music and library staff were added. Bible "quizzing" was included for the first time in the Bible classes in the 7th and 8th grades.

Funds were raised at the annual Life Christian School banquet in 1988 to initiate and purchase sufficient computerized instructional equipment to qualify as a computer laboratory. With the rapidly advancing technology in our society, such training is becoming essential in a complete educational program. Prior to this time there were only four known secondary schools in the State of Washington so equipped and qualified to provide computer-assisted instruction at this level.

The staff, full-time and part-time, reached 36 persons. With no more room, plans for further expansion of the program at this time were delayed. The first Junior High school graduating class was in 1983. At the time of this writing, six classes have graduated.

Classes are now being conducted in the Fulton Buntain Learning Center (where the school administrative offices are located), in eight portable buildings with the primary classes housed in the newly completed Christian education and administrative addition.

A study has been initiated to determine the advisability and feasibility of extending the program further to include the balance of the high school grades, ten, eleven and twelve. There are numerous factors involved in making such a decision, but it is the stated intent of First Assembly of God Life Center and of Life Christian School to serve the church constituents and the community with a dynamic quality program.

Pastor Buntain's dream for Life Christian School has not yet been totally fulfilled. The addition of the senior high school program is next on his agenda. He has the philosophy that "the difficult things should be done right away—the impossible take a little longer." The present attainment of the educational program at Life Christian School is an attest to that.

There are a number of obstacles to the extension of the senior high school program. Among those are (1) lack of site, buildings and equipment for an adequate senior high school curriculum, (2) insufficient enrollment to be able to maintain a reasonable class size in highly specialized elective subjects, (3) need for adequately prepared faculty members, and (4) insufficient funds from the church or other sources to subsidize this more expensive program.

One of the more difficult aspects of administering a Christian school is that it must share facilities with other programs and the coordination required therewith. Conflict of interests can and do occur. When a school is conducted within church facilities, frequently the interests of the school become subordinated to the needs of the church sponsor. This requires much skill and patience to maintain harmonious relationships. Brian Van Wagner has accomplished this to a remarkable degree.

One of the most effective tests of the quality of a Christian school is the impact upon the lives of its students. Although not easy to evaluate, this can perhaps be better measured by the quality of those who have graduated from the school. Reports of, and from, Life Christian School graduates

demonstrate a "high quality product" has been developed in the school.

The spiritual influence of Life Christian School has great influence on the children attending the school as well as their parents. There are a number of families that have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and have become active members of the church as a result of their children's enrollment in Life Christian School.

Life Christian School, commenced as a one-person day-care facility, has grown to a combined kindergarten-elementary school-junior high school institution of nearly 500 students. Pastor Buntain has the vision to make Life Christian School and all phases of his ministry serve his congregation and all who will receive Jesus Christ as Lord.

During these current times when the forces of evil are making such an "in-road" into the lives of children as well as adults, it is heartening to know of the vision of Pastor Buntain. With the cooperation of the boards and constituency of the church they strive to sacrificially offer to the "church of tomorrow" a quality education and a spiritual foundation for the leadership which not precede that time.

## **Philosophy of Life Christian School**

Christian education is the authority, authenticity and reliability of the Bible as the complete and final revelation of God concerning faith, truth and practice. First Timothy 4 states that the words of faith and good doctrine and godliness are profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

It is further based on the conviction that the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit is essential for men to know and understand God's revelation to man.

Those persons involved in Christian education must be called of God and have demonstrated a personal commitment to Jesus Christ.

The Christian philosophy of education recognizes that the home, church and school must work in harmony to teach Christian values and a disciplined pattern of life. Discipline is a learned control that must be integrated within the individual. It is not outside control or punishment. These are beginning points to the discipline of an ever-increasing maturity of each individual as he or she grows in Christ. Christians must develop balance in faith and works.

This philosophy recognizes its responsibility to develop its students to clearly defined goals of academic and mental, social and emotional, spiritual and moral and physical standards. Children need to develop specific skills in all learning areas. Besides learning content, students need to gain experience in usage of learned areas and to gain confidence using already learned skills in further learning and new applications. In order to achieve this goal, administrators must administer with a sense of ministry,

teachers to teach with love and students to learn with enthusiasm.

Students need to be taught to evaluate and learn to accept or reject, by the standards of God's truth, information provided by the world. They need to learn the joy that comes with maturity and to become exemplary Christian citizens.

## **1988-89 TUITION RATES LIFE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL**

### **TUITION RATES PER MONTH**

	1st Child	2nd Child	3rd Child
Kindergarten/Grade 1	\$155	\$135	\$110
Grades 2 through 5	170	145	110
Grade 6	175	150	110
Grades 7 through 9	185	155	110

Tuition is paid on a ten-month basis. There are student-aid programs available to assist those that qualify. Life Christian School believes that as much as possible every family that wants to place its children in a Christian school should have the opportunity to do so. The commitment on the part of Life Christian School to raise funds to help families must be met with a sacrificial effort on the part of the families. (This often means a change in life style such as keeping an older car and accounting for small "out-of-pocket" expenditures which add up during the year.) Financial aid is made available without regard to the ethnic origin, nationality, race, color, sex or handicap.

# RETIREMENT FACILITIES

## LIFE MANOR

From near the beginning, pastors and congregations of First Assembly of God Life Center have been concerned for the welfare of the elderly in the church. In 1932, Pastor Frank Gray and the Board first arranged for group living. Three ladies of the church needed housing, meals and minimal care. All had minimal income. Mrs. Florence Pate, Mrs. Bertha Berg, and Mrs. Torsrud were the ladies involved.

The church rented a house at 1942 South "M" Street in Tacoma. Mrs. Jorgenson was employed as cook and caretaker, thus making four ladies living together. It was named Bethel Home. In the day before social security and state pensions, retirement programs were very rare.



***Bethel Home Beginning***

After approximately two years at the "M" Street location, the board determined that a permanent structure closer to the church would be more desirable and practical. Two lots immediately North of the church were vacant. They had been purchased at the time of the acquisition of the church site in 1925. Construction of a brick residence to meet the needs of the elderly more adequately was approved.

On completion of the building, other persons made application and were admitted to this new facility. Bethel Home, at 1119 South "G" Street, served this purpose for more than fifteen years. Conditions changed. A few of the residents became very difficult to manage. The members of the Board of Deacons who had assumed the responsibility for supervision of the management of Bethel Home, felt that the problems were too frequent and time-consuming. On a number of occasions they devoted more of their meeting time in resolving Bethel Home problems than dealing with church matters. So, in 1951, the termination of the program in this building was



effected. Gradually the residents succeeded in making other arrangements.

Without a definite program for twenty years, frequent expressions to again sponsor a program for seniors, were heard. Rev. Martin Kvamme, one of the original deacons of the church, who with his wife, served in China and Manchuria as missionaries for many years, often expressed the desire for the church to again provide retirement facilities under different circumstances. Martin Kvamme passed away in July, 1966, just eleven months after Pastor Buntain became pastor. Unfortunately, he was never able to enjoy retirement years in a church-sponsored retirement home.

## **PASTOR BUNTAIN SEEKS RETIREMENT HOME**

Fulton W. Buntain, from the very beginning of his service as pastor, expressed a burden for elderly people and a deep desire for the church and to become involved in helping to meet the needs of these people. He appreciated and supported Martin Kvamme's desire for a church-sponsored program for the elderly.

Some of the ingredients for developing such a program were present. Others were not. On the favorable side quite a number of elderly in the church living in remote locations or in sub-standard facilities, needed ministering. Understanding on the part of many board and church members to provide a suitable program was expressed. One very favorable factor was site availability. The northeast corner of the church property unimproved and a swamp, at one time, was not desirable in its present condition. However, the property consisted of more than one and half acres, a size very difficult to obtain elsewhere in the vicinity.

The Buntain family although scattered geographically were very supportive of each other. Pastor Buntain's widowed mother, Mrs. Kathleen Buntain, now elderly, needed a place to live close to her son and to the church. This was an added incentive for the pastor to pursue this project.

In 1970, Pastor Buntain and the Board of Deacons appointed a committee to investigate the options and feasibility of the construction of retirement facilities. Those on the committee were Harold F. Gray, Harold E. C. Wick, Arthur Burk, Frank Bentley, Kenneth Oas, Dr. Stanley Johnson and Pastor Fulton W. Buntain. The committee met several times to explore available options. They reported that outside of government financing or government guaranteed financing, it would be very difficult to finance such a project.

They then learned that the Southern California District of the Assemblies of God had constructed a Federal Government-sponsored retirement home. Committee members visited the California property and discovered that it was a guaranteed government loan under the Section 202 program of housing for the elderly by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Certain restrictions as to eligibility to live in the facility relating to the income of the resident must be observed.

The committee agreed this was a viable option for First Assembly of

God and thus reported to the church boards. Evidence indicated that 100% financing could be obtained under Section 202. Funds were available at that time. An independent corporation would have to be established before a loan application could be processed. Attorney Wallace B. Hager prepared articles of incorporation. The church boards authorized the establishment of a corporation to explore the feasibility of proceeding with a project and to take necessary steps to proceed if that was deemed feasible.

The members of the board were: Harold F. Gray, president; Harold E. C. Wick, vice president; Arthur W. Burk, secretary; Frank Bentley, treasurer; Kenneth Oas, Dr. J. Stanley Johnson and Pastor Fulton W. Buntain. (It is noteworthy that five of the seven original members of the board are still serving at the time of this writing. Frank Bentley retired after many years of service. Dr. Johnson withdrew for personal reasons.)

A corporation was organized. The members of the corporation consisted of the members of the boards of deacons and trustees of First Assembly of God and the corporation board of directors. The constitution provided for an annual meeting of the corporation, at which time vacancies in the board positions would be filled by written ballot. A report to the members of the corporation of the progress of the program would be provided, followed by an election of the officers of the board by its members.

After receiving encouraging reports from the Region X HUD office in Seattle, headed by Lester McCants, the corporation determined to make application for approval of a project. The site on the northeast corner of the First Assembly of God site was made available on which to construct the retirement home. The sponsor (church) would receive \$50,000 as a purchase price. However, the sponsor, as part of the agreement, was required to purchase certain movable furniture and equipment. It then resolved that the cost of the movables to the sponsor was equal to the \$50,000 received from the sale of the site. Thus the actual cost of the church's sponsorship was the value of the site.

The board discussed and agreed on the corporation name of Golden Opportunity Living Development, the first letters of each word spelling G.O.L.D. When time came to name the building-project, Pastor Buntain came prepared to the meeting. As he had stated on many occasions, his goal and objective is to minister LIFE. Jesus had told his disciples I am come that they might have LIFE and have it more abundantly." Pastor Buntain convinced the Board that the name of LIFE MANOR would be the most appropriate. Other names were considered, but on the first secret ballot Life Manor was favored by the majority.

Since availability of funds for the multitude of federal government programs being applied for was uncertain, the board determined that application should be made at the earliest possible date. This required the project to be defined in great detail and architectural plans be submitted for approval. The firm of Daniel, Mann, Johnson and Mendenhall of Portland, Oregon, had been recommended as capable and experienced in this type of project. The Board approved this firm. Program specifications must be

developed in detail. Extensive study of the site was required. HUD approved a construction budget of \$2,365,000. Plans called for the inclusion of 158 residential units—52 one bedroom units and 106 efficiency units which was determined to be a reasonable distribution considering the constraints imposed.

The committee met several hours each Saturday for more than a year, dealing with the planning of the building by the architect but also reviewing HUD program specifications to make certain that the building and its program would receive approval. Frequent meetings were held with the architect by the entire board, on occasion, and at other times by a committee of the board. As plans were being developed, frequent meetings were held with the HUD representatives in Seattle. Mr. Lester McCants, the program director, was most helpful in guiding the board in reference to fulfilling requirements of the various government codes, rules and restrictions.

The need to expedite final approval of the project and to commence construction was difficult to effect. One of the numerous discouragements encountered by the board was the delay in receiving final HUD project approval. The Board was then advised that the appropriation which funded Section 202 projects had been fully spent prior to final approval of the GOLD project. The aid and advice of Congressman Floyd Hicks was sought throughout the planning process. The Congressman and the members of his staff were most helpful in assisting the Board in securing final government approval. Following notification of the lack of funds in the Section 202 appropriation, the Board was advised by Lester McCants that Section 236 still had unused appropriated funds. That was welcome news since it gave hope that the project had hopes of proceeding.

This resulted in the necessity to completely rewrite the application so that the project could be in conformity with Section 236, a totally different set of regulations and guidelines. Due to this delay, inflation in building costs resulted in the necessity of revising a number of the project features so that it would not exceed the budget of \$2,365,000, originally set by HUD. Although this was under a different program, HUD was adamant that the ceiling on expenditures not be lifted. There were many hard decisions by the Board resulting in reduction of the space allocation of various parts of the project.

## **HAROLD WICK COMES TO THE RESCUE**

Efforts to find a reliable, bondable contractor who would construct the building in accordance with the plans and specifications became very discouraging. At times, the board questioned whether or not the project could be completed within the limitations being imposed. Harold E. C. Wick, long-time member of the Board of Trustees of First Assembly of God, chairman of the building committee for the church and vice president of Golden Opportunity Living Development provided the solution. His extensive experience in residential and commercial construction gave him a knowledge as to how best succeed with this dilemma. Mr. Wick could not accept the

contract since his membership on the board would create a conflict of interest.

Harold Wick recommended that N. E. Sommers, building contractor in Anchorage, Alaska, with whom he had had dealings previously, agreed to take the contract for the stipulated amount, provided Harold Wick would "co-venture" with him. The result was that Harold Wick would guarantee completion of the project according to plans and specifications. If the prime contractor, Norm Summers, who, at that time had access to only limited capital, encountered higher costs than had been estimated, another party would have to absorb the deficit. Therefore, Harold Wick, who would receive no share of the profits, (if there was a profit) accepted the risk of sharing in any loss exceeding that which Norm Sommers could absorb.



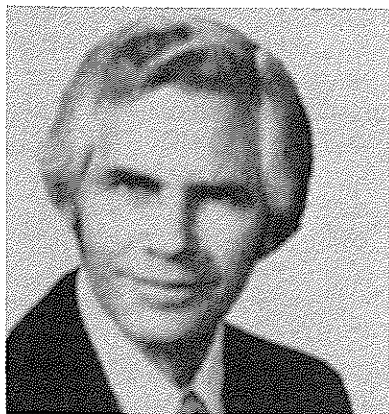
*Life Manor*

Norm Summers' brother, Pete, became the project manager and Ed Brown who had worked for Norm Summers on other projects became the superintendent. As soon as possible after the signing of the final papers, a trailer was brought to the property as a construction office and the work began. The members of the board had mixed emotions: happy to see the project underway but apprehensive for the risk taken by Harold Wick.

Although the project was far from complete, the board felt the need to employ an administrator who could become familiar with the building under construction, as well as the program requirements of HUD in the operation of the project, upon completion.

## **ROYAL FREEMAN SELECTED AS LIFE MANOR ADMINISTRATOR**

The board, sensing that the selection of the administrator was one of its most important decisions, reviewed applications and resumes of several people. Of those considered, none with previous experience in administering an institution met the expectations of the board. Pastor Buntain suggested Royal Freeman, former Assemblies of God missionary to Venezuela, who returned from the mission field because of family needs. Although Royal had never held such a responsibility, his spiritual and personal qualities appeared to compensate for lack of experience.



*Royal Freeman*

The need for a capable office manager and secretary to work in cooperation and harmony with the administrator resulted in the selection of Royal's wife, Ruby Stauffacher Freeman. Ruby Freeman had grown up in the church. Her father, Melchoir (Mike) Stauffacher, had been a leader in the church prior to and after the construction of Pentecostal Tabernacle at South 12th and "G" Streets. Royal and Ruby were living in Tacoma following return from the mission field. Ruby's widowed mother, Octava Woll Stauffacher and sister, Pearl Craig, both resided in Tacoma. This encouraged the Freemans to locate in Tacoma.

Royal and Ruby Freeman worked diligently to become acquainted with the building and HUD'S policies and procedures. Royal met with the board of directors to learn the philosophy and operating requirements established by the Board.

As the building neared completion, (though not yet certified for occupancy since not all of the seven floors had been completed,) the first residents, Mr. and Mrs. Vernon West entered Life Manor on February 16, 1973. Recruiting applicants, processing applications and certifying the eligibility of nearly 200 persons took until the Fall of 1973.

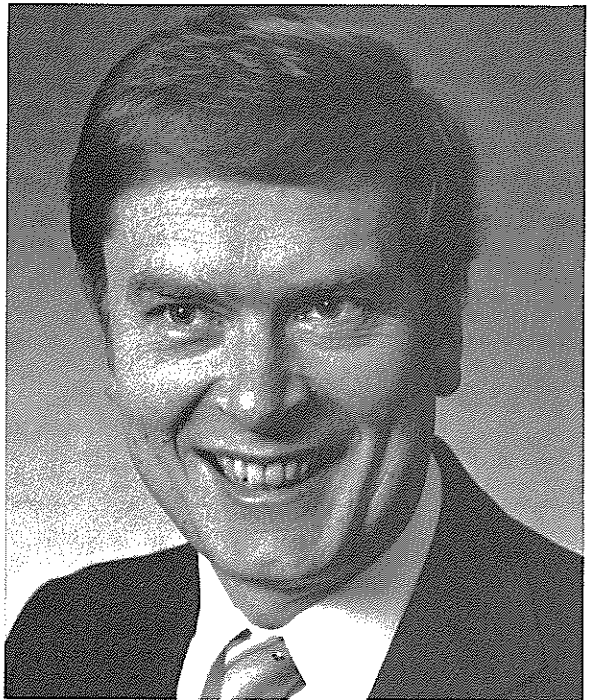
In determining eligibility for entrance and monthly rental, there were three classifications of tenants. A limited percentage of occupants could be admitted by paying "Market Rent." Market rent was set by HUD as an amount approximating the actual cost by disregarding contribution by HUD or the sponsor. Basic rent was the category for the majority of occupants. Persons of limited income but not "sub-standard" would pay 25% of their monthly income as rent (excluding meals). Persons on rent supplement would have their monthly rental subsidized by a special appropriation. No matter how low an income a person might have, he (she) would pay only 25% of the income. There was a special allocation of a limited amount per year from HUD to Life Manor to pay the difference between 25% of the person's income and the basic rental.

The completion of the dining room allowed meals to be served whenever a sufficient number of tenants were present to justify the overhead. From the beginning this was classified as a "mandatory meal" project. This meant that all persons living at Life Manor were required to eat (or pay for) the evening meal in the dining room. There were two principal reasons for this requirement. First of all, it was necessary to have a sufficient quantity of meals in order to keep the price per person, per month, within the reach of those of limited income. Secondly, there is a tendency for some to become semi-recluses unless given a strong incentive to leave their rooms and join with others.

Because of the limitation of size of the dining room, two sittings are required each evening to accomodate all of the residents. Choice of early or late sitting is normally given. Breakfast and lunch served on an a la carte basis is available to residents and others. A number of employees at First Assembly of God Life Center choose to eat their lunches in the Life Manor Dining Room, Mondays through Fridays. Efforts are being extended to

encourage others in the neighborhood to avail themselves of the fine food and service at breakfast and lunch time to keep the ala carte prices as low as possible.

Life Manor has served many members of First Assembly of God Life Center, more during latter years than at the beginning. As people become widowed, left alone, or couples find that living in their own homes has become too strenuous or difficult, the attractiveness of Life Manor living welcomes them.



***Administrator Carl Foss***

From the beginning of the project, a bus has been leased by Life Manor to provide transportation of its residents to the Tacoma

Mall, grocery stores and on an assortment of field trips. Interpretation of HUD regulations now being addressed to the administrator and board members, leave the continuance of such service very much in doubt. The current HUD officers, do not deny the need and desirability of such service but state the current regulations will not permit payment of such a lease from project income. The matter is being appealed.

After fifteen years of service at Life Manor, Royal and Ruby Freeman submitted letters of resignation to the board of directors, effective October 1, 1987. The board reluctantly accepted their resignation and appointed Carl Foss to succeed Royal Freeman. Carl Foss, having had experience working with HUD on government programs for inmates and other related experience, made the Board confident that he could assume this responsibility. Kay Hughes, former accountant at Life Manor, was available for employment. She accepted the position of assistant administrator and receptionist/secretary, replacing Ruby Freeman.

The dream of a retirement home adjacent to the church to accomodate church members has not been realized totally. The more affluent persons can no longer gain entrance to Life Manor. Also, the rooms are limited in size. Some persons feel that since they have always been accustomed to more spacious surroundings, they would not feel comfortable with less space. However, it is interesting to visit the units of some of the residents and to see how they combine so much in a small amount of space.

The term of the loan on the Life Manor building is forty years, an

additional 25 years from this 70th anniversary. Some inquire as to the feasibility of purchasing the building from the mortgage holders. This possibility has been explored but there are many complexities, so nothing concrete has been proposed.

Others have suggested that investors construct a condominium of larger units in the vicinity of the church, catering largely to members of First Assembly of God Life Center. However, nothing definitive has been proposed or considered at this time.

**Members of the Board of Directors with beginning year of service:**

* Harold F. Gray, Chairman	1970
* Harold E. C. Wick, Vice Chairman	1970
* Kenneth O. Oas, Secretary	1970
Clifford Paulson, Treasurer	1976
* Dr. Fulton W. Buntain	1970
* Arthur W. Burk	1970
Bruce Hamilton	1978
Col. James Higbee	1987
Col. Paul Schweikert	1988
Carl Foss, Administrator	1987

\* Denotes membership on original board.

Frank Bentley and Dr. Stanley Johnson were the remaining original members of the Board of Directors.

## CHURCH PLANTING PROJECTS

From the beginning of his ministry in Tacoma, Pastor Frank Gray, began to expand his borders from the small meeting halls being used for the gathering of the saints. Foreign missionaries were always accorded a special welcome. Also efforts began to take the Gospel to outlying and neighboring areas. In the early 1920's a Sunday School was conducted at Lemons Beach (now University Place) by dedicated workers from the mission.



***Ground breaking,  
South Tacoma Church***

**South Tacoma** - Although a permanent congregation did not emerge from the effort, a group of workers from the Assembly of God Mission on Tacoma Avenue began to hold religious services in South Tacoma. Many of the workers were blessed by the opportunity to witness for Christ. Quite a number of those who found Salvation joined with the "mother church".

In October, 1952, three families from First Assembly of God, began regular prayer services in the home of Julius and Grace Rody at South 74th and Puget Sound Avenue. Two years later, Sunday services commenced in the same location, continuing for more than a year. This effort was given cooperation of First Assembly.

A need for a pastor to devote his full time to this growing number of people became obvious. Paul and Louise (McLaughlin) Greisen accepted the challenge and became the first pastors of the congregation. A permanent place of worship to accommodate the growing congregation was of high priority. Architect Gordon Nickell provided the plans. Part of the building costs was supplied from Northwest District Home Missions funds.

It was a joyous time for this congregation to witness definite steps to provide their own place of worship. A site was secured adjacent to the Rody home. Half of the cost of purchasing the site was contributed by one of the families, with the balance supplied by the Northwest District Home Missions fund.

Assistant Superintendent/Home Missions Director, R. J. Carlson, presided at the ground-breaking services. District Superintendent Dwight H. McLaughlin, father of the pastor's wife, brought the message. He expressed great joy at the commitment made by Paul and Louise Greisen, to pastor this new work.



***Early days in South Tacoma***



The sanctuary measured 35 by 80 feet, and was completed at a cost of \$30,000. The first service in the new church was the 1956 Christmas program, amid much rejoicing. Four months later, April 29, 1957, the building was dedicated to the glory of God. Sunday School attendance steadily grew and increased to an average of 137 by dedication Sunday.

First Assembly of God assisted in the financing of the construction with a loan of \$20,000. The balance was loaned by the Northwest District. First Assembly also provided \$50.00 a week, for a number of weeks, to assist the young church with its operating expenses. For the following several months First Assembly of God and the Northwest District shared in the operational deficit, until 1958, when the congregation had grown sufficiently to be self supporting.

Paul and Louise Greisen remained with the congregation until their application for appointment as foreign missionaries to Hong Kong was approved by the Foreign Missions Department. (They still serve in Hong Kong as of the date of this writing.) U. S. Army Chaplain Ross Chittim, now separated from the service, served as interim pastor after the departure of the Greisens. The congregation has grown much during the ensuing years and now has new building facilities considerably more spacious than the original building.

**University Place -** Although Sunday School services had been conducted at Lemons Beach (now University Place) in the early 1920's, an ongoing work did not develop from it. Marian Martinson and her sister, Ellen Berg, provided leadership in this Sunday School ministry. Sunday School classes were conducted in a small structure, formerly an elementary school building.

The Leland family was a powerful force in the establishment and maintenance of a Christian witness in this community. Mrs. Leland and her family were active participants in a continuing effort for the evangelization of her neighbors.

After World War II, a group of young people from First Assembly of God led prayer meetings for a period of one year. It was determined that a building must be provided if this work were to become permanent. While the building was



***University Place Chapel  
Work Crew***

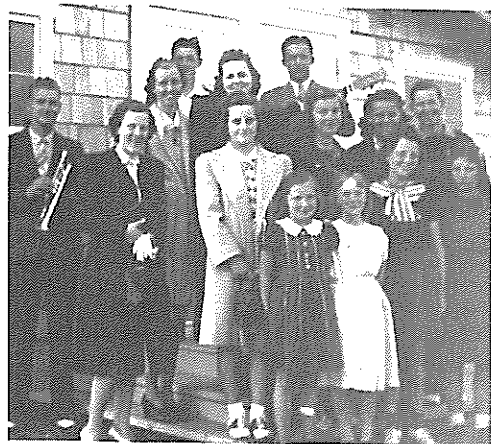


***University Place Chapel***

being constructed, with labor largely from First Assembly of God youth department, Sunday School classes were held in a private home.

Although the church building was modest in size, it provided a good base for a permanent work. After its completion, Sunday School and regular church services were conducted on a regular basis. Arthur Ahlberg, member of First Assembly of God, became the first pastor. Later he and his wife, felt a call to become foreign missionaries through an appointment from the Foreign Missions Department to the Philippine Islands. Elmer Tigner succeeded as pastor and served for a number of years, until his untimely death.

Following Elmer Tigner was Edwin Oster. The present church sanctuary located near a heavily-traveled intersection at South 28th and Bridgeport Way has been pastored for a considerable number of years by Martin H. Haack. The services of the church provide excellent facilities in this rapidly growing area of Greater Tacoma.



***Youth Workers at Milton***

**Milton** - In the early days, the congregation began by meeting for Wednesday evening prayer meeting in the home of the parents of Mrs. Fulton (Lorraine) Buntain, Gus and Marie Hime. A diligent corps of residents were happy to have a place to worship in their own community. The Himes were very gracious hosts and the number of people attending the meetings increased. A group of lay persons from First Assembly of God, under the leadership of William and Myrtle Pointen, went to Milton every Sunday and Wednesday to conduct services.

Within a few months, a portable tabernacle was secured by First Assembly of God. The congregation adopted the name of Gospel Light Tabernacle. Lawrence Stellar was appointed pastor. Within two years of time a substantial growth was evident. It became obvious that a new church building was needed.

In 1941, seventy-five dollars of the limited building fund was expended for the excavation of the basement for a new church. Hopes for an early completion of a new building were darkened with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, which precipitated the United States entrance into World War II. The problem of obtaining materials, some of which were in short supply as a result of the war effort, became greater. However, the members both of the Milton congregation and the "mother church" prayed earnestly for the help of God and witnessed the completion of the building. William Pointen and Alfred Swanstrom of the Tacoma church

carried special responsibilities.

As a result of diligent prayer and hard work, the building was completed. The first service in the new facilities was conducted on Mother's Day, 1944. The blessing of God rested upon this group of diligent Christians and the work flourished. Special revival services with Claire Brooks witnessed more than thirty persons being filled with the Holy Spirit.

As time went on, the church increased in size and maturity. William McNutt succeeded Pastor Stellar. Later, Everett Greeley served as pastor, followed by Texan Walter J. Phelps. Gospel Light Tabernacle has now become Milton Assembly of God. The congregation has thrived. The building program was completed in 1953 with the construction of a parsonage.

**Sumner** - With no full gospel work in this valley city in the late 1950's, a group from First Assembly of God, Tacoma, became interested in initiating a church in Sumner. First Assembly provided financial assistance and Alfred Swanstrom, of First Assembly, prepared the plans. Pastor Everette Ewing maintained

the position that larger and more stable congregations should help to establish new churches. Pastor Ewing's leadership was followed and the Sumner congregation was provided financial, moral and spiritual support from the Mother Church. Pastor R. F. Ashworth served this congregation for a number of years.



***New Sumner Church***

**Lakewood** - This residential area located between Tacoma and the military installations of Fort Lewis, McChord Air Force Base and Madigan General Hospital, had no Assemblies of God work prior to 1959. The Home Missions Department of the Assemblies of God in cooperation with First Assembly of God provided the plans for a new church in the Lakewood area. The first pastors were John and Jan Butterfield, John being a son of the late Charles Butterfield, president of Northwest College. The group began in rented facilities. Property was obtained on South 111th Street, east of Clover Park High School and a church was constructed on this site, where the congregation now meets.

**Ruston** - The town of Ruston is surrounded on all sides by Tacoma. It was formerly the home of the giant copper smelter owned by ASARCO. The smelter has since discontinued operation because of environmental problems. Before the formal organization of the congregation, teams of persons from Pentecostal Tabernacle conducted Sunday School and services. A permanent work was established which became independent from Pentecostal Tabernacle.

The church was blessed for several years by the ministry of Rev. Agnes Anderson, pastor, and her sister, Esther Anderson (Oas), musician and assistant pastor. The congregation stabilized under the direction of the Andersons. For the past number of years, Richard Philp has served as pastor. The congregation has purchased a building site on South Pearl Street for construction of new church facilities. No date for construction has been set as of this time.

**Spanaway -** This community south of Tacoma has had a vibrant congregation and the leadership of a number of excellent pastors. Prior to World War II in the late 1930's, Eugene Born, newly graduated from Northwest Bible Institute (College), ministered to a congregation in Spanaway. Prior to his going to Spanaway, Missionary Earl Wilkie pastored the small flock. A permanent work grew from this small beginning. Later, in the 1950's Stanley Weddle pastored the work. The Spanaway congregation has been blessed of God. Encouragement and assistance, from time to time, has been provided by First Assembly of God (Life Center.)

**Other -** Teams from First Assembly of God Life Center have ministered from time to time in various other communities, institutions and wherever there has been an open door. Each of the seven pastors of the church have been strong advocates of missions—home and foreign.

## NORTHWEST COLLEGE

As the number of converts increased throughout the Northwest District and new congregations emerged, the need for qualified pastors and Christian workers continually escalated. Following the disassociation of many of the leaders of this infant Assemblies of God movement with their previous denominations there also came a marked reaction against many of the rigidities of those denominations. Resolutions were approved on a number of occasions both by the General Council of the Assemblies of God and by the Northwest District, directing that no person be prohibited from preaching the Gospel and receiving credentials because of a lack of academic achievements. (Many of the older denominations had strict academic requirement which one must meet prior to filing his application to enter the ministry.)

Consequently, there were a considerable number of men and some women who had no theological training at all but began to preach and proclaim the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even the leadership consisted principally of those who had been saved and filled with the Holy Spirit and who felt the call of God on their hearts to proclaim their glorious experience in Jesus Christ.

As the years went by there was a tendency for splits to occur in churches partially due to a lack of leadership and a defined statement of beliefs beyond the basics. Therefore, the need became evident for teaching from the Word of God and instruction regarding many of the functions performed by pastors. It was realized that these abilities did not all "fall" on every person who felt the call of Jesus Christ to preach the gospel.

Henry H. Ness became pastor of Seattle's Hollywood Temple in 1933, coming from Fargo, North Dakota. He had been associated with the North Central Bible Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which was started by his good friend, Rev. Frank Lindquist. Rev. Ness indicated his desire to initiate a school in the Northwest and offered facilities of Hollywood Temple to house the instructional classes. The Northwest District loaned the school \$500.00 to get started, mainly to purchase chairs, equipment and office supplies.

Superintendent Samuel Swanson of the Northwest District served as first chairman of the board of directors. The faculty consisted of Rev. C. C. Beatty of Minneapolis, dean, and a number of local pastors who volunteered some of their time to teach in the school.

Rev. Frank Gray, after the death of Samuel Swanson served as Board Chairman for many years. Although times were hard, a goodly number of students joined the student body. Tacoma's Pentecostal Tabernacle had a good representation of students from the beginning. Paul A. Gray, son of Pastor Gray, entered in 1935, and was editor of the college yearbook in his final (third) year in 1937-1938, as well as being the director of the school orchestra, managing the men's dormitory and singing in the school male quartet.

Twenty years later in 1958, he was invited to become a member of

the board of directors of the institution which has now become Northwest College of the Assemblies of God. He has served on the board continuously for the past thirty years, six in the capacity of chairman of the board. Presently, he serves as treasurer and chairman of the finance committee.

Frank Bentley and Harold Gray served as the first two lay members of the of the board beginning in 1951. Prior to that time only ministers were members of the board of directors. Harold Gray left the board in 1954, after having been selected to serve on the board of the the newly established Evangel College, Springfield, Missouri. Frank Bentley served for more than twenty-five years on the Northwest College Board.

During this half century, the college has expanded in most every way and is highly respected for the quality of education which it provides in ministerial studies and in teacher training. Many youth from First Assembly of God have enrolled in Northwest College to receive training for the ministry and many are in full-time gospel service today.

## LETTER FROM DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT FRANK COLE

Congratulations on this the seventieth anniversary of First Assembly of God Life Center in Tacoma, Washington.

Life Center has filled a unique role in declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ with clarity for nearly three-fourths of a century. Through the years, it has been true to the Pentecostal witness and testimony that brought it into existence seventy years ago. It has been a strong force for righteousness in the city of Tacoma and has had an impact on the whole Puget Sound area.

First Assembly of God Life Center has not only kept its message strong to the community, but from the beginning, it has also been a great missionary church. It has mothered many home missions churches in and around Tacoma, that have in themselves become strong in their own right. It remains to this day as one of the top churches in foreign missions giving in the Northwest District. Many young people have responded to the call to be ministers of the gospel here at home as well as foreign missionaries and have gone into full-time service for the Lord.

I am grateful for my own heritage in the church and for parents who were active lay workers over fifty years until poor health finally overtook them. My parents were saved in Dr. Charles S. Price's first evangelistic campaign in Tacoma in 1930. When the meetings closed and the special tabernacle built for the occasion was dismantled, they immediately became members of the Pentecostal Tabernacle at South 12th and G Streets. I was born shortly thereafter, and I recall that our family went to church twice on Sunday and at least once in the middle of the week. Rev. Frank Gray was my first pastor. My faith was established as a boy and the reality of the doctrines and Biblical principles for which the church has stood, down through the years, remains strong in my heart.

I have been blessed by each of the pastors that have served Life Center and I have the assurance that the church will faithfully continue its great God-given ministry to Tacoma and the surrounding area until Jesus comes.

Happy seventieth anniversary.

*Frank E. Cole*  
District Superintendent  
Northwest District  
Assemblies of God

# LETTER FROM GLEN COLE

Dear Friends at First Assembly of God Life Center:

As a young boy, my family began attending Pentecostal Tabernacle at South 12th and "G" Streets where my training in the "things of God" progressed. Many faithful Sunday School teachers shared the Word and their life experiences with us.

My love for music grew at First Assembly as I began playing my trumpet in the band, singing in the youth choir and presenting solos from time to time. I believed that a career in music would be my lot, but God redirected my life following graduation from high school. Instead of accepting a scholarship in music from Washington State University, I felt compelled on a Sunday night, in 1951, to go to Bible School and prepare for the ministry.

It was at this time that the church instituted a scholarship program for young people having a call into the ministry. The stipend from the church was the precise amount offered by the University. It was a sign from God to me that He had indeed called me into His work.

My years at Central Bible Institute, Springfield, Missouri, were a period of growth and development. There I met my wife, Mary Ann. We have shared these many years of ministry together. My musical talents were utilized on the national radio program of the Assemblies of God, Revivaltime. I was privileged to sing in the choir and to play trumpet solos as well as representing the ministry in a quartet that traveled from church to church.

As I recall the past years, I am ever so grateful for the leadership of my home church. The pastors became examples to me of genuine "men of God." I admired them and after God's call to the ministry came, I patterned after them. Many of the "saints" have also been an inspiration and encouragement to me through the years. I have always been proud to say, "I am from First Assembly of God Life Center in Tacoma, Washington."

*Glen D. Cole*

Senior Pastor,  
Capital Christian Center,  
Sacramento, California  
Executive Presbyter, Assemblies of God



## LETTER FROM JOSEPH B. FUITEN

Dear Friends at Life Center:

My first Sunday at Life Center was the ground-breaking for the gymnasium/multi-purpose building. My boyish frame and face were attached to the long line of local dignitaries present for the important occasion. Little did I realize then how much building I would see in the nearly six years of ministry in Tacoma. The gym was only the beginning.

In the average church, the mortgage burning on one building precedes the building of the next. At Life Center, more than the mortgage was burned that Sunday night in 1975. It is the night that still burns in my memory.

I had preached the Sunday night sermon. I was tired enough that my Bible and notebook remained on the pulpit as I headed for home. It was minutes before midnight and I had just fallen asleep when my phone rang. It was Pastor Buntain. "Joe, the church is on fire! If you want to see it you better get here quickly."

Although we lived some distance away, I could see the red sky from my driveway. I had preached on neither hell nor Pentecost. I knew they couldn't blame me for the fire. I found the pastor in the north parking lot. He was amazingly composed. We all wondered. It was too incredible that night for words, but Pastor found the attitude that would inspire this congregation.

The thunderous standing ovation that next Wednesday night in the gym sent the message loud and strong: the building had burned, but this church was still alive. That service will remain in my memory forever.

Although the next couple of years were tough and inconvenient (my office ended up in a storeroom), they were also exciting times of growth and progress. It was a moment of triumph to be present for the dedication of the new church.

Linda and I send our best wishes to Pastor Buntain and all the overcomers and champions at First Assembly of God Life Center. You have remained faithful in good times and bad. The steady progress of the church inspires our fellowship and all those who love the work of God.

Some people accuse us of trying to building the "Life Center of Seattle." We haven't arrived there yet, but I plead guilty to the charge of trying. Following the leader is the sincerest compliment.

Our congratulations to all those in heaven and on earth who have made Life Center what it is today.

Sincerely,

*Joseph B. Fuiten*

Pastor Cedar Park Assembly of God

## LETTER FROM OTIS KEENER

Dear Saints of First Assembly Life Center:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior!

Our world at its worst really needs a church at its best. These momentous days of history find the Holy Spirit calling Christians near to the heart of Christ. In recent months I have my own heart and spirit in the words of the seventeenth chapter of St. John's gospel. Here the One who would die for our redemption is praying for each follower. I am included in every desire he expressed in this priestly prayer.

Christ wanted us to understand our relationship to the Father, the church and the world. As one southern pastor put it, "There is both a believing side and a behaving side to the gospel!" How true. As the Spirit crowns Him Lord of our lives daily, we will become mature, balanced disciples. What we are will complement what we say. This witness will impact our generation with truth that can set them free.

Hallelujah, He is Lord! Lord by creation and Lord by re-creation!

As Lord of my past...	HE CLEANSSES IT!
As Lord of my present...	HE CLARIFIES IT!
As Lord of my future...	HE CONTROLS IT!

In a fallen filthy world, we walk clean and righteous by His blood. In a confused and bewildered age, we see eternal purpose in everything. Facing unknown uncertain tomorrows, we enjoy peace and rejoice in hope.

It is no wonder the Psalmist said, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.....surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD FOREVER!"

Ownership is the selfish priority that drives this materialistic age. But for us, may maintaining HIS LORDSHIP be our primary motive.

Yours for a blessed today and glorious forever.

*Otis Keener and Irene*  
Pastor 1963-1965

## LETTER FROM G. RAYMOND CARLSON

Rev. Fulton W. Buntain and Congregation  
First Assembly of God Life Center  
1717 South Puget Sound  
Tacoma WA 98405

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, it is my privilege to extend heartiest congratulation on the 70th Anniversary of First Assembly of God Life Center. Your church has had a remarkable ministry during these seven decades, and without a doubt, many wonderful memories come to mind as you reflect over the years.

Even more important than celebrating past victories, however, is a renewed dedication on the part of each of us for even greater outreach in the future. As our Fellowship enters the final years of this century, the period we have termed the "Decade of Harvest," it is encouraging to know that we can count on the cooperation of you friends to be a significant part of this endeavor.

The Assemblies of God has been blessed beyond what we could have envisioned for ourselves in the earlier years, as a result of the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit in these last days, and it has been our privilege to have had a part in this great harvest. May we continue to obey the parting command by our Lord to His disciples—the Great Commission—which is to all of us who are His followers.

As you are now commemorating this special milestone, my prayers will be with you that this will be an occasion for fresh dedication of time and talent in order that the work of God will move forward with an even greater harvest of souls.

May God richly bless each of you and may you have a wonderful time of celebration.

Sincerely,

*G. Raymond Carlson*  
General Superintendent

## LETTER FROM DWIGHT McLAUGHLIN

"That I May Know Him." Philippians 3:10

One thing I have wanted all of my ministerial life more than anything else was to KNOW CHRIST. I've followed Him. I've trusted Him. I've talked with Him often. To know Him better than any living person of my acquaintanceship, even my relatives, was and has been my goal. Is it possible? Is it reasonable? Is it sensible? I rose early in the morning, stayed up late at night, reading, studying and praying.

I wanted to know His power, but much more I wanted to know His ways, catch His spirit. David said, "He made known His acts to the children of Israel, his ways to Moses." Psalms 103:7.

I ask myself serious questions. Is it possible to know Him in your very life, in your heart, in your brain, even in your body? I believe that it is. He said, "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me him will my Father honor. John 12:26. He chose his first disciples that they might be with Him. To know Him therefore I must be with Him. I must talk often with Him. I must hear His voice. I must listen. I must obey. I have heard Him say often, "Follow Me."

This is a testimony, and I can't be sure it will impress many in our society today. But, I believe I have succeeded to a point and that point is my capacity.

Dr. A. W. Tozier gave me the words of his own, praying. "Oh, God, I have tasted Thy goodness, and it has both satisfied me and made me thirsty for more. I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace. I am ashamed by my lack of desire. Oh, God, the Triune God, I want to want Thee. I want to be filled with longing. I thirst to be more thirsty still. Show me Thy glory, I pray Thee, so that I may know Thee, indeed. Begin in mercy a new work of love within me. Say to my soul, 'Rise up my fair one and come away.' Then give me grace to rise and follow Thee up from this misty lowland where I have wandered so long."

In Jesus' name, Amen.

*Dwight H. McLaughlin*  
Pastor, 1943 - 1950

# LETTER FROM THOMAS F. ZIMMERMAN

To My Dear Friends in Tacoma:

First Assembly of God Life Center, Tacoma, Washington, stands as a lighted beacon that sends forth its lifegiving hope, as it has now for the 70 years of its illustrious history. No church in the fellowship of the General Council has filled a more strategic mission than has this outstanding church with its faithful congregation.

The pastors who have served this congregation have been individuals of sterling character, high integrity, and with a true sense of God's unfolding purpose in and through this church. From its founding pastor, Frank Gray, the church has had a very firm and well-laid foundation for growth and development. Each of the succeeding pastors has filled a unique role in contributing to its viable ministry that has literally reached the ends of the earth.

Coming through the congregation, with its outstanding young people, have been some of the strongest and most significant leaders of our fellowship. They are contributed largely to the vision and development of the Assemblies of God as a world-wide phenomenon of God's blessing, and has reached the distinction of being the fastest growing evangelical denomination in the world today.

Pastor Fulton Buntain, during the tenure of his outstanding ministry, has been used of God to bring this church to a new level of worldwide effectiveness. The magnificent building that has been built, the many outreaches that characterize its regular concern and ministry, make this a truly New Testament church in every sense of the word.

We pray that as you celebrate the 70th anniversary of the founding of your church, you will take time to reflect with gratitude on the past, and at the same time take note of this glorious and challenging present through which you are passing, with the full assurance that God will continue to use First Assembly of God Life Center as an agency through which He can fulfill His endtime purposes in reaching the world with the saving gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mrs. Zimmerman joins me in sending to each of you our best wishes and the assurance of our prayers for God's continued blessing to rest upon your efforts.

Sincerely,

*Thomas F. Zimmerman*  
Former General Superintendent  
The General Council  
of the Assemblies of God

## LETTER FROM HARRY J. STEIL

Dear Fellow Christians:

In 1931 while pastor of First Assembly of God in Cleveland, I received an invitation from the Ontario District of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada to speak at their district camp meeting at Kitchener, Ontario.

I entered the tent, noting that the meeting had already begun. Everyone was standing and singing heartily and with great anointing. As I drew closer I heard these Canadian ministers of Irish, Scotch and English extraction singing in *German*, a song about the supernatural life of the Lord Jesus Christ in their hearts, "*Es Lebt Es Lebt in Meine Seele*", etc. being translated "*This lives, this lives within my soul*". (As a boy I had learned some German in a German Lutheran School.)

As I listened with great delight and thrill to hear these sons of Erin and of Scotch John Knox and British John and Charles Wesley, singing and praising God in Martin Luther's German tongue. Glory! glory! I thought! Here I was, a German-American stripling from the "sidewalks of New York", witnessing a demonstration of Pentecostal power and glory. This was the *Glossalia* of Acts 2:4-11 being enacted. *We do hear them speak every man in his own tongue the wonderful works of God!*

The confusion of tongues with which God afflicted the rebellious unionists at Babel scattering abroad was here in Acts 2 being replaced with a power to attract all men together. This was a Holy Ghost proclamation of the "wonderful works of God"—the unifying power of the Gospel when preached under the anointing of the Holy Spirit—pagan Babel being replaced by Pentecostal Jerusalem.

I recall with great blessing our first coming to Tacoma the summer of 1938. We were invited by Pastor Rasmussen of the Bethel Pentecostal Church to conduct an evangelistic tent meeting. My beloved wife, Ethel, Winifred and Bob and Preacher Harry were warmly greeted. Also the members of the Pentecostal Tabernacle congregation attended and supported the meeting.

With even more blessing recall the open-hearted welcome extended to our family to return and assume the pastorship as Pastor Frank Gray had resigned to again accept the superintendency of the Northwest District. God bless you all for every act of Christian kindness and warm-hearted friendliness which you extended to us.

Now you are *First Assembly of God Life Center!* Your chosen pastor is divinely ordained by God to lead you "from victory to victory." He is your *new testament Joshua* to lead you into the *Promised Land* of New Testament ministry with all the gifts, fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit as you continue to work together, we pray that you will see many "walls of Jericho" fall down as you determine "*As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*"

Harry J. Steil

Pastor - 1938 - 1943

## APPENDIX

### FULTON BUNTAIN'S EMPHASIS ON LIFE

"I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly," Jesus said. Pastor Fulton W. Buntain has taken that promise and incorporated it into his own life and his ministry. The impartation of life is, without doubt, the greatest gift that anyone can receive. Life is precious. Life is not eternal unless Jesus Christ has been accepted into the heart and all of the sins are cleansed under the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

**First Assembly of God Life Center.** Concurrent with the rebuilding of the church sanctuary following the disastrous fire which destroyed a large portion of the church facilities, Pastor Buntain came before the congregation in a business meeting to propose a new name. "Life Center, Tacoma's First Assembly of God" he told the membership would be a very fine name for the rebuilt church. Since the congregation had been affiliated with the Assemblies of God officially for over 30 years and had since carried the name of (First) Assembly of God, many felt it undesirable to de-emphasize this affiliation. There was some disagreement with the change of name.

Pastor Buntain reasoned that he was a member in good standing with the Assemblies of God and had no intention of discontinuing that affiliation, that he wished to incorporate Life Center into the church's official name. During the course of the discussion, the compromise name of **First Assembly of God Life Center** was agreed upon. Some members who spoke on the subject, emphasized they desired to preserve the affiliation with the Assemblies of God in the church's name.

In everyday life, abbreviations and "nick-names" are used by people generally. Simplifying and shortening names has been practiced in the past and will continue in the future. Thus, in order to shorten the name in conversation, many people commonly refer to the church as Life Center.

**Life Christian School.** What better name could be given to a Christian school that is teaching children to live more abundant lives—in these temporal bodies and throughout the endless ages of eternity? The very apropos name was adopted by the Board of Deacons in an unanimous vote. What a positive name for a Christian school—Life Christian School!

**Life Manor.** Fulton Buntain consistently urged that major ministries include LIFE in their names. He proposed the adoption of that name. He reasoned that we are providing a home in which people can LIVE. Since his recommendation to the Board of Directors was not refutable, the name, Life Manor, was adopted following consideration of a number of other names.

**Introduction to Life.** Calcutta Mission of Mercy established in 1977, needed a way to raise funds to support the work of Mark and Huldah Buntain in Calcutta, India. The struggle to introduce people of India, to Jesus Christ, the giver of all life, required dedication and financial resources. Pastor Fulton W. Buntain adopted as one of his main thrusts, his assistance in reaching this goal. His skill in communicating with people both directly and through the medium of television made this the potential of being a

constructive means of spreading the good news of Salvation. One of the main objectives was to make an appeal to the viewers to share in the spreading of the gospel to the unfortunate ones in Calcutta, India, through prayer and financial contributions.

He contracted for thirty-minutes Sunday mornings on a local television station, KSTW, Channel 11 in 1975. This particular time of the week was very much in demand particularly by national Christian television ministries. Throughout the years, this period of time has been under the control of Pastor Fulton W. Buntain. During the months of his illness in Sacramento, California, in 1978, the program continued by playing selected re-runs with some brief live messages included. During these Introduction to Life telecasts, viewers subscribing to television cable services throughout the Pacific Northwest have been able to receive this ministry on their television sets.

Fulton Buntain had long been convinced that the medium of television should not be left to Satan to use for his destructive goals. He believes that this tool can be used for the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as well.

(Author's note: The good that can be accomplished by Christian television and the confidence of people who have placed their trust in certain television preachers has been somewhat tarnished by the conduct of some whose pretensions have been unearthed to expose other than what they purported their ministries to be. This has reflected in some peoples' minds on the honesty, sincerity and credibility on all who use television as a means of communication. As time goes by, the negative pressure from this will likely subside.)

**Hour of Life**, the name selected by Fulton Buntain, for the one hour telecast of an edited edition of the Sunday morning services from First Assembly of God Life Center, on a one-week delay basis. Through this, Pastor Buntain brought the ministry of the church into the living rooms of "shut-ins" who were unable to attend church in person. Also, many who were unable or disinterested in attending the services, could receive the telecast. This medium of television brought the good news about Jesus Christ to those able to receive programs from Channel 20, directly or through cable networks. Introduction to Life is also released each Sunday afternoon on Channel 20 for those who had not viewed it on Channel 11 at 8:30 A. M. on Sunday mornings.

Since the television ministry would be much less effective if the quality of the reception were not comparable to that which the viewers were accustomed, it became necessary to lease cameras and other equipment to prepare the Hour of Life program. The experience of telecasting these programs to the community proved successful. The boards of the church stated their intentions to continue this ministry, so steps were initiated to purchase basic equipment necessary for recording and editing it for on-air release. Sizable gifts from interested members of the church together with an allocation of a portion of the receipts from the annual Singing Christmas tree, allowed the church to purchase the necessary equipment, paid partially on a deferred basis.



Former pastors of First Assembly of God Life Center certainly had little comprehension of what could and would develop in the 1970's and 1980's. Should the second return of Jesus be delayed beyond this century, only God himself knows what opportunities there will be to obey the *Great Commission* of going into all the world and preaching the Gospel to every creature.

**LIFE** is the key-word for the ministry of Dr. Fulton W. Buntain and First Assembly of God **Life Center** with its ministries of **Life Manor, Life Christian School, Introduction to Life** and **Hour of Life**.

## **DR. DWIGHT H. McLAUGHLIN**

### **1943 - 1950**

Dwight H. McLaughlin did not have the opportunity of receiving an education beyond high school. Because of his quality of discipline and mind development, he was awarded a Doctor of Divinity Degree by Northwest College in 1978.

He began his ministry as youth pastor at Klamath Falls, Oregon, in 1928, where he served for more than two years. Following a ministry of evangelism in the Northwest District, he accepted the pastorate in the Assembly of God Church in Walla Walla, Washington, where he remained for more than ten years before being called to pastor First Assembly of God in Tacoma in 1943. He remained in Tacoma for seven years, at which time he felt led to again minister as evangelist in a number of churches.

From 1951 to 1958, he served as superintendent of the Northwest District of the Assemblies of God, at the time Frank Gray left to pastor in Tonasket, Washington. Following completion of his ministry with the Northwest District, he accepted the pastorate at Bakersfield, California, for seven years, at which time he went to Ventura, California, for four years, before resigning to again be available for teaching and preaching ministries upon call. He currently lives in Bakersfield, California, with his wife, Ruth, whose health has been failing recently. Dwight McLaughlin still accepts a limited number of invitations for ministry.

## **WILLIAM E. KIRSCHKE**

### **1950 - 1954**

William E. Kirschke was nationally known for his belief in the value of Sunday Schools and in the development of philosophies and techniques to make this branch of the local church productive.

His techniques and understanding of effective Sunday School administration and organization made his services in great demand. Not only was he an effective Sunday School specialist, he was effective as a pastor. His pulpit ministry was outstanding. He served as pastor in churches in Galveston, Texas; Corsicana, Texas; Centralia, Washington; Longview, Washington; Chicago, Illinois and Richmond, California. He served as pastor of First Assembly of God, Tacoma, from 1950 to 1954.

William Kirschke was the first Sunday School director for the Northwest District. He eventually was selected as the national representative from the Assemblies of God School Sunday Department, Springfield, Missouri and served for a time as national secretary of the Department. He was also appointed as executive secretary of the National Sunday School Association of Chicago, Illinois for a period of time.

Pastor and Mrs. William Kirschke are fondly remembered for the interest they showed in this pastorate and their effectiveness.

# **ROSTER OF PASTORS 1918 - 1988**

## **DR. FRANK GRAY 1918 - 1938**

In 1918 in response to an invitation from a small group of people, Frank and Stella Gray and their two boys came to Tacoma to minister in a small second floor mission with emphasis on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Within a few months the widespread influenza epidemic had taken the life of his wife and left him with two small boys for whom he was unable to care. He served faithfully for twenty years, with his boys being reunited with him three years later.

The church grew in size and in the outreach to the community. A building was constructed in 1926. He also served as the first district superintendent of the Northwest District, a position resigned in 1930 since it required full time and could no longer be combined with a pastorate. He resigned the pastorate in 1938 to again assume the superintendency of the Northwest District.

He served as an early chairman of the board of directors of Northwest College (then operating as Northwest Bible Institute) and received the first Doctor of Divinity Degree awarded by this institution. Following his retirement from the District Superintendency in 1950, he served as pastor in Tonasket, Washington, before retiring to his Tacoma home in 1957.

## **HARRY J. STEIL 1938 - 1943**

Harry J. Steil graduated from Bethel Bible Training School in Newark, New Jersey in 1919. Prior to coming to Tacoma to pastor at the Pentecostal Tabernacle in 1938, he served as pastor in Ossining, New York; Newark, New Jersey; Cleveland, Ohio; and Washington, D. C. He pastored at Pentecostal Tabernacle, Tacoma, Washington, during the very difficult days when this country first entered World War II.

After leaving Tacoma in 1943, he returned to the Eastern part of the nation and pastored in New York City for two years, in Cleveland, Ohio, for eleven years and finally in Southgate, California, for seven years. He is currently residing in Cardiff-by-the-Sea, California, with his son, Robert.

## **EVERETTE EWING**

### **1954 - 1963**

Everette Ewing pastored in several churches in Kansas, prior to his acceptance of the church in Coffeyville, Kansas. After the resignation of Pastor William Kirschke from Tacoma's First Assembly of God, Everette Ewing was invited by the Board of the church to become their pastor. He accepted and moved with his family to Tacoma during the summer of 1954.

Everette Ewing led the congregation for nine years prior to his resignation in 1963, to accept the pastorate at Calvary Temple, Springfield, Missouri. While there, he suffered a heart attack. After partial recovery his family moved back to Western Washington. His health improved and he accepted the pastorate of the Assembly of God Church in Des Moines, Washington. However, his health again deteriorated and he again suffered a heart attack and died on April 18, 1969.

## **OTIS KEENER**

### **1963 - 1965**

Otis Keener, who had been serving as interim pastor at Central Assembly of God, headquarters church of the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Missouri, was called to succeed Everette Ewing as pastor of First Assembly of God, Tacoma, Washington, in 1963. Otis Keener received his first license to preach from the Illinois District Council in May, 1945. He then pastored a home missions church in rural Illinois and attended Central Bible Institute on a part-time basis, graduating in 1947. There he met his wife, Irene Buckley. After graduation they pastored in Illinois for five years before accepting the pastorate of Irene Keener's "home church" in Oklahoma City, from 1954 to 1962.

The Keeners moved from Tacoma to Bakersfield, California, in 1965 and remained there until 1967 at which time they pastored at Pacific Grove, California. Throughout the latter years of their pastorates, they were also involved in periodic missionary assignments. In 1973, they opened the first "hotel church" in Asia, in Hong Kong. During the intervening years they have been serving ICI (International Correspondence Institute) world-wide.

## **DR. FULTON W. BUNTAIN**

### **1965 -**

Fulton W. Buntain was born and raised in Canada. His father, Rev. D. N. Buntain held a prestigious pulpit in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, until he experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit. He then left the church to preach the Full Gospel. After having received Christ in a meeting conducted by his brother, Mark, Fulton eventually determined to go to Central Bible Institute in Springfield, Missouri, U. S. A. where he met his future wife, Lorraine Hime.

During his Bible school training and at the conclusion he led the song service for his brother, Mark, and occasionally preached. Finally, he held meetings, independently. His relationship with Lorraine Hime continued and they were married in 1951. After continuing with evangelistic meetings they were called to pastor Bethel Church in Oakland, California, in May, 1955. They remained at this pastorate for three years, until they were called to Long Beach, California in May, 1958.

They pastored this growing congregation for seven years until they accepted the call from First Assembly of God in Tacoma, where they have served for the past twenty-three years, longer than any pastor in the history of the church. Pastor Buntain's leadership in the city, state and nation has been recognized. However, his first priority has always been to the people of First Assembly of God Life Center to whom he ministers so effectively.

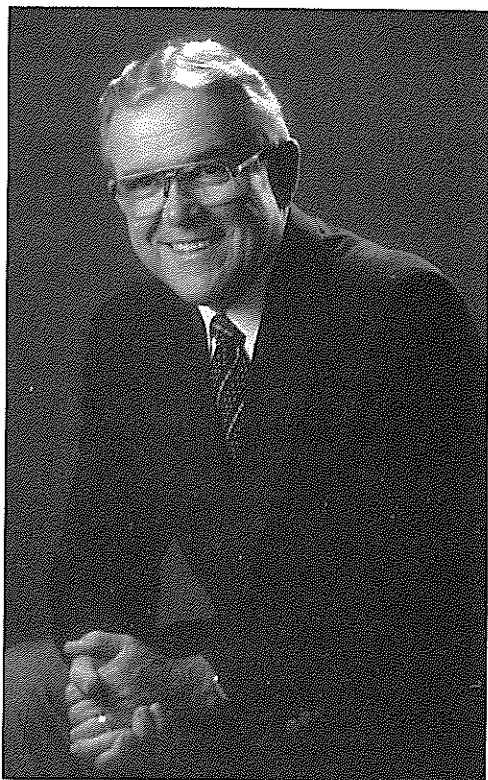
He became gravely ill in Sacramento, California, (where he had gone to preside at his son's wedding) in 1976. He recovered through much prayer and returned to his pulpit.

The growth of the congregation is phenomenal. A Sunday morning congregation of six hundred has expanded to several thousand, through the Grace of God and the faithful ministry of Dr. Fulton W. Buntain. His faithful and competent staff and the faithful congregation has remained stable for these many years.

## FAOG LIFE CENTER MINISTRIES AND EMPHASES

Christ taught that ministries are not equally divided among his servants. Some have the responsibility for planting, some for watering and cultivating and others for harvesting, but it is God that gives the increase. In the early days of this congregation there was much planting and cultivating. Although this has continued in latter years there also have been great harvests of souls for the Kingdom of God.

Dr. Fulton W. Buntain, pastor of First Assembly of God Life Center for the past twenty-three years has been very involved in the harvest. Thousands of people have confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior under the dedicated ministry of Pastor Buntain. Because of natural abilities and inclinations points of emphasis among pastors are not always uniform. Under Pastor Buntain's leadership significant movements have been made in the Kingdom of God in Tacoma, Washington, and around the world. Some of the more significant areas of emphasis have been:



***Dr. Fulton W. Buntain***

- (1) *Buildings* During the last twenty-three years the following buildings have been constructed:
  - (a) Church building at South 18th and Puget Sound, dedicated in 1967.
  - (b) Life Manor, 1973
  - (c) Christian education/gymnasium addition, 1975
  - (d) Re-building of church destroyed by fire, 1977
  - (e) Buntain Learning Center, 1985
  - (f) Christian education/administrative addition, 1987
- (2) *Noted speakers* - From time to time outstanding Christian speakers have been guests at this church. Included among them are:
  - (a) Dr. James Kennedy

- (b) Missionary D. Mark Buntain
- (c) Cliff Barrows (from Billy Graham Crusades)
- (d) Ben Kinchlow (from 700 Club telecasts)
- (e) Ruth Carter Stapleton (the president's sister)
- (f) Hal Lindsey (noted writer and speaker on prophecy)
- (g) Chuck Swindoll (noted Christian writer)
- (h) Rich Wilkerson (noted evangelist)
- (3) *Television ministries* - Use of electronic means to reach out to hurting people:
  - (a) Introduction to Life, telecast originally in the Pacific Northwest and recently on cable systems throughout the Nation - The Church Board decided the evening before the fire, November 30, 1975, to inaugurate this telecast. After the fire, the action was reaffirmed
  - b) Hour of Life, edited version of morning worship service, shown on KTBW, Channel 20, Seattle-Tacoma and local cable systems Radio Ministries - KTBI Sunday mornings KBRD FM This is the life "spots"
- (4) *Emphasis on Missions* -
  - (a) Each fall, a missions convention is scheduled in which the missionary program of the church is emphasized and offerings and pledges are received for special mission projects.
  - (b) Outreach of the gospel by missionaries supported by this church on every continent
  - (c) Calcutta Mission of Mercy initiated by Pastor Buntain to provide means of support of the work of Dr. D. Mark Buntain, in Calcutta, India, largest Assemblies of God Mission field in the world
  - (d) Home Missions support of numerous ministries within the Nation
  - (e) For the past several summers, teams of young people have become involved with mission efforts to New York City, with other teams going to Great Britain and Germany.
  - (f) Assistance by members of the congregation in construction of church in Papeete, Tahiti
  - (g) Assistance in construction of church in the Philippine Islands, dedicated to the memory of Arthur and Edna Ahlberg
  - (h) Assistance in building project in Dominican Republic
  - (i) Contribution of amounts in excess of \$500,000 per year for support of missionary efforts
- (5) *Women's Ministries* - Heavy emphasis has been placed on special ministries for women of the church and community.
  - (a) Women's missionary groups, the main focus in early years - Marie Cole functioned as leader and coordinator
  - (b) Mrs. Goldia Anderson assumed a full-time role as director of women's ministries in 1978
  - (c) Lorraine Buntain, Robyn Wilkerson and Marlene Hamilton now provide the leadership for a functional

- and inspirational women's ministries program
- (d) Women of the Word (WOW) dynamic program
- (e) Mother-daughter brunch had over 900 in attendance in 1988
- (f) Concerned women of America, addressing themselves to state and national issues of particular concern to women
- (6) Youth ministries - A wide range of ministries is provided for children and youth of all ages, coordinated by youth pastors who concentrate their efforts on the needy of the church and community
- (7) Musical ministries - A wide variety of musical ministries, vocal and instrumental, choirs, ensembles, solos with total participation of several hundred people
  - (a) Special emphasis provided for presentations at Christmas, Easter and Independence Day
- (8) School of the Bible - Normally more than 3,000 participate during the "Sunday School Hour" on Sunday mornings, with additional hundreds attending sessions on Wednesday evenings
- (9) Life College for Christian Service
  - (a) Formal, organized college-level classes offered on Wednesday nights
  - (b) Classes offered to provide college credits through the Berean School of the Bible, Springfield, Missouri
- (10) CARE groups organized and functioning
  - (a) Began as "home coffee fellowships" in 1974
  - (b) Meet monthly throughout the city and surrounding area with at least one "cell" located in every postal ZIP code
- (11) Single Persons Ministries
  - (a) Large numbers of unmarried persons meet on Monday nights for devotions, teaching and fellowship
  - (b) A sizable number of unmarried middle-age and older women receive special ministry and activities.
- (12) Men's Ministries
  - (a) Saturday morning men's prayer breakfasts and other less formal activities and athletic events provide for special needs
- (13) Save the baby abortion alternatives counseling program
- (14) Bereaved parents support group
- (15) Widowed support groups
- (16) Loved ones of inmates support group
- (17) Lifeline Ministries
- (18) "Taste of New Wine" support group for those with chemical dependencies
- (19) Lay counseling
- (20) Golden heirs, support primarily for couples in the "golden years"
- (21) College/career support groups

In addition to the above there are numerous less formal provisions for support for most anyone with a special need.

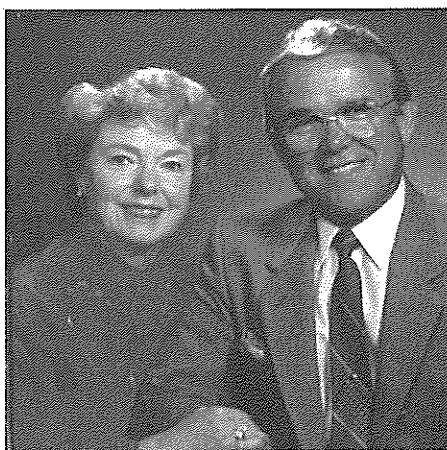




**RICHARD AND ROBYN WILKERSON**  
Johnfulton - Graham - Richard Jr.



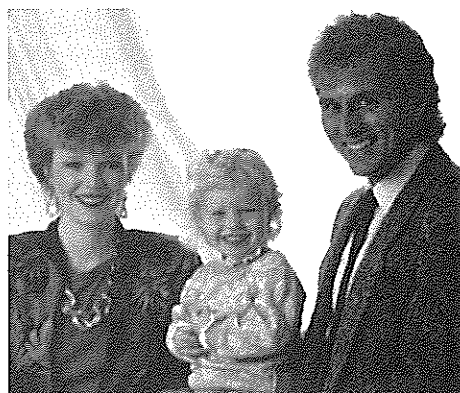
**GREG AND KATHY HARDCASTLE**  
Chad - Geoffrey



**DR. FULTON AND  
MRS. LORRAINE BUNTAIN**



**TIM AND JUDY BUNTAIN**  
Ashley - Katie - Lauren



**TIM AND MICHELLE COX**  
Tiffany (Donald - missing)

## PASTORAL ASSISTANTS

During the course of the past seventy years, there have been innumerable persons who have assisted the seven pastors. In addition, hundreds of lay persons have served in various official and non-official capacities for the furtherance of the work of God. Some have been identified. Others have not, but God maintains records, accurate and complete.

Among those who have formally served as pastoral assistants, at one time or another during these seventy years are:

Ed Anderson  
Fred Anderson  
Gloria Anderson  
Merle Bade  
Bill Bates  
Lorraine Buntain  
P.W. Carlstrom  
Timothy Cox  
Meridee Curtis  
Albert Davis  
Don Duncan  
Fred Fay  
Carl Foss  
Carol Foss  
Joseph Fuiten  
Don Galloway  
Dr. Wayde Goodall  
Russ Gudrum  
John Gregg  
Gino Grunberg  
Martin Hagli  
Marlene Hamilton  
Audrey Hansen  
Marolyn Heidecker  
William Heidecker  
Bill Hennesy

Lillian Holm  
David Hooker  
Steve Hunt  
Carol Jones  
Cal Kanz  
Martin Kvamme  
Steve Novotny  
Tom Pendleton  
Einar Peterson  
Rachel Peterson  
Earl Radford  
Cal Robertson  
Roy Rupp  
Steve Scaggs  
Katherine Schmidtke  
Mike Stauffacher  
John Taft  
Craig Tanksley  
Bob Towell  
Teri Tveten  
Steven White  
Judy Popineau Wick  
Robyn Wilkerson  
Dave Womack  
Mason Younglund

## **AFFIRMATIONS BY PASTOR FULTON W BUNTAIN**

Much has been said concerning the power of positive thinking. Pastor Buntain frequently presents what he terms as Affirmations. These concise truths serve to encourage in areas where a change of attitude can serve constructive purposes. Frequently, these are printed on cards or labels and distributed so they can be referred to frequently. Some of them are:

"Things you appreciate get better; the things you depreciate get worse.  
You can't change yesterday.

You've never failed until the last time you try

Winners dwell on past wins; losers dwell on past losses

Don't surrender your goals and dreams to peoples' facial expressions

Losers blame somebody else—winner's fix the situation

You can get what you want but you may not want what you get  
if you leave God out

God's will for your life is to bless you

The gods of this world will leave you out of control

Are you bargaining with life for a penny when you could have it all?

You can control another's life by caring

When we love little we get little love

No one ever complains about being too appreciated

You haven't had your last day if you will only have faith, only believe

No prayer is sincere unless you are willing to do everything in your power  
to see it answered

God uses tragedy to win battles. He always has a plan.

He is always in control

Every adversity holds a possibility

Force of circumstances can, for a time, make a small man seem great  
but never a great man small

Winners have a wishbone, a funnybone and a backbone

Love is more than money and a kind word will give more pleasure  
than a present

The most beautiful thing a man can do is to forgive

Anything is a cinch, inch by inch

You have to be tough to hang onto your dreams

God's delays are not denials

Faith and time work miracles

Don't push the river

Time heals

It's ALWAYS too soon to quit

What you do today will determine your tomorrow

The difference between what I am and what I want to be is what I do

Extraordinary people are just ordinary people with extraordinary courage

You don't drift into spiritual things

The will of God for you is joy

Desire requires a mental image, then action

You aren't going to have a love relationship unless you  
have some element of sacrificing

The yellow line in the middle of the road is the most  
dangerous place to be

Are you searching for data to support your biases?

Whoever has a heart full of love always has something to give"

## **FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD LIFE CENTER GOALS**

Life Center exists to accommodate and encourage every practical aspect of worship to the Lord, to aid in the fellowship among believers, and to act as an instrument to help evangelize the world.

Just as every individual needs a home and a family, everyone needs a church home. Our church is to us spiritually what our families are to us naturally.

Those in our family have found a real home! It's a wonderful, happy place. There is plenty of room in our family for you and yours. A warm welcome is extended to be a continuing part of this growing family of God.

## **ASSEMBLIES OF GOD**

The Assemblies of God was formed as a result of the widespread religious revival at the beginning of this century. The initial convention, which attracted about 300 persons was held at Hot Springs, Arkansas, in 1914.

Our three-fold reason for being is:

- (1) To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world—reaching the lost with the Gospel of Christ;
- (2) To be a corporate body in which man may worship God—ministering to the Lord;
- (3) To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of Christ—helping believers attain Christian maturity.
- (4) The Bible is our all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. Our cardinal doctrines are:

**Salvation** through the blood of Jesus Christ, resulting in the life of holiness: 1 John 1:7-9; Romans 3:24; 10:9,10; Titus 3:3-7; Hebrews 12:14, 1 John 2:5,6.

**Baptism of the Holy Spirit** with evidence of speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance: Acts 2:4, 10:44-46; 19:6.

**Divine Healing** through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ: Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 8:16, 17; James 5:14, 15.

**Second Coming of Jesus Christ:** Matthew 24:25; Luke 21:35-36; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Titus 2:13; Revelation 19:7-9, 20.