

CONFERENCE OF PENTECOSTAL LEADERS, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, MAY 7, 1948

A conference of Pentecostal leaders having been arranged to follow the Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals at the Congress Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, twenty-four representatives of eight Pentecostal groups met in one of the rooms of the hotel on Friday, May 7, 1948. The names and addresses of those attending the conference are as follows:

R. S. Dunbar, International Pentecostal Assemblies, 3442 A. No. 23 Street,
Milwaukee 6, Wisconsin
C. B. Smith, Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, 50 Euston Ave., Toronto, Ont.
C. M. Wortman, P.A. of C., same address
J. H. Blair, P.A. of C., 208 Wexford Ave., Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
Ivan Q. Spence, Elim Missionary Assemblies, P. O. Box 451, Hornell, New York
Arthur H. Stanton, E.M.A., same address
E. J. Fulton, Open Bible Standard Churches, 851 - 19th Street, Des Moines 14,
Iowa
W. B. Teaford, Foursquare Church, 1100 Glendale Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif.
R. O. Carvin, Pentecostal Holiness Church, Route 3, Box 693, Oklahoma City,
Oklahoma
Byon Jones, P.H.C., 2205 London Street, Portsmouth, Virginia
T. A. Melton, P.H.C., 209 Cherry Grove Street, Dunham, North Carolina
Alpheus Noseworthy, P.H.C., 42 Gerrard E., Toronto, Ontario, Canada
J. A. Synan, P.H.C., 234 South 9th Avenue, Hopewell, Virginia
H. T. Spence, P.H.C., 3833- 17th Street, N. E., Washington, D. C.
J. Stewart Brinsfield, Church of God, Montgomery Ave., Cleveland, Tennessee
H. L. Chesser, C. of G., same address
John C. Jernigan, C of G., same address
Ernest S. Williams, Assemblies of God, 434 W. Pacific St., Springfield, Mo.
J. Roswell Flower, A. of G., same address
R. M. Riggs, A. of G., same address
Stanley H. Frodsham, A. of G., same address
Noel Perkin, A. of G., same address
Hart R. Armstrong, A. of G., same address
W. E. Opie, A. of G., 725 Clark Street, Fresno, California

E. S. Williams opened the conference by referring briefly to the International Conference in Switzerland in May of 1947, at which conference Pentecostal brethren from twenty-two nations were assembled. He reported the results of that conference did not measure up to expectations, but that some good had resulted, for a number of Pentecostal groups in Europe had been encouraged to organize for self protection and the welfare of the work of God. The brethren in Italy have organized as The Assemblies of God in Italy, and a group in northern France are now in the process of similar organization. He stated that one indictment against the Pentecostal Movement had been that it cannot be of God inasmuch as the movement is so divided. Brother Williams concluded his introductory remarks by calling the conference to prayer, invoking God's guidance and blessing.

The conference was then set in order by the election of the following temporary officers: John C. Jernigan, Chairman; J. Roswell Flower, Secretary.

Brother Williams then made a plea for a united front, emphasizing those points of common belief and avoiding those that might provoke disunity.

Noel Perkin, who had been a member of the party which went to Switzerland last year, stated that there are two points for conference, those matters which

affect us at home and those that affect us in foreign lands. He said that we have been challenged as a movement to set our own house in order if we would be helpful to our brethren in Europe. In the early outpouring of the Spirit, the people were of one heart and one mind, and there is no reason why we cannot come to a closer agreement and fellowship. He said there is a great deal of overlapping and unnecessary expense that can be avoided. The Assemblies of God work with the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada in a very happy relationship, and we would like to see such a condition develop between the responsible Pentecostal groups in this country.

In foreign work, if we have some form of association on the field, we could get some concessions cooperatively we cannot now get separately. There is the education of the children of missionaries on the field. If we could establish a Missions school on a cooperative basis, the expense of adequate schooling for missionary children could be shared by the cooperating Pentecostal bodies. He also mentioned the training of native workers on a cooperative basis, and the opening of receiving homes for missionaries at certain coastal points. We were obliged to open such a home in Shanghai, China in order to effect economy.

Then there is the fellowship aspect. The Scriptures emphasize there is one body, one spirit. We must recognize we have a unity and fellowship which is expanding. The work in Brazil is an example. One leader in Sweden objected to the Assemblies of God going into Brazil, but Swedish missionaries in Brazil asked for our help. There are now between 100,000 and 120,000 believers in Brazil, and the Assemblies of God have more missionaries there than the Swedish missionaries, and all are working together in blessed harmony.

In North China, there are more Swedish missionaries than Assemblies of God. They have an international conference, and there is a very happy arrangement for cooperative missionary effort.

Then there is the question of relief work in Europe. That can be a very profitable phase of cooperative work. We can all join in helping our brethren in Italy, in France, and in Germany to organize to help themselves, and for self protection. It would be well to set up a European Committee representing all our organizations.

Brother Teaford was recognized by the chair, and he said that he approved the suggestions made by Brother Perkin, and advised that an interdenominational Pentecostal fellowship be formed. He reported that recently in Los Angeles a great Youth Rally was held representing all the Pentecostal bodies in that area, and 7,000 were packed into the Shrine Auditorium and many thousands outside. The power of God fell on those outside the building, and a number received the Pentecostal baptism. He suggested that we plan for an annual rally, and that when we go to Europe we represent one body -- The Pentecostal Movement of America.

Brother Fulton expressed himself as fully in accord with the suggestion for cooperation abroad, but is also concerned about unity in America. We have our own organizations, and God is moving us together. The N.A.E. is doing something in the way of promoting unity, but we who know the reality of power in the Holy Ghost have a message, a call, and a responsibility that extend even higher than the N.A.E. If any people should be together, we should be together in spiritual fellowship, spiritual accord, and spiritual vision, standing shoulder to shoulder. He expressed a hope that something will come out of this meeting to promote national and international polity.

Brother Jernigan, the chairman, then expressed himself as desirous of thinking about the movement as a movement united. He expressed amazement that we know so little about each other, and hoped this will be a forerunner of another meeting. He said the Pentecostal bodies may never be one organization, but that should not prevent a working agreement among us. We have been in the movement for a long time, and yet we know very little about each other. We do not differ with one another as much as we differ with the brethren of the N.A.E., and we get along with them fairly well. He said he would like to see the appointment of a joint committee to arrange for a meeting of all the Pentecostal brethren in some centrally located place for the purpose of bringing about some Pentecostal association. There has been too much fear from not knowing each other very well.

Brother Jernigan said that he disapproves of churches being located all on one street in a city. A city of 5,000 inhabitants could have more than one church, but new churches should be located properly to reach unchurched sections of the city, and not be located on the same street or too close together. Then, too, he disapproves of ministers constantly changing from one organization to another. There should be an association to control these conditions, and he expressed a desire for the setting up of an association to form some working agreements between the Pentecostal organizations.

Brother Spence said there is more ill will wrought from want of thought than from want of heart. He said that one N.A.E. leader said to him, "Why are you Pentecostal brethren not closer together; we get together, why can't you?" He reported that Clyde Taylor said, "If the Pentecostal people get together in a fellowship, they can make an impression second to none." Brother Spence suggested that in this meeting we ascertain what date would be suitable for representatives from these groups to meet together that all may be benefited. "We are rugged individuals and had to submerge ourselves to come into the N.A.E. God may want us to submerge ourselves on a larger scale, to come together and submerge our denominational identity in one great cause."

Brother Synan said, "This should not be only a beginning; it should be followed up. There are a number of areas in which we can work together to eliminate points of friction. We should request our governing bodies to designate certain ones to meet together to explore the possibilities of cooperation and fellowship. We are one in spirit, and when we get together we find this to be the case. I joined a ministerial association and am glad that I did. If I can sit with those who are not Pentecostal, then most certainly we should be able to get together and cooperate with one another."

Brother Byon Jones then said, "The need in Europe requires there be no delay. We must get busy and do something. Can we not elect a steering committee to make arrangements to get something formulated to be presented to each group so that we do get together in a larger meeting?"

Brother Williams agreed that he would be happy if such a committee be appointed so that we can present the matter to our General Presbyters next September. He said he agreed with Brother Jernigan that he felt grieved when our ministers go in upon the territory of another church. "We have our district officers to educate as well as our preachers. Let us preach to the preachers that they should respect one another. It will take time, but we can hold steady until things do work out."

Brother Fulton informed us that cooperation is being worked out in Tacoma, and it is working splendidly in Cleveland, Ohio and in other places where groups are working together in splendid harmony. If this spirit can be filtered down through our denominations, it will be a great blessing to all.

Brother Teaford suggested that the officers in the groups represented in this meeting write to each official body suggesting that each organization appoint one delegate from their body and that these delegates meet at some central point within ninety days, and they draft some rules of association, and then possibly at the next annual meeting of each body these rules can be presented to each individual group, so that by a year from now the movement of spiritual fellowship would be well started and on its way. Possibly following the next N.A.E. meeting, we could meet with more delegates here and some plans could be made for next year, the Lord willing, for either some district or national rallies, or whatever would develop out of it.

It was suggested that each denomination send at least one delegate with the privilege of sending two, but not more than three. That when the vote is cast, it be restricted to one vote from each denomination. Schools and editors could attend this first meeting in an advisory capacity.

Brother Teaford said that his idea in having one representative is that this committee would only be for the purpose of writing the by-laws. Then when we come together as the result of this preliminary meeting, it will be the time to have departmental representation. This committee is exploratory.

It was then moved that a resolution be adopted, and after some minor revisions, the motion prevailed unanimously as follows:

Resolved, that those Pentecostal denominations (groups) which are organized and incorporated, with governing bodies, be requested to send one, two, and not more than three delegates, with each denomination restricted to one vote, to a meeting to be held in Chicago, Illinois, beginning the evening of August 3 and continuing over the 4th of August for the purpose of exploring the possibilities of interdenominational Pentecostal cooperation and fellowship and to formulate by-laws for such a fellowship to be presented to each individual group for approval, and that the present chairman, John C. Jernigan, and the secretary, J. Roswell Flower, be authorized to head this committee.

Respectfully submitted,

J. ROSWELL FLOWER

Temporary Secretary