

Pentecostal Holiness
in the Peach State:
A Brief History of LifePoint Ministries,
1898-2020

Tony G. Moon

Foreword

I became acquainted with Dr. Tony Moon in 1981 when he and his wife Gloria invited me to their home for a meal and fellowship. For the past forty years, I have watched Dr. Moon excel in ministry as a pastor, church planter, Emmanuel College Bible and ministry professor, and in conference leadership roles.

Dr. Moon's last book, *From Plowboy to Pentecostal Bishop: The Life of J. H. King*, is a masterpiece biography which details the story of a farm boy who later became one of the greatest leaders in the early history of the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC). In addition, Brother Tony has published a book chapter and numerous academic journal and Christian magazine articles about different aspects of King's theology and ministry. He has read several historical papers about King at Society for Pentecostal Studies conferences. And for well over twenty years, he taught a course on the history of Pentecostalism at Emmanuel. Dr. Moon is more than qualified to write about the history of one of the IPHC's regional conferences, LifePoint Ministries (LPM).

Now, after countless hours of research and writing, Dr. Moon has produced for us this priceless treasure: *Pentecostal Holiness in the Peach State: A Brief History of LifePoint Ministries, 1898-2020*. When I originally proposed this project and discussed it with him, I was concerned simply about the need for preserving the history of the conference. However, this document provides that and much more! He has skillfully crafted a booklet that gives us insight into the evolving patterns that have existed since the conception of LPM more than 120 years ago. From these patterns, we can learn from our mistakes as well as our accomplishments as we continue to grow as a body of believers.

Dr. Moon outlined this booklet mostly in the chronological order of LPM's superintendents. Each conference superintendent and ministry team added great value to the ministry of LPM. I'm thankful for the men and women who blazed the trail that we now follow in this twenty-first century. Although some decisions made in the past may now, with the benefit of hindsight, have proven to be questionable, we cannot rewrite history. But we can do something about the present and the future!

This study has stirred up within me a sense of urgency and aggressiveness in my approach to ministry. It has given me greater insight into the need for church planting and church revitalization in LPM. There is still much to do in reaching the unchurched and the dechurched in Georgia, and LPM is privileged to be a part of this effort.

LifePoint Ministries needs church planters, pastors and church leadership teams to step up and say, "Here I am Lord, send me." As the apostle Paul reminded Timothy to "stir up the gift of God which is in you," may the Holy Spirit fan the flames within us. It is my prayer as you read this history of the conference that you too will sense an urgency to share the gospel with others, to build people and churches, to broaden our borders and to bridge people to Jesus!

Bishop Tim Lamb, LifePoint Ministries Superintendent

Preface

Bishop Tim Lamb and I first discussed the idea of a conference history in July 2019. The conference executive council gave the green light for me to begin research in the fall. While I already had some familiarity with the history of LifePoint Ministries, I thoroughly enjoyed doing this more in-depth study. I am grateful for the privilege. I am also thankful to Bishop Lamb, his executive council members and former superintendents Keith Hearn, Doug Beacham and Bill Jones for their improvement suggestions before the final editing was done. In addition, I appreciate the kind clerical assistance along the way of Tina Anderson and Erica Campbell, Conference Ministry Center Office Manager/Accounting Administrator and Director of Communications and Events, respectively. Thanks also to Dr. Harold Hunter and his staff at the International Pentecostal Holiness Church Archives and Research Center in Bethany, Oklahoma for enabling my access to some Fire-Baptized Holiness Church documents from the pre-1911, pre-merger period.

The plan from the start was a brief treatment—what in published form might be labeled a booklet or pamphlet. During the course of the research, I began to think about the most proficient way to organize the material. To my mind, there were three options. (1) Use a quadrennial approach, dividing up the history according to the four-year denominational General Conference calendar, a system that has been operative since the 1913 General Convention. I decided that it might be a rather monotonous way to structure the material. (2) Sequence the information in the chronological order of the fifteen conference superintendents, three of whom served twice. I thought this approach might make the history more personal and more interesting to most readers. (3) Arrange the booklet according to larger developmental themes discerned during the research and writing process. I eventually chose the more personal second option, with the hope (and prayer!) that during the course of continued study and then writing, I could also see some broader developmental patterns into which to situate the superintendents' work (option three).

For the Pentecostal Holiness period (1911 to the present), the primary research sources used for this study were annual conference minutes and conference board/executive council meeting minutes. Some of the former were inaccessible: 1922, 1929, and 1956. The latter were not printed along with the annual conference minutes until 1959. Unfortunately, for the Fire-Baptized Holiness period (1898-1911), few minutes were discovered for the annual association/convention business and legislative gatherings. On the other hand, thankfully, more information was uncovered about this first phase of the conference's history from other sources. Indeed, once I started writing, I realized that I had more data than I previously thought. For most of the materials utilized, see the "Major Sources Used" section at the end of this document.

For the sake of brevity, the primary focus in this study is on the history of LifePoint Ministries' work of evangelism, congregational expansion, church planting and world missions. The history of auxiliary departments (Sunday School and youth, women's, men's, children's and prayer ministry) is treated much more summarily, although these ministry arms of the conference contributed much over the years to the work of outreach and missions.

I have done the work for this project carefully and prayerfully. May the finished product be more than just an educational resource for those who desire to learn something about the history of LifePoint Ministries. May it also be a catalyst for self-reflection and corporate discussion among leaders about the eternally important work of kingdom-building that Jesus, the Lord and Head of the church, has entrusted to his people: evangelism, congregational revitalization, church planting,

world missions and disciple-making. This history has also been compiled in a spirit of tribute to the superintendents who have faithfully led this conference for over 120 years.

The vast majority of people referenced in this document were and/or are credentialed ministers. Therefore, to avoid unnecessary repetition, the title “Reverend” has not been used. In terms of conference leadership posts other than Superintendent (e.g., Evangelism Director and Director of Christian Education), the rule of thumb has been to refer by name to the first person who occupied each position. Also, for the sake of brevity and time limitations, annual conference business meeting legislation and conference executive council decisions have not always been linked to previous General Conference legislation, denominational leadership decisions and the *International Pentecostal Holiness Church Manual*. Finally, for the most part and because this is a history, I have not used the “doing business as” name for the conference, LifePoint Ministries, until the year 2012 in the narrative since that is when it was first implemented.

Tony G. Moon, Franklin Springs, GA, August 7, 2021

Pentecostal Holiness in the Peach State: A Brief History of LifePoint Ministries, 1898-2020

Tony G. Moon

Introduction

G. F. Taylor was one of the great Pentecostal Holiness pioneers. He wrote editorially in a 1933 issue of the *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* that the Georgia Conference “is the oldest conference in the entire organization, and [the] North Carolina [Conference] is next in rank of age.” A native North Carolinian himself, his likely reasoning was that organizationally the beginning of the Georgia Conference predated both the start of the first Pentecostal Holiness congregation in Goldsboro, North Carolina in November 1898, and the founding of the Pentecostal Holiness denomination itself in Fayetteville, North Carolina in early 1900.

In 1960, “colorful” W. J. Nash, who served the Georgia Conference as Superintendent twice from 1938 to 1948 and from 1957 to 1970, described the conference’s history up to that point in time as “colorful.”

The Fire-Baptized Holiness Phase, 1898-1911

The Georgia Conference/LifePoint Ministries began as a state organization within the fire-baptized holiness movement in the very late nineteenth century. Beginning in Iowa as an offshoot of the Iowa Holiness Association in 1895 or 1896, the fire-baptized holiness movement swept some of the states in the rural Midwest, Southern Plains and South “like a mighty tornado.” Its main leader was the flamboyant, controversial Wesleyan-Holiness evangelist, Benjamin H. Irwin from Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Georgia Fire-Baptized Holiness Association was founded in January 1898 in Royston. This was the organizational beginning of LifePoint Ministries. Richard Baxter Hayes, a native upstate South Carolinian, was the first “Ruling Elder.” He served in that capacity at least into the year 1900, except for part of 1899 when S. J. McElroy from Seneca, South Carolina held the post. Hayes was already making his mark as one of the outstanding pioneer Fire-Baptized Holiness (and later, Pentecostal Holiness) revivalists in upstate South Carolina and northeast Georgia. Thurmond A. Cary from Royston was another early Ruling Elder, serving at least in 1905 according to the Royston church records and *Live Coals*, an early Fire-Baptized Holiness periodical.

In August 1898, in Anderson, South Carolina, all the state and Canadian-provincial associations consolidated to form a new denomination: the Fire-Baptized Holiness Association of America. In 1900, the upstate of South Carolina was added to the Georgia Association and it took the new name, the Georgia and Upper South Carolina Association. Also in 1900, at the Third General Council (denominational) meeting in Sanford, North Carolina, General Councils were put on a two-year schedule. At the 1902 General Council session, the organization was rebranded Fire-Baptized Holiness Church and all the state and Canadian-provincial associations were renamed “conventions.” Other General Council meetings followed in 1904, 1906, 1908 and 1910.

The Fire-Baptized Holiness Association of America/Fire-Baptized Holiness Church was a Wesleyan-Holiness organization that affirmed entire sanctification as a normative, second definite work of divine grace. It also taught a third normative crisis experience in the Christian life called “the baptism of the Holy Ghost.” Indeed, its official statement of faith until 1906 included a fourth normative crisis experience, the “baptism with fire.” In 1908, it formally identified itself with the fledgling Pentecostal movement and adopted the doctrine of unknown tongues as the initial physical evidence of third-blessing Spirit Baptism.

Ruling Elder G. O. Gaines

George Oliver (“Ollie”) Gaines served as the Ruling Elder of the Georgia and Upper South Carolina Convention from 1904 (so wrote J. H. King) until the merger of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church with the Pentecostal Holiness Church in January 1911. In the newly-consolidated denomination, he continued his service as Superintendent of the Georgia-Upper South Carolina Convention and then the Georgia Convention until his death in 1918.

In the words of Superintendent G. H. Lewis in 1951, Gaines was “a man of noble character and deep spirituality.” He was close friends with J. H. King, the legendary General Overseer of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church 1900-1911 and then General Superintendent of the Pentecostal Holiness Church for most of 1917-1946. King respected “Ollie” as a veritable saint. For two main reasons, he also viewed Gaines as one of the outstanding churchmen in the early history of the two movements. One, in 1904 he led the Georgia-Upper South Carolina Convention of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church and in 1917 the entire Pentecostal Holiness denomination to adopt the Methodist Episcopal-style quarterly conference. Two, as the climax to several years of earnest prayer and leadership, in 1918 Gaines spearheaded the purchase of a large swath of former health resort property for the Pentecostal Holiness Church at Franklin Springs. Incidentally, at the 1905 annual session of the Georgia-Upper South Carolina Convention in Toccoa, Gaines was required to give up his insurance before the delegates would “pass his character!”

Association/Convention Size

There is almost no hard statistical data available for the Fire-Baptized Holiness phase of the conference’s history. However, materials have been uncovered from four sources. (1) There are a few generalizations in the writings of Bishop J. H. King. (2) In *Live Coals of Fire* and *Live Coals*, two early Fire-Baptized Holiness papers, there are lists of names of “ordained evangelists,” “evangelists appointed” and “missionaries” in the whole organization along with their places of residence. (3) The Royston church records include minutes for the 1905 annual session of the Georgia-Upper South Carolina Convention and for three 1906 Convention quarterly conferences. (4) The staff at the IPHC Archives and Research Center kindly scanned and email-attached to me a copy of the published minutes for the 1909 annual session of the Convention in Royston.

The information in this paragraph is drawn from what King wrote in 1921 and later. In January 1898, the Georgia Fire-Baptized Holiness Association was founded in Royston with “quite a strong membership.” On the other hand, the number of members was “small” in the organization as a whole just before General Overseer B. H. Irwin’s moral fall and resignation in mid-1900. Following that sad and tragic event, all the state and Canadian-provincial associations in the denomination declined precipitously in terms of the number of congregations, membership and

attendance. Indeed, over the next several years, most of them folded until only two remained: Georgia-Upper South Carolina and Eastern North Carolina-Lower South Carolina. Progress was “slow” until 1906, which King described as a turning point for the organization. Denomination-wide growth accelerated even more after the introduction of Pentecostalism into the movement in very late 1906 and in 1907 and the adoption into its statement of faith in 1908 of the Pentecostal doctrine of third-blessing Spirit Baptism. In a few years, several new conventions were organized: “The old ones began to be enlarged and in a comparatively short time their membership was doubled.” This included the Georgia-Upper South Carolina Convention where a good number of new congregations were planted and overall membership increased substantially.

According to *Live Coals of Fire*, the number of “ordained evangelists” in the Georgia Association increased from eleven in early October 1899 to twenty-one in mid-June 1900. The strong majority resided in Franklin, Elbert and Hart Counties in the northeast sector of the state (the communities of Royston, Carnesville, Canon, Dewey Rose, Montevideo, Hartwell and Airline). Several lived in South Georgia (Lyons, Albany and Willacoochee), although they may have been involved with the Florida Association. By January 1905, according to *Live Coals*, there were twenty-five “ordained evangelists,” nine “evangelists appointed” and fourteen “missionaries” in the Georgia-Upper South Carolina Convention. The strong majority in Georgia resided in the northeastern counties of Franklin, Elbert, Madison and Stephens (the communities of Royston, Canon, Bowersville, Carnesville, Bowman, Dewey Rose, Elberton, Jephtha, Ayersville and Toccoa). One lived near Savannah and one in Atlanta. In South Carolina, their places of residence were mostly in the upstate: Belton, Greenwood, Mountville, Abbeville, Seneca, Laurens and Westminster. Three lived further east in Cowards and Columbia, and may have been members of the Eastern North Carolina-Lower South Carolina Convention. One might reasonably assume that there were Fire-Baptized Holiness congregations in or near many of these localities.

At the December 1905 annual convening of the Georgia-Upper South Carolina Convention, pastors were “appointed” for the following churches. In northeast Georgia, they were Toccoa, Royston, Peniel, Bethel, Harper’s School House (near Dewey Rose), Canon, Commerce and Athens. In upstate South Carolina, they were McNeely, Anderson, Abbeville and Belton. By February 1906, according to *Live Coals*, there were “almost” twenty-five members at Belton. In the minutes for the first quarterly meeting of the convention’s Georgia district in February 1906, the following “bands” were represented by delegates: Peniel, Royston, Canon, Toccoa, Harper’s School House and Bethel. David’s Home and Athens were mentioned, but had no representatives present. (Intriguingly, Christian Life Worship Center in Athens celebrated its centennial anniversary in 2008. Of course, a 1908 start date for the congregation is based on their own records and/or research. It may be that the Athens church referred to in the 1905 and 1906 convention meeting minutes was an earlier, failed start attempt, or that the congregation was not officially “organized” by convention leadership until 1908. Ruhamah church near Carnesville also celebrated its centennial anniversary in 2008.)

1909 appears to have been a breakthrough and banner year for the convention, relatively speaking. In his memoirs, *Yet Speaketh*, Bishop J. H. King wrote that the spiritual atmosphere at its November 1909 annual session in Royston was celebrative. This is confirmed in the minutes of that gathering. Five of its seven general evangelists (including R. B. Hayes) “gave most excellent and gratifying reports of their work.” According to them, “many new fields were entered, ... hundreds of souls had been saved, and vast numbers had been sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost. Many new churches had been planted, and old ones edified in the faith and the truth of the present day.” (The latter phrase probably referred to the recently adopted Pentecostal teaching of

third-blessing, initial-evidence Spirit Baptism.) Ruling Elder Gaines, the pastors, local evangelists and mission workers echoed the same sentiment in their verbal reports about their ministry during the year. There had been “great advancement on the lines of soul-saving, full salvation [entire sanctification] and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in all the churches.” There had been a significant increase in financial support for ministers, foreign missions and “rescue [work].” Also, several congregations had constructed new sanctuaries. An ad hoc “Committee on the Spiritual Condition of the Church,” to which both General Overseer King and Ruling Elder Gaines were appointed by the convention, delivered a raving review of the convention’s expansion during the year:

The prosperity and progress of the ... Convention during 1909 has been so marvelous as to [constitute] an epoch in its history. The number of souls [saved] has far surpassed that of any year in our work. [Those] who have been saved have almost invariably sought and obtained the blessing of full salvation and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. ... The General and Local Evangelists have helped to build up the churches, and have opened up many new fields, organizing new societies, and stimulating the people in erecting new church buildings. ... In spite of the failures and mistakes of the past, our numbers are increasing. The opposition and persecution against us ... only causes us to increase. ... The unity of the Spirit ... is remarkable. There are no divisions among us. We are more solidified in Christ than in all the past.”

Ruling Elder Gaines was granted authority by the delegates to appoint an assistant since “his work was greatly increasing.”

General Overseer King presided over this 1909 annual convention session. Thirty-two clergy and lay delegates attended. The meeting opened with the following convention membership figures: seven general evangelists, eleven local evangelists, eleven mission workers (after two were “expelled”) and nine pastors (after one was “expelled”). At the conclusion of the session, the “official list” of credentialed ministers and lay mission workers numbered forty-eight; at least twenty-three resided in Georgia and seventeen in South Carolina. The “appointments” listed at the end of the minutes included ten general evangelists, fourteen local evangelists, twelve mission workers, but only six pastors to shepherd sixteen congregations. Just one of the six pastors was assigned to oversee a single church. Two of them were assigned two churches each, one was given three congregations and two were appointed to tend to four of them each! Eight churches were located in northeast Georgia: Toccoa, Royston, Harper’s School House, Flatwoods, Farmers’ Academy, Salem, Bethel and Piney Grove. (Flatwoods Chapel was founded in 1909 by two of the convention’s general evangelists, Ralph Taylor and Watson Sorrow.) Eight congregations were located in upstate South Carolina: Anderson, Iva, Sandy Springs, Belton, Clinton, Reedy Grove, Saluda and Abbeville. There seems to be a disconnect between, on the one hand, the glowing reports of ministry success given earlier during the meeting and, on the other hand, the small number of pastors and churches and the apparent tiny size of the congregations. Of course, by definition, at least some of the general evangelists ministered a significant percentage of the time outside the bounds of the Georgia-Upper South Carolina Convention.

One item of great historical importance is the fact that, at the 1909 Georgia-Upper South Carolina Convention session, delegates were elected to represent the convention at the upcoming 1910 Fire-Baptized Holiness Church General Council gathering in Chadbourn, North Carolina. They were mandated to vote in favor of an “organic union” with the Pentecostal Holiness Church.

The “Mother Church”

Superintendent G. H. Lewis suggested in a 1951 *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* article that the Royston congregation “might be called the ‘Mother Church’ of the conference” (the first one officially organized). He mentions the fact that *Live Coals of Fire* was published in its sanctuary basement “for a number of years” (1904 to 1907). (The printing equipment was shipped there from Mercer, Missouri in May 1904. The structure and lot were deeded to the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church in January 1905.) In addition, the Georgia Fire-Baptized Holiness Association was organized in a Royston school building in January 1898, and the Second and Fifth General Councils of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Association of America/Fire-Baptized Holiness Church convened in the community in April 1899 (in a large canvas tent) and August 1904, respectively. While it is difficult to determine exactly and for certain when the Royston Fire-Baptized Holiness Church was founded, it is reasonable to guess that it happened in 1898 or 1899. Based on a statement J. H. King wrote in 1918, it was functional by April 1899. Well over a century later, it merged in 2007 with New Vision Christian Outreach (formerly Goldmine). A Hispanic group, Nuevo Pacto de Amor (New Covenant of Love), began using its facility in 2008.

In 1910 and 1911, there were twenty-two members of the Royston congregation after four had been “excluded” and one transferred to the Canon church. Sometime between June 14 and December 20, 1915, there were thirty-nine names on the membership roll. Nineteen had been dropped for various reasons, including one for “misconduct,” one for being involved in a “secret lodge,” one for using tobacco and one for “backsliding.” In both 1915 and 1917, membership committees of married women were elected “to investigate rumors.”

According to Royston church financial records for the 1910s and 1920s, this congregation was a fairly regular financial supporter of “home missions,” the Toccoa Orphanage, Sunday School and foreign missions. It also sponsored a community tent revival occasionally; for example, in 1905 according to *Live Coals*, and in 1915, 1917, 1922 and 1924 according to its own business meeting minutes.

There is a longstanding tradition that the Beulah congregation in Elbert County, near Hartwell, is the oldest one in the conference. That claim appeared in print at least as far back as the “Editorial Thoughts” of G. F. Taylor in a July 1919 issue of the *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*. It continued at least into the 1920s and 1930s in reports submitted to the paper about goings-on there. This assertion was made in the *Advocate* as recently as September 1985. In fact, the tradition morphed during the early years from Beulah being “the oldest holiness church in Georgia” (the 1910s and 1920s, which surely is incorrect) to being “the oldest church in the Georgia Conference” (the 1930s to the present).

Beulah was organized in September 1896 as a Wesleyan Methodist congregation. It was the product of a tent revival conducted by R. B. Hayes who served as its first pastor. Its membership, according to its own records, was ninety-one members during the first year or so. Soon twelve left to join Baptist and other Methodist congregations, and fourteen were “expelled” for cursing, drinking, card-playing and other violations of the church’s rules. The folks originally met in an “arbor” and adopted the name “Beulah.” According to B. H. Irwin in *Live Coals of Fire*, under the leadership of Pastor A. K. Willis, they had constructed a wooden-frame “meeting house” by January 4, 1900. On that date, Irwin organized the group as a Fire-Baptized Holiness “band” and the members renamed it “Willis Chapel” in honor of Pastor Willis, who had died about a year before. Soon thereafter, according to Irwin, the leadership deeded the sanctuary and property to the Fire-Baptized Holiness Association of America, the first congregation to do so in the young

history of the organization. Beulah church records indicate that a Pentecostal Holiness group organized by tent evangelist A. C. Craft in the fall of 1911 purchased the building and land in 1912.

Unfortunately, the Beulah records omit the Fire-Baptized Holiness stage of its early history. Plus, the congregation is not listed for a pastoral appointment in the minutes of the 1905 and 1909 annual convention sessions. Neither is it mentioned in the minutes of the two 1906 Georgia quarterly conferences found in the Royston church records. (By that time, Ruling Elder Gaines held separate convention quarterly conferences for Georgia and upstate South Carolina.) It appears that, at some point after the organization of a Fire-Baptized Holiness “band” at Beulah in January 1900 (probably by 1905), the congregation either fizzled out or left the Fire-Baptized Holiness denomination (perhaps returning to the Wesleyan Methodist Church) and therefore did not participate in the merger with the Pentecostal Holiness denomination in January 1911. Perhaps the Beulah church property was unused and unoccupied by a congregation when Craft’s Pentecostal Holiness group purchased it in 1912. Some of the remnants of the former Fire-Baptized group may have been part of the Pentecostal Holiness congregation that Craft organized in the autumn of 1911.

All of this data seems to mean that Beulah’s status as a *continuously functioning* Pentecostal Holiness church cannot be traced back any further than the fall of 1911. Its uninterrupted existence as an organized congregation since 1896 and its continuous function since January 1900 as, first, a Fire-Baptized Holiness and then (by way of the 1911 merger) a Pentecostal Holiness church is in serious question. If this is correct, then clearly it cannot lay claim to being the initial organized congregation in the conference. That recognition should probably go instead to the Royston church.

Honorable mention should also be given to the Peniel congregation as among the oldest churches in the conference. It was organized as a Fire-Baptized Holiness “band” near Royston and Franklin Springs in the farming community of Sandy Cross in 1900. It was the eventual spiritual by-product of an extraordinary fire-baptized holiness revival at nearby Pennington Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church in late January-early February 1898. With twenty charter members, they met initially in a home, then in a brush arbor, and moved into their first building in the fall of 1903. The General Overseer of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, J. H. King, preached the dedication sermon and conducted the dedication ceremony for the sanctuary. He declared in his concluding remarks, “I will call this place ‘Peniel,’ for here I have seen God face-to-face.” In the words of local Peniel historian Emma Berthene Carey, who wrote a brief overview of the history of the congregation in 1955, “The name was made official by either common consent or a unanimous vote.”

Incidentally, it was that early 1898 revival at Pennington Chapel Methodist Episcopal Church that launched J. H. King into the fire-baptized holiness movement. At the time, he was the pastor of the two-congregation Simpson Circuit in the Atlanta District of the Georgia Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church. One congregation was located in Banks County, and the other, Trinity, was in Franklin County, not far from Pennington Chapel.

The Pentecostal Holiness Phase: 1911-2020

The 1911 Merger

It was in very late January-very early February 1911 that delegates of the Fire-Baptized Holiness and Pentecostal Holiness Churches convened in southeastern North Carolina at tiny Falcon to form a new, consolidated denomination. As the largest convention in the Fire-Baptized wing, the Georgia-Upper South Carolina Convention was well-represented, led by Ruling Elder G. O. Gaines. The Pentecostal Holiness Church had only one convention at the time, North Carolina, although there were some congregations in South Carolina and Virginia, and it had more lay members. The Fire-Baptized Holiness Church had four conventions and more credentialed preachers.

The merger vote took place on January 31 in the famous octagon tabernacle, home of the Falcon Pentecostal Holiness Church and centerpiece of the popular Falcon Camp Meeting. Of the six Pentecostal Holiness and thirty-two Fire-Baptized delegates, only two voted against the consolidation. Former Fire-Baptized leader S. D. Page was elected as the first General Superintendent. The new body, adopting the name of the smaller group, Pentecostal Holiness Church, began with around three thousand members and six conventions: Eastern North Carolina-Lower South Carolina, Georgia-Upper South Carolina, Florida, Virginia, Oklahoma and Tennessee.

The Early Post-Merger Years, 1911-1923: Growth and Dissension

Superintendent G. O. Gaines: 1911-1918

“Ollie” Gaines had served as administrative head of the Georgia-Upper South Carolina Convention of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church since 1904. Post-merger, at the November 1911 business session, he was elected to continue his service, but with the title of Superintendent. He would be chosen by delegates to lead the convention at the next six annual meetings. (There were yearly officer elections in the convention for many years thereafter.) According to J. H. King, Gaines’ “Methodistic training” (background in the Methodist Episcopal Church South) gave him “good business sense” and made him a proficient organizer and administrator. Superintendent G. H. Lewis wrote the following about him in 1951: “He was greatly beloved by the people whom he served, for he was of a sympathetic and lovable nature. The young ministers, as well as those of advanced years, knew that in Brother Ollie Gaines they had an understanding friend.”

Gaines’ Pentecostal Holiness tenure as Georgia-Upper South Carolina Convention Superintendent began in 1911 with thirty-six congregations to oversee. The number of churches peaked in 1913 at forty-seven and the membership in 1914 at 976. But at the 1915 annual business meeting in Canon, the jurisdiction was divided into two separate ones—a sign of growth and progress. The congregations in upstate South Carolina, around eighteen, formed the new Upper South Carolina Convention. At the same session, the Tabernacle Pentecostal Church, consisting of some ten congregations in the Palmetto State, united with that infant convention. When Gaines died of influenza and congestive heart failure in July 1918, there were only thirty-two churches in the Georgia Convention. Even so, at the 1917 General Convention meeting in Abbeville, South

Carolina, the Georgia Convention, with 737 members according to the General Convention minutes (681 in Georgia Convention records), was the second largest of ten conventions in the young denomination.

Relative to Gaines' administration, there is a lot of interesting information in the annual convention minutes. The strong majority of pastors shepherded multiple congregations, typically from two to four; in the early years, sometimes as many as six or seven. Obviously, most of the churches were quite small and did not have worship gatherings every Sunday. The main method for starting new congregations was tent revivals. Some ministers' "character was passed" by delegate vote. Some applicants were granted ministerial credentials on the basis of conditions such as the following: stop riding trains on Sunday, "preach the full Pentecostal Holiness Gospel that Jesus preached," "quit preaching come-outism" (the habit of simply leaving the congregation, convention or denomination if one was dissatisfied with it), be "more strict" about enforcing "Pentecostal baptism" with the initial evidence of tongues, cease selling soft drinks, write a brother a check for the \$35 you owe him, and settle differences with other convention members privately rather than bringing the matter to the annual business session. Reasons for ministers and mission workers losing their credentials included the following: "neglect of duty," "imprudence and bringing confusion among the brethren," "falsehood," "immoral conduct," "fornication and adultery," "erroneous doctrine," "habitual use of morphine," "circulating false reports" and "irregularity in business." A missionary to China, commissioned at the 1911 annual meeting, was "dropped" and required to return to the United States in 1915 for adopting the Jesus' Name water baptism "theory." In 1917, one preacher was "discontinued" because he "had joined the so-called Church of God." All these persons were mentioned by name in the minutes along with the "charges" levelled against them. Unlike today, there was evidently little concern for maintaining confidentiality as much as possible. All this business was conducted openly on the convention floor.

The earliest form of judicial process during the Pentecostal Holiness phase of the convention's history was the election of a committee in 1911 "to investigate and settle all rumors, if possible." Following Fire-Baptized Holiness precedent, the term 'Judiciary Committee' was adopted in 1913. Other "firsts" in the history of the convention include the following. A convention Missionary Board was elected in 1912, probably among the earliest in the denomination after the 1911 merger. Its job was to examine and certify missionary applicants and to receive and distribute donated monies to the laborers on the field. Some missionaries who were financially supported by convention churches and members during Gaines' administration were the Amos Bradleys (Guatemala, Central America), the R. E. Masseys (India), Della Gaines (India) and Olive Maw (South China). A Committee on Books and Periodicals was elected at the 1915 annual session; in 1917, it was renamed the Committee on Publications. Starting in 1915, the annual convention meeting minutes contained statistics about the number of people who had been saved, sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit in convention churches during the previous year. A congregational "Statistical Report" had been included in the annual convention minutes since 1911, giving numbers for a variety of items; for example, water baptisms and how many members had been "excluded" or "expelled" and "restored." But this inclusion of numerical figures for the three "crisis" Christian spiritual experiences was new and would continue for many decades into the future through 1993. A Committee on Sunday School was first elected in 1916, and Committees on Education and Public Morals in 1917.

During Gaines' tenure, ministers transferred into the convention from various organizations and independent congregations: the Tabernacle Presbyterian, Wesleyan Methodist, Missionary

Baptist, Fire-Baptized Holiness and Free-Will Baptist Churches, as well as the Fire-Baptized Church of God, Middle Georgia Holiness Association and Methodist Episcopal Church South. By 1914, clergy were classified as convention officers, pastors, general evangelists, local evangelists and mission workers. Beginning that year, no one could be ordained without having experienced tongues-attested Spirit baptism. Starting in 1915, no one could be licensed to preach without having a personal testimony of entire sanctification.

At the 1914 annual business session, it was mandated that the convention's churches be arranged into Methodist-style "circuits." Those delegates also legislated that pastors would no longer be "called" by congregations, but instead appointed by an annual convention Stationing Committee. Some of the new congregations "received" 1911-1918 were Newnan, Mountain Gap, Barnesville and LaGrange. Since then, sadly, many Pentecostal Holiness congregations in Georgia eventually fizzled out, changed denominations or conventions/conferences, or went independent: Ross Chapel, Welcome, Barnesville, Jackson, Braswell, Maysville, McRae, Rutledge, New Church, Mt. Zion (one mile east of Danielsville), Gray Hill, Harper, Duncan Chapel, Salem, Crawford, Social Circle, Oak Grove, Crossroads, Bethel, Nicholson, Canon, Midway, Augusta, Leverett, Dewey Rose, Lavonia, High Shoals, Sorrow's Chapel, Jersey, Stelth's Chapel, Mt. Hermon, Emmanuel (near Swainsboro), Colbert, Thurmack and Dunlap.

While Gaines was the executive leader of the convention, several traditions were begun which endured for many decades; indeed, one continues today. The delegates at the 1916 annual session recommended that every church organize a "Sabbath School" and adopt for it or the weekly prayer meeting the "penny mission band." Each member would pledge to contribute one penny or more per week to world missions. In 1917, the delegates suggested that an annual Sunday School promotion and training event be conducted for the convention. In 1917 and 1918, acknowledging that the convention had been "somewhat negligent along the line of missions," every congregation was encouraged to form a "missionary society" or "prayer circle" for the purpose of educating about, promoting and raising funds for foreign missions. (By the way, the 1917 General Convention of the Pentecostal Holiness Church changed the jurisdictional and legislative terminology from "convention" to "conference.")

On March 1, 1918, a longstanding prayer and dream of Superintendent Gaines was fulfilled when century-old, former health resort property at Franklin Springs was purchased for his beloved denomination. The tract consisted of eighty-seven acres and over twenty structures. It would soon become the functional headquarters of the Pentecostal Holiness denomination and home to the yearly Franklin Springs Camp Meeting, Franklin Springs Institute (since 1939, Emmanuel College), Franklin Springs Orphanage, the Pentecostal Holiness Church Publishing House and the Franklin Springs Pentecostal Holiness Church.

Superintendent Hugh Bowling: 1918-1920

When G. O. Gaines passed away in July 1918, he was succeeded by Assistant Superintendent Hugh Bowling, who was a younger admirer of Brother Gaines. In the words of Superintendent G. H. Lewis in 1951, Bowling "served the conference well." Along with Gaines, he was a member of the Pentecostal Benevolent Association which obtained the loan to buy the Franklin Springs property for the denomination in March 1918. Once he became Superintendent, Bowling vigorously led the conference to do its part in liquidating the indebtedness of the real estate and in supporting the Pentecostal Holiness Church's new school there, Franklin Springs Institute, which opened its doors on January 1, 1919. Indeed, at the November 1919 annual convening of the

conference, the Institute was strongly endorsed by the delegates in terms of calls for both financial support and student recruitment from the conference's congregations. This official act has been repeated at virtually every conference business session up until the present.

Under Bowling's leadership, there was an evangelism and church planting thrust, including the following attempts to start new congregations: Mt. Olive, Mt. Top, Garretts Mission, Oakwood Mission, Monroe, Swords Mission, Diamond Hill, Columbia Mission and Metersville Mission. (A distinction was drawn between "churches" and "missions." The latter had not yet been officially "organized" by the Superintendent into "churches" with the minimum number of charter members required by the denominational polity manual.) At the 1919 conference session, all general and local evangelists were mandated to conduct at least two services per conference year in "new fields." Also, the Alabama Conference, consisting of just a handful of congregations (including "the Atlanta church") and existing since 1915, was incorporated into the Georgia Conference. In 1919, there were thirty-one congregations in all and three administrative districts: Franklin Springs, Athens and Griffin. Most of the churches had both senior and junior pastors with monthly "appointments."

The General Superintendent of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, J. H. King, had a special concern that the conference establish a robust work in Atlanta. He wrote in the Jan. 15, 1920 issue of the *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*: "[Since] Atlanta [is] ... the capital city of Georgia and one of the largest [cities] in the South, we shall put forth every effort to build up and maintain a strong church in this great city." The congregation came into the denomination "heavily in debt" on its property. King pleaded for Georgia Conference churches to contribute financially to help it survive after a major membership "secession."

A voluntary "provident fund" was mandated at the 1918 annual meeting. Its purpose was to provide monetary assistance to the conference's disabled, retired and widowed ministers. This was a modest but important beginning. A century of legislative efforts to improve, expand and fine-tune the health insurance, life insurance and retirement program for clergy would ensue on both the conference and denominational levels.

Alas, there were two splits in the conference during the Bowling administration. The first happened in August 1918 when some ministers and other members defected to re-form the former Fire-Baptized Holiness Church. The "mother church" was the Nicholson congregation, and the momentarily contentious issue was necktie wearing! They incorporated as the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church. They began with two other congregations, one in Royston and one in Lavonia.

The second division was by far the most traumatic. Dubbed by Pentecostal Holiness historians as "the remedy controversy," it erupted at least as early as 1919. The issue was divine healing, more specifically whether saved, sanctified, Spirit-baptized and tongues-talking believers should use medicine and seek the services of physicians. Superintendent Hugh Bowling and Assistant Superintendent Watson Sorrow emerged as the ringleaders of the pro-medical aid faction. The upshot was that over half of the churches broke away in 1920-1921 and formed the Congregational Holiness Church in January of 1921. The number of congregations in the Georgia Conference fell from thirty-one in 1919 to sixteen in 1920 and thirteen in 1921. Before this extremely discouraging development, the Georgia Conference was one of the largest ones in the denomination. J. B. Todd was appointed by the conference board in August 1920 to finish Bowling's 1919-1920 term as Superintendent.

The negative impact of the divine healing schism was long-term. Superintendent G. F. Taylor editorialized in 1932: “No other conference within this organization perhaps has suffered so much from confusion, opposition and misrepresentation as has the Georgia Conference. If it had not been for the firm foundations laid by the early fathers and officials . . . , it would have been completely destroyed before now.” He wrote in 1933: “Once upon a time, Georgia was one of the strongest conferences within [the] organization, but one division after another has weakened us down until we find our place among the smallest of all the conferences.” Superintendent G. H. Lewis wrote in 1951: “The destruction wrought in the . . . Georgia Conference [by the remedy controversy] was tragic indeed. . . . For years [thereafter], progress was hardly perceptible; indeed, some years there was a retrogression.” The conference did not attain to or surpass the 1919 figure of thirty-one churches again until 1945, 1950 and 1951.

On a positive note, in late 1920 J. M. (“Jack”) and Olivia Jackson Turner sailed for India. They were the first Pentecostal Holiness career missionaries to serve in the Indian subcontinent. Jack had joined the Georgia Conference in 1913. The Turners ministered in India 1921-1927 and 1931-1941; Jack returned alone 1945-1949. Highly-revered Brother Turner has been christened “the father of the Pentecostal Holiness Church in India.”

Superintendent W. H. McCurley: 1920-1923

Brother McCurley, a pastor and evangelist in the conference, began his first tenure as Superintendent in the immediate wake of the divine healing fight. There were sixteen congregations and 545 members. At the end of his first administration, there were eighteen churches and 497 members. The new congregations established were Madison Springs and Atlanta (apparently a restart). The conference was reorganized into just two districts: Franklin Springs and Alabama. The latter included the churches in Anniston and Birmingham, Alabama, and Atlanta, Monroe, West Griffin, East Griffin and Mt. Gap. In addition to the J. M. Turners in India, the conference also helped support the Amos Bradleys in Guatemala.

At the 1921 annual meeting, an enhanced sense of the need for Christian education was exemplified in a recommendation that conference-level “Sunday School Rally Days” be conducted by the Superintendent. Interestingly, in the aftermath of World War I which claimed the lives of tens of thousands of American soldiers, the following pacifist resolution was rejected twice: “We . . . declare ourselves opposed to war and cannot conscientiously take up arms against our fellowmen.”

A South Georgia Conference was founded in 1922, consisting of a few congregations in southern Georgia and northern Florida. It was disbanded in 1925 and the churches returned to their original conferences.

The Recovery Mode: 1923-1982

In terms of the number of congregations, the Georgia Conference was “in recovery,” so to speak, for almost eight decades following its 1913 peak of forty-seven churches, its 1915 division into two separate conferences and its fragmentation in 1918-1921 by the fanatical necktie and divine healing strife. It was 1992, during John Ingham’s administration, before it temporarily (for some twenty-two years) reached and surpassed forty-seven congregations again.

Superintendent F. M. Britton: 1923-1924

When Francis Marion Britton was elected as Superintendent of the conference in November 1923, he was a popular, widely-traveled evangelist, sometimes pastor, first in the Fire-Baptized Holiness and then the Pentecostal Holiness Churches. A native South Carolinian and close friends with General Superintendent J. H. King, he was a staunch enforcer of denominational doctrine and rules. The late Bishop B. E. Underwood once described Britton as “the high sheriff of the [early] Pentecostal Holiness Church.” In fact, Britton was the minister who “preferred charges” against Bowling and Sorrow in 1920. His success in revivalism may have been viewed as good reason to believe that he could lead the conference in beginning a recovery trajectory from the terrible blow of the remedy controversy a few years earlier.

Under Britton’s single year of leadership, the number of congregations in the conference increased from eighteen to twenty-six. Three of the new churches were in Gainesville, Tallapoosa and somewhere in South Alabama. Membership increased from 497 to 602. Relatively speaking, this was notable progress for only one year.

Superintendent J. B. Todd: 1924-1925

Superintendent John Todd was a native Alabamian. Before his first stint as Conference Superintendent, his work and ministry experience was varied: a pastor and school teacher in Mississippi, a principal and faculty member at Franklin Springs Institute and a pastor in the Georgia Conference. At least three new congregations were established during his year of service: Ebenezer and Goldmine in Georgia and Sylacauga in Alabama.

At the 1924 annual business session, the Alabama Conference was reorganized with four churches: Anniston, Birmingham, Sylacauga and Tallapoosa. There was some administrative redistricting of the conference too: Atlanta, Mt. Zion and Beulah. Also, the delegation thought progressively about the evangelism and Christian training of young people: it recommended to the 1925 General Conference the founding of a youth organization for the denomination. Another legislative act at the 1924 session was the adoption, for the first time, of a tithing requirement for ministers and local church members.

In 1924, another great Pentecostal Holiness missionary pioneer was dispatched whose background was within the bounds of the Georgia Conference. Dallas D. Freeman was born and raised near Franklin Springs. He was saved at the first Franklin Springs Camp Meeting in 1918. He and his wife Lula Mae spent almost forty years ministering in Africa.

Superintendent J. H. Jordan: 1925-1927

James Hamilton (“Jim”) Jordan was a member of a popular three-preacher “evangelistic party” in the conference at the time. They were known as “the Jordan band.” Residing in the Franklin Springs area, the other two members were C. A. (“Charlie”) Jordan, Sr. and his wife “Sister Addie.” In 1951, Superintendent G. H. Lewis described them this way: “The Jordans ... were among those who stuck to the old-line type of holiness preaching, and did much damage to the strongholds of Satan.”

Several new churches were organized during Jim Jordan’s two-year superintendence, including Zion’s Chapel, Swainsboro and Dunn’s Chapel in Midville. Districts were rearranged again into only two: Atlanta and Franklin Springs.

At the 1926 annual conference, a few progressive steps were taken which reflected two important realizations. One, Sunday School is both an educational and *evangelistic* arm of the church. So, for the first time, the delegates elected a conference Sunday School Evangelist: L. A. Busha. Additionally, a Sunday School Convention was recommended in each district quarterly. Two, there must be an intentional, concentrated focus on evangelizing and discipling the *youth* of the church. So, following up on the adoption of a denominational Pentecostal Young People's Society (PYPS) program at the 1925 General Conference, the delegates elected the conference's first PYPS President: Jesse Lee Jordan, one of the sons of Charlie and Addie.

By 1925 and 1926, General Superintendent J. H. King voiced some optimism that the Georgia Conference was beginning to rebound and "advance" after the devastating split of 1920-1921.

Superintendent W. H. McCurley: 1927-1929

During Brother McCurley's second administration, at least three new congregations were begun: Pine Grove near Swainsboro, Elberton Mission and one in South Georgia. The districts were rearranged again: Franklin Springs, Atlanta and Swainsboro.

At the 1927 annual meeting of the conference, Sunday School as a potential church planting method was contemplated. A resolution was adopted for pastors and Sunday School superintendents to explore the possibility of conducting Sunday Schools in school facilities and other locations in their communities in order to "open doors for our Pentecostal truths." There was also evidence of heightened sensitivity about the problem of racism and other social-ethical issues. Every member of the conference was asked directly by the Chair, General Superintendent King, whether they were a member of an "oath-bound secret society." Undoubtedly, a major purpose of this action was to ferret out and confront Ku Klux Klan members. Showing increasing awareness of the need for ministerial education, this legislative meeting also requested Franklin Springs Institute to develop a correspondence course for clergy and other church workers.

There was an ecumenical tone to the 1928 business session of the conference. With a vision toward expansion of the conference in the number of both congregations and members, the delegates urged the conference board to pursue reconciliation and/or organizational union efforts with the leaders of the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, the Congregational Holiness Church and the Holiness Baptist Church in the southern part of the state.

Superintendent J. B. Todd: 1929-1931

John Todd's second administration was characterized by a continued emphasis on developing further the educational, evangelistic, youth and foreign missions ministries of the conference. The 1930 annual meeting produced several legislative measures intended to accomplish this. It was mandated that two Sunday School Rally Days be conducted each year by the Conference Sunday School Evangelist. Relative to the PYPS, the goal was adopted to organize a group in every congregation "where ... at all possible," and minimally an annual conference-level PYPS event was required. Mrs. James Powers was designated as a "children's evangelist." Every church was urged to develop a missions society that "functions monthly." To strengthen the financial base for the work of the church at the conference and denominational level, congregations for the first time were required to tithe into the conference treasury and the conference into the denominational treasury. This was early during the period of the Great Depression in United States history, which

began in late October of 1929. Ten percent of conference funds were to be used for “home mission work” (evangelism and church planting activity within the bounds of the conference).

Two new congregations were established in 1931: St. Paul near Barnesville (later renamed Aldora) and Jordan’s Chapel (later renamed Empire). After his second superintendence, Brother Todd pastored the congregation at Monroe, which in his honor was eventually and for many years called Todd Memorial.

Superintendent G. F. Taylor: 1931-1934

George Floyd Taylor moved his family to Franklin Springs during the closing days of 1918 from Falcon, North Carolina. His main purpose was to establish a denominational publishing house where its periodical, the *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*, could be printed along with his Sunday School literature. A second purpose was to start a school for the organization, Franklin Springs Institute. The school began on January 1, 1919 with Taylor as founding Superintendent. The Pentecostal Holiness Church Publishing House was dedicated during the second Franklin Springs Camp Meeting in August of that year. For these and many other reasons, Taylor ranks as one of the outstanding pioneer leaders in the early Pentecostal Holiness Church.

When Taylor, to his “astonishment,” was elected as the Georgia Conference Superintendent at the November 1931 annual meeting, he was also editor of the *Advocate*. In editorials and other articles, he gave numerous reports and updates about goings-on in the conference. In some respects, they contain by far the most detailed information available about the conference during his three years of administrative oversight.

After his election in 1931, Taylor wrote in the *Advocate*: “The Georgia Conference has had her share of strife in the past, resulting in most serious divisions, but for the present she is largely at peace.” In tribute to his predecessor superintendents, he penned: “All these men have filled the place with credit. I know nothing against their work as superintendents. ... They all worked faithfully, and did all in their power to build up the kingdom of God in Georgia.” The new Superintendent also spoke highly of “the Jordan band,” the popular “evangelistic party” in the conference. Taylor concluded the editorial with two requests of all the ministers in the conference. One, he asked that they “unite with [him] in a tremendous effort to open new fields and organize new churches.” Two, he urged that they all adopt with him the following “motto” for the ensuing year: “‘Speak evil of no man’ (Titus 3:2).”

During Taylor’s administration, some forward-looking pieces of legislation were approved at the annual conference sessions. Sunday School and PYPS improvement efforts included the following: regular administrative, lesson-study and teacher-training meetings for Sunday School officers and teachers at the local level, annual conference conventions for both Sunday School and PYPS and one service targeting youth in each quarterly conference. In terms of Taylor’s vision for “opening new fields and organizing new churches,” several constructive resolutions were passed. One, every preacher was required to minister in at least one service each conference year in “new territory.” Two, a “conference gospel tent” was to be secured as soon as possible. (A “Tent Fund” was set up to raise the money for its purchase.) Three, social ministry was encouraged as an evangelism strategy: “ministering to the physical needs of people.” Four, in 1934, a full-time conference superintendent was first mandated. Five, also in 1934, all licensed ministers were required to preach at least twenty-five times per conference year; all ordained ministers, forty times. Six, in 1934, for the first time a Conference Evangelist was elected: C. A. Jordan, Jr. His

job was “to have charge of the tent, so that it shall be kept busy, ... mostly in new fields.” The requirements about where and how much ministers preached may seem somewhat unrealistic today, since most clerics minister where they are invited to do so! However, the mindset of some of our church forebears was that of Jesus: “Go out to the roads and country lanes ...” (Luke 14:23, NIV).

There was other conference legislation during Taylor’s superintendence that was supplementary to the conference’s growth and expansion ambitions. “Young ministers” were recommended to take the denominational correspondence study course for clergy. And it was suggested that training for ministers and “Christian workers” be provided during the annual Franklin Springs Camp Meeting.

Taylor indicated in the *Advocate* that, during the 1932 conference year, the conference spent seventeen percent of its budget on evangelism (“home missions”) and nine percent on foreign missions. That was number two and number three among all the conferences in the denomination, respectively.

Despite these legislative and budgetary measures, the number of congregations in the conference did not increase during Taylor’s service as Superintendent. According to conference records, when Taylor began, there were nineteen churches and 433 members. When he finished his third year, there were sixteen churches and 492 members. (Sometimes there are discrepancies between, on the one hand, conference records, and on the other hand, statistics reported by Taylor in the *Advocate* from his own count and from denominational records.)

The Atlanta congregation disbanded in 1933. It was hoped that, during the next summer, the conference board could dispatch a tent evangelist to “establish a church on a better basis.” About the Atlanta church situation, Taylor declared that year: “A great work is awaiting us in Atlanta, when ... the proper person is there as a pastor.”

In June 1933, Taylor addressed “the reverse of circumstances” for Franklin Springs Institute and its psychological, emotional and spiritual impact on the Georgia Conference. The upper hotel dormitory had burned down in 1926. The lower hotel dorm had been destroyed by fire in 1928. Neither was covered by property insurance. Due to the Great Depression and resulting low enrollment and finances, the school had been forced to close its doors in 1931. Consequently, wrote Taylor, many ministers and other church members in the conference suffered from “disappointment, ... despair [and] depression” as far as the church school at Franklin Springs was concerned. Their spirits would be lifted, however, when the Institute reopened in the fall of 1933.

At the 1933 and 1934 annual conference sessions, some current social-ethical issues were addressed. This evidenced a greater awareness in the conference of the importance of such concerns for the church. Frightened by the rise to political prominence of Adolf Hitler in Germany, a prayer was offered “for the protection of our nation and ... the world from war.” A Temperance Committee called for continued vigilance against “the liquor traffic.” This was in anticipation of the soon repeal of Prohibition in December 1934. Members of labor unions were prohibited from participating in picketing, parading and “flying squadrons!”

G. F. Taylor died on Nov. 16, 1934, just days after the annual conference business meeting. He was only fifty-three years of age.

Superintendent C. A. Jordan, Jr.: 1934-1938

The parents of C. A. Jordan, Jr. were revivalists C. A. (“Charlie”), Sr. and Addie Jordan, of “Jordan band” fame in the conference. So unsurprisingly, the legislative trend continued during C. A. Jordan, Jr.’s administration toward strengthening the conference’s potential for outreach and new church development. It was probably the most robust effort to date.

Ordained ministers were mandated to preach at least fifty times per conference year (not just forty!). Pastors were exhorted to hold at least two revivals in their churches annually and to “enter open doors of the outlying sections of their ... fields of labor.” Evangelists were urged to start new congregations through “revival campaigns,” concentrating especially on “new fields of labor.” There was an emphasis on reaching “the neglected classes,” including the sick and needy. Conducting Sunday Schools “in new fields” was again promoted as an effective church planting tool. Every Sunday School was encouraged to organize at least one more in “adjoining territory.” Prayer meetings were also described as a potentially effective way to dig out new churches. A conference-wide, PYPS-sponsored “Youth Evangelistic Campaign” was proposed “to reach the youth of Georgia with a full gospel” and to get them “into our church.” Recognizing the necessity of careful and prayerful planning and coordination, the conference board was required to “outline an evangelistic program” for each upcoming conference year. It was recommended that a district evangelist be named for each district who would implement “a specific program of evangelism” for his or her district. The Pentecostal Evangelistic Association, a conference organization, was launched in 1938 with W. J. Nash as Manager and Conference Evangelist. Ten percent of the conference budget was allocated for outreach.

The fruit of this flurry of impressive legislative activity, however, appears to have been fairly meager. During Jordan’s four-year tenure as Superintendent, new congregations were started, perhaps including Lavonia Mission and St. Mark. But the total number of churches in the conference increased by only four.

In 1936, the Franklin Springs Camp Meeting, which in its early years was promoted as an annual event for the whole denomination, was designated as a Georgia Conference venue. That same year, the Mountain Gap Camp Meeting was officially designated as the annual camp meeting for the conference’s Barnesville District. It has been a conference-sponsored event ever since. The Mountain Gap Camp Meeting Association was formed the same year, with a governing board of elected officers and the conference superintendent serving as *ex officio* chair. This yearly camp meeting tradition, launched in August 1900 by Vega Holiness Church, took place through 1918 in a crudely constructed brush arbor. Its first wood-framed, open-air “tabernacle” structure was built in 1919, which was dismantled and replaced in 1950. The current octagonal-shaped, cedar-log tabernacle was constructed in 1977. Vega Holiness Church, an independent Wesleyan congregation, was founded in 1898. As late as 1908 a member congregation of the Middle Georgia Holiness Association, it joined the conference in August 1913 as the Mt. Gap Pentecostal Holiness Church.

On the ministerial education front, in 1937, clergy instruction in “the great doctrines of our church” was authorized during the Saturday afternoon session of each quarterly district conference. In 1938, district PYPS Presidents and one PYPS “rally” in each district per conference year were recommended.

The conference had not lost its traditional holiness and fundamentalist-type social-ethical conscience. At the 1935 and 1936 annual meetings, it made strong statements in opposition to the

repeal of Prohibition, the spread and influence of Communism, pornography, secular dancing, public swimming, theater attendance, “Sabbath” desecration and “the tobacco question.”

Superintendent W. J. Nash: 1938-48

Prior to Walter Jones Nash’s first stretch as Georgia Conference Superintendent, he had served as a pastor, a public school principal and a member of the English faculty at Franklin Springs Institute. And his reputation as a fiery evangelist and effective revivalist was solid by then.

During his initial administration, Brother Nash oversaw one of the biggest growth spurts in the history of the conference since the 1920-1921 Congregational Holiness schism. It appears that the following new church plants were at least attempted: Adell, Swainsboro, Cochran Mission, Arnco, Digsby, Goldmine, Macon Mission, Senoia, Alamo, Bridgeboro, LaGrange, Warner Robins, Dunson Mission, Gainesville, Bowman Mission, Rodgers Mill Mission, Crossroads Mission, Raymond and Metter Mission. (Some of these were probably restart projects.) The Newnan congregation transferred in from the Alabama Conference in 1939. The total number of churches in the conference increased from twenty to twenty-eight. The membership increased from 475 to 807. In 1945, for the first time since 1919 (shortly before the Congregational Holiness split), the number of congregations reached and eclipsed thirty-one—there were thirty-two. In 1946, for the first time since 1919, membership reached and exceeded 690—it was 760. Districts were rearranged twice; in 1939: Franklin Springs, Barnesville and Swainsboro; in 1944: Franklin Springs, Atlanta and Swainsboro.

Obviously, there was some major evangelism and new church planting legislation during Nash’s superintendence. The evangelistic radio program on Athens station WGAU, sponsored by the Pentecostal Evangelistic Association (renamed the Conference Evangelistic Association in 1941), was continued, although in 1942 the Franklin Springs District was asked to underwrite it. A Conference Missionary Evangelist was elected in 1941: J. M. Turner. Pastors were encouraged to organize “evangelistic groups” in their churches to do soul-winning in their neighborhoods and communities. In 1941, the conference board was urged to use “the superintendent’s tent” to “begin a concentrated program” of building a new congregation in “a strategic location” in the state, preferably Atlanta. It was emphasized that a major responsibility of the superintendent was “the establishment of churches in new territories.” The conference evangelist was directed to focus mostly during the 1943-1944 conference year on “evangelistic campaigns in the weaker churches.” He was directed at the 1944 session to start a new church in “a strategic city” where there was no Pentecostal Holiness presence. In 1946, to enable more attention being given to “evangelistic campaigns” and new church development, a conference evangelism committee was elected separate from the conference board. Each district was to have members on that committee and tents were to be purchased for use in their areas. The tents, it was “urged,” were to be “in constant use in seasonable weather,” with “buildings” selected for use during the cold-weather seasons. The need for child, Jewish and personal evangelism was stressed as essential aspects of the campaigns. Each congregation was asked to host at least one revival each quarter. During most of Nash’s years as Superintendent, a designated percentage of the conference budget was earmarked for evangelism and new church starts.

The 1941 General Conference of the Pentecostal Holiness Church amended the name of the PYPS to PHYS: the Pentecostal Holiness Youth’s Society. The 1948 Georgia Conference PHYS/Sunday School Convention adopted a very aggressive evangelistic agenda for its children and teenagers. On the local level, it called for quarterly “home missionary services,” a weekly

“evangelistic service” in the community and a youth revival annually. For the annual conference camp meeting, it called for alternate youth-oriented services in the evening and a conference youth rally on the last day. Of course, legislative vision-casting is one thing and actual implementation is another! It is difficult to say to what extent these directives were carried out.

The Georgia Conference News publication was initiated in 1939. It began to be issued each quarter the next year; in 1945, monthly. This official conference paper continued for many decades until about 2008. By the 1940s, the conference had a long history of recognizing the importance of Sunday School. It had installed its first Sunday School Committee for annual business deliberations way back in 1916, and its first Sunday School Evangelist in 1926, but in 1940 it elected its first Sunday School President: D. C. Wilson. In 1944, it elected its first Woman’s Auxiliary “Chairman:” Daisy Jones. These events were significant since denomination-wide Sunday School and Woman’s Auxiliary programs were not launched until the 1945 General Conference. At that year’s annual conference session, Mrs. W. J. Nash was selected as its first Woman’s Auxiliary President and a Woman’s Auxiliary chapter was envisioned for every congregation. (The name was later changed to Women’s Auxiliary and in 1985 to Women’s Ministries.) At the conference PHYS/Sunday School Convention that year, the PHYS President also received the title of Director of Christian Education: Mrs. J. P. Davis. Her portfolio included both PHYS and Sunday School. The title was shortened to Director of Christian Education in 1948. In 1947, a conference Christian Education Board was created and local “Junior Auxiliaries” (for girls) were recommended. Vacation Bible School was first endorsed at an annual conference business session in 1943.

The Second World War raged 1939-1945. Several Georgia Conference developments were directly related. Just months before the United States entered the conflict, the 1941 annual conference delegation authorized that letters be mailed to the Georgia members of the United States Senate, the U.S. Secretary of War and the Chair of the U.S. House Military Affairs Committee. They contained requests that no alcohol be sold on or near U.S. military bases in the state and that no “questionable places of amusement” be located nearby. They also included the following statement: “As Christian citizens, we pledge anew our allegiance to our church, the American flag and to our American institutions [insofar as it is] not inconsistent with our convictions.” The 1942 delegates “urged” cooperation with federal government rationing policies in order to conserve “war materials and food.” They described it as “our patriotic duty” since “our boys are dying for our religious freedom.” In 1943, the conference endorsed the Pentecostal Holiness Church’s Service Men’s Commission. This was the earliest form of military chaplaincy in the denomination. A Georgia Conference minister was appointed as the first denominational National Service Pastor: Samuel J. Todd. In 1945, he briefly held the post of Superintendent of General Evangelism for the whole organization.

It was evident that the Georgia Conference was beginning to break away from its traditional sectarian mindset when in 1946 the conference board authorized Superintendent Nash to attend the convention of the National Association of Evangelicals. The earliest formation of this Protestant evangelical, multid denominational, Christian organization occurred in 1943, and the Pentecostal Holiness Church had joined it as a charter member in 1945. American evangelicalism was changing. Even some Pentecostal denominations began working with other conservative Protestant Christian bodies in the evangelistic, missionary, discipleship, humanitarian and social/political action work of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. On another ecumenical note, the 1946 conference business meeting delegates gave their “full approval” to the

reconsolidation “efforts” going on between the leadership of the Pentecostal Holiness and Congregational Holiness Churches. It was false hope, however; it didn’t happen.

There are a few more interesting and historic developments during the first Nash administration. The 1946 Woman’s Auxiliary Convention first projected as ideal “a junior [children’s] church and nursery” during every congregation’s Sunday morning services. An annual conference ministers’ “meeting” for fellowship, encouragement and spiritual renewal was first proposed in 1947. (They would later be termed “ministers’ retreats.”) The rule that every congregation observe the Lord’s Supper at least quarterly was generated in 1948. At the conference business session that same year, annual camp meetings were recommended for every district and yearly pastoral preference votes were required for all congregations!

Superintendent G. H. Lewis: 1948-1957

It was during the superintendence of Glen H. Lewis that the Georgia Conference *permanently* attained to the number of churches it had before the 1920-1921 Congregational Holiness split, namely, thirty-one. That took place in 1950. Before that devastating spat, the highest number of churches in the conference was forty-seven in 1913. Following the administrative division into two separate conferences in 1915, there were thirty-four. In 1918, the year before the eruption of the remedy controversy, there were thirty-two. In 1919 when the earliest rumblings of the spat began, there were thirty-one. In 1920 and 1921, the climactic years of the fight, the number depleted to sixteen and thirteen congregations, respectively. So, in terms of the number of churches, the “recovery” period since the 1920-1921 train wreck was some three decades. Lewis’ nine-year administration started with twenty-eight churches and ended with thirty-five. The high point was thirty-six in 1955. Also in 1950, conference membership reached and exceeded the one-thousand mark for the first time.

In 1949 and 1950, several new churches were added to the conference: Friendship near Athens, Lincolnton, Kite Mission, Eatonton, Forsyth, Faith near Barnesville and Oak Chapel west of Metter. In 1950, the Royston church experienced an impressive growth spurt in Sunday School attendance: from thirty-five to 144 within a few months. One sign of a more sophisticated approach to instilling vision and a sense of need for expanding the conference was the inclusion in the 1949 annual conference minutes of a membership growth graph for 1911-1949.

The delegations at the 1949 and 1950 annual business meetings passed a spate of aggressive outreach legislation. They proposed a loan fund for church planting and set the goal of at least three new congregations, one in each district, for the following church year. Pastors and evangelists were urged to give their full time to building their congregations and establishing new ones. They were also instructed to conclude every tent meeting and series of revival services with an invitation to new converts to join the church and get water baptized. “Child evangelistic campaigns” were suggested for every conference and district camp meeting and every local church revival. Vacation Bible School and “junior [children’s] churches” were recommended as productive child evangelism methods too. Oral Roberts, an Oklahoma Conference minister and by then a rising star in the national salvation-healing movement, was invited to bring his tent crusades to the state. All the congregations in the conference were encouraged to support a Christian radio outreach. Annual district youth revivals were mandated. Personal evangelism was taught as the privilege and responsibility of all believers, both clergy and lay. On the foreign missions front, a conference missionary convention was approved.

There was another first-time addition to the minutes booklet for the 1949 business session—a statistical page entitled “Experiences, 1915-1949.” The inclusion of this historical data indicates the importance placed in the conference at the time on the three normative “crisis” spiritual experiences that the Pentecostal Holiness Church officially stood for: conversion, entire sanctification and Spirit baptism. It also illustrates a major way by which ministry success was measured. Through 1993, this information was updated every year in the annual conference business meeting minutes. Starting in 1994, it was discontinued.

Superintendent Lewis contributed an article to the *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate* in July of 1951 entitled, “History of the Georgia Conference.” It has been referenced several times thus far in this booklet. Lewis reminisced about the conference’s strong revivalist heritage, mentioning in particular B. H. Irwin, R. B. Hayes and the Jordans. He described the churches in the conference as mostly rural, with “only a very few full-time pastorates.” Therefore, he wrote, the conference “has not been an inviting field for those who are called to a full-time ministry in the pastoral field.” Then he cast the vision for church planting: “But the need for evangelists who are willing to do pioneer work is great, and the field wide open. The Macedonian call is going out from many cities and towns, but only a few are responding.” Lewis was attempting to implement a “progressive program” that would, in his words, “bring the Georgia Conference to its former glory and beyond.” He was confident that, “with the prospects so bright, the membership so eager to advance the kingdom of God, and the Lord so willing to help, ... the Georgia Conference will go forward!” Bishop Tim Lamb, the current Superintendent, was told years ago that Lewis, a long-time grocery store manager before he became Superintendent, helped organize the conference administratively and made it more efficient.

In that 1951 article, Lewis reported what he described as the conference’s “greatest undertaking to date.” During the previous year, the conference board had decided to establish a conference headquarters in Franklin Springs. A private lot had been purchased adjacent to Emmanuel College and “a tabernacle of steel and concrete block construction” was being erected with “ample parking space.” In exchange for the conference using the school’s dormitories and dining hall for its business sessions and camp meetings during summer breaks, the college would utilize the tabernacle as a “gymnasium building” during the academic year. This was the origination of the “old gym” on the campus of Emmanuel College.

Legislatively, during the rest of Brother Lewis’ tenure as Superintendent, inactive ministers (those who were not pastoring or preaching revivals regularly) were challenged to dig out new churches. The goal set at the 1952 annual conference was to start at least two new congregations in each district the following year. Quarterly district rallies were recommended “to promote the spirit of evangelism” in the conference. The adopted report of the Committee on Evangelism at the 1955 annual session contained eye-opening statistics, a sobering assessment and a “clarion” call for Georgia Conference ministers and laypersons to “become evangelists to evangelize Georgia.” “A mission field of 136 counties ... with no Pentecostal Holiness Church, with only one church for every 1,513 square miles, with [only] one out of every 2,892 persons ... as a member of this church, this conference is faced with a challenge that must not go unheeded.” The committee proposed “a state-wide, aggressive evangelistic program” that evidenced some familiarity with church growth methods beginning to trend at the time. It included “a religious survey of the entire state of Georgia” and, based on that data, a “step-by-step” master plan “to enter rural areas, towns and cities to conduct revivals and ... organize Sunday Schools,” with the objective eventually of planting new congregations. Evangelistic services utilizing the “conference tents” were at the center of the strategy. The plan was to be presented by the Superintendent and conference board

to the membership of the conference during a special meeting the following winter. Furthermore, every “self-supporting” church in the conference was summoned to cooperate in this outreach thrust by sponsoring an extension Sunday School or “Pentecostal Holiness chapel” in a nearby locale. It is not clear from the annual conference business session minutes for the following years that such a project was ever devised, presented or implemented.

It appears that by the 1951 annual business session, youth camps had begun to be conducted in Franklin Springs on the campus of Emmanuel College and in the not-yet finished “tabernacle.” For sure, summer youth camps were viewed as an important evangelistic and discipling venue. From 1952 to 1956, newly established congregations included Blairsville, Hawkinsville, New Hope (east of Elberton), Tifton, Albany, Port Wentworth, Good Hope (near Barnesville) and Reidsville. At the 1953 annual conference, there was another failed attempt to bring the Congregational Holiness Church back into the fold. That resolution also extended a futile invitation to the Emmanuel Holiness Church, a split-off group since March from the Pentecostal Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, to unite with the Pentecostal Holiness denomination. In 1954, a fourth district was created in the conference: Southwest. Foreign missionaries supported by the conference during Lewis’ administration included Hobert and Marguerite Howard and Nellie Faye Fowler in India, Princeton and Sybil Cates and Eleanor Dean Cates in Hong Kong, and Dallas (“Ned”) and Lula Mae Freeman in Africa. Pursuant to the 1957 General Conference’s act of changing the name of the Pentecostal Holiness Youth’s Society to Lifeliners, Keith Hearn was elected the same year as the Georgia Conference’s initial Lifeliners Director.

Superintendent W. J. Nash: 1957-1970

Brother Walter Nash’s second tenure as Superintendent began after a two-year stint pastoring the Washington, D.C., National church in the Maryland Conference. Fondly known by then all over the denomination as “the bicycle preacher,” his status as a popular and effective evangelist and revivalist was stronger than ever. During the first three years, it appears that the following new congregational starts were initiated: Washington Mission, Alma, Wadley and Abbeville Mission in south-central Georgia. “Portable tabernacles” (revival tents) were used in attempts to plant new churches in Commerce, Savannah, Douglas, Dublin and Lyons.

The trend continued at the 1958 annual business session to seek expansion of the conference by pursuing organizational union with groups “of like doctrine and faith.” Indeed, the delegation recommended to the denomination’s General Board of Administration that it form a committee to achieve the same goal. On another ecumenical note, the conference board authorized Superintendent Nash to attend the 1958 meeting of the World Pentecostal Fellowship in Toronto, Canada. Aware of the need for expanding the *size* of the conference’s congregations and not just the number, the delegates at the 1960 annual meeting challenged the Superintendent to “develop at least one [part-time] church into a full-time church” during the next conference year. Part of the 1960-1961 conference calendar was a May 1961 conference-wide “simultaneous revival.” All the pastors were asked to schedule revival services for their congregations during the month. This practice continued yearly for the remainder of Nash’s second superintendence and thereafter until at least 1972.

In the folksy phraseology of Brother Nash himself, the Georgia Conference celebrated its “fiftieth anniversary of conferencehood” in 1960 (counting approximately from the 1911 merger). He wrote a full-page “Superintendent’s Corner” promotional article about it for the June 1960 *Georgia Conference News*. Nash described the conference as “full-gospel” and “on the ball to

make progress in every phase of its program.” He depicted its ministers as, “for the most part, ... sturdy young men who are converts of the old order, ... proud of the conference’s colorful past history of spiritual attainments, ... [and] ambitious because of spiritual zeal to greet the future.” He referred to the conference’s Wesleyan-Holiness and Pentecostal heritage: “The old-time Pentecostal ministers, teachers and members have left their mark on the Georgia Conference ... spiritually and educationally. For fifty years now they have been sowing the good seed of holiness and Pentecost that never rot.” With holy pride, the Superintendent described Franklin Springs as “a fine village filled with P.H. people from different parts of the U.S.A. and Canada,” as the headquarters of the Georgia Conference and the Pentecostal Holiness Church, and as the home of Advocate Press (which included denominational executive offices), Emmanuel College, the annual Georgia Conference camp meeting and “a fine local church that is leading the conference in growth.”

In that 1960 article, Superintendent Nash also outlined his main goals for the conference under his second stint of leadership. (1) His “first and highest” objective was to attain a maximum spirituality among the clergy and lay church members by getting as many as possible “fully baptized with the Holy Spirit.” He urged all the pastors and evangelists to “push hard to see this come to pass.” (2) This would produce the “inward power” for accomplishing the second goal: the soul-winning mandate of the Great Commission. (3) His third main goal was “conference-wide revival.” In January while preaching at Newnan, he had predicted a mighty move of God’s Spirit in the conference. Since then, it had erupted in mighty waves at Newnan and Griffin, with forty-five “souls pray[ing] through to definite experiences” around the altars—folks saved, sanctified and filled with the Spirit. Then revival broke out at the Atlanta church through an Oral Roberts tent crusade in Marietta. G.F. Taylor’s granddaughter was saved in that meeting.

From 1961 to 1970, probably the biggest spate of new churches and missions were established in the history of the conference up to that time: Smyrna (northwest of Atlanta; by 1978 known as Trinity Temple, by 1990 Emmanuel Temple and by 1994 Harvest Time Fellowship), Columbus, Thomaston Mission (later Bethany and then New Life), Napier Avenue in Macon, Pine Forest near Swainsboro, Warner Robins, Harrisburg near Jefferson, Vidalia, Carrollton, Savannah First (by 1972 named Stephenson Avenue and by 1986 New Life Fellowship), Hartwell, Vanna Mission and Church of the Comforter in Tucker (in 1988 renamed Victory Christian Fellowship and in 1990 Cathedral of Praise).

Some annual conference legislative measures and other developments may have come into play. Every congregation was encouraged to host at least four revivals annually, with one of them youth-focused. Extension or branch Sunday Schools in hospitals, prisons, factories and nursing homes were again pushed as a potential, eventual new church-start method. The “mother-church plan” was recommended whereby a relatively strong congregation sponsored the development of a new one. The Newnan and Athens congregations were viewed as good mother church candidates for this approach. Starting in 1961, a conference-wide “simultaneous revival” was slated every year during the decade of the 1960s and into the 1970s. H. L. Moore was elected in 1963 as Conference Evangelist; he was required to work “exclusively” in the Georgia Conference. There was a re-emphasis on digging out new churches through the use of “tents, storehouses, brush arbors [and] cottage prayer meetings.” A “Birth Benefit Association” was founded in 1964 to aid young congregations in buying lots and construction materials for their first building. As part of its national program, and in cooperation and coordination with conference leadership, the General Home Missions Department of the Pentecostal Holiness Church assisted in the establishment of churches in the three largest cities in the state: Atlanta, Columbus and Savannah. It was a matching-

funds and personnel-support arrangement. The income of those pastors was supplemented so they could afford to do ministry full-time. The purchase of a conference “mobile chapel” was recommended for starting new churches. In 1967, Walter Poole, Jr. left his Toccoa pastorate and joined fellow Toccoa resident H. L. Moore in full-time ministry as a general evangelist.

Nash’s thirteen-year second administration began with thirty-five congregations and ended with forty-four. The high point was forty-six in 1965 and 1966. In a sense, in terms of the total number of churches, the Georgia Conference was still in the recovery mode. It still had not yet reattained its 1913 high of forty-seven churches during the Pentecostal Holiness phase of its history. But in 1965 and 1966, it temporarily got close.

Additional missionaries were supported by conference churches and members by the end of Brother Nash’s second superintendence. They included John and Erna Mae Brooks, a “Brother Howell,” Florine Duncan, Philip and Gailya List, and Lamar and Mary Pate in Africa, and Joe and Esther Richardson. In 1962, the denominational Home Missions Department, working with the boards of the Georgia and Florida Conferences, explored the feasibility of and then decided against organizing a Home Missions Conference in South Georgia.

Relative to Christian education, by 1961 the Sunday School training curriculum of the Evangelical Teacher Training Association (ETTA) was promoted by conference Sunday School leadership. In 1965, *two* annual youth camps began to be conducted at Franklin Springs: Senior and Junior. By 1970, the denominational Teen Talent and Bible Quiz programs (decades later dubbed Talent Quest and Bible Quest), pioneered in the late 1950s and the 1960s respectively, began to be implemented in the Georgia Conference.

On the racial justice-political action front, the delegation at the 1966 annual conference business meeting took a neutral approach to “demonstration or public display” in regard to the civil rights movement. Members were forbidden from involvement on either side.

Before the 1970 annual conference meeting, sixty-seven year-old Superintendent Nash announced his decision to retire from the job. He explained that the physical strain of the arduous travel demands had become too much for him and his wife Francis. During his long ministry thus far, he had pastored at least thirteen churches and had served as conference superintendent for twenty-three years during two stretches. He had organized some fifteen to twenty-two congregations, a significant percentage of the ones on the conference roll as late as 1984. Combined, around twelve new parsonages and pastoral living quarters additions had been constructed under his administrative oversight. Lawrence Johnson, who was Conference Assistant Superintendent in 1970, described Brother Nash as a man of “sterling Christian character and complete surrender to God’s will” who had “never brought a reproach upon his God or his church.” In a tribute given at the 1970 annual session, Nash was honored for his “constant spiritual emphasis, ... undying evangelistic fervor ... [and] commitment to the doctrine and life of Pentecostal Holiness.” In the opinion of Charles Bradshaw in 1984, who was General Administrator of Advocate Press at the time, Nash was “one of the strongest leaders and one of the more efficient superintendents of the Georgia Conference.”

When W. J. Nash stepped down as Georgia Conference Superintendent, he declared that he was “not [really] retiring, but refiring!” He ministered as a general evangelist in the Pentecostal Holiness Church for some nineteen years before his decease at age eighty-six in September 1989, having preached ten to seventeen revivals annually. He ministered from coast to coast in twenty-two states and in nine foreign countries. At the time of his homegoing, he was the oldest active

evangelist in the denomination. Brother Nash will always be fondly remembered for his unique sayings and homey expressions like “prayed up, packed up and ready to go up!”

Superintendent Keith Hearn: 1970-1982

Keith Hearn pastored the Barnesville congregation for thirteen years and served as the conference Christian Education Director for three years before he was elected as Superintendent in 1970. Following his election, he wrote in the September 1970 edition of the *Georgia Conference News*: “We have a great task before us in Georgia to fulfill God’s call to spread the gospel and build the work of God. To accomplish this, we must strengthen our churches, renew our dedication to the Lord and pray for the Lord to send forth laborers into the harvest. We need to live and work under the anointing of the Holy Ghost. This will solve some of our problems and make our work lasting for the glory of God.”

Early during Superintendent Hearn’s tenure from 1971 to 1974, there were at least four new church efforts in the conference. One was in Monticello. A “new work” was “progressing” in Morrow on the south side of Atlanta; by 1974, it was named the Church of the Trinity. An already-functioning congregation in Canton, on the north side of Atlanta, temporarily joined the conference. By 1974, the Athens church was using the Mt. Zion sanctuary near Danielsville as a “mission point” in a mother-daughter church restart arrangement. By the early 1970s, the conference and the denominational Department of Evangelism had been financially assisting three Atlanta-area congregations “for several years:” Atlanta First in the southeastern sector of the city (which closed in 1973), Smyrna and the Church of the Comforter in Tucker. Brother Hearn began his twelve-year administration with forty-four congregations and ended with forty-one; forty-four was the high in 1970. In a sense, in terms of the total number of churches, the Georgia Conference was still in the recovery mode. It still had not yet reattained its 1913 high of forty-seven congregations during the Pentecostal Holiness phase of its history.

Since 1952, the Finance Committee reports adopted by the annual conference business sessions contained the stipulation that the Superintendent “shall work especially to strengthen weak churches and organize new churches.” This amounted to a general job description. However, the report of the Finance Committee passed by the 1970 annual conference meeting included a significant change: the Superintendent “shall work especially to strengthen churches now in existence.” At the 1972 session, the wording was modified to “especially ... strengthen the smaller churches.” It was switched back to the 1952 version in 1980 when the phrase “organize new churches” was restored to the Superintendent’s basic job description.

Of course, for decades the vision for new church development had been cast in other sections of legislation adopted by annual conference business meetings, particularly the Evangelism Committee reports. It typically took the organizational form of a conference Evangelism Director (who was not always the Superintendent) chairing a conference Evangelism Committee which was membered by conference District Evangelism Directors. Indeed, in 1973, the conference board, following the directive of 1972 annual conference legislation, appointed a conference Evangelism Director—they chose the Superintendent. The delegates at the 1974 annual conference session accepted the recommendation of the Committee on Evangelism for such an arrangement with the Superintendent again designated as the conference Evangelism Director. The explicit purpose was to “make efforts to establish new churches.” In 1978 and 1980, the Evangelism Committee’s adopted report did not specify that the Superintendent fill that role. The 1982 report did. Plus, over

many years, even the committee reports passed at conference Sunday School, youth organization and Woman's Auxiliary conventions had contained some content dealing with new church vision.

Perhaps there had developed since Hearn assumed office some disagreement and confusion in the conference ranks about whether the Superintendent's leadership role should be primarily pastoral and administrative versus evangelistic and oriented largely toward church expansion and planting. After all, the conference had been led for twenty-three of the previous thirty-two years by W.J. Nash who was widely recognized as a gifted evangelist and enthusiast for starting new congregations. It is difficult to know whether there was a connection between this vacillation in the Superintendent's main job description and the stagnation in growth of the number of congregations during Hearn's administration. In either case, it is invalid to try to gauge the spiritual progress of the conference *only* in numerical-congregational terms. For example, in 1972, the total membership of conference churches reached and permanently exceeded two thousand for the first time in its history.

Another sign of spiritual and ministry vitality in the conference during Brother Hearn's tenure as Superintendent, especially with respect to evangelizing and discipling children and adolescents, was the founding of Camp Louisa Jones at Mountain Gap. From 1971 until 1987, under the leadership of Georgia Conference Lifeliners and Christian Education Director Nerl G. Coleman (elected 1970), this conference youth facility, situated on 23.6 acres, was developed adjacent to the Mountain Gap Camp Meeting grounds near Barnesville and Thomaston. In its early phases of construction and later, four cabins, a bathhouse, two open-air shelters, basketball courts, a volleyball court, a swimming pool, maintenance and utility sheds, and Davis Hall (a two-story combination kitchen, dining hall, lodging and recreation facility) were built "on the mountain," with a softball field developed at its foot. Additions and improvements continued over the years, including a game room in Davis Hall, an obstacle course and walking trails. Thirty-nine more acres of property were purchased in 1996 for future development. The Louisa H. Jones Foundation, spearheaded by Coleman and formally incorporated in 1980, was the major source of funding for this long-term project. Coleman's vision from the start was for a year-round Christian family retreat center, a dream which unfortunately has never materialized. For several decades, Camp Louisa Jones was a main site for Georgia Conference children and youth events—camps, spiritual retreats, training sessions and other boys and girls ministry venues—as well as women's and men's ministry retreats and other activities.

Soon after Brother Hearn began his new job, a formal conference office (other than in the Superintendent's home) was set up in a Franklin Springs rental space. In 1972, the construction of a conference parsonage was completed.

In his 1975 "State of the Conference" address, Superintendent Hearn reported "a spirit of revival ... in many churches." He also shared about advances on multiple fronts during the previous conference year: 2,200 members (a net gain of 114), across-the-board increases in conference income and pastors' pay, one additional pastorate that transitioned to full-time and two congregations that experienced "outstanding" increases in conversions and membership (Napier Avenue and Athens). At the 1980 annual conference business session, a "growth strategy" was adopted for "enlarging and building" the conference. For the 1980s, labelled a "Decade of Destiny," one goal was to "establish" at least three "new works;" another was ten percent growth each year for every church. A "1,000 Club" was approved whereby one thousand people would pledge to donate a minimum of \$1 per month for planting new congregations. The purchase and use of a mobile chapel was part of the plan. At the 1982 annual conference, the delegation waxed

bolder and set a goal of ten new churches during the quadrennium. The “1,000 Club” contribution was doubled to minimally \$2 per month for new church development.

The 1970s were a time when the church growth movement began to impact many Protestant evangelical denominations in America. Some leaders and pastors in the Pentecostal Holiness Church and Georgia Conference read and studied literature produced by that movement. In 1975, a church growth seminar was jointly sponsored by the Georgia and Upper South Carolina Conferences at the Georgia Baptist Conference Center on Lake Louise near Toccoa. Of course, more traditional methods of doing evangelism and growing congregations in the United States had not been abandoned: prayer and fasting, house-to-house visitation and demographic surveys and analyses, for instance. “Spiritual retreats” for the inner spiritual revitalization of the conference’s pastors and other clergy, important for effective ministry, were then coming into vogue too. Two were scheduled for the 1974-1975 conference year. In fact, the 1975 and 1977 annual conference gatherings were promoted as “spiritual retreats.”

Ecumenism was a theme during the Hearn administration. In 1974, the Protestant charismatic movement in the United States was still young, but blossoming. The delegates at that year’s annual conference business session “rejoiced” that Pentecostal Spirit baptism was being experienced by many believers in the mainline Protestant denominations. They encouraged all ministers and members in the conference to offer them the right hand of fellowship and “a church home” if they felt unwelcomed by their own leaders and congregations. At the 1980 annual conference meeting, the delegation issued a statement of endorsement of the recent affiliation agreement between the International Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC) and the Congregational Holiness Church. (The word ‘International’ was added to the denominational name by the General Executive Board in 1975.)

On the Christian education and ministry training front during Hearn’s administration, three youth camps began to be conducted at Mountain Gap instead of two (Senior, Junior Hi and Junior), the Ambassadors for Christ boys program was introduced and the initial Lake Louise leadership training retreat was conducted jointly with the Upper South Carolina Conference. At the 1979 conference camp meeting, for the first time in its history, a ministers’ seminar was taught each morning. The conference Woman’s Auxiliary organized the Ministers’ Wives Fellowship in 1973; part of its purpose was leadership training. Additional missionaries who were financially supported by the conference during Hearn’s tenure included Larry and Toni Bolling (Argentina), Anne Mayer (Hong Kong), Carl and Barbara Early (South Africa), Frances Carter (South India) and Arnold and Donna Gause. At the 1978 annual conference session, during the heyday of the Sexual Revolution and hippie movement in western and American secular culture, a firm condemnation was expressed of “illegal drug traffic,” homosexuality, “unisex” fashion and the Equal Rights Amendment.

Target 2000, an Enlarged Vision and Increased Efforts toward Progress: 1982-2001

Superintendent John William Ingham: 1982-1994

John Ingham pastored three congregations in the conference before he was elected as Superintendent in 1982: Friendship. Macon First and Peniel. He had also served as conference

Sunday School President and conference Secretary. As Superintendent, he was known for his caring pastor's heart and as a prayer warrior, an effective teacher, mentor and leader, and "a great encourager" to the pastors who served under his oversight. It seems that financial assistance to congregations increased substantially during Ingham's administration.

In the words of Dr. A. D. Beacham, Jr., Superintendent Ingham had a "diligent vision for church planting." He was very proactive in pursuing contacts for new congregations. When first elected, reminiscent of W. J. Nash, he summoned the conference to prayer and fasting in the *Georgia Conference News* for "a great revival" in all its churches. Throughout his tenure, he cast a vision for a mighty "harvest of souls." In his February 1990 *Conference News* editorial entitled "1990's—The Decade of Destiny," Ingham used the possibility of Christ's return before the year 2000 as a catalyst for motivating the ministers and people of the conference to pray and work hard for "a decade of great harvest," "the latter rain harvest," "a great endtime revival," and the fulfillment of the IPHC's Target 2000 goals. His twelve years at the helm started with forty-one congregations and ended with fifty. The high was fifty-one in 1992 and 1993 (the first time the conference hit the fifties). Relative to the 1913 high of forty-seven congregations during the Pentecostal Holiness phase of its history, the Georgia Conference finally moved out of the recovery mode. Also, the conference first attained and topped three thousand members in 1990.

The theme for the February 1983 annual conference was "A Growing Church for '83" and church growth workshops were conducted. This emphasis on congregational growth training for pastors and other ministers, drawing largely from materials produced by the Fuller Institute of Church Growth in California and other agencies of the American church growth movement, as well as training in urban evangelism and church planting, continued throughout Ingham's tenure. In May, Ingham led a conference prayer rally for, among other things, new converts, expanding congregations and "new works."

An early "new work" effort during Ingham's administration was at Sharpsburg on the southwestern end of metropolitan Atlanta. New Covenant Fellowship was started in late 1982 with a mobile chapel and in partnership with the General Evangelism Department of the denomination. Later, in a restart form, it was renamed Community Pentecostal Holiness Church. Maranatha Christian Servicemen's Center in Savannah became a full-member congregation in the conference in 1983. Abundant Life in Statesboro joined as an affiliate member the next year. At the 1984 annual conference session, minimally two yearly revivals were recommended for every congregation, the Superintendent was directed to "give high priority to promoting and teaching evangelism and church growth across the conference," "pioneer church planting" was stipulated as a priority with special stress on new ethnic congregations ("Black, Hispanic, Korean, etc."), and the "Project Plant a Church" initiative was launched with the goal of two new works per year (in addition to already established congregations affiliating with or joining the conference). That year, new church projects were initiated in Lavonia (Word of Life), Ringgold (Family Fellowship), Conyers, Elberton (The Lighthouse) and among Korean and Hispanic communities in Atlanta. In 1986, there was a "church planting effort" in Gwinnett County and the Superintendent communicated with three independent congregations in South and Central Georgia about joining the conference: in Soperton, Sylvester and Fort Valley. At the annual conference business meeting that year, the delegation urged the conference board to "give priority to building a strong Pentecostal Holiness witness in the Atlanta area."

Unquestionably, several denominational-level developments that began in the mid-1980s contributed to this fresh impetus and vision in the Georgia Conference for local church expansion,

the multiplication of congregations and new church planting. The Target 2000 initiative was adopted by the 1985 General Conference, declaring “the multiplying of believers and ... churches the top priority” of the IPHC. The two numerical, global goals of this program were bold: to plant congregations in fifty world-class cities (which was soon increased to two hundred) and to enroll six million members by the year 2000. Two other goals related to training church members in spiritual gifts and mobilizing them to pray earnestly for world evangelization. The World Intercession Network (WIN), a spin-off of Target 2000 which addressed the prayer implementation part of the plan, was launched in 1985 as well. Dean Ivey was the first Georgia Conference WIN Director, appointed in 1990. The Men’s Fellowship organization was begun the same year—it was renamed Men’s Ministries in 1993—with Bane James serving as its initial conference Director. Over the next few years, the eight-course “Equipping the Saints” (ETS) curriculum was published by the denomination to assist in the training aspect of the Target 2000 initiative. In 1990, the historic World Conference of Pentecostal Holiness Churches convened in Jerusalem, the first global gathering of the denomination outside the United States. Some four hundred leaders issued the “Jerusalem Proclamation,” announcing the IPHC as a “People of Destiny” and calling on all its members to be “Great Commission Christians.” Through a lifestyle of worship and witness, the IPHC was summoned to fulfill its responsibilities in accomplishing the Target 2000 world evangelization goals. The 1995 second World Conference in Jerusalem again challenged church leaders and members to implement the vision and goals of Target 2000.

Directly related to the denomination’s Target 2000 goals, the legislation of the 1990 annual conference meeting included the objectives of enlarging existing congregations, “receiving ‘like in faith’ fellowships” and “birthing new works.” The Project Plant a Church program was reaffirmed and a mother-daughter approach to new congregational development was particularly recommended. The important role of conference evangelists was noted and the necessity of “innovative ministries for outreach” was stressed: prison, street, drama, hospital, nursing home and youth. Relative to church multiplication, it was insisted that “top priority” be given to urban and suburban regions of the state. Significantly, the challenging goal was set of seventy “functional” churches in the conference by the year 2000—at the time, there were only forty-five—by “starting/receiving” three new works per year for the next decade. In summary, the delegates at the 1990 annual conference session “exhorted” the Superintendent and his board “to zealously lead [the] conference into [the 1990s] with the determination to plant new churches and ... disciple many to Christ.” This Target 2000 vision was reiterated at the 1994 annual conference meeting.

From 1987 until the end of his superintendence, Ingham led the conference in church start projects and in recruiting new full-member and affiliate congregations in the following locales: Columbus (Incorruptible Seed Ministries), Macon (Foundation Bible Church), Milledgeville, Blitchton near Savannah (Eldora), Ooltewah, Tennessee (Calvary Life Fellowship, east of Chattanooga), Cotton in southwest Georgia, Oakwood (Gospel Tabernacle), two in Savannah (Preach the Word and Grace), Dublin, Pelham (Church on the Rock), Garden City (Faith), Moultrie (Grace Fellowship), downtown Atlanta (House of Prayer), Lithonia (John 3:16 Ministries), Swainsboro, Spencer, Tennessee, and Hispanic church start projects in Jesup and Gainesville. In 1993, Superintendent Ingham presented to the General Evangelism Board of the IPHC a “Metro Atlanta Project” proposal that called for several new congregations being planted in the metropolitan Atlanta area. Telemarketing was part of the plan for the development of these new churches. Beginning in 1991 when he was appointed as part-time Evangelism Director for the conference, Bill Jones was a key player in these progressive projects.

Superintendent Ingham was a strong spiritual leader. He brought into some prominence in the conference, especially among his conference leadership colleagues, a particular form of spiritual method in the work of church growth, planting and problem-solving. Adapted partly from the burgeoning spiritual warfare movement that erupted in 1990s American charismatic Christianity, it included the practice of “taking charge” over demonic forces through individual, corporate and targeted prayer and fasting.

Of necessity since the western world entered the Information Age in the 1970s, an increase in the use of communication technology marked Brother Ingham’s superintendence. Teleconference phone calls for the conference board were more frequent. A phone answering machine and copier were installed in the conference office in the mid-1980s. Following the lead of the IPHC International Headquarters offices in Oklahoma and other denominational conference offices, the Georgia Conference office transitioned around 1988 to computer word processing. This computerization of conference office work necessarily escalated during the administration of Ingham’s successor.

A number of conference administrative milestones were reached while John Ingham was Superintendent. For the first time in its history, a conference Missions Director, Family Life Director, Planned Giving Officer, Pastoral Counselor and Hispanic Ministries Director were appointed (respectively, Harold Dalton, 1983; Rita Ingham, 1985; G.H. Lewis, 1988; Levy Moore, 1992 and Magda Banuchi, 1994). Gene Burden was appointed as the first conference Commander for the Ambassadors for Christ (AFC) boys club in 1983. (Since 1986, Royal Rangers has been its name.)

On ethical issues, the 1990 annual conference in session reaffirmed “the need for sanctification and [the] baptism of the Holy Ghost” for resisting the pressures of a culture in rapid moral decline. The 1994 delegates rejected participation in the state lottery.

New missionaries supported by the conference during Ingham’s administration included Kirby and Kay Phillips (Haiti), Debra Crook (the Philippines), Ray and Becky Brewster (Singapore), Winston and Vertice Hollingsworth and Joe and Elsie Arthur (East Africa), Dennis and Marilyn Davis (missions aviation), Matt and Janese Bennett (United Kingdom) and Rachel Berg (Zimbabwe).

Superintendent A. D. Beacham, Jr.: 1994-2001

Before his election as Superintendent in 1994, Dr. A. D. (“Doug”) Beacham had been an Emmanuel College professor for five years and pastor of the Franklin Springs congregation for twelve. He had served as Assistant Superintendent to John Ingham since 1990. As Superintendent, Beacham took Ingham’s passionate vision for church multiplication to the next level. Strongly gifted in administration, organization and leadership, under his guidance the conference increased from fifty congregations when he began to seventy-two when he finished. Seventy-two was the high in 2000 and 2001. This was by far the largest number of churches in the history of the conference. The 1990 annual conference delegates’ daring goal of seventy “functional” churches by the year 2000 was achieved—at the time, there were only forty-five. Moreover, during Beacham’s time as Superintendent, the conference reached and exceeded for the first time the four thousand-member mark in 1998 and temporarily the five thousand-member mark in 2000. Conference Evangelism Director Bill Jones, serving in that capacity since 1991 and appointed full-time to the position of conference Evangelism and World Missions Director in 1998, was a key

player in these accomplishments. Indeed, in 1999, Beacham described the full-time appointment of Jones the previous year as “the single greatest administrative step” taken in the conference’s history.

Starting in 1995, the Superintendent’s carefully-crafted “State of the Conference” addresses to the annual conferences in session led the way. These speeches were full of motivational information, vision-casting, goal-setting and earnest exhortation with respect to new church development, the revitalization of nongrowing congregations, intercessory prayer, leadership development and ministry training for clergy and laity, and financial stewardship (especially ministerial tithing).

In his 1995 “State of the Conference” message, Superintendent Beacham outlined five priorities for his administration. The first was new church planting and the revitalization of plateaued and declining congregations. For new church development, he wanted to target especially the major cities along the state’s Interstate and other main highways. “Aggressive action in church planting and revitalization must occur if we are to be effective for the cause of Christ in the next century.” The other four priorities were clergy education, pastoral care for ministers and their families, lay ministry training and enhanced computerization of conference office operations. Relative to the latter, Beacham noted that “we must ... be proactive ... and anticipate the future.” In 1996, he introduced the “Building Believers 2000” project, a twenty-year plan for financing bold church planting efforts, and shared the urgent need for the expansion of full-time personnel as soon as possible. In 1998 and 1999, Beacham linked his administration’s priorities with the IPHC slogan for the 1998-2002 quadrennium: “Mission 21.” He declared: “Our vision ... remains focused on church planting, church revitalization, prayer, leadership ... development among ministers and laity, financial stewardship and reaching the next generation. ... Leadership development remains a high priority ... [in] this age [which is basically characterized by] the dynamic of change. ... Let us reach the international community coming to Georgia: Hispanics, Asians and others!” In 1999 and 2000, partially influenced by the New Apostolic Reformation movement that began in the 1990s, Superintendent Beacham called the conference to prayer for a “release of apostolic and prophetic anointing.”

Bold goal-setting for new churches and congregational revitalization marked the Beacham administration almost from the start. Three seminars were conducted in the conference for that purpose. In 1995, Beacham set a personal goal of twenty-five new congregations for a total of seventy to seventy-five in the conference by the end of the 1994-1998 quadrennium. In 1997, he set a goal for one new church per district every eighteen months. In 1998, his goal was seventy-five by the conclusion of the 1998-2002 quadrennium. In 1999, he stated that he was believing God for over one hundred congregations and over 5,000 members by the close of the quadrennium. The next year, he extended the first goal to 2005. Beacham’s vision was for a Pentecostal Holiness congregational presence in every Georgia and Southeast Tennessee county, especially the eight metropolitan regions. In 1997, Evangelism Director Bill Jones set a goal of seventy-five by 2000. In 1999, Jones was trusting the Lord for six more churches during the next year. In early 2000, his goal was twenty church plant attempts by year’s end. At the 1994 and 1998 annual conference meetings, the delegates adopted the goals of seventy “functional” congregations by 2000 and eighty-five (at least one addition annually in each district) with seven thousand members by 2002.

Clearly, the largest flurry of new church development in the history of the conference took place during Superintendent Beacham’s seven-year tenure. Church planting became a driving force. Metropolitan Atlanta was impacted more effectively and the conference’s ethnic and cultural mix

became more diverse than ever. New congregational plants, full-member churches, affiliates and restarts included the following: South Metro Fellowship (Jonesboro), Northeast Community Fellowship (Buford), New Vision (Springfield), Lavonia, Holy Spirit Revival Church (Doraville), Lighthouse (Collins), Church of the Holy Spirit (Atlanta; Hispanic), Daniel Tabernacle (Royston; African-American), Word of Life (Thomson; later New Life Worship Center), The Sanctuary Christian Fellowship (Kennesaw), Christian Community Church (Snellville), Free For All Holiness Church (Decatur and Midway), New Life-Hope Christian Center (Monroe), First Christian Fellowship (Savannah), Christ Community Church (Duluth), Living Waters (Savannah), Living Word (Winterville; later Family Worship Center), Faith Chapel (Woodstock), Grace Covenant Church (Cedartown), Clean Heart Fellowship (Buford), Freedom Point USA (Royston), Harvest Church (Danielsville), Liberty (Savannah), New Hearts Christian Center (Watkinsville), The Lighthouse Ministries (Eatonton), Wildwood Fellowship (on Lake Sinclair), Faith Chapel (Kennesaw), South Bibb Community Church (Macon; later Life Center Outreach Ministries; since 2019, Life Church), Evergreen (near Cordele), Dublin Faith, All Nations (Suwanee), Celebration Outreach Center (Commerce), Christian Restoration Center (Duluth; Hispanic), Church of the Narrow Way (Ellijay), Higher Praise Worship Center (Conyers), Hope Christian Worship Center (Hoschton), Harvest Church (Winterville; Hispanic), More Than Conquerors in Christ (Lawrenceville; Hispanic), South Metro (Stockbridge; Hispanic) and Covenant of Love (Lavonia; Hispanic). On the down side, many of these congregations eventually, some of them over a relatively short period of time, ceased to exist, transitioned (or returned) to independent status, merged with other congregations or transferred to other denominations or conferences.

A variety of methods for new church development were utilized during Dr. Beacham's superintendence. They included goal-setting, telemarketing, intercessory prayer (including prayer walks), the targeting of urban and suburban areas, the creation of a Metro Atlanta District in 1996 to facilitate church planting work there, the mother-daughter model, neighborhood canvassing, home visitation, preaching and teaching about the Second Coming of Christ as an incentive to embrace the evangelism and church planting vision, friendship and servant/kindness evangelism, preaching and teaching about and prayer for apostolic and prophetic gifts and anointing, clergy and lay leadership development, and traditional and progressive revivals.

The conference's church planting strategy under Beacham used the following classification terminology. Groups were led through three steps or stages. The first step was "church plant." This included the entire process of building the group from the time when the lead church planter was commissioned by the conference board. The second step was "church-type mission." At this stage, the group began financially supporting the conference, typically at a minimal level—as much as it was able. By the end of the third year, the mission was expected to meet all *IPHC Manual* requirements for monetary support of the conference and denomination. The third step was "organized church." This meant official recognition as a Pentecostal Holiness congregation, as a full-member church in the conference. In the case of new works that "failed to flourish," a decision was made about whether to formally "disband" the group or to go through the process again, possibly in another location. The latter were labeled "reorganizational missions." The ultimate aim of every church start project was to develop a "thriving" congregation that "by its fifth birthday" was helping to start another "thriving" congregation.

In the late 1990s and well into the 2000s, largely under the leadership Evangelism USA Executive Director Ronald Carpenter, Sr., the IPHC in the United States proactively and dramatically expanded its ministry to the African-American and Hispanic communities. Also by the late 1990s, the Georgia Conference had reason to celebrate its growing ethnic diversity. Daniel

Tabernacle Holiness Church in Royston, a Black group, affiliated with the conference in 1996. In fact, way back in the 1920s, it had once already been a Pentecostal Holiness congregation. The first African-American to serve on the conference board, Lonnie Williams, was elected in 1998 and served for eight years. And on April 28, 2001, almost two hundred convened at Harvest Church in Winterville for the first gathering ever of Georgia Conference Hispanic churches and pastors. Over the previous eighteen months, five Hispanic congregations “with hundreds of members” had become full-member churches of the conference. They were located in Winterville, Lawrenceville (two of them), Royston and Albany. These churches comprised “one of the fastest growing segments of the ... conference” at the time.

Three historic and memorable conference events transpired during Beacham’s administration. He described the January 1999 Day of Prayer and Vision at the Macon Convention Center as a “breakthrough,” “a pivotal *kairos* moment for most churches in the conference” and, for him personally, “the most significant spiritual event of [his] tenure” as Superintendent. At the June 2000 Solemn Assembly, a night service, Beacham mournfully spotlighted in his sermon the conference’s century-long record of mostly slow progress with respect to the number of congregations and church membership growth. He explained that this was due to Satan’s attacks, a deficiency of vision, faith and evangelistic passion, discord and poor decision-making. He then led everyone in a prayer time of representational confession, repentance and affirmation of trust in God for a brighter future. And in October 2000, the “Moon house” in Franklin Springs was dedicated to the Lord’s service as the conference’s new headquarters. It was the first time the conference owned its own office space. Up until that point, the conference office had been in the Superintendent’s home and then in various rental facilities in Franklin Springs and Royston.

In the early 1990s, the development of information technology and computerization in terms of digital communication were in their infancy. By 1996, most IPHC conference offices and missionaries were connected by electronic mail (“email”) through a program called “New Evangelism Technologies” (NET). This was an international internet-based ministry created by Evangelism USA at the IPHC Resource Development Center (RDC) in Oklahoma. (Evangelism USA was the new name of the denominational Department of Evangelism by 1993 and, beginning the next year, International Headquarters was called the RDC.) In 1996, NET conducted the first United States satellite telecast for the denomination: the “Seize the Future Summit.” By the following year, NET had constructed a state-of-the-art IPHC website and digital multimedia services began to be provided to the constituency. Within the first several months of Beacham’s initial term, communication technology and the computer system were upgraded and enhanced in the Georgia Conference office in multiple ways. These progressive changes included communication through email as well as through printed and mailed materials, Worldwide Web access, a toll-free phone number, a car phone for the Superintendent and the beginning of a long, grueling process of converting financial accounting records and statistical and other data from manual to computer.

The push for ministry training and leadership development was prominent during Beacham’s tenure. Some was required for clergy; some was elective. It was offered abundantly to laity too, including local church deacon board members! The instruction was provided by the Superintendent, the Evangelism/World Missions Director, other conference board members, directors and board members of other conference departments like Church Education Ministries (CEM, the name of the IPHC Christian Education Department since 1997), Women’s Ministries, Men’s Ministries, Royal Rangers and WIN, and IPHC leaders as well as other experts from outside the denomination and conference.

At the initiative of its Director, Dr. Tony Moon, the CEM Department added several new conference leadership posts while Beacham was Superintendent. The Mission Quest Director organized and led one annual conference mission trip for teens and college-age youth. The Senior Adult Ministries Director conducted conference-wide activities for seniors. Conference “consultants” were appointed to assist local congregational leaders in formulating programs for family life, music and fine arts, and teen and children’s ministry.

Additional missionaries supported by conference churches during Beacham’s superintendence included the following: Jacquelyn Sylvester (the Philippines), Carolyn Foster, Philip and Kelly List, and Michael and Jennifer Oliver. Showing increased interest in preserving the history and heritage of the conference, Paul Oxley was appointed as its first Archives Director in 1998.

At the 2001 IPHC General Conference, Superintendent Beacham was elected to the denominational leadership position of Executive Director of Church Education Ministries. He was the first Georgia Conference minister in the history of the IPHC to occupy a resident denominational office. From 2005-2012, he served the denomination admirably as Executive Director of World Missions Ministries. Since 2012, Dr. Beacham has served equally well as General Superintendent/Presiding Bishop, the first one in the history of the organization to be elected straight from the Georgia Conference.

Vision 2020, Arise 2033 and Inspiration for Early Century Twenty-One: 2001-2020

Superintendent William N. Jones: 2001-2014

Before he became Superintendent in 2001, William (“Bill”) Noel Jones served three pastorates in the conference: Griffin, Elberton and The Lighthouse in Elberton. He was the founding pastor of the latter. From 1991 to 1998, while shepherding The Lighthouse, he served exemplarily as the part-time conference Evangelism Director during the Ingham and Beacham administrations. From 1998 to 2001, Jones did an outstanding job as Superintendent Beacham’s full-time conference Evangelism/World Missions Director. Beacham credited the impressive church multiplication achievements of his superintendence largely to Jones’ “visionary and faithful ministry.” Jones had also ably occupied the post of Assistant Superintendent since 1994.

In October 1986, while pastoring the Elberton church, Brother Bill published an article in *The Elberton Star-The Elbert Beacon* entitled “A Man with Three Birthdays.” He wrote about his physical birthday, his spiritual birthday (Christian conversion) and his “physical ‘rebirth’ day” on May 11, 1983 when he received a kidney transplant that allowed him to discontinue some sixteen months of kidney dialysis treatments. While Superintendent of the Georgia Conference, he received a second kidney transplant in July 2002.

The Jones’ administration continued the emphasis on new church development, the revitalization of nongrowing congregations, intercessory prayer, leadership development and ministry training for clergy and laity, and financial stewardship (especially ministerial tithing). Brother Bill also shared Doug Beacham’s conviction that, given its Pentecostal heritage and identity, the conference should be open to the clearly Bible-based aspects of the charismatic, Third Wave and New Apostolic Reformation movements in terms of operating in the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit, particularly the apostolic and prophetic ones. As an able administrator and strong, visionary

leader, Superintendent Jones was never hesitant about “coloring outside the lines” of tradition. His oft-stated mantra went something like this: “The very definition of madness is to keep doing the same thing and expect to get different results.” He was always zealous for wise creativity and innovation in doing the work of the kingdom. One example of this was prophetic prayer ministry teams. They ministered to pastors and their leaders at some of the annual conference camp meetings, and when invited, traveled to churches to assist them in doing spiritual warfare and breaking through spiritual barriers.

There were several name changes during Jones’ administration, relating largely to IPHC General Conference legislation, revisions encouraged by denominational leadership and trends in other IPHC conferences. The conference board became the conference executive council. The conference offices/headquarters became the Conference Ministry Center. The yearly conference camp meeting at Franklin Springs was rebranded “Summer Conference.” At the 2005 IPHC General Conference, conference superintendents were bestowed the honorary title of “Bishop.” Effective in January 2012, the conference adopted a DBA (“doing business as”) name: LifePoint Ministries (LPM). (The legal name, Georgia Conference, remained the same.) The rationale was to “reach new constituencies, appeal to a new generation of ministers and churches, and ... open new doors for ministry.” In 2014, all the conference leadership boards were labelled collectively the “Conference Ministry Cabinet.”

The adoption of the DBA name LifePoint Ministries in 2012 was accompanied by the approval of a conference mission statement, an official set of core values and statements of ministry objectives for both LPM and the LPM Ministry Center. All of these formal declarations revolved around the core values of relationship, diversity, Spirit-filled living, interdependence, fruitfulness and missional life. Three other key identificational terms and concepts affirmed were “Pentecostal,” “apostolic” and “prophetic.”

Relative to church planting and congregational revitalization, several denominational initiatives were major programmatic thrusts during Bishop Jones’ tenure. The “Reach Three/Plant Three” strategy and the Vision 2020 initiative challenged each church member to win three people to Christ each year and each congregation to embrace the goal of starting three new churches by the end of the first decade of the new millennium. An important component of these programs was the training made available in personal evangelism and new congregational development. In 2012, church start training was upgraded through the partnership of the IPHC with the Dynamic Church Planting International organization. Jones stated in his “State of the Conference” report that year that “we must ... develop a culture of church planting that is a part of the DNA of every local LPM church.” Later in 2012, under the guidance of new General Superintendent Doug Beacham, the IPHC’s General Executive Committee prayerfully formulated a fresh global vision and identity statement for the movement. Based on Isaiah 54:2-3, it was subsumed under the motto, “A Place of Hope [for all people], A People of Promise [who stand on God’s promises in his Word].” They also articulated seven core values for the denomination as it moved further into Century Twenty-One: scripture, Pentecost, holiness, Christ’s kingdom, all generations, justice and generosity. At its 2002, 2006, 2010 and 2014 annual business sessions, LPM affirmed church planting, congregational revitalization and evangelism as its “top priority,” “mission” and “objective.”

New church development and congregational revitalization approaches utilized during Jones’ superintendence included sidewalk Sunday School, the mother-daughter model, servant/kindness evangelism, the use of a “portable church” building, the satellite/multiple-site/multiple-campus model, conference-wide evangelistic campaigns and “roundtable meetings” with pastors for

training and goal-setting. In terms of the multisite approach to church revitalization, Abundant Faith Fellowship in Reidsville, Life Center Outreach Ministries in Macon, Empire in Cochran and Upward Church in Norfolk, Virginia adopted and assisted struggling LPM congregations. In addition, the adoption of new names by churches and congregations merging to form a stronger witness and ministry to a common community—standard practices in church revitalization strategy—trended under Jones’ leadership like they never had before.

As a matter of fact, Bishop Jones and his executive council led LifePoint Ministries in the most concentrated focus on the revitalization of plateaued and declining congregations in its history. As mentioned above, they did it through sessions with groups of pastors whom they led in discussions about growth strategies and goal-setting for their churches, and through pastors of stronger congregations adopting small, struggling churches nearby as a second “campus.” They also did it through revitalization teams who were dispatched to churches to help leadership assess needs and formulate solutions. Insightfully, they also did it by intentionally aligning the work of church revitalization with the work of clergy pastoral care.

Based on the premise that “healthy churches are led by healthy ministers,” the Jones’ administration implemented several strategies to bring spiritual and emotional healing to pastoral and other church leadership. Beginning in 2011 as part of the “Building Healthy Ministers” program, “Encounter Life Weekends” were offered, first for pastoral married couples and later for non-pastoral clergy and lay leadership couples. A form of spiritual retreat which was spearheaded locally in the conference by Life Center Outreach Ministries in Macon, these were “encounter God times” for spiritual refreshment, personal deliverance and prophetic ministry. The following initiatives were similar in approach. The “Ministers Nurturing Ministers” (MNM) program, which started in 2004, brought together “clusters” of ministers for fellowship, encouragement and group prayer. Beginning in 2006, the conference Ministerial Intervention and Restoration Program was fine-tuned to more adequately address “the rehabilitation and restoration process for ministers who have experienced moral ... failure.” Starting in 2010, criminal and credit background checks were required annually for all credentialed clergy. In 2013, “Prayer, Impartation and Exhortation” (PIE) meetings were begun whereby the conference executive council prayed with and ministered to pastoral couples. Around the same time, Pastor Tim Lamb and the leadership of the Empire church commenced a pastoral care and mentoring program for pastoral couples at their “White House” facility in Cochran.

A key theme in Jones’ leadership philosophy was the church’s need to “embrace change.” He regularly reminded the pastors, other ministers and lay persons of the conference that American culture in Century Twenty-One is like a seascape “with the tides constantly moving and shifting the picture.” In his 2013 “State of the Conference” address, the Bishop indicated that one reason congregations die is because they “refuse to accept the lifeline of change.”

One dimension of the rapidly changing vista of American culture at the time (as now) was communication and computer technology. Under Jones’ leadership, LPM continued to adapt and adopt to keep pace with new developments. A conference web site was constructed. Video teleconference calls were sometimes utilized by the executive council. Digital media were used for multiple-campus ministry. Around 2008, the *Georgia Conference News* print mail-out was discontinued. In its place, a briefer, two-page *Conference Connection* print newsletter was mailed with the monthly ministers’ tithes report forms. Later, online reporting for churches and clergy was introduced.

Goal-setting for growth characterized the Jones' administration too. For the 2002-2006 quadrennium, the aim was for "close to one hundred congregations and 7,500 members." The urban and suburban centers of the state, particularly metropolitan Atlanta, and "the burgeoning immigrant populations" (African nationals, Asians, Latinos and Pacific Islanders) were special target groups. For the 2006-2010 quadrennium, the congregational goal was scaled down: eighty-five churches and 7,500 members. The goals for the 2010-2014 quadrennium included a *much* more modest one for new congregations: five additional church plants, fifteen more revitalized congregations (with strong leadership development and effective outreach and assimilation processes in place) and a proactive, serious attempt to attract independent African-American, Hispanic and other ethnic churches.

Among the new congregations in the conference during Bishop Jones' tenure (both plants and already functioning churches that either affiliated with or joined the conference as full members) were Atlanta Tamil (Norcross), Calvary Life Fellowship (Ooltewah, Tennessee), Frontline Community Fellowship (Eastanollee), Fuente de Vida (Source of Life, Athens; Hispanic), Metro Sur (South Metro, Jonesboro; Hispanic), Savannah Family Worship Center, Viviendo en Fe (Living in Faith, Albany; Hispanic), Cristo Mas Que Vencedores (More Than Conquerors in Christ, Lawrenceville; Hispanic), Lifespring Family Church (Albany), New Harvest International Ministries (Savannah), New Life Center (Tallapoosa), Nuevo Pacto de Amor (New Covenant of Love, Lavonia; Hispanic), Spirit and Truth Church (Hartwell), The Vine Fellowship (Auburn), Life Tabernacle (Elberton), Genesis Church (Alpharetta), His Way Assembly of Praise (Alto), Restoration World Outreach Center (Lavonia), The Bridge (Cornelia), Life Center, North Campus (Macon), Faith Family Covenant Church (Forsyth County), New Vision Worship Center (Guyton), Word of Life Ministries (Twin City), Iglesia Pentecostes Rios de Aqua Viva (Rivers of Living Water Pentecostal Church, Statesboro; Hispanic) and Rock of Israel (Hull). The conference temporarily attained five thousand-plus members for the second and third times in its history in 2003 and 2008-2010, with the all-time membership high in 2009 of 5,233. However, the number of congregations that dissolved, went independent (or returned to independent status), merged with another church or otherwise dropped out greatly offset the number of new ones. During Jones' thirteen-year administration, the conference began in 2001 with seventy-two churches and ended in 2014 with forty-six. The high was seventy-two in 2001, which matched the all-time conference high in 2000. The Bishop himself described LPM as "statistically ... challenged" in his 2014 "State of the Conference" report.

For the first time in the conference's history, in 1998 a full-time, nonclerical staff member was appointed to assist the Superintendent in his work. That person was assigned the job of Evangelism/World Missions Director. The portfolio for that full-time conference staff position evolved during the thirteen years of Bishop Jones' tenure. In the summer of 2001, it was changed from evangelism/church planting and world missions to that of Administrative Assistant and CEM Director. The following year, church revitalization was added, and then dropped in 2003. In 2008, the portfolio was revised to Administrative (later Executive) Assistant and Director of Evangelism (later Church Multiplication). In 2012, it was changed to Executive Assistant and Missions Director. In 2013, the post of Church Multiplication Ministries Director was made non-salaried and part-time. Perhaps the strategic decision by the conference executive council in 2001 to change this full-time conference staff person's portfolio from primarily evangelism and church planting to administrative and other responsibilities was a factor in this decline in the number of congregations.

Bishop Jones' administration continued the concentration on education and provided ample opportunities for clergy and lay leaders to increase their ministry knowledge and skills. There was training for teachers, local church treasurers, congregational revitalization, church planting, mentorship and leadership. Largely due to low enrollment, the conference School of Ministry (SOM) suffered setbacks. It was restarted in 2004 and "relaunched" again in 2012. In 2005, the conference purchased the Mountain Gap church property adjacent to Camp Louisa Jones in Pike County. The combined structures and sixty-seven acres were designated The Rock Leadership Training Center. Its mission was "to provide training and development [for] Christian leaders of all ages." There were big plans for further developing the real estate, including pioneer camp sites, a shooting range, a hotel-type lodge, additional cabins and the Mountain Gap Training Center. At the 2009 General Conference, the name of the CEM Department was changed to Discipleship Ministries.

The Great Recession of the American and global economies from December 2007 to June 2009 had an ongoing negative economic impact into 2016. By late 2011 and well into 2013, the leadership of LPM was forced to make substantial budget and spending cuts because of an income decline in ministerial and church tithes and offerings. There was a staff reduction at the LPM Ministry Center. The annual ministers' and spouses' retreat was temporarily suspended. Camp Louisa Jones and The Rock Leadership Training Center were closed in August 2012.

On social-ethical issues, the delegates at the 2002 and 2006 annual conference meetings condemned genetic engineering, human cloning, abortion and euthanasia, affirmed "the equality of all races" and supported "racial reconciliation within our churches and communities." The credentialed ministers at the 2011 annual conference session signed the historic "Centennial Covenant" document, pledging their commitment to "proclaim and live a clear Gospel message into [the IPHC's] second century of existence." In 2013, the conference executive council went on record as approving the General Conference's declaration that year that IPHC properties could only be used for heterosexual and monogamous wedding ceremonies, receptions and anniversary celebrations.

New missionaries (both career and short-term) who were financially supported by LifePoint Ministries congregations and members during Bishop Jones' tenure included Todd and Stephanie Presley (Wales), Bill and Gretchen Schwartz and Cheryl James (Belgium), Ronnie and Margaret Turner (Eastern Europe), Ruth Brookshire (Russia), Willard and Yvonne Wagner (West Africa), Lee Grady (the Mordecai Project), Gordon and Denise Gedda (Israel), Kevin and Summer Sneed (Kenya), Joshua and Theresa King, Heidi Newberry and Cheryl Ray. By 2013, the conference had developed a Disaster Relief USA (DRUSA) team sponsored by the Men's Ministries Department.

Superintendent Timothy Lamb: 2014-Present

Billy Tim Lamb came to the office of Superintendent and Bishop of Lifepoint Ministries with an abundance of pastoral experience. He had exemplarily led the Carrollton church for fourteen years and then Empire for twenty. He was elected to the conference executive council in 1994, became the Assistant Superintendent in 2001, and began his work as Bishop in 2014.

Bishop Lamb has continued most of the emphases of his two immediate predecessors, Beacham and Jones, but with a slight new twist. The development of new churches and the revitalization of plateaued and declining congregations have remained highest in priority for him and his executive council. However, the two have been more closely combined. This alignment is not an innovation

in the history of the conference. It extends at least as far back as the IPHC “Reach Three/Plant Three” campaign that began in the first decade of the 2000s during Bishop Jones’ tenure. But for the Lamb leadership team, it appears to be a more emphatic and strategic decision about the *primary* approach to be pursued in starting new congregations. In his 2016 “State of the Conference” report, Bishop Lamb stated, “It is our goal to equip our churches so *they* can plant new churches” (writer’s emphasis). They build on the Jones’ administration’s premises that “healthy churches are led by healthy ministers,” and congregational spiritual health ideally entails the eventual production of other churches. Therefore, revitalization efforts are directed at both the individual, spiritual, emotional and marital needs of pastors and the revitalization needs of the congregations they lead, with the ultimate goal of new congregational development, utilizing especially the mother-daughter church planting model. For the Lamb administration, it amounts to a slight but intentional shift in emphasis in how church revitalization is conceptualized: it should be the *primary* (although not the only) means of starting new churches. Organized intercessory prayer, leadership development and ministry training for clergy and laity, and the purposeful pursuit of congregations outside of LPM continue to be major priorities for Lamb’s administration as well.

Part of the strategy to nurture healthy ministers is to improve their cohesiveness, sense of community, team spirit and networking potential. Therefore, during Brother Lamb’s tenure, there has been a strong focus on strengthening the relationships among pastors, other clergy and lay leaders in the conference. In his 2017 “State of the Conference” address, for example, Bishop Lamb envisioned 2018 as “a year of strengthening relationships ... by facilitating opportunities for [ministers] ... to come together for encouragement, mentoring, training and worship.” This included at the time minister appreciation meals.

Under Lamb’s leadership, the conference clergy prayer ministry has expanded by adding corporate prayer on Monday morning via teleconferencing and the internet. The annual Summer Conference has been separated from the yearly conference business convention and renamed Kingdom Life Conference. The Conference Ministry Center has been relocated to the campus of Emmanuel College in Franklin Springs. This was described as a “strategic move” to downsize office space, cut operational expenses and “connect with students” for ministry and recruitment purposes. Indeed, LPM had already seen an increase in the number of members of the younger generation (“Millennials”) seeking ministerial credentials.

Other trends that remain intact during Bishop Lamb’s time of service include the *Conference Connection* (a monthly two-page newsletter mailed with the clergy report forms and posted on the LPM web site), conference-sponsored, short-term mission trips, churches adopting new names to help position themselves for growth, “Encounter Life” weekend spiritual retreats for pastors, other clergy and lay leaders and their spouses, annual ministerial background checks (criminal, credit and child abuse), computer and communication technology upgrades (including the development of a new conference web site in 2020), and the more traditional minister-spouse and conference executive council retreats. On the other hand, the influence of the New Apostolic Reformation movement seems to have waned somewhat among conference leaders.

In the Christian education field, Camp Louisa Jones was reopened for day camps during the summer of 2015. It operated during the summers of 2016-2018 with both day and overnight camps and a girls conference, and then closed again “for public use” at the end of 2018. The Mountain Gap church used it for summer camps in 2019. That same year, the Discipleship Ministries Department was restructured and the post of Discipleship Ministries Director was temporarily

eliminated, with the Bishop designated as “Interim Contact.” On the ministry instruction and training side, the conference School of Ministry has been relaunched again. Through this venue and others like the annual Kingdom Life Conference, clergy and laity have been instructed in topics such as leadership, marketplace evangelism, new church development (utilizing Dynamic Church Planting International curriculum and certified teachers), mentoring and local church online reporting and financial bookkeeping. In late 2019, the executive council commissioned Dr. Tony Moon to write a brief history of LPM.

The Arise 2033 initiative was approved by the 2017 IPHC General Conference. Denominational goals were set for the year 2033, the two-millennia anniversary of the death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus and the Acts 2 outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. Three goals were set for the United States: IPHC congregations in seventy-five percent of the nation’s 3,142 counties, two hundred “traditional” congregations targeting new immigrant populations and house churches in major cities. Two global goals were set: an IPHC presence in 150 of the 195 countries of the world and five thousand new IPHC congregations outside the United States. The Arise 2033 campaign has exerted a direct impact on the Lamb administration’s vision for the conference. In his 2018, 2019 and 2020 “State of the Conference” reports, Lamb affirmed its goals and indicated in his 2019 address that the whole executive council was committed to leading LPM in doing its part to fulfill those objectives. He also shared their LPM goals for 2033: ninety churches and a congregational presence in seventy-five percent—that’s 119—of Georgia’s 159 counties.

Other elements of LifePoint Ministries’ church planting philosophy under Bishop Lamb were expressed in the Relocation Study Group’s report to the 2016 annual conference. The special target regions should be the metropolitan areas of Georgia. The church planters should be experienced and “educated” to increase their potential for reaching “upwardly mobile families.” A team approach should be used. In addition, there should be a multicultural focus on Hispanic, African-American, African national and other minority ethnic groups.

New congregations started and non-IPHC churches joining the conference during Bishop Lamb’s tenure include New Beginning Christian Center in Griffin on the south side of metropolitan Atlanta, Pages of Life Christian Worship Center in Swainsboro, Soperton (later Zoe Ministries and Believers in Action), Metter, Iglesia Pentecostes Dedios in Milan (Pentecostal Church of God; Hispanic) and River of Life Ministries in Rincon. The Soperton and Metter congregations were “mothered” by Emmanuel Worship Center and Pages of Life in Swainsboro, and Lifespring Worship Center in Bloomingdale, respectively. In the late summer of 2020, a church plant was at the core-group stage of development in McDonough on the southeastern end of metropolitan Atlanta. This was an Arise 2033 project. In his 2020 “State of the Conference” message, Lamb appealed for more “mother churches” and church planters.

“Church revitalization strategies” have been a consistent theme in the discussions of the conference executive council during Bishop Lamb’s administration. “Coaching” for pastors and members of their congregational leadership teams provided by LPM Church Multiplication Ministries Director Trey Jones and others has been a crucial part of the plan. Starting in early 2018 and continuing for three years, this was done in partnership with the IPHC’s Evangelism USA Department. As explained by the Superintendent in his 2017 “State of the Conference” address, congregational revitalization is usually an extended process. At the time, Freedom Point in Carrollton had been undergoing it for four years, LaGrange for five years and Upward Church in Hartwell for six. The sponsorship of a larger, stable congregation has also sometimes been part of

the strategy. In Lamb's words, "a healthy church helping a struggling church is essential" to the effort. When he pastored Empire, for instance, he and some of his local leaders provided oversight and support for the LaGrange project. The Springs of Toccoa (formerly The Ark) is currently a revitalization project of the Franklin Springs church. Again quoting Lamb in 2017, "Church revitalization will be part of our daily vocabulary as we look ... to 2018." The next year, he reported that several congregations participating in the coaching program were seeing an increase in worship attendance, conversions and volunteers. In late 2020, Goldmine began the revitalization journey. For 2021, the church revitalization coaching program has been restructured around "peer coaching groups." The plan is for both in-person and online meetings.

The conference executive council revised and "updated" the LPM mission statement in 2020. It now reads as follows: "LifePoint Ministries' vision is to build healthy individuals and churches, broaden our borders to at least seventy-five percent of the counties in the state of Georgia and create ways of bridging people to Jesus. We do this by providing leadership development opportunities, church planting essentials and ... resources for discipleship growth."

The COVID-19 pandemic, which hit Georgia full-blast by March 2020, directly and strongly impacted the operation of LPM, its member and affiliate congregations, and its ministers and laity. Incrementally over the course of the scourge, the Governor issued executive orders for restrictions with regard to quarantines, social distancing, mask wearing, hand sanitation, business closures and church service shutdowns. The 2020 Kingdom Life Conference went virtual. The LPM executive council communicated primarily through email and online meetings. And most in-person LPM events, including the 2020 annual conference session, were canceled.

Bishop Lamb was proactive as he guided the conference in how to deal constructively with "this unprecedented time." Through electronic mail, "snail mail," phone calls, text messaging, the *Conference Connection*, web platforms and the IPHC's online *Encourage* magazine, he enheartened pastors and urged them to be "creative" in the methods they used to stay in contact with their congregations and in "find[ing] new ways to do ministry." His attitude was faithful and upbeat and his counsel wise and helpful. When church services were mostly cancelled from March to September 2020, he advised pastors that the choice was between "online versus on-site ministry." Lamb wrote in his 2020 "State of the Conference" report, "Online ... is a great way to reach the unchurched [and] to bridge people to Jesus." He led with his own example.

The Superintendent viewed COVID-19 and its negative impact on the life and work of the church as a sign of the times: "How we do church is rapidly changing." But he also saw the pandemic as a potential "breakthrough" opportunity for most congregations in LPM to start catching up in terms of adapting to the digital age. "It excites me to see churches accepting the tremendous challenge of finding creative ways of being the church without the building." Providentially, Lamb believed, COVID-19 had forced many congregations worldwide to "do church" in new and innovative ways and to improve and expand in their use of information and communication technology to reach and disciple the lost. Among the examples he mentioned were outside/drive-in services, internet-based congregational meetings and Bible teaching for adults and youth, online giving, weekly contact through email, texting and electronic social media, and "goodie bags" dropped off at church members' homes. He provided web links for more resources and ideas. One of 2020's lessons, the Bishop wrote, was that through computer technology *local* ministries can directly reach and disciple people for Christ *around the globe!*

Post-pandemic, Georgia was among the first states to largely reopen. By June 2021, the Governor had lifted the majority of restrictions for the general public with respect to quarantines, social

distancing, mask-wearing, hand sanitation, business closures and congregational service shutdowns. Nonetheless, Bishop Lamb’s mindset was not that of returning to pre-pandemic “business as usual” as far as the church’s ministry was concerned. As early as September 2020 when many LPM congregations resumed at least some in-person services with social distancing, mask-wearing and hand sanitation protocols in place, Lamb exhorted church leaders to continue to utilize and sharpen the new digital methods of worship, pastoral care, evangelism and discipleship some of them had adopted during the COVID-19 crisis. For the future, he declared, “it should be both online and on-site ministry. I’m confident that this will move us from addition to multiplication in ministry.” He reported later that 2021 in-person Easter services “in many of our churches seemed to be a success” since “many of them saw new people” and some folks who were absent during the pandemic returned. By May, Lamb was informed by several pastors about numerical growth in their congregations through “many salvations and water baptisms.” Appropriately, the theme of the June 2021 in-person Kingdom Life Conference was “Emerge.” Encouragingly, it was anticipated that eighteen candidates would receive ministerial licensing and ordination credentials in September at the conference’s annual business session.

New short-term missionaries who have been supported by LPM churches, ministers and members during Brother Lamb’s tenure thus far include the following: Paul Oxley (Kenya), Felicia Bush and Mandy Lester.

Bishop Lamb began his service as Superintendent in 2014 with forty-six congregations. At the end of the pandemic-plagued 2020 conference year, there were forty-six, which matched the 2014 high. LPM temporarily eclipsed the five thousand-member mark for the fourth time in its history in 2016. According to the official statistics released by the Conference Ministry Center, in 2020 there were 140 credentialed clergy. In terms of “assignments,” there were seventeen full-time and thirty-three part-time pastors, four full-time and six part-time associate pastors and church staff members, two evangelists (either full-time or part-time), seven missionaries, two chaplains, nine administrators and thirty-one retirees. The average Sunday morning in-person worship attendance in 2020 for all LPM congregations combined was 1,704. The peak on-line worship participation was 4,217. The average weekly in-person attendance for systematic Bible study (including Sunday School) was 1,122. The number of church members at the end of 2020 was 3,817. For the year, congregations reported 256 people saved, ninety-seven water-baptized, one sanctified and eighteen Spirit-baptized.

Conclusion

In 1951, Superintendent G. H. Lewis wrote about the rich spiritual, revivalist, Wesleyan and Pentecostal heritage of LifePoint Ministries.

Within the Georgia Conference have been some of the greatest revivals of the greatest revivalists of our church in its early history. B. H. Irwin, founder, organizer and first General Overseer of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Association [of America], conducted successful revivals within its bounds. R. B. Hayes, a fiery evangelist of those days whose preaching shook the foundations of hell and brought souls by the hundreds into the Kingdom, did much of this work in this conference. The Jordans—J. H., Charlie and wife, ‘Sister Addie’—were among those who stuck to the old-line type of holiness preaching and did much damage to the strongholds of Satan.

These preachers were just a few of the multitude of pioneers who blazed the trail for Fire-Baptized Holiness and then Pentecostal Holiness in the Peach State during the very late nineteenth century and the opening decades of the twentieth. Describing his administration's program as "progressive," Lewis declared that his goal was "to bring the Georgia Conference to its former glory and beyond." He added, "By God's grace and help the Georgia Conference will go forward!"

In 1960, Superintendent W. J. Nash expressed holy pride about the conference's "colorful past history of spiritual attainments." On its fiftieth anniversary (since the 1911 merger), he praised his predecessor "ministers, teachers and members." They "left their mark on the Georgia Conference ... spiritually and educationally" by "sowing the good seed of holiness and Pentecost that never rot."

The one-hundredth anniversary of the Georgia Conference was celebrated at its annual business session and camp meeting in 2011. A booklet containing photocopied pages from issues of the IPHC's 1917-1996 magazine, the *Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*, was compiled and distributed. It featured a promotional piece for the 1920 Franklin Springs Camp Meeting, serial articles about the early history of the denomination by J. H. King and G. F. Taylor, a Taylor editorial containing the texts of the original 1905 charter of the Fire Baptized Holiness Church and its amended 1911 version for the Pentecostal Holiness Church, articles from the memorial editions which eulogized G. O. Gaines and G. F. Taylor following their decease in 1918 and 1934, the 1951 write-up about the conference's history by G. H. Lewis, and obituaries honoring J. B. Todd and W. J. Nash after their homegoings in 1958 and 1989. The following is an excerpt from Bishop Bill Jones' introduction to the booklet.

As we move forward, it's important that we understand from where we came. Long before we arrived this year on the campus of Emmanuel College, there was a price that had to be paid. The exact toll is unknown—it is measured in risk, faith, confidence, sweat, dollars and sacrifice. ... Now it becomes incumbent upon us to continue to pay the price. The fees are the same: risk, faith, confidence, sweat, dollars and sacrifice! ... Allow the lives, the sacrifice and the stories to provoke courage and faith in your spirit—so that we can move forward making history!

Overall, in terms of the number of congregations, members and attendees, the history of LifePoint Ministries is not statistically impressive. Superintendent Beacham said as much in his 2000 Solemn Assembly and "State of the Conference" addresses. He lamented its "slow rate of growth ... in the twentieth century"—since 1911, thirty-nine years to reach one thousand members, another twenty-two years to cross the two-thousand mark, another eighteen years to eclipse three thousand, and another eight years to reach four thousand. He attributed this poor record in part to a persistent and resistant "rural mindset." Commendably, under Beacham's leadership, it took only two years to pass five thousand members for the first time. Since then, the five-thousand mark has been achieved during five more conference years, the latest one in 2016. During pandemic-ravaged 2020, membership dropped below four thousand to its lowest figure since 1996.

However, biblically speaking, it is a serious mistake to measure spiritual progress and "success" in the work of the church *only* in numerical terms. In the divinely-inspired words of the apostle Paul, "it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (1 Corinthians 4:2, NKJV). Based on this study, it is certain that a tremendous amount of energy has been expended over the last twelve decades by faithful LPM forebears and contemporaries to advance the boundaries of Christ's church and God's kingdom. There has been much visionary planning and organizing at all levels of conference work—including the "auxiliary" departments—and much effort to implement those

plans. Many methods and programs have been used to grow the conference, its congregations and its influence. That level of spiritual passion and ministry activity—that “work of faith” and “labor of love” (1 Thessalonians 1:3, NKJV)—could never be adequately measured by and reflected in congregational, membership and attendance growth statistics.

A broad kingdom perspective is important too. The church of Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God in this world are far bigger than LPM and the IPHC! There are literally thousands of other organized Christian traditions and denominations which are doing the work of the church and the kingdom. It is likely that the strong majority of believers and congregations who were once part of LPM, but are no longer, are *not* outside the bounds of Christ’s church and the Lord’s kingdom! Moreover and undoubtedly, a multitude of people and congregations who have never formally been a part of LPM have been influenced by “the good seed of holiness and Pentecost” that it has sown for over one hundred and twenty years. Ultimately, in partnership with all the other IPHC conferences worldwide and with all the other branches and denominations of global Christianity, LPM’s contributions to the work of Christ’s church *universal* is what matters most. And God, who keeps far more accurate records than we do, will be the final Judge of that (1 Corinthians 4:1-5).

Meanwhile, let’s be inspired by the powerful vision-casting sermon delivered by Bishop Tim Lamb at the 2015 annual conference meeting. Based on one of Jesus’ directives to his disciples during his early Galilean ministry, the Bishop challenged the ministers and lay members of LPM to “go into the next towns,” and like Jesus and his first followers, share the good news of salvation (Mark 1:38, NKJV). Let’s embrace the LPM executive council’s visionary commitment to the Arise 2033 goals of ninety congregations in seventy-five percent of Georgia’s counties by 2033. As Bishop Lamb stated in his 2019 “State of the Conference” message: “The need to revitalize churches and plant new churches is urgent.” As he reiterated in his 2020 report, the need is also critical for more church planters and more mother congregations to provide them with spiritual, financial and pastoral care support.

The following concluding paragraph contains an observation about an overall trend and pattern that has emerged during this study of LPM’s history.

Starting with the Empire congregation in the mid-1990s and accelerating during the first decade of the 2000s, with the *major* exception of All Nations Church in Norcross in northeast metropolitan Atlanta, a significant shift has taken place in the conference relative to the location of its largest congregations. This change has been from the northern half of the conference, especially the Franklin Springs District in northeast Georgia, to the central and southern half of the conference. The greatest church revitalization, church growth and church plant stories in this region of LPM during the last twenty-five years or so have been Empire near Cochran, LifeSpring Worship Center in Bloomingdale near Savannah (formerly Port Wentworth), Mountain Gap near Barnesville and Thomaston, and Life Church in Macon.

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