

Preaching in the "Open Air":

The Southwestern
Pentecostal Holiness News
 "Voice of the Southwest"

VOL. 18—NO. 6 MAY 1, 1948 66 YEARS

This Issue Is Dedicated To Our Lady Ministers

OUR LADY MINISTERS

For the past two months, The News has been asking for the pictures of the lady ministers of the churches and the responses had been good, although not numerous. Therefore the pictures of a few are missing. I wish it was possible to give you the life story of each, but space will not permit, therefore I have listed their names and addresses, and position in the service of the Lord. Perhaps in future issues it will be possible to tell you more about them one at a time. However, it goes without saying, that their ministerial record is very interesting and their service to the church is precious, therefore it is a pleasure to dedicate this issue of The News to our Lady Ministers.



Before



After

The picture above is of the McMaster Church before it was renovated and on the opposite side of the page is a picture of the church as it appears today.

PANHANDLE CONFERENCE NEWS

GUYMON

Our church is meeting spiritually and did in meeting with us in a wonderful way. Our revival with Sister Phipps as evangelist was a great success, eight saved, six baptized, eight baptisms in water, and five united with Alpha church, with which we praise the Lord.

MOUNTAINAIRE

Sister Previer of Mountainaire, Okla., is here in a revival and we are thankful for the presence of the Lord in our midst. Pray that this will be a soul-saving revival.

ELROY, Ariz. — Pastor Mrs. Ruby McCraw reports the best revival our people have ever had in the State of Arizona. The meeting lasted two and one-half weeks, ending on an Easter Sunday, being in accordance to the wishes of the "General" Superintendent to have a pre-Easter revival, the pastor was flooded with two effective small results. She reports that the Lord seemed to say unto her "that this act on the right side." Here and Mrs. A. J. Flay, of Eastern Oklahoma arrived and began meeting with which many did the deed. Many people were saved, 18 baptisms and 5 revolved the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

CALIFORNIA CONFERENCE NEWS

CALIFORNIA

We have had several real good showers of blessings during the last three months, but last night (last) we had a down-pour of the Holy Ghost power. Brother Max Dawson of Ontario has been ministering to us during the absence of our pastor, Sister Inezna Campbell. His preaching has been under the heading of our pastor. He is faithful to win and so you are catching and catching the wave, completely healed.

WORKS FOR THE NEWS

Mrs. C. H. Morgan writes that she enjoys the News, and has set up a subscription for this year. She greatly enjoyed reading the life story of Mrs. Cora Ennis of Seminole, Okla., because Sister Ennis was her Sunday school teacher many years ago.

FREEZANO

Mrs. J. A. Edgus and family came here last September to build and organize a church. The first Sunday there were 11 in Sunday school and 12 baptisms there were 11. All present are on a building program. Prayers to build a church is a great help. We also have a weekly broadcast and church paper. There are men united with the baptismal service, recently, the presence of the Lord was very precious.

Arizona Camp Meeting
 Center of Twenty-Third Avenue and Hadley Street
 PHOENIX, ARIZONA
 JUNE 4—11, 1948

EVANGELIST SUPERINTENDENT




MOTHER'S DAY
 Sunday
 May 9, 1948

How All the Children In? I think children in the night down high of an old house on the hill, Of a yard all wide and blossom; Where the children played at will. And when the night at last came down, Hiding the heavy dew, Mother would look around and ask "Are all the children in?"

California Camp Meeting
 JUNE 17—27, 1948

EVANGELIST SUPERINTENDENT




The Ministries of Early Pentecostal Women Preachers in Oklahoma

by Kristen Dayle Welch

Even before Oklahoma became a state in 1907, charismatic preachers were working within its borders, including women preachers such as Dollie York. Following her were women

PENTECOSTAL WOMEN PREACHERS

like Lucy Hargis, Grace Hope Curtis, and Ruth Moore. While none of these women ever held an influential leadership position in the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC), all are notable for their unusual contributions to preaching the Pentecostal doctrine after the famous Azusa Street revivals changed the nature of the IPHC in 1906 to a church focused on leading others into the baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues as evidence of that baptism. They passionately preached in the streets, in schoolhouses, in churches, and even in the fields, proclaiming the gospel into the open air. The sacrifices they made and the challenges they faced are worth remembering.

On October 2, 1898, Dan York married Dollie Fagan. They immediately went to work as jail captains for the Salvation Army for two years.¹ By 1903 they were in Indian Territory in Pauls Valley, determined to preach the doctrine of sanctification, a belief that one could be cleansed of sin permanently.² Dollie was described by her husband as a “little dark, sun-burned woman with black keen eyes who saw everything as it was. She had long black, and straight hair that was never cut or bobbed.”³ At the time, for a woman to cut or “bob” her hair was a sign that she was not submitted to Christ or to her husband in marriage; it was to align one’s self with those women crying for equality with men.⁴ It is clear from Dan’s story that Dollie was only interested in being equal as a preacher and an evangelist with her husband, Dan, in Indian Territory, not in supporting gender-based social equality for all. Refusing to cut her hair symbolized a refusal to support a feminist social agenda.

Dollie was ordained to preach by the Holiness Church of Christ around 1903, and she held her first meeting in Wolf, Oklahoma, in 1905.⁵ However, Dan and Dollie lost their alliance with the newly formed church when they heard testimonies of being baptized in the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues by two women from Ardmore by the names of Myrtle Dixon and Willard Armstrong. These women claimed that a preacher in Ardmore who had actually been to Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California, taught them the doctrine of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues and informed them that now a group of people were fasting and praying so they could receive the experience themselves.⁶ Azusa Street was a turning point for many Christians in the early twentieth century and is marked as such in every history of Pentecostalism because many new denominations were either changed or birthed out of these revivals.⁷ For them the baptism of the Holy Spirit was

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

thought of as a charismatic experience that resulted in the ability to either speak in an unknown foreign language as a way of witnessing about Christ to speakers of that language as the apostles did in Acts 2, or it was thought of as a charismatic experience that resulted in the ability to speak in tongues as a way of praying or as a way of giving a message in God's language followed by an interpretation in English. All of these experiences were grounded in scripture, with the second two being repeatedly addressed by Paul, who was a tongues-speaker himself.⁸ Many were eager to pray for the experience in the early twentieth century because of the revivals on Azusa Street.

In fact, although it was happening hundreds of miles away, the effects of Azusa Street seemed to reach even into the most remote locations. The Azusa Street revivals, which ran over a course of three years, began in 1906 and were led by African American preacher William Seymour. Many denominations that were previously aligned with the charismatic holiness movements readily adopted the new doctrine that one could be baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues, and many denominations were birthed out of these revivals, as historian Vinson Synan describes in *The Century of the Holy Spirit*. The change in American religious doctrine was so monumental that Synan writes: "What happened because of the Azusa Street revival has fascinated church historians for decades and has yet to be fully understood or explained."⁹ On Azusa Street services were held three times a day, every day, and thousands were baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues.¹⁰ It was this new style of worship and doctrine that reached Oklahoma so quickly and began to change believers like Dan and Dollie, transforming Oklahoma's religious landscape along with the rest of the country's.

The path from Azusa Street to Dan and Dollie was not overly long. Soon after hearing the testimony about Pentecost from the two women, while in Beulah, Oklahoma, Dan reported that he and Dollie encountered a group of people who had "heard of Pentecost" in Lamont, Oklahoma, as it was preached by Joseph Hillary King.¹¹ King was an influential leader who was elected general overseer of the Fire Baptized Holiness Association in 1900 and later became superintendent of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church. He experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit on February, 15, 1907.¹² In May of 1907 King traveled to Lamont, Oklahoma, to "conduct a 'Pentecostal camp meeting' in the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church" there.¹³ In turn, the Nazarene Beulah Holiness Bible

PENTECOSTAL WOMEN PREACHERS

School became Pentecostal because Frank T. Alexander, the school's president, received the baptism at Lamont. When he returned to his school, there was a Pentecostal outbreak on campus, and it was here the path ended with Dan and Dollie experiencing the baptism.¹⁴

Dan recalled the experience as follows:

When we came back to Beulah, the band had heard of Pentecost up at Lamont, Oklahoma, by our beloved Rev. J. H. King. We sent Rev. Fitzgerald and our leader of the school up to see what it was all about. The first night these two men got their Pentecost. This was in 1907. When these men returned, they told our workers to seek God for Pentecost. Some of our workers received Pentecost the first service. Then wife and I started seeking. While here in this meeting, I had to take my wagon apart, lead my team across the stream; carry parts of the wag[on] and drag the rest across with my team and put it together again. After carrying wife and children and a trained nurse, Sister McClumb, across the stream, we journeyed on in time for the meeting.

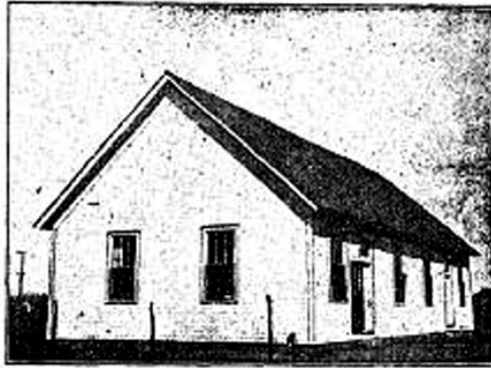
It was on Sunday, July 22, 1908. I was at the organ singing "I was once in Egypt bondage but deliverance came to me." I then got my Baptism and a few minutes later wife received hers. This was at Foss, Oklahoma[,] in Johnny and Harriet Bender's home.¹⁵

Dan and Dollie considered themselves part of the Pentecostal Holiness Church soon thereafter, but they were not alone in their new affiliation with the denomination. The late Joseph Campbell, an early historian for the IPHC, described in his book *The Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1898-1949* the Lamont Revival as being responsible for new churches in "Yukon, Drummond, Billings, Perry, Pawnee, Muskogee, Mazie, Witchita [*sic*], McAllister [*sic*], Quinton, Cowen, Hart, Stratford, Paul's [*sic*] Valley, Castle, Swan Lake, Manitou, Faxon, Tipton and many other places in Oklahoma."¹⁶ The Beulah School Holiness Revival attracted many new followers as well, including a minister from the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. The history of the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene is described in *Pioneer Days: The Holiness Movement of the Southwest* by self-appointed, late nineteenth-century historian Reverend C. B. Jernigan. The chronicle also records the contributions of Miss Mattie Mallory, the founder of the Oklahoma Orphanage in what came to be Bethany, Oklahoma.¹⁷ The history and people of the two denominations sometimes intersect, as in this example. In fact, the IPHC headquarters is located in Bethany, not far from Southern Nazarene University.

In Campbell's history Dan and Dollie are mentioned in the section about the Beulah revivals, although they did not receive the baptism until later. Shortly after these revivals, the Oklahoma Con-

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

We feel that one great mission of *The Advocate* is to bring the different conferences and sections of our work in closer touch with each other. There are many ways in which this can be done. We think that one way is to place in *The Advocate* from time to time photo-



TABERNACLE AT WAGONER, OKLA.

graphs of the different tabernacles throughout the whole territory. This will let all see what kind of churches we have in different places, and will naturally interest us all more and more in the work at different places.

In the first issue of the Pentecostal Holiness Advocate, George F. Taylor called for congregations to submit photographs of churches in the different states in order to create more unity in the fledgling denomination. The Pentecostal Holiness Advocate, May 3, 1917 (photograph courtesy of the IPHC Archives and Research Center).

ference was reorganized, and the church then established at the Oklahoma City Mission is now noted for being the “oldest organized church in the Conference and perhaps . . . the oldest Pentecostal church of any denomination in the mid-west.”¹⁸ Dan and Dollie are mentioned again as being assigned to the churches in Stratford, Hart, and Pauls Valley by the IPHC denomination.¹⁹

Dollie wholeheartedly embraced the denomination, writing two letters to the *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* not long after it was first published in 1917 by George F. Taylor.

PENTECOSTAL WOMEN PREACHERS

Ravina, Okla.

Well praise the Lord. I have just been wondering how the little white-winged Advocate ever found us, as we are way off in one dark corner of the world feeling kind of like I imagine old Elijah felt after slaying all the prophets of Baal, lonely, for there are not any Pentecostal preachers here except husband and myself. But praise the Lord, He is feeding us on manna from heaven. The Lord gave us a glorious service Sunday night. Husband preached a good sermon, and the Lord blessed me in testimony. We haven't many here to help us, as there are only two sisters who have received the Baptism, but praise the Lord, we are expecting the Lord to help us to build up His work here at this place.

I have been reading every copy of The Advocate with delight; especially Bro. Bradley's piece, as we have had some experience in false doctrine tearing down the work in this part of the country. But praise the Lord, we can not afford to give up. I have done got a glimpse of the goal, and I am headed toward heaven. Pray for me and my family, that we may stay true to the Lord. I remain

Your sister to[?] Christ,
Dallie [*sic*] York

Dear Advocate:

Well, praise the Lord, here I come again with my testimony. I have just been reading The Advocate, and it is just like being in a red-hot testimony meeting. It just puts my soul on fire. About ten years ago was the first Pentecostal meeting that was held in Oklahoma, at least, the first I know of. It was held at Lamont, Okla., by Bro. J. H. King. At this time we lived at Beulah, Okla. The church sent a delegate to investigate the doctrine and see if the experience was real. He (Bro. Alexander) sought and obtained the blessed experience of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. He returned telling all of us holiness people about it. We all saw it was real and went to seeking the experience. We found the blessed Comforter very near. I remember the first time I went to the altar, I just said: "Lord, if it is real, send the power." Then the power came, knocking me prostrate on the floor. I just kept on seeking the Lord until He baptized me with the blessed Holy Ghost. Oh, He put such a zeal in my heart to tell the people of this wonderful experience, and it is still there today. Praise God.

While we have had many things to discourage us, yet I do not mean to be discouraged. Many thanks to Bro. Noble for that good sermon he preached for us this week on not being discouraged. Those good sermons make us feel like pressing on. I am glad that I can say as did David in Psalm 63:8, "My soul followeth hard after the Lord." I feel like going on and pressing the battle to the end.

Your little sister,
Dollie York

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

Dan recorded Dollie's successes as a preacher, admirable due to the challenges presented by the Oklahomans described by Campbell as having a "natural tendency . . . to be free and independent," thus resisting the organization of the denomination in 1907 in Oklahoma.²⁰

Ravina, Okla.

Well praise the Lord, I have just been wondering how the little white-winged Advocate ever found us, as we are way off in one dark corner of the world feeling kind of like I imagine old Elijah felt after slaying all the prophets of Baal, lonely, for there are not any Pentecostal preachers here except husband and myself. But praise the Lord, He is feeling us on manna from heaven. The Lord gave us a glorious service Sunday night. Husband preached a good sermon, and the Lord blessed me in testimony. We haven't many here to help us, as there are only two sisters who have received the Baptism, but praise the Lord, we are expecting the Lord to help us to build up His work here at this place.

I have been reading every copy of The Advocate with delight; especially Bro. Bradley's piece, as we have had some experience in false doctrine tearing down the work in this part of the country. But praise the Lord, we can not afford to give up. I have done got a glimpse of the goal, and I am headed toward heaven. Pray for me and my family, that we may stay true to the Lord. I remain

Your sister in Christ,
DOLLIE YORK.

* * *

Dear Advocate:

Well, praise the Lord, here I come again with my testimony. I have just been reading The Advocate, and it is just like being in a red-hot testimony meeting. It just puts my soul on fire. About ten years ago was the first Pentecostal meeting that was held in Okla., at least, the first I know of. It was held at Lamont, Okla., by Bro. J. H. King. At this time we lived at Beulah, Okla. The church sent a delegate to investigate the doctrine and see if the experience was real. He (Bro. Alexander) sought and obtained the blessed experience of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. He returned telling all of us holiness people about it. We all saw it was real and went to seeking the experience. We found the blessed Comforter very near. I remember the first time I went to the altar, I just said: "Lord, if it is real, send the power." Then the power came, knocking me prostrate on the floor. I just kept on seeking the Lord until He baptized me with the blessed Holy Ghost. Oh, He put such a zeal in my heart to tell the people of this wonderful experience, and it is still there today. Praise God.

While we have had many things to discourage us, yet I do not mean to be discouraged. Many thanks to Bro. Noble for that good sermon he preached for us this week on not being discouraged. Those good sermons make us feel like pressing on. I am glad that I can say as did David in Psalm 63:8, "My soul followeth hard after the Lord." I feel like going on and pressing the battle to the end.

Your little sister,
DOLLIE YORK.

Dollie's letters as they appeared in the Pentecostal Holiness Advocate on May 24, 1917 and June 7, 1917, respectively (images courtesy of the IPHC Archives and Research Center).

More than that, C. B. Jernigan wrote that in 1897 Indian Territory was "owned, but unallotted by the Indians," leased mostly to "cattle men," and owned by farmers living in its rich valleys.²¹ These people lived in dugouts and log cabins, just as Dan York described as well. Jernigan goes on to describe early Oklahomans: "The inhabitants were Indians, cowboys, and many desperate characters who had gone there to escape the law in other states." The soon-to-be-converts "spent their Sundays in drinking 'chock,' a native beer manufactured by the Choctaw Indians, and in gambling and carousing in general," Jernigan further observed. As a Pentecostal Nazarene Jernigan claimed that it took a "preach or burn" spirit to reach these people and a "pioneer spirit" that had little to do with settling the land and everything to do with spreading charismatic Pentecostalism.²² Thus, when Dan and Dollie set up meetings in the open air, clearing "briars and underbrush," they were opening themselves up to whatever might come in the course of the evening. Dan wrote that "one afternoon when my wife spoke, 65 fell at the altar, screaming and crying for God to

PENTECOSTAL WOMEN PREACHERS

have mercy on them” at a service held in 1909 in Foss, Oklahoma.²³ Thus, the potential converts were as untamed as the services in which they were converted.

Dan described the work on preaching in the streets and holding open-air camp meetings, but Lucy Hargis, another preacher who was associated with the IPHC for many years, shed new light on just how dramatic these early services could be. In 1975 a handwritten letter was placed on file at the IPHC Archives and Research Center in Bethany, Oklahoma. In the letter Lucy described the work of her husband, Lee, and herself. Lee was born in 1898, and Lucy must have been born within five or ten years after that date. Both Hargises were born at least twenty years after the Yorks, to put it into perspective.²⁴ Not long after they were married in 1922,



This is Dan and Dollie as they were in service with the instruments.

This photograph of the York family was taken from The Life Events of Dan and Dollie York (photograph courtesy of the IPHC Archives and Research Center. The original copy of the photograph is on file with the center).

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

Lucy and her husband, along with her mother and family, had to move from Durant to Muskogee because of their new beliefs and experience in tongues-speaking.²⁵ Yet, the sacrifice was not hard, although Lee did not receive his baptism until after the move. Lucy



Pastor Lucy Hargis (below). Photograph from the Southwestern Pentecostal Holiness News, May 1, 1948. The issue was dedicated to "Lady Pastors" (image courtesy of the IPHC Archives and Research Center).



PASTOR LUCY HARGIS

California Camp Meeting



PENTECOSTAL WOMEN PREACHERS

wrote that before she got married that part of Lee's attraction to her was that she had a "call to the ministry," just as he did.²⁶

Just like the Yorks, the Hargises had to have church outside many times. She wrote:

We really began our ministry for the call was weighting us down We filled every open door and many times we opened doors by securing a school building or building a brush arbor. Lee bought a \$3.00 guitar and much of the time this was our music. If one rev. [reverend?] closed and we didn't have any invitation to go any where, he would take his suit case and guitar and hitch hike just starting out by faith that God would give a place some where. If in hitch hiking he would come to a cross road he would stop and pray and say Lord which way from here and the Lord always led. He would get a revival under way and as soon as he could get enough money or borrow a model T, he would come after me or send for me.²⁷

Like many early Pentecostal preachers, the Hargises were fully dedicated to their calling. That is, they went without the luxuries of life. Dan York recorded the details of the poverty he and Dollie shared as evangelists, wandering about Oklahoma either on foot or in a wagon. Lucy also mentioned that she and Lee rarely had much more than they needed and sometimes did not have all that they needed.²⁸ Lee and Lucy joined the IPHC in 1925.²⁹ During that time they held a revival for Reverend Ellis Roberts when his son Oral was just a boy. The famous preacher Oral Roberts would be part of the IPHC until 1968 when he broke with the denomination to go to the Methodist Church.³⁰

However, just as George F. Taylor was attempting to do with *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*, many early Pentecostals in Oklahoma wished to be a part of the larger religious community. Friendships were formed; names became familiar. One of many pieces of evidence of the interconnectedness of these Oklahomans is found in a story Lucy told and another preacher Robert Rex repeated in his autobiography. Lucy Hargis described how she and her husband had both given up their jobs and had gone north by train with a nursing baby because they felt that God wanted them to go.³¹ They ran out of money, except for a dollar and some change, and had to stay in the McAlester, Oklahoma, train station two days before they met a man. "Brother" Stevens said he was waiting on a preacher to come by train to preach in a revival. The preacher never came, so the Hargises left with him. As an anonymous young man drove the group, Brother Stevens played his guitar and they all sang. Lucy wrote that she felt that God had blessed them as they "forgot our

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

empty stomachs and our hungry body and our hardships” in the spirit of the music.³²

Robert Rex told a similar story and then picked up where Lucy left off.³³ Over the next six to eight weeks, the Hargises held a revival that drew increasing amounts of attention because of the new doctrine Lee was preaching—baptism in the Holy Spirit. Rex reported that during this time he became a Christian by Lee Hargis’s invitation, and when opposition grew to the teaching and violence was threatened, “some of the businessmen in town told the opposition group that if Reverend Hargis could get a man like Mr. Rex saved, he could stay and talk in tongues all he wanted.”³⁴ As the revival progressed, Lee Hargis put out three altars every night, wrote Rex: “one for those seeking to be saved, another for those who wanted to be sanctified, and one for those seeking to be filled with the Holy Spirit.”³⁵

Lucy was a pastor in her own right. She recorded the fact that she pastored the church in McAlester from 1946 to 1949 and often revisited the train depot to remember the story retold above.³⁶ As believers in faith healing, Lucy wrote that she and Lee raised eight children and only called on a doctor one time in all those years. Lucy allowed her husband to do most of the preaching but considered the calling a vocation they both carried out, praying and fasting alongside him, putting her heart into every service, interacting with God. One service in particular stood out in her letter. She recalled riding in the back of a wagon next to a friend.³⁷ They saw two men walking together, and their hearts “grew heavy.” In response, they fasted and prayed about that evening’s brush arbor service. Lucy described Lee’s preaching as “mighty” and “anointed.” In the altar call, a young man was saved. He later claimed that he and five other boys had come that night intending to hang Lee, but when they came to the arbor they could see a “rainbow of fire” come to rest on the top of the arbor, and then they saw a ball of fire shoot through that. They became afraid and decided to stay and listen.³⁸

Lucy also recalled the fact she was given a church at Roff to pastor while her husband “did general evangelistic work.”³⁹ She also pastored at Denton after Lee was elected to be the conference evangelist and stayed until returning to Roff.⁴⁰ She lovingly recorded Lee’s death in her letter, the testimonies of those who were changed by their ministry, and the difficulties she faced, all the while praising God for his faithfulness to her and her family.

Grace Hope Curtis also penned her autobiography, but unlike Lucy’s handwritten letter on file at the IPHC Archives and Re-

PENTECOSTAL WOMEN PREACHERS

search Center, she had it published in 1978 as a short book. On the cover is a photo of the statue in front of the Pioneer Woman Museum in Ponca City, Oklahoma. On the back of her book, it is noted that Grace felt the statue represented her life and work as an evangelist in Oklahoma.⁴¹ Grace wrote that she was born in the fall of 1895 in Indian Territory.⁴² When she was five, her family and two other families decided to leave the “wild Indian Territory” and move to Arkansas, but they returned when she was twelve.⁴³ They moved to Wynnewood, and there Grace got saved at the age of thirteen in a Nazarene brush arbor meeting.⁴⁴ Later she married John K. Hope and had a son, but despite her family’s happiness she became ill. They chose to move to Bartlesville and attend a Holiness church there where she was miraculously healed and where her call to preach was renewed.⁴⁵

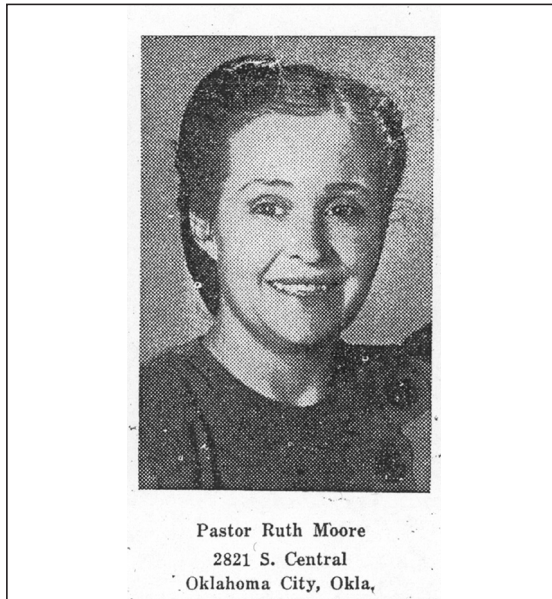
Grace described her spirit baptism in that church as a charismatic, emotional experience, using the term “sanctification” to describe it, although later people might call it the baptism of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶ Of the same doctrinal disposition as their early twentieth-century contemporaries the Hargises, she and her family did not believe in using doctors but relied on divine healing. Later, after having a daughter who was ill, Grace described her struggle with the call to preach again. As she pled for her daughter’s life, she remembered how much the call meant to her. She wrote:

My heart broke before Him as the call to preach His everlasting gospel flooded my memory, when as a child I preached to the trees in Arkansas, and again at the age of fourteen when I openly confessed Him and was baptized, then when a young woman dying with TB [tuberculosis] He instantly healed me and renewed the call! As the memory came rushing over me in a moment’s time, I cried from the depth of my soul, “Yes, Lord.”⁴⁷

She then announced that her daughter was healed. A few days later she received her first invitation to preach. She described it as such: “I went into the pulpit with fear and trembling, but the anointing of the Lord came upon me and I preached with the power of the Holy Ghost, losing sight of people or preachers. The Lord gave me three precious souls that night—so that was the beginning of my ministry.”⁴⁸ She wrote that after that she preached every chance she could get and that her listeners would come in “cars, wagons, buggies, on horseback and on foot” to hear her.⁴⁹

She did not preach in established churches because so many felt women should not be allowed to preach.⁵⁰ Instead, she preached in

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA



Photograph of Ruth Moore found in the Southwestern Pentecostal Holiness News, May 1, 1948 (image courtesy of the IPHC Archives and Research Center).

“schoolhouses, vacant store buildings, city halls, and oftentimes out under the stars in open air meetings.”⁵¹ No hotels and no air conditioning frame her telling of how she traveled and lived in those times. She took a woman with her named Alice Dodd to help, but Alice did not handle the hardships as well as she did. At times, she could not eat the food before her since it was often covered in flies in people’s simple homes, so she would fast and pray instead.⁵²

Grace’s greatest difficulty was that she was so often away from her family.⁵³ She described how she was called to preach to a group of people who lived about seventy miles from her home. At the time, her youngest child was just a baby. As she mournfully told her family goodbye, she wrote that “a dear old Indian preacher patted me on the shoulder and said, ‘Hannah must have been an awful good woman.’” Hannah, whose name means “woman of grace,” was barren until she finally bore one son, Samuel.⁵⁴ His name means “he who is from God.”⁵⁵ In an act of gratitude to God, Hannah gave her son to be raised as a priest saying, “Sir, as sure as you live, I am the woman who stood here beside you [Eli] praying to the Lord. It was this boy that I prayed for and the Lord has granted what I asked.

PENTECOSTAL WOMEN PREACHERS

Now I make him over to the Lord; for his whole life he is lent to the Lord.”⁵⁶ Grace’s sacrifice was mercifully recognized by the Indian preacher who saw quite clearly what the time lost with her baby had cost her heart.

It comforted her, but she said the “battle didn’t end there.” It was winter in Oklahoma, and when the wood fires went out at night, she would wake and “become so homesick for my family” that she would “have to get up in the wee hours and, kneeling on the cold bare floor, cry out to God until He gave me peace.”⁵⁷

The fact that she was a woman preacher meant people often came to hear her preach, and she said that she would “preach like the world was on fire.”⁵⁸ Even so, she claimed that she never had a lot of people saved in her meetings, but one time when she was lamenting that fact, she felt that the Lord reassured her that she was doing exactly as he had called her to do.⁵⁹

Finally, another early Oklahoma woman preacher was Ruth Moore. In a 2004 interview Ruth’s daughter Wanda Baker related that her mother grew up in Texas but was converted to Christianity in Woodville, Oklahoma, when she was seventeen years of age.⁶⁰ She was born on May 20, 1908, and married on September 14, 1929, to Ed Moore.⁶¹

Both Ruth and her husband, Ed, attended the IPHC college in Kingfisher, Oklahoma, called King’s College. It was there that they met and fell in love. However, she began preaching before she met her husband and traveled along with Lee and Lucy Hargis to conduct revivals. She and Ed joined the IPHC Conference in 1931 and lived in Enid, Oklahoma, attending the church pastored by Robert Rex.⁶² Although she was a part of the conference, Ruth had her first child in 1931, and after briefly ministering a church in Drummond, Oklahoma, she put preaching off until 1945 when her children were older, with the exception of leading a few revivals.⁶³

Wanda recalled that her family moved to Oklahoma City in 1943 so her father could work at the Douglas Aircraft plant. There, they attended the First Pentecostal Holiness Church, and her mother was preaching in a revival there the day World War II ended. She described her mother’s career in these words:

In August of 1945, she was asked to pastor the Central Pentecostal Holiness Church in south Oklahoma City. My mother was the minister and my father was the administrator. They were a good team. During this pastorate my father oversaw the construction of a new church building and parsonage and two other houses which were sold to help finance the church construction. He was an excellent builder and

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

helped in the construction of several churches in the Oklahoma City area. They were at the Central Church five years. Also, under their leadership, a church in Moore, Oklahoma, and one in Del City were established.

Their last pastorate was the Trinity Pentecostal Holiness Church in Oklahoma City where they stayed for twenty-five years. After my mother died in 1968, my father continued to pastor until 1984. He said later that he had felt “called” when he was younger, but he felt like he had to make a living for his family. He started preaching when they went to Trinity, but that was not until around ’58 or ’60. My mom did all the preaching up until that time and my dad took care of the business part and the board meetings. It was what my mom wanted because he had expertise in that. It worked well.

Mother and daddy loved the Pentecostal Holiness Church. They loved to go to the general conventions. Daddy was a delegate almost every time. He went as a lay delegate for many years. In 1958, my mother was sent as a delegate to the youth convention in Franklin Springs, Georgia. My husband [and] I went with her. After she arrived, she felt she was too old to be a youth delegate so she asked me to attend the sessions with her.⁶⁴

Ruth had a different preaching style from Dollie or Lucy or Grace. Instead of the passion and outspoken charisma of these others, Ruth had a quiet demeanor and was, in her daughter’s words, “a wonderful listener.”⁶⁵ Her people loved her, and her daughter said that “what she preached, she lived and she believed.”⁶⁶ Central to her mother’s faith was her belief in the doctrine of sanctification, or the belief that you can be completely cleansed of sin. In Ruth Moore’s sermon, “Scriptures on Sanctification,” she described how she and another woman named Sister Pierce went out into the pasture and began to pray beneath a “little shade tree.”⁶⁷ She said, “as we knelt there the very presence of the Lord seemed to settle down around us as I had never felt Him before.”⁶⁸ There, in the open air, Ruth experienced sanctification.

In conclusion, so many of the religious experiences of these early Pentecostal Holiness women preachers took place in the open air of Oklahoma. They were not alone, for they were accompanied by husbands and friends. The women described here were part of a group, working alongside each other, meeting and being influenced by the same charismatic leaders, joining the same denomination that would grow into the present multinational International Pentecostal Holiness Church. Their influence cannot be measured but should be remembered and included in the histories still being written about the American religious experience in Oklahoma today.

PENTECOSTAL WOMEN PREACHERS

ENDNOTES

*Dr. Kristen Dayle Welch is an assistant professor of English at Longwood University in Farmville, Virginia. As a native Oklahoman and life-long member of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church, her dissertation on rhetoric and women preachers led to the recent publication of her first book on Oklahoma women preachers: *Women with the Good News: The Rhetorical Heritage of Pentecostal Holiness Women Preachers* (Cleveland, Tenn: CPT Press, 2010). It is available at www.cptpress.com.

¹ Dan York, *Life Events of Dan and Dollie York* (Oklahoma City, Okla.: Charles Edwin Jones, 2002), 5. Original copy on file at the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC) Archives and Research Center, Bethany, Oklahoma (hereafter cited IPHCARC).

² *Ibid.*, 6.

³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴ The controversy over “bobbed” hair and submission in the church was epitomized in the publication by John R. Rice titled *Bobbed Hair and Bossy Wives* (Wheaton, Ill.: Sword of the Lord, 1941). The book is still in print.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁷ For a fuller explanation, see Vinson Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit: 100 Years of Pentecostal and Charismatic Renewal, 1901-2001* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 2001).

⁸ Romans 8:26; 1 Cor. 12:10, 12:30, 14:2-6, 14:18. “Thank God, I am more gifted in tongues than any of you,” see M. Jack Suggs, Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, James R. Mueller, eds., *The Oxford Study Bible: Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1992), 1439, 1458-60.

⁹ Synan, *The Century of the Holy Spirit*, 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹ York, *Life Events*, 8.

¹² Harold Hunter, *IPHC Historic Timeline, 1867-1911*, http://arc.iphc.org/timeline/pre_1911.html (accessed May 1, 2010).

¹³ Vinson Synan, *The Old-Time Power: A History of the Pentecostal-Holiness Church* (Franklin Springs, Ga.: Advocate Press, 1973), 124-25. Shortly afterward the pastor of the Blue Front Saloon Mission in Oklahoma City, located in the “red-light district,” turned it into a Pentecostal mission, and in 1909 this mission became part of the First Fire-Baptized Church of Oklahoma City and later was the “nucleus of the western work of the Pentecostal Holiness Church.” *Ibid.*, 125.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ York, *Life Events*, 9-10.

¹⁶ Joseph Campbell, *The Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1898-1948* (Franklin Springs, Ga.: Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, 1951), 210-11.

¹⁷ Charles Edwin Jones, “Miss Mallory’s Children: The Oklahoma Orphanage and the Founding of Bethany,” *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 71, no. 4 (Winter 1993-94): 392-421.

¹⁸ Campbell, *Pentecostal Holiness Church*, 212-13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 214.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 213.

THE CHRONICLES OF OKLAHOMA

²¹ C. B. Jernigan, *Pioneer Days of the Holiness Movement in the Southwest* (Kansas City, Mo.: Pentecostal Nazarene Publishing House, 1919; reprint, Oklahoma City, Okla.: Charles Edwin Jones, 2002), 54 (page citation is to the reprint edition).

²² *Ibid.*, 59.

²³ York, *Life Events*, 10.

²⁴ Lucy Hargis, unpublished letter, IPHC Archives, 1.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 21.

³⁰ Synan, *Old Time Power*, 268.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Robert Rex, *I Was Compelled by Love, People Called Me "Mr. Evangelism"* (Franklin Springs, Ga.: Advocate Press, 1982), 25.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁶ Hargis, unpublished letter, 13.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁴¹ Grace Hope Curtis, *Pioneer Woman for Christ: The Life and Ministry of Grace Hope Curtis* (Tulsa, Okla.: Johnnie Hope and Associates, 1978).

⁴² *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 12-13.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁴ 1 Samuel 1:19-28; M. Jack Suggs, Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, James R. Meuller, eds., *The Oxford Study Bible*, 278-79.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 278.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁵⁷ Curtis, *Pioneer Woman for Christ*, 19.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁰ Kristen D. Welch, Appendix D: Wanda Baker, Interview, 2004, in "Oklahoma Preachers, Pioneers, and Pentecostals: An Analysis of the Elements of Collective and Individual Ethos within the Selected Writings of Women Preachers of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2007), 232.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 234.

PENTECOSTAL WOMEN PREACHERS

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 234-35.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 236.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 237.

⁶⁷ Ruth Moore, "Scriptures on Sanctification," in *The Pentecostal Message* (Franklin Springs, Ga.: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1950), 141-44.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 144.