

REPORT OF THE GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT

Doug Clay

It is a delight to be gathering with our Assemblies of God family for the 58th General Council. It's my prayerful desire that during this Council, we will experience a personal, spiritual renewal; and an increased burden to expand the kingdom of God in our places of ministry assignment.

Our Assemblies of God constitutional declaration affirms that our reason for being is to evangelize the world, to be a corporate body in which people can worship and experience God, to intentionally engage in discipleship, and to be a people who demonstrate the compassion of God's love, in word and deed.

We are People of the Spirit . . . committed to evangelism, worship, discipleship, and compassion.

When I took office in October 2017, I led the Executive Leadership Team through a prayerful and deliberate process of crafting a vision, mission, values and priorities document that would be a guide for the National Office. These have produced clarity, alignment, and synergy.

Vision

To see a Spirit-empowered church that is marked by spiritual and numerical growth in every community.

Mission

We exist to resource and serve districts, networks, churches, ministers, and missionaries to fulfill the vision. *(Our purpose is your priority.)*

Values

Relationships, Communication, Excellence, Serving, Relevance, Diversity, Stewardship

Priorities

Bible Engagement, Church Planting, Church Recalibration, Church Resourcing, Perpetuating Pentecost, Growing Missions, Stewarding Credentials.

I am often asked to describe the Assemblies of God. Sometimes, I represent our fourfold mission to evangelize, worship, disciple, and show compassion. Sometimes I'll

talk about our core doctrines: Jesus as Savior, Healer, Baptizer in the Spirit, and Soon-Coming King. Sometimes I refer to the strength and influence of our global family.

Often, I will highlight our diversity. As you know, we're one of the most ethnically diverse religious groups in the United States (43 percent), with a strong history of women in ministry (25 percent), and growth in number of young adults (11 percent over the last decade in the 18—34 age group). But our diversity of church expression goes far beyond those statistics. On any given Sunday, there are people finding Christ at cowboy churches, urban churches, rural churches, traditional churches, megachurches, watching online and sitting in video venues. You'll find Assemblies of God churches in the United States that are speaking Spanish, Korean, Farsi, or Portuguese. You'll find some congregations that are small in numbers, but impacting their communities and their neighborhoods in transformational ways. That's who we are!

The mission is the same, but the expression is different.

That's why I am asking all of us, regardless of your ministry expression, to represent the Assemblies of God as a Bible-engaged, Spirit-empowered, missions-participating Fellowship.

We are Bible-engaged. It was a Bible-engaged mentality that led Charles Parham to dig into Scripture to see the biblical model of baptism in the Holy Spirit. It was that same fidelity to God's Word that led William Seymour to sit out in the hot Houston heat, enduring racial injustice, just to hear what the Bible said about the promise of the Spirit. It was a hunger for Bible engagement that rang throughout E.N. Bell's call to Hot Springs in the *Word and Witness*.

It's crucial that this part of our DNA be fostered so that each generation remains faithful to and hungry for the Word of God.

This week you'll be hearing and seeing the results of an extensive Barna Group survey that measures the current landscape of Bible literacy and engagement of Assemblies of God church attenders. Our goal is to inspire pastors and church leaders to see the value of biblical literacy and to feel an urgency to lead their people to engage with the Word.

We are Spirit-empowered. I'm seeing a hunger for the things of the Spirit grow throughout our Movement! The first resource that my office produced for churches was the *Who is the Holy Spirit?* curriculum for children, youth, and adults. Like you, I'm passionate that our future will outshine our past. My sincere prayer is for a spiritual

awakening in our nation that will sweep across generational lines with Pentecostal outcomes of Spirit baptisms and young people hearing and responding to God's voice.

This year, our National Office released a magazine called *Pentecostals*. Our desire for the magazine was to tell the story of what it means to be Pentecostal in belief and practice while showing the phenomenal statistical story. Within a week of our initial promotion, the magazine sold out of all printed copies. We ordered an additional printing, which sold out within a week of being stocked. There is a hunger for biblical Pentecostal experiences in our churches! I'm grateful that this Pentecostal movement that we identify with is the fastest growing movement in the history of Christianity.

Each and every Assemblies of God church should characterize itself as thoroughly dependent and empowered by the Holy Spirit. I have been encouraged to receive reports from churches like River Valley in Minnesota and Radiant in Tampa, Florida where hundreds are being baptized in the Holy Spirit in a single day! Let's continue to pass along this legacy of Spirit-empowered life to the next generation!

We participate in missions. A truly Pentecostal experience has always propelled people outward to be witnesses (Acts 1:8). At the Last Supper, Jesus foretold that the Spirit would come and point people to Him. The most natural reaction to the Spirit operating within one's life is to point people toward Christ.

That Pentecostal imperative to reach the world is evidenced within our Fellowship. Nearly 2,700 AGWM missionaries are serving in over 190 nations around the world. AG World Missions personnel are presently engaged with 321 unreached people groups worldwide. That's astounding!

Here in the United States, more than 1,000 AGUSM missionaries are reaching college campuses, prisons, military bases, and the most difficult places in our nation. We even have an Assemblies of God UNITED STATES missionary as Army Chief of Chaplains.

I believe missions is a catalyst for clarifying what it means to be Assemblies of God. We have passed our first century as a Fellowship, and Assemblies of God churches today look quite different than they did even a few years ago. I never want our growth to lead to a lessening or a diluting of missions philosophy and support. The success of our missions accomplishment is not measured by what we have done, but rather by how we are responding to the unfinished task in front of us.

When the Assemblies of God churches rally around the Bible, the Holy Spirit and missions, those commitments act as unifying forces, clarifying what it means to be Assemblies of God.

My sincere prayer is that we, the Assemblies of God ministers and churches, will:

- Grow in our hunger for more of the Spirit;
- Increase our efforts to reach the lost;
- Strategically invest in the next generation;
- Honor the past, but not live in it; and
- Truly be salt and light in a culture that is largely secular.

Thank you for believing with me that the best days for our Fellowship are ahead!