

Assemblies of God ^[1]

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by Helen Losse, 2006

Assemblies of God ^[2], headquartered in Springfield, Mo., and maintaining substantial membership in North Carolina, is one of the largest of the Pentecostal sects, with more than 12 million members worldwide. Like several other Pentecostal ^[3] groups, the Assemblies of God have their roots in the Azusa Street Revival ^[4] (1906-11), which was named for the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, Calif., where it took place. Members of the Assemblies of God consider the revival one of the most significant events in the history of the Pentecostal Church. There, many Pentecostals believe, the Holy Spirit descended on those who sought a "baptism of the spirit," which was evidenced by their speaking in tongues (glossolalia). This and other beliefs distinguish the Pentecostals from many other Protestant denominations.

The North Carolina District of the Assemblies of God ^[5] was formed, staffed, and commissioned in Dunn in 1944. The district council consisted of 29 charter members. The decades following the 1940s saw considerable growth in the Assemblies of God in North Carolina. Aided by the "charismatic movement" of the 1960s and the creation of Christian television programming, Pentecostal churches began to attract members from mainline denominations. Diversity marked Assemblies of God churches in North Carolina, as local congregations ranged from traditional to charismatic in structure and methodology, though all remained united in Pentecostal doctrine.

In 1987 the Assemblies of God experienced and survived a "crisis of integrity" as a series of scandals enveloped television evangelist Jim Bakker and his Charlotte-based PTL (Praise the Lord) Club ministry ^[6]. Some Pentecostal churches experienced a reduction in membership as a result of the scandals, although the setback proved temporary. By 2004 the North Carolina District Council of the Assemblies of God, with headquarters in Selma ^[7], included 249 individual churches, with approximately 49,000 members throughout the state.

Reference:

Charles H. Cookman and others, *Never Let Go: The Dramatic Story of the North Carolina District of the Assemblies of God* (1994).

Subjects:

Religion ^[8]

Authors:

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