The formation and early development of the Church of God in Christ

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THE INTERDENOMINATIONAL THEOLOGICAL CENTER

THE FORMATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE
CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

BY

OLIVER J. HANEY, JR.

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the Master of Divinity degree

Dr. Thomas J. Pugh, Advisor

Date, April 12, 1969
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Dedication

To my wife, LaVerne, for her devotion and assistance during my Seminary career.
Preface

The Church of God in Christ was organized in the latter 1880's. Since that time, it has grown tremendously. It has also made an outstanding contribution to the development of a sense of moral duty and spiritual responsibility in the people of the world, and it takes its place among other Protestant denominations of the world. Even though the above cannot be denied, I find it astonishing and disappointing that the truth about the Church of God in Christ as to its historical beginning, practices and its doctrines are actually known by so few. Therefore, I feel it necessary for me to make known the history of the Church of God in Christ, and have assumed that task in the essay. It is hoped that many of the misunderstandings about the Church can be made clear. It is also my aim that those who do not know about the Church, may through this essay become acquainted with it, and that those who are already familiar with it, may be further enlightened.
Acknowledgement

The task of acquiring material about the history of the Church of God in Christ is a very difficult one. This is due to the fact that the Church has not been consistent in keeping historical records. The records that are available are widely scattered among members of the Church, and in several books pertaining to the life of the Church that have been written by others. However, the efforts to produce this essay were possible because so many people helped.

I want to make special mention of my friend, Elder Charles E. Blake, Co-pastor of the Greater Jackson Memorial Church of God in Christ, San Diego, California, who has been especially helpful in gathering data for this essay, Dr. Thomas J. Pugh who served as my advisor during my Seminary career at I. T. C., and whose helpful suggestions after careful readings of the manuscript made the essay possible, Dr. Hugh M. Jansen, professor of Church History, and Dr. Ralph L. Williamson, professor of Church and Society, who assisted in the compilation of materials for this essay.
I. Introduction

The purpose of this essay is to provide a concise and comprehensive history of the formative years of the Church of God in Christ. In this essay the formative years are considered to be between 1894, when its roots were planted within the minds and hearts of men, and 1934 when the church had fully developed and had begun to spread rapidly around the world. It is the primary intention of the writer to compile historical data from within the Church (i.e.) minutes, historical documents, pamphlets, etc., as well as other historical information. It is hoped that through these efforts, the writer will be able to present a comprehensive early history of the Church of God in Christ.

In order to make the presentation orderly and clear, the essay is divided under four main headings, namely: The Founding Fathers, Events Incidental in the Beginning of the Church, the Formation of the Church of God in Christ and the Emerging Church of God in Christ, 1906, 1934.

This essay is limited to the first forty years of the development of the Church of God in Christ, because a general history of the Church from its formative years to the present necessitates a much broader scope of investigation than is intended for this essay.

It is the sincere desire of the writer that this essay will be beneficial to the Interdenominational Theological Center Family, to the members of the Church of God in Christ, and to all who read it.
II. THE FOUNDING FATHERS

The history of the Church of God in Christ can be traced back to the year of 1894. It had its beginning in the southern part of the United States. Its earliest roots are found to have originated in the tri-state area of Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee. In the later 1800s the southern part of the United States was heavily dominated by the southern Baptist denomination. It was from this body that the roots of the Church of God in Christ emerged.

In the year of 1894, Reverend Charles Price Jones was the pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Selma, Alabama. He was motivated by the conditions of his Church to search the scriptures more diligently. He believed that God required everyone to live a sinless life, and he sought to affirm his belief through the use of the scriptures. This was not in harmony with the teachings of the traditional Baptist Churches. Through searching the scriptures, he became dissatisfied with his traditional Baptist religion. He saw the traditional Baptist faith and beliefs as a body of teachings that brought forth no visible fruits. He says, "I was not satisfied with a faith that brought no fruits, or else of so poor a quality spiritually and a religion that none of the signs, spoken in the scriptures followed. Mark 16:14-18, Hebrews 2:1-11."

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1 Hereafter, Reverend Charles Price Jones will be identified as Rev. Mr. Jones.
2 Charles H. Pleas, Fifty Years Achievement, (City Unknown: by the Author, Date Unknown), p. 1.
It is the opinion of the writer that Rev. Mr. Jones sought visible physical expressions of religion. He seemed to have been of the opinion that unless divine healing and the speaking in unknown tongues took place among the adherents, it was not true religion. If this is the case, and we assume that it is, his opinion seem to have been based on a literal interpretation of the New Testament. He could not perceive of his then present religion as Biblical because he could not see the signs mentioned in Mark 16:14-18, and Hebrews 2:1-11 working visibly in the Church. The particular signs mentioned are healing the sick, casting out devils, speaking in unknown tongues, and sanctification. Rev. Mr. Jones was of the opinion that these were the signs that should and necessarily ought to be in the believer. If these signs were not present, the particular faith or denomination was not considered as Biblical.

Rev. Mr. Jones began to preach these doctrines and concepts in the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Selma, Alabama, and in the Mount Helm Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi. He preached basically a doctrine of holiness, sanctification, purity, sinless lives, and the signs of speaking in unknown tongues as visible evidences of conversion. He sought to make people perfect and the above ingredients were necessary evidences to show an adherent that the new faith was on the right road. All of the above mentioned concepts were interpreted in a way that was different from the traditional Baptist interpretation. However, with a working knowledge of such he continued to preach upon these new emphases in the Mount Helm Baptist Church. Nevertheless, he preached doctrines such as sinless lives, speaking in unknown tongues, etc. that were contrary to traditional Baptist polity from
his pulpit.

In the year of 1895, Rev. Mr. Jones was joined by other Baptist ministers. These ministers believed as he did about scriptural interpretations. So, consequently, the movement spreaded to other Baptist Churches. These churches were located in Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas. Later he was joined by, the Reverend Misters F. S. Sherrill, A. J. Bradley, Kelley Bucks, W. S. Plesant and a young fiery evangelist, C. H. Mason. These men were all members of the General Baptist Association. This association was being held in the Mount Helm Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi. At this time, Rev. Mr. Jones was still the pastor of the church. Not only were they permitted to proclaim their interpretations of the scriptures, but it is here that the first booklets on Pentecostalism were distributed.

Here, Rev. Mr. Jones attests to this fact. He says:

At this association, we sold our first booklet, a Treatise on the 12th chapter of First Corinthians, under the title, The Work of the Holy Spirit in the Churches. We also began about the same time to publish Truth.

The later publication, Truth was a pamphlet that contained some of the basic teachings of pentecostalism. This pamphlet was intended to inform the masses of the doctrines that these pentecostal preachers were advocating. The weeks following these publications, many new converts were added to the Church. These pamphlets were, without a doubt aids to the successful attempts of the newly motivated preachers to reach the masses and win converts.

3. Ibid., p. 2.
Following this Association, Rev. Mr. Jones states that,

The Holy Spirit bade me call a Holiness Convention. Said I, "When Lord?" "The sixth of June", said He. "What day will that be Lord?" I asked. "Sunday", said He. Later when the Almanac for 1897 came out, I found that it was Sunday. Then I, young as I was in the way of the Holiness Faith, knew it was the Lord...We began this meeting Sunday, June 6, and continued two weeks, studying the Bible, and praying day and night.4

This was to be the first Holiness Convention to be held by this body.

In this convention, it seems as though emphasis was on fasting, praying and reading the Bible.

Immediately following this Convention, events transpired which led to the initial break with the Baptist Church and the Central Baptist Association. Here it is not known physically what incident took place. But from sources that are available, we can assume that the incidents were doctrinal disputes. That is to say, that the events that led to the break with the Baptist Churches were disputes over scriptural interpretation, and the visible signs that the pentecostal preachers believed ought to be in Christians. These signs were mentioned earlier in this paper. Bishop Charles Pleas, who was one of the first members of the Church of God in Christ, describes these events as persecutions. He says:

We were persecuted by the churches, Eventually the Associations and all sects combined against us. But this persecution compelled us to build another sect, which was not our desire. We contended that

4 Ibid., p. 2.
Christ is all. But we were extreme in our fight. The times demanded it. But we from the first only wanted to exalt Jesus and put down man-made traditions.

In speaking of having been persecuted by all churches, the writer assumes that Bishop Pleas was referring to the Baptist Churches and the Associations who ousted those who believed differently and attempted to advocate their beliefs in Baptist Churches, against the wishes of Baptist adherents. It was also during the persecutions that Rev. Mr. Jones was ousted as the Pastor of the Mount Helm Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi. Immediately following his ouster, he joined with other preachers who believed as he did. Together they became evangelists and held revivals. These revivals spreaded like wildfires throughout the south.

Along with C. P. Jones were others of the same belief, including C. J. Mason, W. S. Plesant of Hazelhurst, Mississippi, Pastor of White Oak and Domeral Baptist Churches; J. E. Jeter of Little Rock, Arkansas. They preached relentlessly that which they saw in the scriptures, "Follow peace with all men and Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." They contended that all who had that conviction, and patterned their lives accordingly were doing as God would have them do.

These men continued to conduct revivals, preaching this new doctrine whenever and wherever they could. Since they were not yet organized and had no established church or building in which to either worship or conduct revivals therefore, they held revivals

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5 Ibid., p. 2.
6 Ibid., p. 3.
at any place that was available to them; in private homes, on the
street corner, or the nearest sidewalk, when a street corner was
not available. During these meetings, they prayed, sang and preached.
The latter was always a firey pentecostal gospel. In spite of
their being loosely organized, or unorganized, these meetings were
very successful. The chief symbol of success is the attention of
the masses attracted, many of whom joined their fellowship. These
preachers continued to conduct revivals wherever they could. The
pattern of the revivals seem to have been similar to the pattern
of the "Great Awakening Revivals" of the early 1800s. This is so
in that they were held in homes, gin houses, on street corners,
and what has become a traditional mark of the Pentecostal movement,
the store front church, and more important is the number of people
who accepted Christ and decided upon having spiritual guidance
provided for them in the new church.

Even though these pentecostal preachers had been barred from
preaching Pentecostal doctrines in the Mississippi Baptist Churches,
Rev. Mr. Jones received an invitation to conduct a revival at the
Asia Baptist Church in Natchez, Mississippi. He was to do this in
behalf of an educational fund raising drive. That drive was for
the specific purpose of helping a Baptist college in Natchez, Mis-
sissippi. (The name of the College is not known.)

He responded and conducted a revival for
one week. As a result, quite a number of
persons were sanctified. These included
the principal of the school, professor L.
W. Lee. This brought on a fight and the
pastor lost his pastorate. As a result,
Rev. Jones was asked to return and modify
or correct that which he had preached.
However, he was not able to respond. In his stead, Rev. C. H. Mason conducted a week's revival and gained one convert, Charles Pleas, Jr. (now Bishop of Kansas). This was in 1896. Rev. Mason returned the following year, 1897. But the doors to all churches were closed against him, and all others who believed and supported the doctrine of sanctification. Therefore, he was forced to deliver his first message from the south entrance to the Courthouse. At this time, a brother, John Lee granted Rev. Mason the privilege of holding the meeting in the front room of his home. However, it proved to be too small for even the first night. Because of that, one Mr. Watson gave consent for the meeting to be held in an abandon ginhouse which he owned...

He was also assisted in the meeting by Rev. C. P. Jones, and W. S. Plesant. This service proved to be a miraculous success. In that meeting one, Jennie Watson was healed of an affliction which the doctor had pronounced as hopeless. She lived for twenty years afterwards. On the same night, there were five pistol shots and two shots from a double barrel shotgun. Some persons were wounded, but none of the wounds were fatal.\footnote{Ibid., p. 4.}

This particular revival was very successful, and many new converts were added to this new church. This was evidence that the Lord blessed their efforts. A more exciting phenomenon was the gift of healing (Jennie Watson), and an increase speaking in unknown tongues, than had been witnessed in other meetings. These were some of the signs that these pentecostal preachers had originally believed and sought after, come to function. This one particular revival, was very successful. At the same time, other revivals were being conducted
in other southern states that were equally as successful. As these revivals grew and spreaded throughout other southern states, these preachers became more and more aware of the need for central organization. Consequently in 1897, the preachers who believed alike about sanctification and pentecostalism met again; this time their aim was organization, and to hold together that which had been re-vived.

Upon the advise of Elder Mason, Elder Jones, and Elder Plesant, a meeting was called and votes were allowed in order to give the people an opportunity to express themselves as to what they wanted. In response to that privilege, sixty stood as Charter Members. (of the Holiness Pentecostal Church).  

The sixty persons who stood in that meeting are considered to have been charter members of this yet un-named church. However, it was readily seen that this organization could not survive without a leader. As a consequence, Rev. C. H. Mason was the unanimous choice. He performed his first baptismal service on the first Sunday in March, 1897. Those who were baptized in that service were, Addie Golden, Lulu McCollough, Charles Pleas, Jr..., and an elderly man, named McMillan....The first Church added to the number professing sanctification was located in Carroll County sixteen or seventeen miles north of Lexington, Mississippi. 

Of the many persons who were instrumental in the formation and development of the Church of God in Christ, there are two persons who stand out uniquely in their contributions to its beginning, namely, The Rev. Mr. Charles Price Jones and Elder C. H. Mason.

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8 Ibid., p. 8.
9 Ibid., p. 7.
They provided leadership from the beginning of the movement in 1894 until 1906, when they split over doctrinal dispute.
III. EVENTS INCIDENTAL IN THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

From 1894 to about 1906, this body existed as a very loosely organized Church. It was continuing to spread to the point that its outreach was now beyond the southland and into northern and western parts of the United States. Consequently, the Azusa Street Revival of 1906-07 in Los Angeles, California, was one of the primary incidents that led to the development of the Church of God in Christ. It was held at the Azusa Street mission in Los Angeles, California.

In 1906, the center location for the Pentecostal movement was Los Angeles, California. Both preachers and laymen alike, who believed in the Pentecostal doctrines converged at the Azusa street mission. Somehow, most probably through travel and word of mouth, the news of the revival reached Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi. It too spreaded like wildfires. It was not long before C. H. Mason received word of the revival. When he received word of the revival, he too was seeking the baptism of the Holy Ghost. He immediately made plans to attend the revival.

Elder Mason, among many others attending this revival and received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost with signs of speaking with other tongues.

The Azusa Street Mission was a former church, and at one time a livery stable that was converted into a place for conducting pentecostal revivals in the early 1900s.
Having received the Holy Ghost, at the Azusa Street revival which was conducted under the auspices of Elder W. J. Seymour, Elder Mason returned to Memphis even more convinced that the doctrines that he had been advocating were right. Realizing this, he renewed his evangelistic quest throughout the southland. During these new revivals, he preached on the basis of what had happened to him at the Azusa street revival, and interpreted this as New Testament Christianity. He preached the Gospel as he understood it. The fact was, he testified that he had had a personal experience of receiving the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. This he knew because with the gift of the Holy Ghost was accompanied by the signs of speaking in unknown tongues. "He came back preaching this as a New Testament doctrine, to which many of the brethren were adverse." A great many of the brethren were adverse to Elder Mason's interpretation of the signs of speaking in unknown tongues as evidence of conversion. Elder Mason held that all who were saved and sanctified according to the scriptures (Basically Acts 2:14 and Mark 16:14-18) would and should speak with unknown tongues. A great many followers disagreed with him over this matter. Among those who disagreed was an ardent

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12 Church History, 52nd Holy Convocation Booklet, November 25, 1952, p. 7.
supporter and co-worker, Rev. Mr. Jones. It was this disagreement between these two leaders of this all ready loosely knit organization that led to the second incident of significance in the formation of the Church of God in Christ, namely the schism of 1907. This conflict led to a decisive split between the two leaders, Rev. Mr. Jones and Elder C. H. Mason. By this time, the latter was the presiding officer or overseer of the whole movement, while the former was the overseer of the churches in Arkansas. These two leaders met again in 1907. It was during this meeting that the split finalized.

The feud over the speaking in unknown tongues as a sign of conversion had led to a split between Elder Mason and Rev. Mr. Jones. The former continued with a group of ministers who followed him. This group later became known as the Church of God in Christ. The latter organized another pentecostal church. It was known as the Church of Christ Holiness, U.S.A. The remainder of the paper will give attention to the former.

Later in the same year, Elder Mason called a meeting in Memphis, Tennessee of all ministers who believed in receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost according to the scriptures, Acts 2:4. Among the group of Elders who responded to this call were, E. R. Driver, J. Bowie, R. R. Booker, W. M. Roberts, R. Hart, W. Welch, A. A. Blakwell, E. M. Page, R. H. I. Clark, D. J. Young, James Brewer, Daniel Spearman, and J. H. Boone. These pioneer ministers were responsible for the early strides of the church's growth.

The above mentioned men became the first General Assembly (this was the Governing body of the Church of God in Christ.) They firmly believed that their faith was founded upon the apostolic preaching

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as received on the day of Pentecost. Elder Mason was the Senior Bishop or chief Apostle.
IV. THE FORMATION OF THE CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

Immediately following the break with the faction led by Rev. Mr. Jones, and the formation of the first General Assembly of the Church of God in Christ, this newly organized church was faced with two primary tasks, namely, an official name, and an organic administrative structure. Let us now turn our attention to these two problems and the solutions that they found for both problems.

First, what shall be the name of the new Church? During the years 1894 up to 1906-07, this very loosely organized body had no official incorporated title, nor did it have a traditional word of mouth title. However, the people who belonged to the group were identified as "the Saints," "Holy folk," "the Holy rollers," and "the sanctified people." These un-orthodox titles never were really representative of the body but were all used quite frequently until an official name was given. However, prior to this time preachers and revivalists frequently labeled the church as the Church of Christ, or the Church of God. So we conclude that until 1906-07, the movement was not known by an official title.

In 1906, Elder Mason revealed that God had given him the name, "Church of God in Christ" as the name for the new church. Elder Charles Pleas, one of Elder Mason's first converts tells it this way:

Having been rejected by the Baptist, Elder Mason sought God prayerfully for the correct name of the church. While walking alone a certain street in Little Rock, Arkansas, the Lord revealed this name "Church of God in Christ" with the following scriptures to support it. 1st Thessalonians 2:14. "For ye brethren become followers of the church of God which in Judea are in Christ Jesus. For
ye have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have for Jesus." His forceful message concerning the same so influenced the others of the brethren that it was agreed to accept it as the name of the Church. However, this caused much trouble with the clergy bureau. It was further revealed to Elder Mason in view of the scriptures, to name it Church of God in Christ. This was readily accepted and there was no trouble with the clergy bureau. 14

This title, "The Church of God in Christ" today is the official legal name for the Church.

In order that we fully understand this title, let us look at it as it is summarized in the History of the Church of Christ (Holiness), by Otho B. Cobbins. He traced the title through the steps in the development through which the development passed.

"Recapitulation"

1. Movement
2. Church of God
3. Church of Christ
4. Church of God in Christ

The first three titles are those that were used by the individual preachers and churches in the period from 1894 to 1906. In 1906-07, the name Church of God in Christ was given to the followers of Elder Mason. This body later became a national denomination, and the title mentioned above was chosen as the official title.

Having chosen a title for the denomination, Elder Mason tuned his attention to internal government. He was given authority by the

14 Ibid., p. 6.
charter members to govern the church as he saw fit. Consequently, Elder Mason was given the title Senior Bishop and Chief Apostle. The two titles were used interchangeably. This title was one that implied that absolute authority for organization was given to Bishop Mason. He was to govern the body, set up various national and state departments and to appoint overseers as he saw a necessity. Bishop Mason was given this authority because he was a charismatic leader who believed very strongly in fasting and praying, particularly when matters of religion had to be discussed or when a vital decision had to be rendered. During these times, he was known to have prayed until he felt that God had given him the answer. Then he would relate the message to the brethren. Because of his prayer practices, his messages were accepted as having come directly from God. This is one reason why he became so powerful. This form of government was accepted by the majority of the members of the general assembly. It was later adopted and ratified as an official part of the constitution of the Church of God in Christ. In the constitution we find the following:

Article II, Senior Bishop, Nothing in this Constitution shall operate to deprive Elder C. H. Mason, 1121 Miss. Ave., Memphis, Tennessee, the present chief apostle, founder and Senior Bishop of the authority he holds as chief apostle, of the Church of God in Christ.15

One of the first organizational acts performed by Bishop Mason was to appoint a group of overseers. Their delegated responsibilities

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were to assist Bishop Mason, the Senior Bishop in the over-all supervision of the Church-at-large. There are no official dates known as to when these overseers were appointed. But from the trends of action and development in the Church between 1906 and 1922, the writer assumes that they were appointed between 1911 and 1922. Bishop Charles Pleas one of the original charter members gives this account:

Elder Mason was given power to appoint overseers and to authorize the organization of auxiliaries to the Church. Following this, Dr. Hart was appointed overseer of Tennessee; Elder J. Bowie was appointed overseer of Arkansas, and Elder Mason assumed the oversight of Mississippi for a short while, after which Elder J. A. Lewis, was appointed overseer of Mississippi. As the church grew other overseers were appointed. These included Elder E. M. Page, (afterward Bishop), overseer of Texas; Elder E. R. Booker, overseer of Missouri; Elder E. R. Driver, overseer of California. Elder W. B. Holt was appointed national field secretary.16

This can be described as the first official cabinet of the Church. The plans for this cabinet were devised by Bishop C. H. Mason. It was also presented to the General Assembly by Bishop Mason. It was unanimously accepted and ratified by the General Assembly. It should be noted that just as Bishop Mason was given power to appoint overseers, he was also given the authority to remove any or all of them according to the dictates of his own judgment. Said power was also stated in the constitution. It is stated,

Article II. Overseers of the Church of God

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in Christ.
The overseers will be appointed by the senior Bishop and may be removed for cause by the Senior Bishop or his appointee.¹⁷

This power was duly exercised by Bishop Mason from 1911 thru 1934. During this period, He saw the need for a constitution, however, this was not fulfilled until 1922.

The process of forming a constitution for the Church was set in motion years after the church's first leader had gone it alone for fifteen years. The earliest possible date that is available for actually drawing up a constitution is 1922. In that year, Bishop Mason appointed a committee, which was to meet and draw up a constitution for the purpose of establishing some form of rules and regulations for the purpose of governing the National Convention. The Committee met under the leadership of Elder E. R. Driver, overseer of California, who was appointed chairman of the committee. In the same convention, a constitution was drawn up and ratified by the General Assembly. The purpose of the constitution is stated thusly:

Whereas, it was the sense of the Elders and members of the Church of God in Christ in 1922 in Memphis, Tennessee, to organize and incorporate a National Convocation, to do religious charitable and missionary work, to put into effect the benevolent intentions of their constituents, by eliciting combining, directing and outlining the work of the denomination from a national to an international scope with fundamental principles and organic rules.

Article I...Name

This organization shall be known as and styled

The National and International Convocation of the Church of God in Christ.

Article II...Object

This convocation by uniting all churches such as may desire an organization of this kind, shall promote home and foreign missions to foster and encourage Christian education, to publish and distribute Sunday School and other religious Literature, and enlarge in other Christian endeavors to build the kingdom of God.¹⁸

The first constitution proved to be quite inadequate even to govern the General Convention. Realizing this serious dilemma, Bishop Mason appointed another committee in 1926 to study the present constitution and make proposals for the improvement of the old one, or to construct another. The new constitution while it would be inclusive of the old would be primarily for the sake of governing the whole church. In the same year, 1926, the General Assembly approved and ratified the new constitution. This constitution was also accepted by Bishop Mason.

Between 1906 and 1925, there were four basic auxillaries established within the church, namely, the Sunday School Department, the Young People's Willing workers, the National Women's Department, and the Home and Foreign Mission Board. They were all set up by Bishop Mason. They were set up in the following order. (1) In 1911 Bishop Mason saw the need for the establishment of a National Women's Department.

While scanning the different areas where the Church was in the course of development in search of

a woman capable of organizing that department of the church work, the name of Lizzie Woods was brought to Elder Mason. Upon inquiry, he succeeded in getting acquainted with her. She was Matron of a Baptist Academy at Dermott, Arkansas. Being convinced of her capabilities, Bishop Mason appointed her as General Overseer of the women's works. This is what the National Supervisor of the Women's department was called at that time.\textsuperscript{19}

Mrs. Woods accepted the offer from Bishop Mason and became the first General Overseer of the National Women's Department. Immediately following the national convention she began a tour of local churches. Her mission was primarily to organize district and state auxiliaries. On her first tour, she met a minister, one Elder Robertson, whom she later married. Finding two groups of women in the church, one group praying and the other group studying and teaching the word, one known as a prayer band, and the other the Bible band. She combined the two under the name of prayer and Bible band.\textsuperscript{20}

With the organization of this Band, the Women's department was officially in its formative stages and functioning with its first official auxiliary. Mrs. Robertson continued her work of establishing local auxiliaries.

She strengthened a small group of women whom she found sewing, called the daughters of Zion and organized them, giving them the name, Sewing Circle. For she remembered the great women of Acts 8:36-40.\textsuperscript{21}

Since the establishment of these two auxiliaries, the Women's department has grown tremendously. By 1934, there were sixteen various

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{19}{Ibid., p. 13.}
\footnote{20}{Ibid., p. 13.}
\footnote{21}{Ibid., p. 13.}
\end{footnotes}
auxillaries within the church.

(2) The second national department established by Bishop Mason was the Young People's Willing Workers. (Y.P.W.W.) This department was established in 1914.

In 1914, Elder M. C. Green of Arkansas was appointed National Y.P.W.W. leader. At this time, the activities of the National Youth Department were confined more or less to sessions in the National Convocation of the Church of God in Christ. After a few years, Elder O. T. Jones, then of Fort Smith, Arkansas, was appointed National Y.P.W.W. leader to succeed Elder Green. Under Elder Jones' administration, Y. P. W. W.'s were organized in all the states.22

The program was designed primarily to unite, educate, and train young people in the church. This organization grew very rapidly. In 1929, the General Assembly and Bishop C. H. Mason granted the department permission to hold an annual convention. The first convention was held that same year.

Four years earlier, the National Sunday School department was organized. It too was organized by Bishop Mason. Elder J. C. Christmas was appointed the first National Superintendent. During the first eight years of his administration, the Sunday School was established in every state where the Church was in existence.

The last major auxiliary to be established during the formative years of the Church of God in Christ was the Home and Foreign Mission Board. This department was designed to work as an agent in mission

22 Ibid., p. 13.
efforts within the continental United States, to further the cause of the gospel and the establishment and support of Churches of God in Christ in foreign countries. This organization also grew very rapidly. By 1934 the Church was preparing to make missionary ventures in Africa, Jamaica and Haiti.

With the establishment of the Home and Foreign Department, the Church of God in Christ was well on its way to a definite place among other protestant denominations. It had come from a humble beginning in 1934 to becoming a giant by 1925 with the signs of an established denomination.
V. THE EMERGING CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

The adoption of a constitution and the establishment of the four major departments were turning points in the history of the Church. For after these matters were settled, the church grew very rapidly throughout the continental United States and in five foreign countries. After its beginning and growth in the south for six years, the church seemed to have taken strides of growth primarily in the northern areas of the United States. By 1934, the church could boast of having grown throughout the entire United States, in Trinidad, West Indies, Turks Island, Africa, and Jamaica.

As the church was preparing to spread worldwide, its leaders realized that much more intensive planning was needed. They saw the need for stronger auxiliaries and departments. Among the departments needed was, a department of Education. However, it was through the efforts of a small group of individuals in the state of Mississippi that a department of Education was established.

In 1914, another significant incident occurred in the history of the Church of God in Christ, namely the organization of a Church related school. This school was organized by a group of ministers and laymen in the State of Mississippi. Its purpose was to provide religious literary and industrial training for the children of Mississippi. The school was opened to all children regardless of religious affiliation. However, it was not long before the Church at large joined the workers of Mississippi in this effort.

By 1920, the importance of the school had so greatly increased, that the idea of making it
a National institution was introduced in the National Convocation of that year in Memphis, Tennessee. After some deliberation among the brethren, the school was accepted as a National institution, upon the endorsement of Bishop Mason.

After the school was accepted as a national school, a national fund raising campaign was begun. The purpose of this drive was to raise money to purchase land, the construction of new buildings, and the acquisition of an acceptable faculty. Following this campaign, which was very successful, the school was named, Saint's Industrial School. Mr. James Courts was named as principal. During the formation of this school, the term principal and President were used synonymously. Mr. Courts served as the administrative head for a period of sixteen years. He served from 1914 to 1930, at which time he died. Upon his death, Bishop Mason appointed Mrs. Arenia C. Mallory, then one of the faculty members, to the presidency. Mrs. Mallory launched another fund raising campaign. Her primary aim was to develop the school's services from the status of a general industrial school to a fully accredited Junior College.

In response to these efforts, substantial offerings and donations were given for use in the erection of dormitories, halls, the purchase of additional land, the equipment of laboratories for Science, and for everything that goes along with an A-1 institution of learning.  

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23 Ibid., p. 44.

24 Ibid., p. 54.
This fund raising drive was also very successful. In the following year, two new buildings were constructed on the newly acquired campus. So by 1934, Saint's Industrial and Literary School was well on its way to becoming a fully accredited two year Junior College.

In the time span, between 1906 and 1934, the growth of the church members was tremendous. But because records were inadequately kept, there are no official records available that could give the definite census. The Church has been held together, not by its leaders, physical organization and educational concerns, but the system or set of beliefs, doctrines and Philosophy.

Now at this point, let us say a brief word about the doctrinal beliefs of the Church of God in Christ. The Articles of Faith are strictly Pentecostal. They are based upon the teachings of both the Old and the New Testaments.

The writer feels that a brief resume of the doctrines of the Church of God in Christ are adequately expressed by Bishop C. H. Mason in the Church Manual, also in Fifty Years Achievement by Charles H. Pleas. The writer has chosen to quote from the latter.

We believe

In the new birth, or regeneration, John 3:1-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17.
In sanctification as a living reality. The priests were commanded to sanctify themselves, Lev. 11-14.
To sanctify myself is to set apart for divine service, Lev. 11; 44; 2; Timothy 2:21. To be sanctified by the Word is to be kept from all evil - John 17:15. Jesus prayed the father to sanctify His disciples and all that would believe in Him through the Word. John 17:17. Romans 15:15.
--That Jesus' Priesthood was after the order of Melchisedec Hebrew 5:6; Genesis 14:18.
--That the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire with
signs following, Matthew 3:11, Mark 15:16. It is a promise for all people of all ages, Joel 2:28, Acts 2:38-39. It did come to pass and is now falling, Acts 2:1-4; 8:14-45. To all ages Acts 2:39. The Apostles were urged to be filled with the spirit, Ephesians 5:8.

--That all healing is of God, both material and divine, II Kings 4:39-44; 20:7. Jesus anointed eyes with clay, John 9:6-7; Matt. 8:5-13.

--That the Sacraments, the Lord's Supper should be carried out until our Lord shall return. Matt. 26:29. We believe that which was in the cup was the same that was offered at the passover, Lev. 23:5-13.

--In the resurrection of the dead, Daniel 12:1-3; John 5:28; 1 Corinthians chapter 15.

--There is a first and second resurrection, Revelation 20:6 also that there is a first and second life and a first and second death, Rev. 21:8.

--That sanctification is a progressive work, not to bring to Christ, but carried in those who are sanctified in Christ, 1 Corinthians 2:30.

--We believe that marriage is honorable but whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge, Hebrew 13:4; Matthew 19:3-10; Romans 7:2-3.

--Not in Church members going to law with each other, before the unjust, 1 Corinthians 6:1-3.

--That hell is an eternal reality, Mark 9:42-43.

--In the Cardinal Doctrines of the New Testament; after the death, the judgment, Hebrews 9:27.

--That there is no redemption after death, Ecc. 11:3; that God brings wars to cease unto the end of the earth; that war are brought about by unrighteous desires of men, James 4:1-3 that all are loosers in the final end, James 5:1-7.

It was from these teaching that the roots of this Church were embedded in the hearts of thousands of people throughout the continental United States and in many foreign countries. It is also through these teachings that the Church continues today. While these doctrinal beliefs are not perfect, the members of the Church of God in Christ feel assuredly that the basic tenets of the Christian Faith are found within them, and therefore, cherish these "Articles of Faith."
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this essay, the writer has traced the origin of the Church of God in Christ from its formative years to its flourishing in the mid-thirties. This essay has brought light to many of the reasons for the original dissensions in interpretation of scriptures with the Missionary Baptist movement, which took place in the latter 1800s. It was these particular motives which caused the Church of God in Christ to become. In writing this work, the writer has also given particular attention to the founding fathers and the specific roles played by them. We have also discussed the Schism of 1906 between Elder C. H. Mason and followers, and Elder C. P. Jones and followers. It will be remembered that this particular schism which centered around speaking in tongues as an outward expression of having received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, eventually led to a final split between the two leaders in 1906. This split gave rise to two Pentecostal Denominations, namely, The Church of God in Christ, and the Church of Christ Holiness U.S.A. In this essay our attention has been given to the former.

We have also discussed the administrative offices of the Church primarily in the time span of 1906-34. It will be remembered that during this period the church was governed through the office and works of one dominating figure, Bishop C. H. Mason.

We mentioned the phenomenal growth and size the Church had reached by 1934. By this time it had spreaded and developed throughout the entire United States. We also discussed the Articles of Faith of the Church of God in Christ, which are primarily Pentecostal.
So with its pentecostal doctrines and beliefs, the Church of God in Christ has grown to be the second largest pentecostal denomination in the United States. It has not reached this position because of its organizational structure, nor because of its monarchical type of internal government. But rather because of its beliefs and practices.

In the years to come, the Church will again encounter some of the snares that it faced during its formative years. This will be due to the fact that some of its beliefs and practices are quite different from those of other protestant denominations. However, come what may, the Church of God in Christ can, it must, and it will survive. It will survive because the majority of its teachings are undoubtedly valid; and relevant. Therefore, the Church of God in Christ yet has a great deal to offer to contemporary man.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


