

The First Twenty-One Years
of the Church of God
by JAMES M. BEATY

1884 Stirrings, study and searching with prayer and fasting

1886 August 19 (Th)

The first congregation was organized at Barney Creek with eight (8) members; Richard Green Spurling preached the message and organized the church.

His father, Richard Spurling (1810-1891), an ordained Baptist minister [age: 76] was installed as minister; then R.G. was received as member and chosen as pastor.

The Proposal and Invitation to Membership: 1886

"As many Christians as are here present that are desirous to be free from all man-made creeds and traditions, and are willing to take the New Testament, or law of Christ, for your only rule of faith and practice, giving each other equal rights and privilege to read and interpret for yourselves as your conscience may dictate, and are willing to sit together as the Church of God to transact business as the same, come forward."

Members: Richard Spurling (the father)
Barbara Spurling, wife of Richard Green Spurling (the son)
John and Polly Plemons [+ John Jr. & Melinda],
Margaret Plemons Lauftus (daughter) & Adeline Lauftus, her daughter

Name: Christian Union

Members: good Christian character

Ministers: receive credentials

Pastor installed

Dedication of the Church

2nd Invitation: Richard Green Spurling

September 26 (Sun): R.G. (the son) was ordained. Note: Richard (the father), either continued or renewed his relationship with Holly Springs Baptist Church; remarried and died in 1891.

1896 Summer: The Great Revival in Shearer School House in Camp Creek, NC

This was led by William Martin, Joe M. Tipton and Milton McNabb, who were from Monroe Co., TN.; Spurling and Bryant attended. Over 100 claimed sanctification.. Forty people, at one time, were turned out of Liberty Baptist Church (their record). Revival continued after Meeting; W. F. Bryant leader.

The group were denied use of school house. Persecution and fanaticism followed. In the home meetings many began to speak with tongues.

1897 Log church: property from Richard Kilpatrick [in front of Shearer School House]

1. Set on fire; rain put it out; 2. Dynamited; 3. Torn down and burned
106 persons involved; Trial in 1898; church asked for clemency for the 106.
Bryant's brother among the 106.

1899 Ambrose Jessup Tomlinson: from Indiana

From 1896(?) Tomlinson was a summer missionary in the area.

July 14 (Fr) arrived in Murphy, NC; October 16 (Mo) arrived in Culberson.

1900 June (US Census): Two of Bryant's children: Luther and Julius, were in Tomlinson's home for school.

1901 March 10 (Su): Twelve (12) children and nine (9) grown workers in his home

March 25 (Mo): practiced Foot washing for first time.

April 10 (We): No money with 25 mouths to feed.

June 28 (Fr): close of School.

August 18 (Su): had to leave home because of persecution;

Went to Maine--convention at Shiloh (sick 4 days); baptized in water by Sandford.

He left on October 6 (Su), got home Nov 16 (Sat).
There were 25 students in school at that time; 14 in Tomlinson's home.

1902 May 15 (Th)

A church was organized in the home of W. F. Bryant in Camp Creek.

By Richard Green Spurling (the son)

Name: The Holiness Church.

Bryant ordained; Spurling named pastor;

No new members for one year; study of scripture.

November (1902) to May (1903):

Tomlinson and family returned to Indiana He worked in secular work.

1903 May 27 (We): Tomlinson left Elwood, Indiana for Culberson;

Stopped in Cleveland and bought a house on Gaut Street (the first street across the railroad from the Seminary).

Wife and family did not come until July 8.

June 13 (Sa): Tomlinson joined the Holiness Church at Camp Creek;

So did 2 deacons and 2 members.

During the following year: fourteen (14) more members joined.

1904 December

A. J. Tomlinson moved to Cleveland, Tennessee, to Gaut Street.

His family went to church at Cumberland Presbyterian at first.

One church in GA [Jones]; two in TN [Union Grove and Drygo], plus Camp Creek (NC)

1905 Need for an Assembly.

1906 January 27-28 (Sa and Su)

First Assembly at Camp Creek (Cherokee County) NC

In the Kilpatrick House [J. C. and Malissie Murphy lived there].

Twenty-One Attendants at First General Assembly

Those who were mentioned as speaking are marked with an asterisk.

Ministers

Family Members

From Georgia (Jones)

1. Belford Abercrombie (Crumby)
2. Johnie Brown
3. John Ellison
4. R. R. Jones

From Turtletown, North Carolina

Elder 5. R. G. Spurling (the son)*

[Elder] 6. Andrew Freeman*

[ordained by Spurling in Christian Union]

From Camp Creek, North Carolina

Elder 7. W. F. Bryant*

8. Nettie (wife), & 9. Agnes (daughter)

10. Ella (Bryant) Robinson (daughter)

Deacon: 11. J. C. Murphy* **Hosts**

12. Margaret Malissie Gay Murphy [Maddox] (wife)*

[Nickname: Norma]

13. Theophilus Ellis

14. Nancy S. Ellis (daughter)

15. W. M. Coleman

16. Lucy (mother)

17. T. N. Elrod

18. Alexander Hamby*

19. Sallie Hamby

[Wife:of Billy, brother Barbara & cousin of Alexander]

From Cleveland, Tennessee

Evang. 20. M. S. Lemons

Pastor 21. A. J. Tomlinson

1907 January 9-13 (We-Su) at Union Grove, Bradley Co. TN.

Second Assembly

Change of name to **Church of God** (Jan 11, Fr at 8:30 AM)

Revised: September, 1999.