

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD NEWS SERVICE

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30,000 PENTECOSTALS CONVENE IN ORLANDO THIS WEEK

ORLANDO—The Assemblies of God (U.S.), part of the largest worldwide Pentecostal denomination with nearly 60 million members and adherents, is meeting at the Orange County Convention Center this week for its 53rd General Council. More than 30,000 delegates and visitors are expected to attend the gathering which opens Monday, August 3.

The Assemblies of God (U.S.) has nearly 3 million members and 12,311 churches. Emphasizing the power of the Holy Spirit and member participation in the work of the church, the denomination has grown from a few hundred believers at its founding convention in 1914 to 60 million around the world.

There are 682 AG churches in Florida. The national headquarters for the church is in Springfield, Missouri, where the Gospel Publishing House, the church's printing arm, produces an average of 12 tons of gospel literature each working day.

The Assemblies of God grew out of the Pentecostal revival that began in the early 1900's in places such as Topeka, Kansas and the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles. During times of prayer and Bible study, believers in the U.S. and other parts of the world, received spiritual experiences like those described in the Bible in the Book of Acts. Accompanied by "speaking in other languages" their religious experiences were associated with the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Jewish holiday of Pentecost (Acts 2) and participants in the movement were called "Pentecostals."

The Pentecostal movement (of which the Assemblies of God is only a part) has grown from a few Bible school students in Topeka, Kansas, to an estimated 650 million in the world today from almost every denomination and church.

Along with the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the church also believes the Bible is God's inspired Word to man; that salvation is available only through Jesus Christ; that divine healing is made possible through Jesus' suffering and death on the cross; and that Jesus will return to earth for those who love Him.

Assemblies of God leaders credit the church's continuing growth (18.5 percent of growth in US adherents for the past decade 1995-2005) to its acceptance of the New Testament as a model for the present-day church. Evangelism and mission zeal at home and abroad characterize the church.

The church publishes a weekly magazine, *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*, which has a paid circulation of nearly 200,000, making it one of the largest Protestant weeklies in the nation. It also operates 19 accredited colleges, including a seminary in the U.S.