
The Examination for the Historic Development of China Assemblies of God

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Preface:

China Assemblies of God in Taiwan was developed by the Assemblies of God USA. Therefore, her historic background of faith is intimately with Assemblies of God USA. The development of China Assemblies of God in Taiwan not only closely related to Assemblies of God USA, but also associated with the history of Pentecostal faith. As the matter of fact, the rising of Pentecostalism was very closely with a series of revival movements in the church history. And such results of the development of the Charismatic Movement are persistently inherited.¹

The historical development of the Pentecostal faith was continued by following the Methodism of John Wesley, the Holiness Movement in 19th century, Keswick Convention, and Charlie Parham's Revival Movement, etc... When we examine the modern Pentecostal movement, we see there was no any apparent leader had shown. But from the point view by way of the consistently developing of modern church history, no matter the Reform movement (1517) in 16th century by Martin Luther, the raising of the Pietism (1670) and the Methodism (1730) in 17th and 18th centuries, the missionary movements led out by William Carey who arrived at India (1793) to spread the Gospel in late 18th century to 19th century, and till the so-called the Commence of the Pentecostal Spiritual Movement by Charles Fox Parham(1900) and the Azusa Street Movement(1906) in 20th century, all of their following sequences are clearly recognized.

Even though we examine in detail the modern Pentecostal movements we see there was no any apparent leader had shown. But when we take view to the consistent development of the church history we find that Reform Movement led by Martin Luther in 16th century which emphasized "Righteousness through Faith" was about Salvation; the Revival Period of the Pietism and the Methodism in 17th and 18th centuries was about Sanctification; the

¹ 中國神召會台灣區議會，「中國神召台灣區議會組織章程總綱第五條」，《中國神召會台灣區議會總綱》(台北：神召會出版社，2010)，p3-10；《中國神召會網址》
Retrieved May 5, 2010 from the [www.http://www.aog.org.tw/](http://www.aog.org.tw/)

mission led by William Carey to India from late of 18th century to early 19th century was about Missionary; and the so-called the Commence of the Pentecostal Spiritual Movement led by Charles Fox Parham as well as the Azusa Street Movement in the early 20th century was about Holy Spirit. Therefore, if we stand on the perspective of history, the development of Pentecostalism was inherited through the ways of Reform Movement, the Sanctification Movement, and the Missionary Movement. The Assemblies of God believes that the church history since 2000 years ago, which through these events till the occurrence of the rising of modern Pentecostal Movement, is a series of works of the Holy Spirit that led out this Revival Movement. ²

Historic Development of China Assemblies of God

The historic development of China Assemblies of God has an intimate relationship with Assemblies of God USA. In October 1907 the first missionary with the Pentecostal faith had come to China to preach the gospel. However, this happened exactly 100 years late than Robert Morrison who was the first missionary reached China. Since then there were more Pentecostal missionaries continually arrived China. They received together a big filling of the Holy Spirit, and brought out a great revival. ³ At that time the work of the Holy Spirit was processing in the United States, and the Assemblies of God USA brought that into China for the reason of that God's presence is kind of a presence of power. ⁴ We now discuss the development of the Assemblies of God in the land of China.

I. Reclaimed Period: Before founding

China Assemblies of God was reclaimed by William Wallace Simpson (1869~1961), who was a missionary of the Assemblies of God USA. He was born in 1869 at White County,

² 孟惠霖和孟保羅，《聖靈與能力—五旬節經驗基礎》，揚子江和陸張潔明譯(香港：羨智領袖學院，2010)，13-21。

³ 霍特桑，《神蹟永隨》，翁李鈞譯，(台北：以琳，1985)，154。

⁴ 戈登費依，《認識保羅的聖靈觀》(台北：校園出版社，2000)，57。

Tennessee.⁵ He went in the New York Missionary College which founded by an Alliance pastor A. B. Simpson in 1891. The next year, due to the guiding and encouragement by J. Hudson Taylor, he prepared himself with some other missionaries assigned by the Alliance for the mission to Tibet. He joined the Assemblies of God became a pastor in 1951. But by the reason of his wife's health, he couldn't continue his mission toward China. However he returned to China as a missionary again in 1918 after his wife died in 1916. Thus made a large quantity of missionaries of the Assemblies of God came to China to reclaim and found churches, to set orphanages, and to establish Bible colleges throughout China one wave after another. Simpson's son (W. Ekvall Simpson) also spread the gospel in China with him in 1916, but unfortunately was killed in 1932 by bandits and became martyrdom at Suzhou, Gansu. The Assemblies of God found the General Council in northern China in 1922 and established the first Biblical institute in Beijing as well, which named **Beijing Truth Bible Institute**. And this was the commencement of China Assemblies of God. The institute could accept sixty people. In 1924, Simpson's daughter Louise Simpson completed one hymn with several Chinese co-workers, and 5000 were printed. Same in this year Louise and her husband Harvey Chemoweh found a Bible school at Minzhou of Gansu province. Simpson remarried another missionary Martha Merrill in 1925. They had six children. Simpson had reached almost all over the provinces of China for missions except the seven provinces in southern China. He usually went missionary by way of hiking even as far as heading to Tibet, Mongolia, and northeast China.⁶

Afterward there were two missionaries Ivan S. Karffman and V. G. Plymire (Rev. David Plymire's father. And Pastor David Plymire was the first president of Taichung Assemblies of God School of Theology), both of them entered into Gansu in China and the border of Tibet to evangelize in 1908. Then in 1920 Plymire joined to Assemblies of God USA and returned again to Tibet frontier continuing to preach the gospel. In 1908's Fall Rev. Alfred G. Garr and his wife arrived at Hong Kong from Los Angeles. They found Hong Kong/Kowloon the Pentecost, and very soon at their missionary site had reached up to 3000 attendants. And their meetings same as the experiences happened in the early church on the Pentecost with the

⁵ William Menzies W., *Ibid.*, 138; 院訊編輯室, 「五旬節信仰人物介紹—中國神召會拓荒者辛普森」, 《神召神學院院訊》, 第 147 期(2001.7), 10。

⁶ 莊飛, 《中國神召會簡史》(台中: 神召神學院, 1991), 6。

filling of the Holy Spirit. During this period the missionaries of the Assemblies of God were working hard to reclaim inland of China, but lacking of effectiveness. Presumably, it related to having not enough trained workers.

II. Mature Period: Early Years of Founding

After the founding of the Republic of China, the Chinese government had repeatedly stated the policy of equal treatment to all religions. Thus, the spreading of the Christianity in China had a marvelous development. From 1914 to 1936 Assemblies of God USA had sent many missionaries came to China. Then in 1912 Rev. James Baker, whose son Rev. H.A. Baker became later the president of Tai-Guang Bible College which was the first seminary of the Assemblies of God in Taiwan, came to China. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and became a Pentecostal believer in 1919. He then returned Yunnan and opened an orphanage in 1924. Since Assemblies of God USA was founded, its Overseas Missionary Department extremely regarded the vast harvest fields of mainland China. Therefore numbers of missionaries were sent into each region in China to evangelize.

In 1914 G. Dallistain started setting a mission centre in Shanghai, and very soon the attend increased up to 100 of people. Then in 1924 the Cantonese church of the Assemblies of God was also founded in Shanghai. They had been inviting Simpson to lead a revival meeting. And during the meeting a woman was filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking out fluent in Malay. Because the scene at that time there were really some attendants have been living in Singapore, so they could understand this young woman was speaking the foreign language. In 1915 Simpson founded a church in Nanjing with a Chinese co-worker Nathan Ma.⁷

In 1916 L. M. Anglin began the work of the mission centre in Shandong and setting up an orphanage as well. According to the report of 1924 indicated that there were many Chinese children hadn't been learning English, but they were able to speak fluent English after being filled with the Holy Spirit in some meetings. And in 1932 the orphanage had accepted in of more than 600 children. Among them some became evangelists after they grew up.

In 1917 a minister Miss Nettie Nichols arrived at Ningbo with merely sixty cents in the

⁷ 莊飛，〈中國神召會簡史〉，6。

pocket. But she relied on God's providing and found the Bethel Bible College at which she trained many workers. Among them some even spread gospel toward border areas. In addition, she also opened an orphanage to receive about 100 children.

In 1922 the Assemblies of God established the General Council in Northern China. Meanwhile the first Biblical college of the Assemblies of God, the Beijing Bible College was established and was able to accept 60 students in the beginning. In 1918 Rev. Simpson set a mission centre in Minchow, Gansu. Shortly within five years he had 32 co-workers and set 16 more of mission centre. In 1924 Louise Simpson completed one hymn with several Chinese co-workers, and there were 5000 booklets printed. Same of this year Louise and her husband Harvey Chemoweh found a Bible school at Minchow of Gansu Province. And there were 17 new students enrolled for the first semester. Later Simpson's son (W. Ekvall Simpson) spread gospel at here with him in 1916, but was killed by bandits in 1932 at Suzhou, Gansu became martyrdom.⁸

In 1923 Clifford Morrison and his wife came to China. Their missionary object was the people who lived nearby the border area of Guangxi. But because of bandits revolted as well as the smallpox epidemic, they had to evacuate from there. However, God reopened another door for them to get to Yunnan. And then they turned to Burma to work for 17 years long at the district of Lisu people. There were 5000 people believed in Jesus. And about 2000 among them were filled with the Holy Spirit. Then they founded 46 churches of the Assemblies of God there and worked together with 26 local co-workers.

In 1929 the missionaries of the Assemblies of God started their mission in the Northeast (Manchuria). And to the year of 1935 there were 11 missionaries evangelizing there already. In the same year the "Christ Ambassador of the Assemblies of God" was founded in the district of North China. A missionary G.K. Johamsem became the first Minister of the Youth Department. In 1932 the General Council of Gansu Province was established. The executive committees were selected from native habitants in the beginning as much as possible. And the year of 1935 they had started planning the establishment of the General Council of China Assemblies of God. Same in 1935 the couple of Howard Osgood began the ministry in

⁸ 《同上》，7。

Yunnan. They were in charge of the training center for missionaries, deal with administration affairs, and the transport station for the daily supplies for missionaries. Besides, they also established a local Bible school. ⁹

In 1936 two missionaries A. Ruth Mdlching and Palma Ramsborg joined the mission in the Northeast. They returned America when the war of Chinese resistance to against Japan began. After some years they assisted to found Assembly of God Taipei Church in Taiwan.

During the 8 years of the war of Chinese resistance to against Japan, the Biblical institutes everywhere in China of China Assemblies of God were still processing as usual. In 1937 Beijing Bible College renamed and known as Truth Bible College, and Rev. Balder was the president. In 1939 two new buildings were built. Meanwhile Chinese co-worker Luke Ma translated “the 8 Biblical courses by correspondence”. This set of translated teaching materials might be the first set of the systematic material that was translated from English into Chinese for China Assemblies of God. When the fourth graduation ceremony held in May 1941 there were total of 35 graduates. And for other graduates that graduated from Bethel Bible College in Ningbo, they organized a “Crusade” and willing to spread the gospel toward the border areas.

In 1937 the annual meeting held in Shenyang of the Northeast China. And Rev. Simpson was the speaker. At that time the Chinese co-workers had aware of that there will have varies kinds of challenges need to face in the future. So they declared that, during the voting of the secretary, this position of secretary is not only doing meeting recording but also needs to be in charge of the works of literature propaganda. On December 7, 1940 the missionary Martin Kramme on his report indicated that he had attended in several meetings, and in those conferences the Chinese Christian and leaders had already awakened that the future of China Assemblies of Gods should ahead toward the goal of self-reliance, self-support, and self-evangelism. ¹⁰

After the victory of the War against Japan, the missionaries soon returned to the previous mission fields to continue their uncompleted missionary works in the past in China. In 1946 Rev. and Mrs. Simpson returned to China and continued their works in Northwest China. And

⁹ 《同上》，7。

¹⁰ 《同上》，8。

the same year, Rev. H.A. Baker also returned to Kunming, Yunnan. He then opened the Ling-kung Bible College there. In the next year there were 30 new students were accepted, among them two were Buddhist monks and another two were former soldiers. In 1946 Rev. Howard Osgood had a feeling desiring to publish the hymn particular for the China Assemblies of God. He met a brother in Christ Kuang-Ye Li at the Bethel Bible College located at Ningbo, Zhejiang. They worked together to edit 300 songs about the salvation, and 3000 books were accomplished as well as published in 1951. In the year of 1947 Rev. V. G. Plymire and his family returned to work in Chinghai. And in 1948 Rev. James Vigna, who had have come to China for the first time in 1932 with his wife, arrived at the District of Northwest (Gansu, Qinghai) to join the ministry of evangelism. Same this year the annual General Council of the Northwest was still held. Rev. Simpson was voted for the chairman of the Council, and Rev. V. G. Plymire was the vice chairman. However, due to the political tense situation by the approaching of the Communist they had to return America. Their missions thus were taken over by Chinese co-workers. Rev. James Vigna did not leave until 1952. He was the last missionary of the Assemblies of God who left mainland China. Afterward He came to Taiwan in 1954 and served as the president of Tai-kung Bible College and the minister of Missionary Department for some years. Rev. and Mrs. James Vigna had dedicated themselves to the mission among Chinese people for 30 years long. They retired and returned to America in 1971. ¹¹

In March 1948, the couple of Rev. Howard Osgood took long trip from the southern to Beijing to attend the annual General Council of the Northern China District. Although everyone had felt the national political situation was so bad, but the Chinese co-workers thought that they should take more responsibilities. Among them some spread leaflets to suggest having a national wide organization in order to maintain contact each other. Therefore in September 12th to 18th of the same year, the Grand General Council of China Assemblies of God had been called at Assembly of God Wuchang Church, the province of Hupei. And there were totally 37 attendants in which included 10 Chinese pastors, 1 elder, 5 Brothers who then was working in the Council, 20 American missionaries, and 1 British missionary. Rev. Howard Osgood was elected as the president of the General Council, and

¹¹ 《同上》, 9。

Chinese pastor Peter Guan the vice president. In the Council the representatives from all seven districts (northern, northeast, northwest, central, southern, and southwest) had passed the resolution of the Constitution for China Assemblies of God. And in 1949 when the Communist Party has conquered the whole mainland China, the Bible College of the Assemblies of God was moved from Guangdong to Hong Kong and cooperated with the Canadian Assemblies of God to rebuild the Bible College. Rev. Balder served as the president of this new college.

In 1948, it was about the time the fall of the mainland China. Rev. Howard Osgood and another two young missionaries Philip Hogan and Garland Benintendis, who were sent to China for the evangelism fled from Shanghai to Taipei, Taiwan where we restarted our ministry of Pentecostal faith. And 11 years later in June 1959, our Council of China Assemblies of God in Taiwan, which now is The Taiwan District Council of The China Assemblies of God (hereinafter referred as District Council), was officially established and restarted to work. We had registered as a cooperate organization to the government of Taiwan Province in April 1960. And after we completed our legal registration by the District Court of Taipei in May of the same year, we then actively found churches and spread the gospel of Christ.

Rev. H. A. Baker came to China for the mission in 1912. Before he returned to America in 1919 to debrief his works in China he then had received the filling of the Holy Spirit. And He set up the Adullam Orphanage in the city of Kunming, the province of Yunnan. He was frustrated once for the reason of being no mission effectiveness there at all. However through the intercession prayers of his friends in America and in British, a spiritual revival happened to this orphanage. There were 50-60 children in the orphanage at that time. But these children who were formerly begging on the streets, whose ages were between 6-18, were all filled by the Holy Spirit and saw vision. This event was seen as a miracle.¹² After working many years in the orphanage, Rev. Baker was led by God and went down to the Southwest of China to evangelize among the people of Hmong on the mountain sites of the Province of Yunnan. The Holy Spirit greatly worked. There were more than 40,000 people repented and returned to the Lord. And among them many were filled by the Holy Spirit and saw vision just as

¹² 貝開文，〈天外異象〉（台北：大光，1997），74。

those children of Adullam Orphanage did. Many of them also received special gifts from the Holy Spirit. Rev. Baker later came to Taiwan and lived in Miaoli. He began to learn the language of Hakka when he was 75 years old in order to preach the gospel to Hakka people. When he was 80s, he still carried megaphone all the time to preaching along the streets. And he was buried at the land of Miaoli when he died. Such a faithful missionary and the sacrifice of a loving soul was so touched and respected. ¹³

III. Flourish period: Moving to Taiwan

Prior to 1945 the Retrocession of Taiwan, the Assemblies of God did not have any mission centre or missionary sites throughout the Taiwan. This probably because the contemporary missionaries of Assemblies of God USA were more concerned of the ministries in the mainland China than in Taiwan. And there were no any statement at all about the ministries of Hakka's or Xiamen's dialects recorded in the General Council of Assemblies of God USA. Therefore, before 1949 there was no any missionary work of the Pentecostal faith or from the Assemblies of God in Taiwan.

On September 12, 1948 the first General Council of China Assemblies of God was held at Wuchang, Hupei. Rev. Howard Osgood was elected for the Chairman of the General Council. In the meanwhile the Communist forces were speedily outspreading, and the mainland China was about to fall. Early of this year in Spring Rev. Howard Osgood had led two young missionaries Philip Hogan and Garland Benintendis fled from Shanghai to Taiwan to make the research and contact for the preliminary missionary work. And later in autumn, these two young missionaries returned again to Taiwan with their families to start the reclamation works.

There were about one million of civilians as well as military soldiers with their families retreated to Taiwan during 1948 and 1949. They arrived at Taiwan with the feelings of fear and frustration. Among them many were the fruits born by those Christian missionaries who had sowed the gospel seeds to them in the early time, such as government officials, students, merchants, and soldiers. And these believers therefore consolidated the foundation for the

¹³ 此部份資料，謝謝台北市中心神召會丁爾勁牧師提供。

gospel ministries in Taiwan.¹⁴ Even though these two young missionaries Philip Hogan and Garland Benintendis had been shortly doing missionary in mainland China and had learned to speak mandarin, however their reclamation works started in the city of Taipei was mainly facing the Taiwanese speaking people. Thus they decided to begin spreading the gospel at Taiwanese business areas, the Circle of Taipei city. According to the reclamation records, there were 23 baptized for just one year before 1950.

Afterward they felt like to have a site to worship and serve the Lord, so they rent a two-story house at 3, Ningxia Road, nearby the Circle of Taipei city (here later was former Kuo-Shang Restaurant). They used down stairs for the worship sanctuary and the meeting place. But when there was the evangelism meeting held, the outside corridor would also be used. All the meetings were English speaking translated into mandarin so that many shoppers were attracted and stopped by to listen. What's more? Sometimes because of full of crowds on the Sunday worship, some could just leave because find no seat left at all. During 1952 and 1953 there were 1500 decided to believe in Jesus at Assembly of God Circle Church (now the Assembly of God Taipei church).¹⁵

In 1952 Taiwan's political situation has become much more stable. The national wide missionaries had continually come back to Taiwan. The Assemblies of God USA invited Rev. James Baker who had been establishing the Ling-Kung Bible College at Kunming, Yunnan, coming to Taiwan to prepare the new opening for a Bible College. The Foreign missionary Department of the Assemblies of God USA also sent four female missionaries Henrietta Tieleman, Alice Stewart, Ruth Melching, Naomi Daraham, who all had done many years of missionary in China, came to Taiwan to assist the development of the ministry.

In March 1953 these missionaries began to find some mandarin speaking believers that believe in the truth of the Pentecostal faith, or those who desire to pursue the Spirit-filled experience. So there were family style meetings held and last for five months at the house of Rev. H. A. Baker. They also put advertising on newspapers to invite people coming to attend the meetings for pursuing the Pentecostal faith. As a result, there were 10 came to attend. Then they rent one story space in a building located at Ho-Ping East Road and founded Assembly of God Ho-Ping East Road Church, which now is the Assembly of God Taipei

¹⁴ 史文森，〈近代中國與基督教論文集〉（台北：宇宙光，1981），407。

¹⁵ 莊飛，〈中國神召會簡史〉，11。

City-Center.¹⁶

Although its organization system was not quite perfect before the founding of China Assemblies of God Taiwan General Council, the Evangelism Committee which composed of missionaries and some Chinese co-workers had organized to develop new churches. But for pastors' hiring and the works of administrative coordination for local churches there was the Administration Committee which was set in the Tai-Kung Bible College, and composed of faculty and missionaries to charge the administrative and academic affairs. In addition, the Committee also took care of administrative works for those new churches that were being developed. Because of well developing of the ministry, three terms of the graduates trained by Tai-Kung Bible College had joined the ministries in the mission fields. And eight local churches were increased. Thus both missionaries and the College felt that it was the time to start the Council in the district of Taiwan. So there were 22 attended when June 2-3, 1959 the inaugural conference of China Assemblies of God Taiwan District Council held at Tai-Kung Bible College, San-Chun. The Constitution and the Articles were adopted in the Conference. And after the election Rev. James Baker was the president, Rev. Garland Benintendis the vice president, Rev. Kwang-Ye Li the secretary, Rev. James Vigna the treasure. Then by adding in Rev. David Plymire, Rev. Yao-Tong Kao, and Rev. Baredon, all of the seven organized the Executive Committee to charge all the affairs in the Council. We had registered as cooperate organization by the government of Taiwan Province in April 1960. And we also completed our legal registration by the District Court of Taipei on May, 10 of the same year.¹⁷

The organization of China Assemblies of God Taiwan General Council is established according to the Constitution and Articles of China Assemblies of God. The General Council should have authority to manage all the activities of the Assemblies of God within its district. In the beginning there was the Executive Committee under the General Council's management. During the annual adjourned period of the General Council, the Committee took the responsibility to manage and develop all the ministries. And there was the Literature Committee under the management of the Executive Committee to promote the ministries of literature evangelism and the publishing spiritual books. Thus the meeting of the Executive Committee held in November 1960 agreed with publishing the periodical of "Tai-Kwang

¹⁶ 《同上》，12。

¹⁷ 《同上》，18。

Monthly”. Rev. Kwang-Ye Li was the general editor, who then also was the faculty of Tai-Kwang Bible College. And there were 4000 printed for each term. Another committee under the Executive Committee was the Clergy Examine Committee. And its function was to examine annually if each of the College graduates was qualified for the ministry in order to be the basis for their promotion toward the assist minister, minister, or ordained pastor.¹⁸

Before the General Council was established both of the Sunday school ministry and the youth ministry had been promoted and developed through the local churches. On October 31, 1960 the first Sunday School Fellowship was held at Assembly of God Taipei City- Center. And in November the General Council hired Palma Ramsborg as the district director of Sunday school to promote all levels of the Sunday school ministry. Both of children and youth ministries were always the main works for church’s reclamation. The Assemblies of God was very seriously upon these two ministries. From America the missionaries introduced in an American youth fellowship type of organization named Christ’s Ambassadors (referred C. A.), or known as Christ for all. The name was taken from II Cor. 5:20 which stated “We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God was making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: be reconciled to God.” This is also the common name throughout the world for the young Christian organization in the Assemblies of God. The General Council set the C. A. Department in June 1963.¹⁹ Rev. Baredon was set apart for the first department head to promote and direct the youth fellowship ministry for the Assemblies of God. He opened the first C. A. summer camp since 1964. Till today the summer camp took place every year to cultivate and train our young people in the summer.

Tai-Kwang gospel broadcasting began in December 1961. In the beginning there were nine stations broadcasted the full radio programs of full gospel in Taiwanese and in Mandarin (Program Name: Tai-Kwang Gospel). The Mandarin sermon was served by Rev. kwang-Ye Li, and that of Taiwanese’s by Rev. Yao-Dong Kao. This was a 30-minute program in which included vivid hymns of Pentecostal faith, sermons of full Gospel, as well as special prayers for the lost, the sick, and the spiritually hungry people. The audience who have listen this gospel programs starting to write in their letters constantly. Many of them told us that they have received the salvation by listening our broadcast, and others told that they were healed

¹⁸ 《同上》，19。

¹⁹ 李廣業，「會員大會事工」，《台光月刊》，第3卷，第6期(1961.8)，5。

by God. Still, more others mailed in their thanksgiving offerings to support our broadcast ministry. Moreover, there were many of audience came to our local churches to receive the baptism, filled by the Holy Spirit, and became our faithful members.

In January 1962 not more than one month since we started this ministry, our radio stations increased from nine to eighteen, and the cities expanded from five to ten. And the government allowed us to use their Central Broadcasting Station to spread the gospel toward mainland China. In October 1963 both Rev. and Mrs. Rev. Paul Philip organized the “Gospel Radio Choir” to assist and train the gospel broadcasting talents for us.

Before starting of China Assemblies of God Taiwan District Council we have had eight local churches. But after the General Council was established to 1961 we have increased to ten local churches, which were Assembly of God Taipei Church, Assembly of God Taipei City-Center, Assembly of God San Chung Pu Church, Assembly of God Po-Sin Church(at 4th sec. Sin-Yi Road), Assembly of God Tamsui Church, Assembly of God Chungli Church, Assembly of God Kaohsiung Church, Assembly of God Fengshan Church, Assembly of God Taichung Church, and Assembly of God Tainan Church. The Taipei church was founded the earliest (October, 1948),²⁰ and the Tainan church was the latest (October, 1960). At that time Taipei church was the highest average of 105 attendants for the Sunday morning worship, and the total of 409 attendants for all of the 10 local churches. Although Tamsui Church was closed in the end of 1963, however adding up Assembly of God Keelung Church, Assembly of God Towu Church, and Assembly of God Kaohsiung City-Center Church, with total number of 12 churches. The local churches continued to grow due to the reasons as follow:²¹

A. The students of Tai-Kwang Bible College made up the Student Evangelical Team to spread gospel leaflets everywhere on weekends and holding the evangelical meetings as well.

B. Another main reason was that our missionaries were willing to reclaim new churches. Rev. James Baker resigned from Tai-Kwang Bible College in 1960 and removed to Tainan to found the Assembly of God Tainan Church. Shortly within one year five baptisms took place with 51 were baptized. In Tainan there were two brothers Huimao Chen and Fengsiu Ge decided to register into Tai-Kwang Bible College to receive evangelical trainings.

C. Co-reclamation by the graduates and missionaries together. The Assembly of God

²⁰ 李廣業，「會員大會事工」，《台光月刊》，第1卷，第8期(1961.6)，5。

²¹ 莊飛，《中國神召會簡史》，21。

Kaohsiung Church was founded in 1959. In the beginning Rev. Baredon and some Chinese co-workers composed of a Tabernacle Evangelical Team. By sharing the gospel and visiting constantly there were five new believers received baptismal in two months. Rev. Chinkui Chen was serving at this church since the church was founded. In just two years, five baptisms were held with seventeen baptized. In addition, there were eight members received the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Since the Assemblies of God holds the Pentecostal faith, we strongly emphasize the pursuing of the filling of the Holy Spirit. In our services we specially stress worshipping in the Spirit. There were different spiritual gifts often running during the worships, such as speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, the prophecy, healing, and other various spiritual gifts. In the 1960s, our local churches frequently made up the revival-evangelical meetings. And the evangelists from America were usually invited to Taiwan to lead these meetings. After preaching the speaker usually called for repent and prayed for the sickness. There were many decided to be baptized because they were healed. They also prayed for repent the sin and for pursuing the filling of the Holy Spirit, and many saints were re-strengthened to testimony for the Lord. In addition, preachers regularly visited and held family worship therefore many believed Jesus through this way. Both the Kaohsiung Church and Kaohsiung City-Center C are founded by this model.

In short, the patterns for the churches of the Assemblies of God in this period were: 1. Reclamation by missionaries: Assembly of God Circle Church and Assembly of God Ho-Ping East Road Church. 2. Reclamation by the Bible College: Assembly of God San-Chun Church. 3. Reclamation by missionaries and graduates together: Assembly of God Kaohsiung Church.

IV. Founding and closedown of the Tai-Kwang Bible College

Early in February 1953 Rev. James Baker and Rev. Garland Benintendis represented the Assemblies of God USA and spent 13,200 Taiwan dollars to purchase a land, with that totally wide of 2800 level ground (9184 square meters), from Lin, Bo Shou and other 6 persons and set it for the school site of Tai-Kuang Bible College which was located at 101 Chon Sin Rd. Section 4, Tsai-Liao, San-Chon Pu. The same year in November school was opened and there were 25 new students enrolled in for study. When June 1956 on the first graduation there

were 10 all together completed their studies. Ying-Biao Hong, Yao-Dong Koa, Qui-Hu Chow, Yao-Ren Kao, Zhan-Chin Ma, Tong-He Tsai, and Tsui-Ying Fang Kao seven students received their diploma. And Kai-Shan Li, Yu-Ye Hwang, Si-Wei Kao three students received the certificate. They became the first group of ministers trained by the Assemblies of God in Taiwan. Because of these 10 graduates joined into the fields of the missionary or the pastoral ministry, not more than 4 years 10 churches were founded except Circle Church and Ho-Ping East Road Church which were founded by missionaries. The other 8 churches of Assembly of God were all born by both of the missionaries and the graduates their reclamation together.²²

At that time Tai-Kwang Bible College was the only biblical college with the background of Pentecostal faith in Taiwan. Therefore many young people were attracted to enroll in to study in this college which stressed the Pentecostal faith. In addition to the general biblical courses and the practical theology, the college also emphasized the teaching of Pentecostal faith. Rev. Baker was the president since the college started. In addition, Rev. Kwang-Ye Li was hired as the dean of academic affairs, and he is also the publisher of the periodical magazine Tai-Kwang Monthly. This publication was one of the most popular magazines throughout the churches in Taiwan.

Rev. Swanson was a scholar particularly focused on the research of the church growth.²³ In his book *Aspects of the Church in Taiwan* he indicated that the first half of the 1950s was the period of harvesting and following up for the church. He said that the number of Christian in Taiwan was about 51,000 in 1948, but afterward increased to the number of 380,000 in 1960. Within 12 years short the increasing was so amazing. And the Assemblies of God also made progress rapidly in this period. Just as two trends that Rev. Swanson had indicated: A. Missionaries worked hard to found churches. B. The work of training was involved toward believers and preachers. These were the main factors during the period of the harvesting and the following up. Unfortunately Tai-Kwang Bible College was closed in 1966. This may be the main reason to explain why the local church of the Assemblies of God stopped growing for a long period.

Tai-Kwang Bible College from the founding in 1953 to the closing in 1966, during these 13 years there were total of 166 applicants accepted in which 112 were male and 54 were

²² 《同上》，16。

²³ 史文森，《台灣教會面面觀》，盧樹珠譯(台北：台灣教會增長促進會)，38。

female. But only 63 of them graduated or completed their studies, and among them only one-fifth served in the Assemblies of God. The accepted students couldn't complete their studies or the graduates wouldn't stay to serve in the Assemblies of God, thus makes the loss of workers trained by us. This was also another main cause led to the closedown of the Tai-Kwang Bible College. We may sum up several causes as follow:

A. At that time the Government was researching a Railway detouring plan to set the railroad tracks would go through the campus site. Therefore the college had to find other campus site to continue the class. And if the new semester didn't have at least 4 of our young people accepted in to study, the school would be forced to close down.

B. Only few graduates stay and continued to serve in the Assemblies of God.

C. There are many veterans enrolled in to study but drop out soon because of assignments pressure or with a wrong serving heart.

D. Due to the shortage of receiving the full-time dedicated young people, thus the college was shut down in 1966. This writer thinks that it was a pity. Since then the training work for the native ministers interrupted.

V. The Founding of the Assemblies of God School of Theology

The closedown of Tai-Kwang Bible College (closedown in 1966 that made 8 years long chasm of worker-making) made the huge loss to whole the Assemblies of God. The local churches lacked of trained workers due to the closedown of the Bible College. Therefore they were not only unable to start any new ministry but also, those ministers who was about to retire from the field could not find their successors. In addition, some local churches needed to find new worker to success because their former ministers had resigned. Although there were some workers from other denominations had been accepted to be our ministers, but not for long they resigned and left us for some various reasons. By this, many of the co-workers in our Council repeatedly appealed and affirmed that restarting the Bible College was the imperative ministry. Therefore, by using the income from the sale of the assets of Tai-Kuang Bible College, the Assemblies of God led by Rev. David Plymire spent NT \$ 1600,000²⁴ purchased 3 acres (11,906 square meters) of land located at the hillside of Dadu Mountain of

²⁴ 謝謝美國宣教士，安永靜牧師提供的資訊。

the western suburbs away from Tai-Chung City.

Afterward on the 14th Member Conference of the General Council held in June 1973 the issue for the founding of Assemblies of God School of Theology (AOGST) was passed. Rev. Yao-Ran Kao was designated as the first president and one year later Rev. David Plymire succeed. During the 37 years since then (up to 2010), there are more than 120 students graduated from AOGST. And among them many have received the higher degree hereafter. And most of them today are still serving in the various fields of ministry.

Although AOGST starts producing the graduates since 1976 (of the first graduation: Rev. Wen-De Lin; of the second graduation: Rev. and Mrs. Er-Jin Ding, Rev. Hong-Sheng Chang, Rev. Yue-Tsun Dong), but many of the local churches of the Assemblies of God were still lacking of workers at that time. Therefore, even we could not set an overall plan to reclaim but the General Council had set a “Two dollars Movement” in an extraordinary general meeting held in November 1977 to encourage each member of local churches to offer two dollars daily, one dollar for church founding and another dollar for soul saving. The General Council also set the “Six-year of Self-Reliance Plan”. That meant the General Council will cover the full expenses for the first two years but from the third year the General Council only covers 80% of expenses and 20% mission centre will do by itself. Therefore the fourth year the General Council covers 60% and the mission centre 40%; the fifth year the General Council 40% and the mission centre 60%; the sixth year the General Council 20% and the mission centre 80%. Thus the self-reliance goal for each mission centre should be reached on the seventh year. In addition, the General Council also suggested the local churches to set a long term plan of “Five-in-One Self-Evangelism Plan”. This means that each self-reliance church should found the branch church or open the house-worship site. .

The speaker of this extraordinary general meeting was Rev. David Yonggi Cho. Many attendants deeply felt that, from his sermon, the Assemblies of God must associate with the affiliated local churches be one mind to set together the mission centre through prayers and offering. Thus, the mission centre set by “Two Dollars Movement” was Chan-Cheng Mission Centre. But unfortunately this mission centre remained only two years. It was closedown due to the resign of the serving preacher. The future direction of the General Council still set on opening new mission fields and establishing new mission centre. Thus may help the China

Assemblies of God continues to grow.²⁵

China Assemblies of God was developed by the Assemblies of God USA. And the Assemblies of God USA was deeply influenced by the Pentecostal faith. When we observe those denominations of the Pentecostal,²⁶ although their doctrines have their own historic background and the theological standpoint, we found them just like all other churches that focused very much on the work of proclaiming the Gospel. This is what we ought to study and learn. The New Testament documents have shown three basic aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit, such as salvation, sanctification, and services. They co-operate each other. And this is the all that the Pentecostal claims. Recently the Pentecostal church and the Evangelical church were often compared. This writer thinks that this issue is inferior. The Pentecostal will not like as the Pendulum Effect swing on both sides but remains in the middle. What is the more important thing to do after receiving spiritual gifts is all that the Pentecostal should consider. The nature of the Pentecostal concerns of the experiences of spiritual gifts and the following-up function, but not the doctrine.²⁷

Therefore we should think of what we can do for God? Upon receiving the spiritual gifts is not for self-giggle covertly. We have to do more ministries for our Lord, to testimony and proclaim His Gospel and to glorify Him. Thence The Pentecostal faith is good with a high “Theology Purity Rating”. According to the survey which covers twelve American main denominations and was made by Barna Research Team of south California with that focus on the five basic doctrines of the accuracy of the Bible, sinless Christ, Satan’s authenticity, deeds could not earn salvation, and evangelizing action, the Assemblies of God and the Pentecostal Foursquare Gospel Church are found the highest purity rating.²⁸

Thanks to God! The history of Pentecostal faith tells us that these Pentecostal saints and sages did their best in the past to testimony the gospel and to glorify the Lord. They were unbiased and walked in it just to work more for the Lord. And this is what today the Assemblies of God in Taiwan should continue to act.

In conclusion:

²⁵ 莊飛，〈中國神召會簡史〉，23-24。

²⁶ 施同德，〈聖路加的靈恩神學〉，楊子江譯(香港：神召神學院，2001)，125。

²⁷ Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 10, 256.

²⁸ 蔡麗貞，〈見前〉，364。

We have reviewed the antecessors of the Assemblies of God all about how they sacrificed themselves to spread the gospel for God's kingdom. Their experiences should be the good examples for us the successors from different generations that younger than them to learn. Although many frustrations happened on them, they still preserved and continued to work for God. This deserves our admiring and learning. Today our conditions of evangelism are much more convenient than that of their time. But instead, our ministries still stop to moving forward. There are always full of loudly complaining when difficulties appeared. We should feel ashamed but just turn to work absorbedly for the Lord, and to serve Him faithfully.

Meanwhile, we China Assemblies of God are trapped in out of serving of the "window period", a weak and lean occasion. We are to uphold the spirit of hard working from our antecessors in order to continue marching on courageously for the kingdom of God.

In this chapter, we have seen the begin history of China Assemblies of God, as well as the serving spirit that these antecessors who worked hard for the Lord. And this is what currently the Assemblies of God lacks of. For nearly a hundred year, today the Assemblies of God all over the world continually brings church growth by a speedy way. And the main two causes are the emphasis on the filling of the Holy Spirit and the more abundant life of Christian (They are also all the churches actually want). But looking at the China Assemblies of God in Taiwan we are much weak. What is the cause lies? Did we loss the pursuing for the filling of the Holy Spirit and the abundant life of Christian that we used to emphasize? We ought to self-examining seriously and honestly.

The Global Conference of the Assemblies of God was held on February 4, 2011 in India. Rev. Yen participated on behalf of China Assemblies of God and he was so encouraged in the meeting. During the meeting he also communicated with the leaders of the Assemblies of God that from other areas. The Assemblies of God was rapidly developing in many other countries, particularly in India recently. At present, the largest church in India is Assembly of God New Life Church. This church now has 50,000 members and most of them are from the lower middle class.²⁹ While looking at them and then asking ourselves that why they are able to touch down but turn to we China Assemblies of God became the difficult issue. This is what we need to working harder to get to improve.

²⁹ 編輯室，「第 26 屆第 14 次執行委員會會議記錄」，《中國神召會台灣區議會第 52 屆會員大會事工彙報》，70。

Finally, once again remind ourselves that we must face our ministry by the heart of “give an account” just as Hebrews 13:17 states: "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you." We have to obey and listen and to lay down our own views;³⁰ cautious and watchful to face “give an account” in the future. We must also respect and obey the Church's authority, order and discipline. It is not a good thing by lacking of the leadership in a community of group. Such will lead to ruin. But disobeying the leadership is also terrible for that would mean the same as no leadership.³¹ Therefore we should not let worry by our antecessors. This is what we each one who works in the Assemblies of God should be on our guard. Be united together and working harder to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to testimony and glorify Lord's name, and carry forward the spirit of the Assemblies of God as well.

³⁰ 周聯華，〈中文聖經註解—希伯來書〉（台北：台灣基督教文藝出版，2010），396。

³¹ 埃里克·布恩和菲利普·克雷，〈古代基督信仰聖經註叢書—希伯來書〉，林培鳳譯（台北：校園出版，2007），340。