

*LESS
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FORGET*

Wallace McKeehan

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The writings of one who knew the experience of the Pentecostal movement as an active preacher for thirty years, who observed the activity of its people:

- from the brush arbor revivals of the thirties
- the glory of evangelistic harvest fields
- a few pastoral endeavors
- worked with a number of patriarchs of the faith
- envisioned an imaginary “United Express” train of the United Pentecostal Church

Wallace McKeehan, Author

An Introduction

The Diary

Soon after I decided to retire, completing thirty years of active ministry, I took a look at some of the work I kept as a diary. I was faced with a question. What profit are they if no one ever sees them? It was clear I needed to make a decision. I could put them in the bottom of a trunk; then maybe some day in the future a descendant would find them and look them over. Or I could use them as a base to write essays and short stories of people we worked with to carry the Pentecostal message. I could write of my experience, along with that of others. I would write of the converts who were baptized, and many who received the Holy Spirit, the brethren and our fellowship together. I would mention my travels by train for thousands of miles to carry the message from place to place. In fact, I had such a fancy for trains, I created an imaginary train and called it the Pentecostal Express. With these kinds of things in mind, I bring to the reader a look into the glory of the times, as well as some of the difficulties.

Wallace C. McKeehan

Lest We Forget

The Experience - The Fellowship - The Heritage

It has been over fifty years now, since brethren gathered carrying the banner of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ. We begin the following summary of stories and essays with a question. Where have they gone? Time will tell us. With the greatest of respect, many lie in the dust of the earth. They are waiting for the great reunion in the heavens. Many more boarded the united Express, bound for the promised land. Thanks be to God, we reached our destination of unity safely, with a host of other brethren climbing aboard the United Express along the way. The crew running the train would be none other than the Oneness Pentecostal fathers.

To have been on board from the beginning is great. In the opinion of this writer, the work has been a great achievement. However, it has been brought to my attention that there are descendants of some of the greater achievers until the present time who carry an obsession of fear that their forebears were forgotten and their work of a lifetime blown away with the winds of change. Hold on my brother! We are all in this together. Let me give you, the reader, an example. About forty years ago I visited a church in Merryville, Louisiana. On the front of the building was a stone slab. On it was inscribed the words, "D. K. Morris, Founder." This man was the grandfather of the author's spouse. Does she remember him because the name was on the stone? Even though I promised to go back some day and let her see it again, we never got around to going. Should she forget him? Not at all. Each day of her life a praise goes up. She remembers both his spouse, Annie, and him because of their prayers, their singing, and preaching. The message of Pentecostal blessing will be passed on to our children and generations to come. What a heritage!

The writer of the following story's experiences and observations kept a diary for several years. I would write down a few things that happened each day. Some of the material will be from that source. Other bits and scripts will be from memory. One of my greatest teachers always said, "Whatever you hear, good or bad, never flatly turn it down. If you don't understand, just put it in the far recesses of your brain. If you ever need it, push the memory button. It's there."

I wish it were possible to write the stories of all the pioneers of the faith. Especially the ones who cleared away the brush and laid the foundation for those who follow. The ones who gave so much to so many, yet died in poverty. However, time and strength make it impossible. My best hope is to write of those who touched my life in some special way.

Before Conversion

First, it will be necessary to fill in a background of life as known before conversion. The life which was the average of one reared in the routine of a farm and ranch in the country called the ArkLaTex. I was eighteen years old when I saw and heard the first Pentecostal preachers. The O. S. Owens family came to our trading-post town of Bloomburg, Texas. They set up a tent and began a revival. It was said it drew the largest crowds, even in that area.

A Witness

There were only a few converts. One of those few was to change my life forever. A lady by the name of Hattie Allen received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. She lived with her husband, Lon Allen, about a half mile from our place. After the Owens' meeting closed and the tent moved away, Bro. Owens thought his effort was a failure - but far from it - the seed of the gospel had been sown.

The one convert of which we speak would in future times cause the gospel to spread all around. She talked about her experience almost day and night to people in that part of the country. She was a witness beyond compare. One of her and Lon's first efforts to spread the Word was to open their home for the Lord's cause. They invited a group of gospel workers from around Atlanta, Texas, to conduct a few days' meetings in their home. Among the group that came was an Assembly of God preacher. He knew how to get one's attention. When the few days' meetings were over, I was one of the converts filled with the Holy Spirit! A kind of zeal took over me, whereby I wanted to tell everybody about it. We had no regular pastor. Being hungry to learn more about what we had received with the zeal of the holy Spirit giving courage to do so, I attended just about every meeting in the area. By this, it gave opportunity to witness, as well as pick up a few gospel crumbs. Then something happened that brought about another great change...

Seeking

The Allens, who had invited the first group to their home, became deeply disturbed. She came to our place. The message she brought this time was something like this, "The preacher that came with the group for the first meeting did not teach the same message as O. S. Owens," (where she had been converted). She would never be satisfied until a minister was found to preach the same as Owens. Well, indeed, one was found. A brother, L. J. Hosch, was pastor of a group of Oneness people west of Atlanta, Texas. After he promised to come for an open-air series of meetings, preparation was made. The first service arrived on time. The new preacher opened his Bible and gave us a wonderful message. I was on a front board seat. Something was out of place. It baffled me for a few minutes. I kept staring at him. I finally figured it out. He did not have on a necktie. I had never seen a preacher in front of a congregation without a tie.

The Necktie

As for the folks in our part of the country, it was not a person's attire, but the spiritual gift of that person that really mattered. But this was not the way it was in other places. Our brother, L. J. Hosch, was destined to be more than just a backwoods teacher of the Bible. his destiny was to be a leader in fields of order and unity among brethren. Pressure was coming from many directions for him to put on a necktie. You will make a better impression when you meet people from all walks of life; your influence greater, etc.

Revival Time

Brother Hosch finally gave in with the following remark, "Oh well, if putting a string around my neck will help me reach more people and lead them in the right path, so be it." From then on he was surely useful in helping many people find a better way. Who is to judge if the string around his neck did indeed help? For us, in that area of Cass County, we went all out for conversions. During a short time, several of my sisters, my brother, Ray, and later my parents were baptized by Brother Hosch.

Seeking

Brother Hosch taught us the Bible way to baptize was in the name of Jesus. Read it in the Bible(Acts 2:38. We were in the depth of the great depression. The small band of believers could not support a regular pastor. We found out that our Brother Hosch had two or three other groups to minister to also, in other parts of the county. He would come to us when possible

Study of the Bible

It was during this time in the winter of 1931 and 1932 I found the great treasure we call the Bible, a treasure that had been there in my parents' home all along. I began to read it when there was time away from my farm and ranch duty. The memory of the winter of 1932 stands out among the rest. The times spent sitting by the old fireplace reading the Bible by the glow of a burning resin-rich pine knot. The forest around us had plenty of pine knots. It cost us nothing to gather them. When one burned out, just put another on the coals. It was on one of those nights while reading by the fireside, when my call to preach was definitely settled.

The Calling

Several nights each week my mother, with my sisters gathered by the old kitchen table, and I would sing gospel songs. It was a time of joyful worship. That particular night they were singing "Footsteps of Jesus." The verses went like this:

*Tho' they lead through the temple holy, preaching the Word
Or in homes of the poor and lowly, serving the Lord
Tho' they lead o'er the cold dark mountain, seeking His sheep
On down by the Siloam's fountain, helping the weak.*

The timing was perfect. Even the urge that came over me at times such as when plowing in the fields or when talking to people, the Spirit was moving upon me. I must go and tell the Good News. To follow the steps of our Lord is to obey.

Outside the group that met in homes in our area of northeast Cass County, the first endeavor on my own was in the O'Farrel community west of Atlanta, Texas.

The Laymon family had invited me to come for a few nights of service in their home. Did I hold back because the only clothes I had were well worn; with holes in the soles of my only pair of shoes? The answer, of course, was “No!” They had invited me; therefore, I would go. This began a ministry that would continue for thirty years. In that first effort, we had some true converts. I did my first baptizing on a cool February day in the year of 1933. There were other homes in which the gospel was preached. Brother Hosch never forgot me. he was keeping a close watch on the way the Holy Spirit was anointing me. He was getting calls for help in various struggling churches. He asked me to go along with him. Our first trip together was to a group near Oil City, Louisiana.

In Oil City, Louisiana

From the first service, it looked as though we were going to have a visit of the Holy Spirit. That it was! A wake-up call from on High was very evident! They had not seen that for awhile. It really made me rejoice, because Brother Hosch and I were in our first work together outside my home country. Also, I could never say thanks enough for the folks from there for the shower of clothes and a new pair of shoes. Whether they felt sorry for me after looking at my over-used shoes or not, they could never have found a more thankful young preacher.

The Guitar Episode

There were times when it was necessary to go out alone to some group of very poor people. I was young and single with the zeal of my calling burning in my soul. To me those folks were just as precious as any. When we met for the meetings, we were somewhat handicapped for some type of music as a backup for our singing. In the teen years, I loved to sing country and western folk songs. Now, since the great turn around by conversion, I could not get enough of the gospel songs. Then I remembered a neighbor who lived on the same road as our

farm about a half mile away. He was a guitar picker. I started a habit of going down in the evenings to see him, after the chores were over. I'd sing while he picked the guitar. I think he enjoyed it as much as I did. In one of those sessions, an urge came over me. It was overwhelming. Something was saying to me, "You need to learn for yourself. These evening sessions can't go on forever." When I mentioned this to the neighbor, he was all for it. After showing me the basics, he also gave some advice, "Get you some literature on the guitar and get with it. Practice, practice, practice." I took his advice. After a time, I could trust my fingers most anywhere. With the poor folks where we went before, now we could sing with a bit of backup music. Also, I honestly believe that with the combination of singing and preaching, more doors were opened to get the message of Pentecost to others.

The Brush Arbor

Many modern-day Pentecostals sing about those good old brush arbor days. I venture to say they have never seen a brush arbor, let alone been in one of the great revivals held in one. Back in the times of the great depression, they were a wonderful place to worship. When the folks in my country were too poor to buy a tent for a summertime place to have a revival, they got together and built a brush arbor. Most any farm could supply the materials needed. The boards for seats and sawdust for ground cover was hauled in from a nearby sawmill.

It was the spring of 1933. Up to now the Pentecostal people in northeast Cass County had been meeting in homes only. There was talk of building a brush arbor, but where? Finally, it was agreed to build on Lon and Hattie's place (the same couple that had offered their home for the first meeting ever. The building of the brush arbor began right away. We got in touch with Brother L. J. Hosch

to invite him to be our preacher for a revival. His answer back was, "Yes." However, it would be early fall before he could possibly do so.

In one way, putting it off for an extra month made me happy. There was such zeal burning within me to see my kindred saved, this extra month would give me time to make a trip to the coast country where my older brother, Ray Mckeehan, was working. Away I went. On my arrival there, I began trying to persuade him to go back with me. I told him about the folks back home receiving the Holy Spirit. I told him how things were in progress for the brush arbor revival. Would he go back to Cass County with me? We would attend the meeting and I'm sure he could find employment afterwards. Glory be! He agreed to go back with me. Arriving at the farm home, we helped finish up the brush arbor. Word from Brother Hosch came that we were ready to go.

When Bro. Hosch began telling the story of Pentecost, Ray was one of his best listeners. A few meetings later, he made the following statement. "This is what I have been looking for all my life!" Then he headed for the alter, kneeling there in the sawdust, pouring out his life of sins to the Lord. Of all the people I have seen come to the alter through the years of evangelistic ministry, this one was a most remarkable repentance.

Even though my conversion was in the Trinity movement, our preacher laid before us the message of Act 2:38, so plain that I accepted it. Ray and I were baptized at the same time, by the same preacher, in the pond, in the pasture owned by Charlie Brown.

From the time of the brush arbor revival and baptizing, there was an interval of about two years. Study of the Bible began for Ray. While he was working on our farm/ranch and other jobs in the area by day, he continued study at night. I was keeping up with my calls to go various places to minister. For about two

years of this routine, Ray had been following, he expressed to me that he believed the Lord had called him to be a minister of the gospel.

Called to Preach

The way he buried himself in the study of the Bible and every other literature concerning the ministry of the Word available, it appeared he was not mistaken. Also, with a good personality, maybe it was so. He was destined to minister. These were times when the only preacher we were in touch with was Bro. L. J. Hosch. One could call him a “mentor.” However, it was evident we could not always be together.

The Hill Country

It was convention time in the Texas District of the P.A. of J.C. At these conventions in the spring of the year, in addition to business affairs, many of the pastoring brethren came to get in touch with an evangelist for revivals. At the convention in Cleveland, Texas, I first met A. D. Light from Llano, Texas. He was pastor of three groups of people in the Hill Country of Central Texas. We made arrangements to be his evangelist for revival at Burnet, Texas. To our surprise, they were already set up for a miniature camp meeting.

When the meeting was over, my brother, Ray, at the request of Brother Light decided to remain as co-pastor. A short time later, he was changed to full pastor. Brother A. D. was in charge of several small groups in various places. The meeting in Burnet was so satisfying to A.D. I was invited to plan for two more meetings as evangelist. The next place was to be in the area of Kingsland, Texas. When we arrived, I found it to be a place of satisfying beauty.

Tent Revival

I was to learn that Brother Light was somewhat of a prayer genius. He had the gift of getting others to pray. This I found more and more was a good way to tune in to the Holy Spirit. The tent he had set up was full of people each service. How many converts there were, I did not count. Brother Light did the baptizing at my request.

The church building was sitting on the bank of the Colorado River^{1*}. The brethren with the leadership of Pastor Light had built a brush arbor on the grounds for summertime meetings. Some of the folks from the Kingsland area had visited the miniature camp meeting in Burnet and, by faith, were fired up for great results under their own brush arbor. In addition to the mighty prayers of Brother Light sounding from the mountains where he went to pray, other workers came. Two of note were Carl Light and Authur Wilkerson. Those two sang and picked guitars in such a fervent way, others' emotions were stirred to the heights.

This meeting on the Colorado River turned out to be a true camp meeting in the cedar breaks. People came from all around and camped out, prepared for a two-week stay. Sister Light did the cooking with help from the campers' wives. Carl and Authur caught fish in the river. A brother who owned a ranch in the area gave a young beef to feed the campers. With the anointing of the Spirit and the conviction of the unsaved, it was one of the most wonderful times ever experienced during my thirty years of ministry.

From Kingsland, we moved over to Llano for another Pentecostal meeting. The same people were praying, singing, and preaching. We experienced another

¹* That place is covered with nearly fifty feet of water (1996)—lake bottom

visitation of the Holy Spirit. Maybe it wasn't as spectacular as the two meetings before it, but any degree of visitation from the Holy Spirit is indeed wonderful!

The Camp Meeting Marriage

For a break in our serious thinking, there in an afternoon meeting one Sunday, while in Llano, everything came to a halt. Someone whispered in Brother Light's ear, "There's an older couple coming in the front door to get married. They have the marriage license in their hands."

Brother Light looked at me with a startled look and spoke, "Brother McKeehan, I haven't renewed my ministerial license. Can you perform the ceremony for me?"

I said, "Yes." By then, the elder couple was almost up to the front where we were. He had the marriage papers in his hand. When it was explained to them that I would perform the ceremony, they were just as glad. Afterward, they went on their way rejoicing.

Visit Back to the Hill Country

About two years had passed since I had touched base with my brother, Ray; in fact, not since he agreed to remain as pastor of the Burnet Church. Out there somewhere on the evangelistic field, a great urge came over me to go back and visit him. When I got there, I found a very sick man—some type of fever. Using some of the home remedies of my mother, Josephine, plus a few of my own, he survived. Soon he was ready to get going again.

Visions

At the time, it was thought best to stay with him a few days. We took a ride out south of town where one could see the rolling hills for mile after mile to the southwest of where we stood. His remark was, "When I leave here, I am going deeper into the heart of Texas." However, it would be awhile before that would come to pass. It would be a term in several P.A. of J.C. churches; marriage to his lifetime spouse; to their union, two girls would be born, with several grandchildren to follow; he would be employed by the U. S. Soil Conservation Service; thus, moving about to various places. The only hope for pulpit ministry was small groups here and there. It was his greatest pleasure to be a witness on the job and other places. The final place, before retiring from the Soil Conservation Service, was Coleman, Texas. Coleman (being in the heart of Texas) was his wish of many years, before it came true.

Burial—Coleman County

Not long after that, life's journey came to an end for him, sixty years after the brush arbor revival in northeast Texas where he was converted. Dorothy and I were called to come for the funeral. Standing by his casket, I recalled the many things we had done together in our early years. I thought of the quote he gave, once when I was going to the north country to minister for awhile. Here it is:

"In whatsoever Valhalla the spirits of all prophets foregather, both Americans and Texans, God rest your soul."

We laid him to rest in Santa Ana Cemetery, Coleman County, Texas, at the age of eight-eight years.

Think It Over

Soon after the P. A. of J. C. was organized, opinions began flowing into church

groups. The larger portion of them were focused on the female gender. In many cases, if the guidelines were not obeyed, they were not welcome in the assembly. Today, some call it ideas of the old school. Others call it out-of-date opinions. In the following notes, a few of them will be written down. Some of them were preached by ministers as regular routine. Were they Biblical? You be the judge.

*The “Do Nots”²***

Do not cut your hair. Fix it anyway you like, but do not cut even a snip.

Do not wear short sleeves; anything above the wrist is considered short.

Do not wear jewelry; no rings on fingers, no bracelets, no earbobs, no beads.

Do not go on the rostrum wearing bright colored clothing, especially red.

Do not wear open-toed shoes.

Do not wear make up, lipstick, etc.

Do not let fingernails grow extra long; don't paint them.

Expanding Territory

When the brethren voted me in as leader of the National Youth Department, many more doors of opportunity were opened. This made it possible to obey my calling as an evangelist and, at the same time, work with the young people, many of whom reconsecrated their lives to the Lord. Some of the places had only a few young people; others, a larger number. This, of course, made no difference to me. It was a two-fold ministry and worked out just fine. Everyone was pleased, including the pastors.

I knew my time as youth leader for the Pentecostal Young People's Association would come to an end in the future. It always had before, about two years on
² ** Author's comment: "Oh, what a change time has wrought!"

average. In my heart, I looked out there in the harvest field and saw the need so great and the laborers so few. Everywhere one looks, you see many calling for help. I also know there is only so much one person can do. So fellow workers, let's climb each mountain as we get to it.

A.B.I. and Winnipeg

The annual convention of the P.A. of J.C. was coming up soon in St. Paul, Minnesota. After making my way to the convention, I asked, "Was it fate or the work of the Holy spirit that brought S. G. Norris and I together?" He asked me if I would like to attend the A.B.I. School. If I stayed, he would see that my expenses were paid. I accepted on the spot. Everything I owned was with me. To me, this was going to be a new experience.

Not long afterwards, Brother Norris approached me with the following message. "I have a call from a group in Winnipeg, Canada. They need an evangelist."

Another new experience, I thought. With my bible and guitar for companions, I took a train for Winnipeg. When not in use, I always carried the guitar in a case. When the train stopped at the border, the customs official came through the train, checking. He looked me over first, then the guitar case. "Open it up," he said. When he saw my old, well-worn songbook on top of the guitar, he said, "Shut it up." I think he thought it might contain a machine gun. Some crooks do just that.

To continue the trip to Winnipeg, I can say of all the places I have ever gone, those folks gave me the greatest reception of all. After the revival was over, they also gave me a wonderful farewell.

Arriving back in St. Paul, I said to myself, "Now I will settle in and study awhile." This talking to myself did not turn out as complete as I had thought. The young people of Midway Tabernacle and those of the Bible School joined together and asked me to be their leader until school was out in the spring. This turned out to be one of the largest groups ever for me to get together a program in which everyone could be a part. It kept me so busy I neglected some of my school studies. It was a pleasure to serve! I will always remember them.

North Country

It was now spring in Minnesota - time for the Northwest Council Convention. The district had three states: Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa. At this convention, Brother Norris with his big open heart announced there was a shortage of money for the school. In order for more worthy students to attend, they must find some way to raise more money. The subject was brought up and discussed. What about the idea of having someone on the field represent the school and evangelize at the same time? They asked me if I would consider the task. The idea of preaching the gospel while possibly winning a few souls at the same time sounded all right. I would give it a try. For me, the preaching of the Word comes first in any endeavor. After I took the position, many doors of opportunity opened that otherwise may not have been. It was a great experience, meeting with those wonderful people in that area. How they did love my illustrated messages! They were always ready with thanks of appreciation. I suppose my presence in behalf of the school helped some. However, I still think the brethren picked the wrong person for the task. I did very little good as a fund-raiser.

Pacific Northwest

Was it fate or what? May the Lord judge. During work for the Bible school, plus evangelistic work for the Northwest Council, I met a brother from the Pacific Northwest who had come all the way from the West Coast. He explained he was pastor of a P.A. of J.C. church in Tacoma, Washington. His purpose here in this area was to earn a few extra dollars because his church group was small. He had offered to pick up some new cars in Detroit for a company back in Tacoma. He needed drivers. He had heard of me as an evangelist. If I would drive one of the cars back to the West Coast, he would be glad to have me for a revival. "Think it over," he said. The company furnished enough money for gasoline and food for the driver. Maybe it was the genes of my ancestors who migrated to America that prompted me to accept his offer. When I thought of the plains and the sight of the snow covered Rocky Mountains I thought, "Yes, this may be my best chance." The two-thousand mile trip may not be so bad. It was so very beautiful when we were once there.

We were blessed in the revival there. I never count converts. That is left to the local folks. During the time I was there, mail was received from the Texas brethren saying, "Won't you please come back? You are a Texan and we need you." The folks in Tacoma were fine folks. Their duty toward my welfare was over. I was now on my own. This was a time of gloom and despair. Here I was 3,000 miles from home and very little money. What could I do? I was glad Brother Magrew gave me a place to stay. It was at least a place of shelter till I could decide what to do. I knew that if there was anyone, anywhere that could help me, it was the man with the big heart back in St. Paul, S.G. Norris. I mailed a letter to him. Sure enough, he persuaded a friend of the Great Northern Railroad to give me a pass. On the passenger train to St. Paul, Minnesota, I almost starved during the long trip, having only a sandwich or two each day.

When the train arrived late at night in St. Paul, I was still one-thousand miles from home; that is, the home of my parents.

Road to Texas

I got a road map from an open all-night gas station, checked the highway toward Iowa, then started walking. I'd rest awhile and walk some more. When daybreak came, I began picking up rides on the road. Night overtook me in drizzly rain in Ames, Iowa. There I made the decision to take the only money I had and buy a ticket on the railroad to Texarkana, near where my parents lived. I was so tired and worn out when I was on board the train I fell asleep. The only time I woke up was changing trains in Kansas City, Missouri.

In Texas

Finally, arriving in Texarkana, I went to my parents home for a brief visit. From there it was off to the annual convention of the P.A. of J.C. After greetings with friends, it was business as usual. There is work to be done in the harvest fields of the Lord. Let's do it.

Courtship and Marriage

Some sixty years ago, while traveling the country as an evangelist and working as Youth Leader for the P.A. of J.C., I met some of the finest dedicated young ladies to be found anywhere. Almost, if not all, were looking for the same thing(a spouse and a home with the possibility of children. To marry someone without the same goal was out of the question for them. There are many of the ministering brethren who already had a growing family before they felt the call to go out into the gospel work. There is a difference here. The vows made by

one's spouse at the time of marriage stays in force even if they were later called to the ends of the world. As for me, I was growing tired of the single life. I began to wonder where that person was that will fit into my life.

My brother, Ray, and his spouse were pastor of the Boling, Texas church. I had been there before. I had met the Patterson girls. There were three of them. We had gone to a few places as a group, such as fellowship meetings. They were well respected, leading members of the local church. The one named Dorothy was my choice. My brother, Ray, and his spouse were pastor for a term. In a visit to them, he mentioned that he believed Dorothy liked me. She wanted to know when I might come to Boling and give the young people an encouraging boost. In answer to a letter he wrote, I said, "Very soon." After the letter from Pastor McKeehan, I arranged to go back for a few days in behalf of the young people. But anyone can guess I also had something else on my mind.

In time, Dorothy and I were married in the spring of 1943. With pleasure, I can report that from fifty-three years to date (1996) she has been by my side. The vows we made in Bay City, the place where we were united in marriage, has held firmly. She gave me four sons. For all these years, she has been active in all types of gospel work, except pulpit preaching. With her teaching and exhorting, enough was filled in to be almost equal to the pulpit ministry of her spouse. The boys are now grown and gone. Three are married and following careers of service to mankind. The youngest is still single (1996) and says he will most likely spend his life as a single person. We will see.

Working and Preaching

Not long after Dorothy and I were married, when our first child was on the way, knowing the few dollars we received on the evangelistic field would never pay a doctor or hospital bill, we went to Texarkana to work awhile with the Railway

Mail Service, where some time was spent “during the war.” During the stay there, calls still came in from brethren needing the help of an evangelist. One of the calls came from Gladewater, Texas. It seemed the most urgent. I knew if I accepted the call it would mean giving up the position with the Railway Mail Service for good. In my thoughts, I went back a few years in memory to the final night of my calling to the ministry... “to follow the footsteps of Jesus wherever they led.” The Lord never called me to be a mail clerk. It was good to know it did help in times of great need. So now I would go once more to seek a few lost souls. The pastor in Gladewater of the group calling for me was an uncle of Dorothy’s. His affiliation was with the Pentecostal Church, Inc.

Gladewater, Texas

My first purpose in accepting the call, of course, was seeking the lost. Also, I was an advocate of the much discussed merger of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ and the Pentecostal Church, Inc. While with Him there will be plenty of time to discuss the subject. For just as surely as we live and breathe, it will come to pass.

Revival in Gladewater

When the meeting began at the appointed time, it was a revival from the start. The anointing of the Holy Spirit was upon us. As an evangelist, it’s not my policy to count converts. However, some of those working around the altar said fifteen received the gift of the Holy Spirit. For this, we rejoice.

A year or so later, we heard a young man went out from that church group and was preaching and pastoring churches all over the country. Some said he was Wayne Pounders.

Patriarchs

“To every thing there is a season. A time for every purpose under heaven” (Eccl. 3:1).

Near the close of my thirty years as a minister of the P.A. of J.C. and U.P.C., much thought was given to the five most worthy leaders that gave me the encouragement I needed to keep going in all kinds of pressure. I thought of the children and who I would tell them about. There were five who touched my life more than any others (four brethren and one sister. These I knew as mentors and spiritual associates. As these names are written down, I am aware there are many in the realms of early Pentecost who left their life's work with an equal service to others. It is hoped their story will be remembered and others will appreciate them as much, or even more, than can be written here.

The Roll Call

L. J. Hosch ~ A. D. Light ~ R. L. Blankenship

S. G. Norris ~ Mary Williams

A short essay on each of these patriarchs follows:

L. J. Hosch

He grew up in the area of Athens, Texas, and married Katy Lee Vernon. They were blessed with several girls and two boys. One of the sons became a Pentecostal minister. Three of the daughters married ministers. L. J. became very active in the official department of the P.A. of J.C. and was active in becoming a mentor to a number of young preachers. There is much to be read in the beginning of this work that concerns his work for the Cause.

A. D. Light

I remember one of the greatest honors ever given to A.D., (one I doubt he even knew about). The Texas brethren called him “the apostle of the cedar brakes.” A.D. spent his life in the beautiful Central Texas hill country. His home was in Llano, Texas. Those who knew his spouse all said she was a humble person, ready to lend a helping hand to her preacher husband.

In the area of Texas where the Light family lived were many ranchers, farmers, and sheep and goat raisers. To them, A. D. brought the message of Pentecost. The times I spent with him is beyond compare.

A. D. and spouse were blessed with four children. The oldest son, Raymond, pastored churches in the area of Austin, Texas. The other son, Carl, brought sunshine to many lives with his music and singing. The daughter, Mary, unlike many youth of the present times, wanted to help in the ministry of her parents. The younger son died at around the age of ten. Before sickness overcame him, I dare say there was no other youngster in all the country that admired the person of Wallace McKeehan more than Silas Light. Should I rejoice or weep? Blessed be the memory.

R. L. Blankenship

He was born in the area of Montgomery County, Texas. My first glimpse of him was in one of those early Pentecostal conventions that was more like an old time camp meeting. Arriving on the scene, R. L. was preaching up a storm; and believe you me, he could preach! I started sizing him up. As I did, another preacher whom I'd met several years before remembered the brother who did not wear a neck tie. R. L.'s face was so homely looking with a big wad of fat and skin hanging under his chin, I gave him a nickname right then and there, “the buffalo preacher.” Every time I saw him, I'd think of a bison buffalo. When we think of what this fellow accomplished in the Texas district of the P.A. of J.C., it

was the **inner** man, not his buffalo face that mattered. Just the fact that this preacher was the one who performed the ceremony when Dorothy was united with me in marriage is enough for me to accept him as a lifetime friend. His spouse was spoken of as queen of his domain. She was admired both by those in the church, as well as those outside.

In the old times, the pastor's home was a place of visitation and fellowship. Those traveling from afar made it the first stop, usually arriving hungry and tired. "Ma", as she was called, was ready to quickly prepare something for them to eat and drink. Her fame of being able to cook up something good with few provisions was known far and wide. Ma and Pa Blankenship had three children born to their union, two boys and one girl. Data of their lives is unknown to the author.

S. G. Norris

First, let's write a few notes on why we find him in the area of the twin cities of the North country. The way this writer found this out was in a friendly discussion with him regarding titles such as "mentor" and "father in the Lord," or first-pastors usurping some kind of hold on someone. (Contrary to some people's talk, S. G. was not untouchable.) He always had time for any useful subject, even with little people like me. However, he did not believe in wasting time on useless matters.

S. G. was a true Ohio buckeye in his youth, a graduate of an Ohio university. Not long out of school, he began feeling the Urge calling him to the ministry. Not knowing just what move to make, he turned to the person he considered his mentor, W. T. Witherspoon. His question was, "If you were in my place, where would you go to put down roots and fulfill this calling stirring in me?" The answer came swiftly, "...northwest of here there are the twin cities of the North

Country. They are in the state of Minnesota. The harvest there is great. The laborers with our message are few. If I were in your place that is where I would go.” And go with his spouse he did. They became pastor of Midway Tabernacle. S. G.’s vision was much farther than the twin cities. It would reach not only the USA, but to the harvest of the world’s lost people. S. G. and spouse were leaders in organizing the Apostolic Bible Institute whose doors were open to all worthy students.

S. G. and spouse were blessed with four children, James, David, Elenora, and Ruth. Sometime back, I was told of his passing. Let us call him “the patriarch of the Oneness message in the North Country.” As he spent most of his adult life in the country where the Norse people’s descendants settled, it seems fitting to remember him with a Norse proverb: “In whatsoever Valhalla the spirits of all prophets foregather, both Americans and Buckeyes, God rest their souls.”

Mary Kraus Williams - Matriarch

This lady came on the Pentecostal scene at a most welcome time. The need for Bible teachers was greater than any other time in Pentecostal history. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the beginning of the 20th century was drawing converts by the scores. The tents, brush arbors, and open-air meetings were drawing people from all walks of life. Many had never touched a Bible, never read a verse, never heard a Pentecostal preacher before.

Mary observed all of these things. The desire to teach the Word that she carried all her adult life was stronger than ever. The question in her mind was how to teach these people the Bible way of life(what method to use to reach them. Then, it dawned on her. If we had a school, we could teach young people from Christian homes first; then, as workers, they could teach the new converts. Thus, a cycle of one-on-one would be created. Mary talked it over with her husband.

Soon a training school was organized in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Many students went out from there teaching and preaching. Thus, we can say those who before knew nothing of a Bible way of life were rescued. Otherwise, they may have fallen back to the life they knew before conversion. This writer also gives credit to Mary Williams for the creation of the one-on-one cycle widely used by the U.P.C. Yes, Mary will be remembered by many spiritual descendants.

“Her children shall rise up and call her blessed.” (Eccl. 31:28)

The Diary

Quite often, someone will ask, “What was written in your diary each day?” The people who keep diaries have different ways of doing so. What I tried to keep is something like this:

Where I went today.

Whom did I see, talk with, etc.

What was my message (if I was in church).

Did I receive an offering? How much?

How many miles traveled and the means of travel.

Special events, camp meetings, conventions, etc.

Evangelist to Pastor

Can a minister change his gift from evangelist to pastor? The following episode may help to answer the question. Up until Dorothy and I were married, evangelism seemed to be my calling. Even after our first child was born and the second on the way, both of us continued on the field conducting revivals in various places. When we were expecting the second child, we went into retreat in the home of Dorothy’s mother in Gladewater, Texas. Soon after the baby boy was born, we had two minister brethren visit us in three days.



L.J. Hosch



A.D. Light



Mary K. Williams



S.G. Norris



R.L. Blankenship

First, it was O. S. Owens. After a friendly greeting, he told us his business(would we consider taking a pastoral position in Montgomery, Alabama? He had interest there and believed we would be just what they needed. We thanked him for being our friend and one who cared. However, we thought it best to remain in Texas for awhile yet.

Our next visitor was L. J. Hosch, my old mentor from years past. He had been voted in as superintendent of the Eastern Section of the P.A. of J. C. in Texas. In our conversation, he spoke of being appointed to look after the welfare of groups in the section. The group in Zavalla, Texas was in a divided upheaval. They would accept whoever was sent to them. L.J.'s words to me were, "since you are not too busy right now, what about you going as pastor and give it a try? You may be the person to bring peace and harmony." I promised to think it over and call him as soon as possible

In my promise to think it over, there was the glory of past blessings: the many converts baptized and who had received the Holy Spirit. As a single evangelist, about all I carried was one piece of luggage and sometimes a guitar. My needs were few and easy to supply. I thought of some of the places I had gone: from Kettle River in the cold north of Minnesota to the citrus groves of extreme South Texas, to the snow covered mountains of the northwest and the corn belt of Iowa. My thoughts were endless, but now I had a family to think about. In pastoral work, it would not be two or three weeks in a place and then move on. It could be much longer periods of time. I would have all kinds of problems dealing with people around me. So I thought it over good before I called Brother Hosch. This I did. Using his own words, I sent a message that I was ready to "give it a try."

Arriving in Zavalla, after moving into the house the group used as a parsonage, we got ready for our first service. The majority of the folks in the area who made the church in Zavala their home church were wonderful folks. During our three years there, they remembered us in many ways. When the fields and gardens were ripe, they brought us some of the bounty of various kinds. We had several evangelists to come with their spouses for revival meetings. To name a few, there were L. Stevens, Torrence, and Mason. At times, I did work for the people of the area to supplement our income for the family's needs. Our stay in this town of the East Texas country presented the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Zavalla

It has been my policy through the years that if I believe I can accomplish more some other place than where I am now, then go there. This was my innermost feeling about Zavalla. So the proper thing for me to do was to seek to find the will of God in another place. To a number of good people in this place, we bade good-bye with many pleasant memories, and many not so pleasant.

(Post Scripts by Dorothy McKeehan)

At Zavalla, I was introduced to drawing water out of a well, washing clothes by hand with an old-fashioned rub board, cooking on a kerosene stove, heating the house with wood and outdoor facilities as the old fashioned "privy." All of these things were new to me, along with also tending two small children. Yes, it was a memorable place! We both learned a lot!

Leaving Zavalla

The next door of opportunity for pastoral work was in the town of Seabrook,

Texas, a small place on the shore of Galveston Bay. A brother I choose to call a friend, was leaving the pastor's position there to go to Texas City, about fifteen miles from Seabrook to do work there as pastor. Titus McDonald made contact with me. He gave me an invitation to come over and meet the people and preach for them when I was free to do so. I went for a week-end. In the meantime, we had just left Zavalla. Our plans at the time were to go to Atlanta, Texas to stay with my parents for awhile, possibly to the end of my Mother's life. She had been diagnosed as having only a short time to live. While Dorothy cared for her, I would seek employment to support us. I had not heard from the folks in Seabrook for a month or so. Then, as we had already set the plans in motion, we got the message from Seabrook. They wanted us for pastor. Now what? We discussed it with my parents. The final decision was made by my Mother. She said, "You go on and fulfill your calling. My time is very short. Your life with this good woman has lots of time. Go on with her and the children. You can be a blessing to many out there in the harvest fields of the Lord. Remember, we love you."

As we prepared to go, I looked back to give them a farewell wave. It was, indeed, filled with sadness. These folks we were leaving had one of the greatest of lives, even though it was filled with many hardships. She had given birth to thirteen children, reared them, plus two grandchildren. To complete the story of Josephine Moore McKeehan, we must write that she followed the Lord the best she knew. When L. J. Hosch came along as messenger of the Lord, preaching the gospel according to Acts 2:38, she accepted it and was baptized in Jesus' name. She received the Holy Spirit while doing chores at home. When we were leaving them, going once more into the harvest field of the Lord, that final wave was unforgettable. Dorothy and I were on our way to a different experience.

Seabrook

The church group at Seabrook was few in number. This is not a problem if one has faith. It's always possible that people will be converted and added to the church. It's always a good policy for a pastor to learn a trade. It may come in handy when there is a family to feed and provide for. Especially if the church folk are doing their best and still the bills are not paid. Something special happened to the McKeehan family the first year we were in Seabrook that gave us joy for a lifetime.

The School Years

The four sons born to Wallace and Dorothy McKeehan would be going to school about twenty-five years. This was due to the unusual spacing between each birth. This did not count for college years. The school years began with our firstborn son, Wallace Lee, while we were pastoring the church group in Seabrook, Texas. There was a space of about one-hundred yards between the house where we lived and the schoolhouse. When the little fellow began the trek back and forth across that space for the entire school term, it was somewhat overwhelming. Just to think, for the coming years we would be raising a family. It gives parents a feeling of responsibility, but a joyful one not felt like this before. As to the first one, he did well everywhere we went: graduate of the Lakeweer School system in Marion County, Florida; received his B.A. degree at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida; received his Ph.D. at the University of Texas in Austin, Texas

Bay Area Fellowship

During our term at Seabrook, we noticed a short time after we arrived that the brethren in the towns around us had no time set aside to meet for groups to have

fellowship. With the huge metroplex to our west called Houston, we felt left out. Brother V. A. Guidroz was about ten miles to the east in Baytown, and Titus McDonald was south in Texas City. We three got together, talked it over, and agreed to meet for one service each month on a Monday night.

It was a great time we had. By the second meeting, all the brethren in the area joined up with us. In the local church, we invited a number of evangelists for revivals at various times. Regardless of how hard I tried, the local church always fell back into a *status quo* attitude. I, being an evangelist a great part of my life, grew weary of the *status quo*. I decided to make a trip to the Texico District convention. Dorothy would remain in Seabrook with the boys.

Going to Texico

It was a joy to attend one of those conventions. We brethren in East Texas had always thought of that area as the dust bowl. I found the ones who lived and worked for the Lord's cause to be happy and zealous to work for and willing to reach out to win the lost souls. Sure, they had problems the same as other area's of ministry. Brother A. H. Browning was District Presbyter. I had worked with him in the Youth Department in bygone times. There was some discussion concerning the need for pastors in various places.

In Texico

Brother Browning turned to me, stating, "There's a vacant place in Las Cruces, New Mexico. They are looking for me to send them a pastor. If you are interested in coming to the Texico District, what about going by there while you are in the area? Get acquainted and preach for them. I will give you a letter of introduction. If you want the pastorate, all that's necessary is a vote of

acceptance.” I decided to do once again as my old mentor said in times past, “Give it a try.”

Texico

At the weekend services, the folks in attendance accepted me as their pastor. Woe is me! Here I am pastor of a church in the dry country of New Mexico. My family is still in Seabrook on the coast. What must I do? The answer to my question was easy. Take the group who needs you the most. My opinion would be Las Cruces. So be it. A trip back to Seabrook followed with arrangements made for moving the family, after resigning the pastorship.

Gulf Waters to Desert Sand

It was spring of the year and the Coast Country School was out when we prepared to bid farewell to Seabrook,. Our first son passed the second grade. We, as a family, became travelers west to New Mexico. Our term as pastor began. By prayer and consecration, we tried to make it a place of peace and blessing. Every few months, we had evangelistic groups visit to keep a spirit of revival in our midst.

Las Cruces

The renowned Warren evangelistic group, Bud, Jimmie, Joyce and Velma came to visit us in Las Cruces for a revival. Their singing and music was quite a lift for the church group. Their homebase was Gladewater, Texas. The fact that they were from a more familiar place, to us as home country, made the Warrens a double blessing to us. In our family circle, our second son, Richard Kent, began school in his first year. Our third son, Stephen, was born in Las Cruces. We were to be in Las Cruces for three years.

The Florida Episode

This story began on a large fruit grower's orchard in the Hood River Country of Oregon. We were to do some home mission work. To be able to carry out our mission, it would require working to have food for the family. We were living in a house supplied by the owner. There were rumors to the effect that Oneness Pentecostals were all over the area like lost sheep without a shepherd. With an agreement with the owner of the orchards, we would work five days and then be free to do whatever we desired on week-ends.

On our first weekend we arose early so as to go to Portland. We would get the true facts about what to expect when going out on our mission. We had a good visit with Brother Yadon, the Presbyter. He assured us that in the early times of the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit there were some mighty revivals in the area. He even gave us a few names. The work in the orchards was hard, but we took the time to seek out some of those wandering Pentecostals. Most of them were not interested in getting together and forming an organized church in the area.

When the apple harvest was over, most of the other work was over also. It was then when the great test came for me. Already a September chill was in the air. Here I was 2,000 miles from my home base, with children to put in school. I had no job, no church, and not much money. What could I do? I let myself sink down into a melancholy mood. Then Satan's messenger came and sat on my shoulder. He whispered to me, "I got you now, preacher. What are you going to do now? You are all alone out here with your family left to starve."

Then from deep within me the Spirit spoke with a message from my Lord. Something like this: "Fear not my child. I'm with you always." Immediately a feeling of peace swept over me. There was springtime in my soul. That same day in the late afternoon, a telegram was delivered to me. It was from a church group in Central Florida. A dear friend and fellow minister had told them about me. He recommended me to them for pastor(Wayne Pounders, a brother who received the Holy Spirit a few years past in a revival where I was evangelist in Gladewater, Texas. After calling them back to be satisfied they really wanted us to come, my answer was, "We are on our way."

We were a sight to see as we pulled out of the apple orchards, now barren, perhaps never to see them again. In the car were Dorothy and I, two teen-age boys, one seven year old boy and a pet dog. The trailer we were pulling was loaded to the ceiling. We bid good-bye to Marge (my sister) and her spouse. (Not long afterwards, her spouse died and she returned to the home country of her parents in East Texas.) Our plans were to travel about thirty hours each leg of the journey. By switching drivers every few hours, we could do it. One of our problems would be to keep the teenagers pacified. Being students of US history, we tried telling tales of each town or place we passed through(some fact, some fiction. As long as I live, it will be difficult to erase the time I believe surely a guardian angel must have been watching over us. I had turned the driving over to Dorothy so I could take a nap. Sometime later, I was jolted out of sleep with the car and trailer going bumpety-bump. Dorothy had gone to sleep at the wheel and was going along on the oval space beside the pavement. Thanks be to God and His angels, we were out of the mountains and in the plains country.

Late in the afternoon we passed through the city of Cheyenne. Did I have a good story to tell the boys in the back seat? Yes, indeed. They listened. Even with

two drivers, we were about finished. We stopped in Loveland, Colorado. We kept our pet dog in the motel with us. After a bedtime snack, we all sacked out for a good night's sleep. The next leg of our journey was to be Fort Worth, Texas. Staying with kinfolks for a couple of days gave me time to have the car tuned up. Then we bid them all good-bye and moved out on the long leg of the journey to Central Florida. We made it safely.

Bellevue, Florida

Now, thirty-five years since the time when we became pastor of the group in Bellevue, Florida, it's time to ponder. Is there anything we believe should be remembered? Yes, indeed. Quite a number received the Holy Spirit during that ministry. Among those baptized in Jesus' name were our two older sons, Wallace Lee and Richard Kent. Secondly, we must never forget A. M. Armstrong, Superintendent of the Lake Weir High School. In the last year of Wallace Lee's high school, Armstrong persuaded us to remain in the area because he knew for sure there was a scholarship to be given him for college, leading our son to receive it and continue to receive his B.A. degree at the University of Florida and his Ph.D. at the University of Texas. Yes, Mr. Armstrong, you will always be remembered.

Closing

To write history, one must think history. To think history is to live history, mentally. As this work is brought to a close, I admit there have been times of sadness as well as joy. I have no regrets, no bitterness. Along with Dorothy, we always suppressed our feelings, whatever they were, by calling it a different experience.

In writing these episodes, very few dates were used. To the reader it may appear

as a history of the author's life, and it is; however, only a part of it. In the beginning of this work, mention was made that it would not be possible to write an essay of every acquaintance, only those who touched my life in a special way. However, it can be said to one and all, "there are no acquaintances so dear, no associations so sweet , as those we find at the feet of Jesus." Let us hope all will benefit from the **ones trying to follow Jesus.**

In our retirement years, Dorothy and I attend Calvary Pentecostal Church in South Fort Worth. Ron Liles has been pastor for a number of years. When the choir sings songs as "It Will Be Worth It All, When We See Jesus," we rejoice, knowing we did what we could.

Official Data Service

Evangelistic..... 1932-1943 (single)
Pastoral/Evangelistic..... 1944-1964
Youth Leadership (Texas District).....1936-1939
Youth Leader (National)..... 1939 - October, 1940
Presbyter for Texico District.....3 years

Wallace McKeehan, Author

Addendum

The brethren and sisters listed in the following pages are some of the ones called to carry the message of Oneness Pentecost into all the world. It is believed they made a greater sacrifice in those days than is necessary today. Why? For the simple reason they had to go alone. Most of those listed are now sleeping in the dust, forgotten by the fast moving world of this age. They never dreamed of a time when home mission work was done in groups. About the only time they saw their fellow workers was at an annual convention. I try to picture them in an imaginary way at the same small depot waiting for the Pentecostal United Express. Once on board, they look for that blessed assurance they would work alone no longer.

Wallace McKeehan, Author