
4

THE BRIAR AND THE LILY (1922-1925)

Elmer Gantry was drunk. He was eloquently drunk,
lovingly and pugnaciously drunk.

—Sinclair Lewis, *Elmer Gantry*

Perhaps part of the blame for Archie Word's descent into sin can be laid on the times in which he lived. The America that he saw on his return from New York to California was not the same America that he had seen when he ran away from home in 1918. The Great War had changed the fibre as well as the face of America. There were new attitudes and life styles – not all of them good. Fledgling youth became the “flaming youth” in a rollicking era known as the “Roaring Twenties,” rebelling against the old pre-war standards of morality and decency. In effect, they

became the forerunners of today's modern society.

Daughters (and, in time, mothers) "bobbed" their hair, put on cosmetics, smoked cigarettes in public, hiked up their skirts, rolled down their stockings and danced the "Charleston." Young men took these "flappers" to the picture shows — now all the rage — in their Model T's, driving on vastly improved roads. Thanks to Henry Ford's marvelous invention, travel to places away from home was now possible. People could get away from the confines of home and go to the movies, dance halls and roadhouses where they could listen to live jazz, dance, smoke, drink and carouse until the wee hours of the morning. The number of automobiles in America grew from eight million in 1920 to twenty-three million in 1930. The 1920 Census revealed that for the first time in America's history the population in urban areas was greater than that in rural America.

One of the most significant changes in the new world Archie found himself in was when the 18th Amendment was put into effect. Prohibition, a period of time from 1920 to 1933 when Federal law prohibited the manufacture, sale and consumption of alcoholic drinks, was now in effect. You could, however, still buy plenty of "near beer," "bathtub gin" and "white lightning" in certain "speakeasies," thanks to the work of "bootleggers." Archie Word, whose grandfather had been a whiskey distiller in Kentucky, "chasing his whiskey with a string of oaths,"¹ soon became involved in the illegal bootlegging business.

It would not be fair to simply put the blame on society and environment for Archie's downfall. He was (though he would not admit it at the time) a stubborn sinner. The heart of his problem was the problem of

his heart. In years to come he would preach from Jeremiah: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and it is exceedingly corrupt . . . we have sinned against Jehovah our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even unto this day; and we have not obeyed the voice of Jehovah our God." Archie Word's behavioral problems cannot be merely laid at the feet of a permissive society; they must be placed at his own feet of California clay — his choice to sin.

ARCHIE BECOMES A BOOTLEGGER

Archie Word got into the bootlegging business not long after his graduation from high school. He and a companion stole 30 barrels of booze, hiding them under a bridge, intending to sell them later. But Archie had a hunch that his companion in crime was going to doublecross him and steal it out from under him. One thief stealing from another! The very thought incensed Archie, so he went out to the bridge and hid in some bushes. Sure enough, it was not long before he heard the sound of a large truck slowly approaching the bridge. He waited until the men had loaded the truck, then came up behind one of the thieves and stuck a finger in his back. "Reach for the sky, you low-down thief!" He marched the frightened fellow into some bushes and proceeded to give him a sound thrashing. Then he returned for the other fellow and gave him a "fixing" too. He took the stolen hooch back to the farm where he hid it under some olive tree prunings. It became his "private stock," but not for long! "I went out one day to get a drink, and (found) it had been turned upside down and had all drained out. It ran all over the country. Mom never said anything about it. She knew what had happened!"²

Archie Word rarely referred to incidents like this in his wild years. Only in the last decade of his life did he open up and tell some of the stories to inquiring news reporters. One such reporter gave this report about Archie when he was 84:

Does A. Word take after his mother's father, who ran away from a Catholic seminary in Ireland to become a sailor, and who later preached Christianity in the living room of his home in the American backwoods?

Or does the Gering resident take after his father's father, a Kentucky politician and distiller who chased his whiskey with a string of oaths?

At 84, Archie James Word carries a bit of both: the sincere piety of the reformed sinner, the energy and dash of the romantic bootlegger.³

Archie may have thought of himself as a "romantic bootlegger" at one time, but he later saw himself as a wretched sinner. Although Luther's father had been a drinker, Luther himself never turned to drink until he was 60 years old. Once his olive ranch started making some money he began to drink. After Archie was converted he found his father lying under an olive tree. "Dad, I know you're drunk; you know you're drunk; and I want you to know I know you're drunk!"⁴ But at this point in time (1922) it was Archie who was doing the drinking. His taste for beer led to brawling and his brawling led to several arrests. He once said, "I have been in jail a couple of times, but Daddy would come down, write a check and get me out. I got in one more time and I had to lay it out — 72 hours. I decided I wasn't proud anymore. . . ."⁵

Archie now resumed the boxing career he had begun in the Navy. But sometimes his fighting went

beyond the ring and spilled over into real life. When he was fighting on American Legion cards, folks came from 60 miles around to see him fight. One Sunday afternoon, however, he took the fight outside the ring. A fellow from out of town wanted to fight Archie in a bare knuckle brawl. "He cut me with a big ring he wore. That's where I got this scar on my chin. I tore his nose loose on one side. They hauled him home in the back of a pickup. I put a clean white shirt on and went back to work at the service station. The police came and asked if anyone had seen someone there with blood all over his shirt. I said I hadn't heard anything like that. I had a piece of tape on my chin. They knew who they were talking to but they didn't say anything. . . ."⁶

Incidents like this brought sorrow to the two special women in Archie's life, Maggie and Florence. During this time Florence was not seeing Archie because the "briar" in him was sticking out all over. Years later, after Archie was converted, married to Florence and the father of two children, he ran into the very fellow he had brawled with that Sunday afternoon in 1922! "I recognized him, but I don't think he recognized me."

THE WRECK

Archie tried business school twice, in Tulare and Visalia. Both times he was asked to leave: once, in Visalia, because the President's wife played up to him (as she had done with other good looking students).⁷ It was probably time to leave Lindsay for good. The little town was constantly abuzz with stories of the young bootlegger, boxer and brawler who had broken little Billy's heart. Archie packed his bags and took his

sorry act north to Fresno where he worked for Standard Oil by day and continued his wild life by night. Soon he had an opportunity to run a dance hall, then another, then yet another! The man who only a few short years ago had sworn off dancing in public was now running three dance halls in wide-open Fresno. The dance hall connections brought him into association with a gang of bootleggers. Many years later he admitted,

Actually, I was a bootlegger. A plain bootlegger. I've known the dance hall business from top to bottom. I've had my teeth knocked out, my nose flattened, I've got a hole behind both ears⁸

The portrait of Archie Word was becoming a sordid canvas, ugly to behold. He put together dance bands, playing the fiddle himself, sometimes even getting into the act by acting as his own bouncer. Weeks passed to months and months passed to years — wasted years. For three booze-soaked years Archie Word, by his own admission, committed every sin except murder. "I was hard as nails," he once told a reporter. "No Christianity in me at all."⁹ But even the hardest nails can be crushed under the mighty hammer of God.

The wild night life in Fresno continued at a blinding pace until one night in 1925 when Archie and three drinking companions left a dance hall after an evening of heavy drinking and carousing. They got into a car and took off with a spray of gravel. Soon they were on the open highway, racing at breakneck speed. The driver, thoroughly drunk by this time, lost control of the car. Rubber squealed and men screamed as the car rolled over in a cloud of dust. When Archie regained

consciousness he was lying on the cold highway looking up at the stars. He rolled over and saw to his horror that two of his buddies were sprawled in death. The smell of blood and gasoline filled the night air. The driver somehow escaped death. Later he would be sent to San Quentin on manslaughter charges. "He never could forget the fact that his two best friends had died in the wreck," said Archie. "He drank himself to death two years later."¹⁰ Archie called this tragedy the "hardest lesson" of his 24 years.¹¹ "The wreck made me want to find something to live for besides what I was doing."¹² For the second time in his life he had been providentially spared from a premature death.

SALVAGED BY A LEMMON

A chastened Archie left the bright lights of Fresno and returned to little Lindsay. Well, semi-chastened anyway. He was still drinking, still staying away from church, still a "briar" by choice. The story of how God took this sin-soaked young man out of the briar patch and put him to work in the vineyard of the Lord is an interesting and inspiring one. With Saul of Tarsus God used a devout disciple named Ananias; with D. L. Moody, a concerned Sunday School teacher named Edward Kimball; with Gipsy Smith, a converted gypsy father; with Billy Sunday, a dedicated worker at Pacific Garden Mission; with Archie James Word, a preacher by the name of W. S. Lemmon.

William Sherman Lemmon was born November 11, 1863, in Clyde, Ohio. The day after he was born his father left for military service in the Civil War. W. S. became a school teacher at the age of 16, played professional baseball and worked as a cowboy. He did not

become a Christian until he was 30, and shortly thereafter began to preach. He served as State Evangelist for Washington and also preached in Idaho, Oregon and California. In California he held ministries in Napa, Chico, Madera, Yuba City and Porterville.¹³

Archie Word might not have been as drunk as Elmer Gantry the day God brought W. S. Lemmon into his life, but he was mighty close to it. As a salesman for Standard Oil, he would often visit service stations. One day he was visiting with a proprietor who was called away from the station for a few minutes. He asked Archie to man the pumps for him and Archie obliged. About this time a car pulled up to the pumps and Archie's life was changed forever.

I was singing. I had been drinking a little. I had just enough booze in me to make (me) want to sing. I was putting gas into a car and singing at the same time when the man told me . . . 'Young man, you have a good voice.' I agreed with him and said, 'Yes, real good.'

The gentleman said they were having an operetta ("Queen Esther") at his church and invited me to try out for a part. 'Come down tonight at 7 o'clock.' I said, 'O.K.' but had no intention of going.

But . . . the Lord kept bringing that to my mind all afternoon. I went home after work and took a shower. I kept thinking about going. Along about ten after six I went down to the bootlegger and got a little help. I decided to go and try out and behold, I ended up with not one part but two: a Priest, of all things, and a Scribe.

Archie showed up at the church "eloquently drunk."

I wasn't pig drunk . . . just drunk. They could smell me clear across the house.

They (the elders) said they were going to fire the

preacher if I sang in it (the operetta), but he said I was going to sing in it, and if they wanted to fire him that was all right because, (he said) 'If he is ever converted, he will be a real power for God.' I thank the Lord he stuck with it.

I became interested in the operetta and in doing my best job. I really loved to sing. On the night of the opera, the President of Eugene Bible University, E. C. Sanderson, was there. He heard me sing and offered me a scholarship. I accepted. Little did I know that they taught more than singing. It was a preacher factory!¹⁴

It is fascinating to think that had Archie Word whistled at his work, instead of singing, he might never have been discovered by a preacher named Lemmon, noticed by President Sanderson, or converted by Jesus Christ. Thanks to a courageous preacher at Porterville, who put his own job on the line, and a Bible College president, who saw raw talent among the whiskey fumes, Archie Word got his third and final chance to further his education.

COLLEGE BOUND

Archie started going to church again in Lindsay in the summer of 1925. Effie Bachman Bayley, who grew up with Archie in Lindsay, remembers.

He wasn't too much of a Christian at that time. I always loved to hear him sing — he had a beautiful bass voice. He'd go way down. We'd never know when he was going to hit bottom.

But Archie hit bottom in other ways.

I had to walk him outside a lot of times to get him sobered up. He was supposed to sing at church — if we could get him sober enough to get inside.¹⁵

Slowly but surely little changes began to take place in his life. That summer he behaved enough for Florence to agree to rekindling their romance that had remained dormant for three years. Now that she could see a little change in his heart, she gave him a little place in her heart. The love letters resumed in the month of June. Billy was spending six weeks in the Sierra Summer School near Huntington Lake in upstate California. Archie and his brother Walter were spending their summer fumigating orchards in the Plano-Wood Lake area. It was hot, hard, dangerous work. On the last day of June he wrote Billy, "Little Poogens, I never realized how much I love you." The flame burned brighter: this time it would burn undiminished for 63 years.

As the summer of 1925 wore on Archie continued to show Billy some signs of spiritual progress. Now he used fill-in-the-blank h____ instead of "hell," and d____ instead of "damn" in his letters. He was saving his money (his first paycheck was \$103.94 for 12 days of labor) for college instead of blowing it on hard liquor and easy women. In early August the Word family went to Pismo Beach for a weekend. Archie told Billy that Luther really liked her. By this time he was thinking of marriage. Billy, although enjoying school, wrote, "Dear, I want to see you, how badly you can't know."¹⁶

At last the long, hot summer was over. Florence returned to Strathmore to teach another year of school. On August 31 Archie received a Western Union telegram from H.C. Shropshire in Eugene, Oregon. The telegram read:

Saw Sanderson. Second scholarship for two years. You

will have to pay nine dollars contingent fee and music. Be sure to come at opening of school in September. Don't fail. Write school at once. Bring school standing. Am having good trip. All well.¹⁷

When Archie read the telegram to his father, Luther snapped, "I'd rather see you dead!"¹⁸

The young lovers barely had time to say "hello" to each other before it was time for Archie, now 24, to try college for a third time. This time it would be a charm, charming president's wife or not. Archie loaded up his things in his car, "Blackie," and headed for Eugene. On September 11, 1925, Archie Word made his grand arrival in Eugene, Oregon, home of Eugene Bible University where Archie would spend the next five years of his life.

LIFE AT EUGENE BIBLE UNIVERSITY

Eugene Bible University (Northwest Christian College today) was founded in 1895 by Eugene C. Sanderson, the man who "happened" to be in the audience the night Archie Word took the stage in the operetta "Queen Esther." The school, originally known as Eugene Divinity School, was located on the corner of Eleventh Avenue and Alder Street, just across from the campus of the University of Oregon. EBU was actually a complex of several colleges: *The Bible College*, the "heart, center and inspiration" of the entire group; *The College of Fine Arts*, which consisted of the School of Oratory, School of Music and School of Art; *The Girl's Junior College*, a Christian home as well as school (despite his reputation, Archie did not spend any time here!); *The Graduate School*, for those seeking higher degrees; *The Extension Division*, a

correspondence school; and the *International Bible Mission*. Pacific Christian Hospital in Eugene was owned and operated by IBM, as was the Training School for Nurses and the Boys Junior College. But the most unique feature of IBM was the two additional Bible Colleges overseen by EBU: Minneapolis Bible College and Christian Americanization Work in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the Extension Work at Seattle, Washington. Sanderson's philosophy was to locate all three Bible Colleges (Eugene, Minneapolis, Seattle) near state universities where his students could receive "the inestimable advantages of the great state insitutions . . . without extra cost to the supporters of our schools."¹⁹ Archie Word took several courses at the University of Oregon during his fifth year of school at Eugene.

What did the California boy think of Oregon? He told Florence that the weather was cool, the country green and the people very friendly ("but no comparison to Lindsay"). The campus of EBU he described as "not much of a school for looks but it may be strong for power." His first day on campus he met faculty members Walter Lee Myers, Louisa A. Kellems, Elmer Patterson and Charles Van Dyne. He secured a room at 1166 Alder Street, "comfortable" and "reasonably priced," but his roommate got on his nerves. Before Christmas the poor lad would be sent home with a nervous breakdown. Archie closed his first letter to Billy with a Scripture citation, Romans 8:28.

His first Sunday in Eugene he attended First Christian Church, 11th and Oak, where E. V. Stivers preached. Archie viewed the church as a "whopper" and seemed quite impressed by the choir. "There are as many in the choir here as there are in the whole

church in Lindsay!" Following Stiver's message Archie went forward and placed his membership with the church. That afternoon he strolled around the campus, then wrote his impressions to Billy.

I haven't met but one real man since I've been meeting students, and he is on the faculty. The biggest bunch of sissies I've ever had to associate with in my life. If it hadn't been for my scholarship I'd have chucked the whole thing and come home to California Christian College the first day. I sure do hope my opinion of this school changes for if it doesn't I'll have to vomit in class every day. . . . And all of the half-witted, sore-eyed, bow-legged, incompetent, weak sisters of large families come here to get a preacher husband. Some crowd!²⁰

It goes without saying that Archie Word was not too stuck on his new surroundings. But think how the faculty and students must have viewed this "briar" from California! J. Willis Hale, a student at EBU who later served as a missionary in the Philippines, encountered Archie one day.

Hale had gone down to get his mail at the school's mail center, and there was this fellow in a turtle-neck sweater with a bottle of whiskey in his hip pocket. He spoke to Hale, asking if 'everybody here is going to be a blankety-blank preacher.' Hale thought at the time, 'If the Lord can make a preacher out of that fellow, He can make a preacher out of anybody!'²¹

Hale later related this incident.

We met one Friday evening at the entrance of EBU and he asked me what I was doing in the Bible College. I told him I was preparing to preach the gospel. Then he said, 'Is every fool here trying to be a preacher?' He

told me that he had decided to quit because he thought he was coming to a UNIVERSITY and he came prepared with 'drinks' and, as far as he was concerned, he planned to have a good time. I was disappointed when he informed me that he was going to quit, so I urged him to continue until the end of the first semester. . . . Only a little while later Brother Word became quite evangelistic.²²

Once again God had providentially brought a man in contact with Archie Word at a critical juncture in his life. The list of men and women whom God used in this manner would continue to grow. Archie Word supported J. Willis Hale in his mission work in the Philippines his entire life. Toward the end of Word's ministry Hale dropped in on a revival meeting Archie was holding. "When he saw me just inside the door, he dropped everything and ran down to meet me, and what a wonderful visit we had that night."²³ At the 1990 North American Christian Convention, where Hale and his wife were honored as "God's Honored Servants" (along with Don and Elsie DeWelt), he said, "Brother Word was the greatest evangelist in the Restoration Movement in the last 60 years. Tens of thousands converted to Christ."²⁴

Another man whom God used to bring Archie Word to Christ was Harold E. Knott, professor at EBU, who helped Archie map out his studies for his freshman year. They included New Testament Exegesis I, Elocution and Oratory, Ethics and Hygiene, Religious Education I, Vocal Music, Evangelistic Singing, Christian Missions and Chapel. Some believe that Knott was the key to Archie's conversion.

The faculty had so arranged his class schedule that he was in Knott's class on 'Evidences,' [New Testament

Exegesis I — Author] which opened with the section on belief in God. There were times in the professor's presentation that Archie held up his hand with the intention of challenging some statement only to have his hand seemingly go unnoticed, and invariably the teacher brought out something that caused him to be glad he had not had his say. In time he came to see that all the intelligent fellows were not atheists and agnostics, and gradually his faith returned, only this time not because he had been brought up that way, but because he had strong, personal, convincing reasons for his faith. Through the years 'Evidences' has been such an important field to him that in his evangelistic meetings every Sunday night's message is on something pertaining to 'Evidences.'²⁵

Archie Word never forgot the good that Harold Knott did for him in presenting clear and convincing reasons for faith in God, Christ and the Bible. After Word's death, a faded newspaper clipping from the *Los Angeles Times* was found in his personal belongings. It told of the tragic death of Dr. Harold E. Knott in Bakersfield, California. Knott and his wife, Violet, were on their way to Eugene, where he was to assume the presidency of Northwest Christian College, when he was killed in an automobile accident. Archie was in a revival in Sanger, California, at the time.

Now that school was underway and Archie had a chance to meet the faculty and students on an ongoing basis, his attitude seemed slowly to change for the better. "Now that school has started, I'm finding some real men," he wrote Billy. "Lots of recent arrivals in the female group are not hard to squint at." Archie may have been referring to Rowena Hoven, daughter of Professor V. E. Hoven — "Daddy" Hoven to Archie and the entire student body — and Vivian Mae

Lemmon, daughter of W.S. Lemmon, the preacher who "spotted" Archie's singing talent at the gas station. Vivian would serve for many years in Japan. Archie's new room mate was L.C. Nightingale from Wheatland, California, "a darn good fellow." But there were three special fellows in the freshman class of 1925-1926 who would become fast friends of Archie's over the next five years: Howard Fay Hutchins, William Lee Jessup and Roy Bernard Shaw.

On the back of a photograph of the class of 1925-1926, Archie wrote something about each and every class mate (not everything was complimentary!). Roy Shaw, "Shawie" to Archie, was a "real Swede." Their mutual love of music brought them together. Roy Shaw was born October 8, 1899, in Oakland, California. The Shaws, Irish Catholic, were a railroad family, living and working near Santa Cruz. For a time their work took them to San Luis Obispo, where a member of the Christian Church invited Roy's older brother, George, to church. George had been reading the Bible. He had stated, "When I find a church described in the Bible I'll join it." The winsome church member replied, "That's the one I go to." George and Roy were both converted in the San Luis Obispo church. Roy was about 15 at the time. The family then moved back to Santa Cruz where Roy worked in a saw mill, helping support his widowed mother. Like Archie, he had a good singing voice, and his minister, W. R. Baird, encouraged him to go to EBU. He went, "with no idea of becoming a preacher,"²⁶ just like Archie. Roy's wife Dorothy says,

Several things worked together to make them good friends from that first year. They were both a couple

of years older than the just-out-of-high school group, both having worked four or five years before college. Also, they were both good singers and in most classes together. That first year Archie also had no idea of becoming a preacher. Then the second year they and two others rented an attic from a Christian family [J. Michael Shelley — Author] and roomed together. During this period Roy and Archie were kept busy leading singing and singing as soloists for meetings with young enthusiastic evangelists from the college. Actually, this was where Archie was truly converted and they were both challenged to become preachers.²⁷

Bill Jessup, "a fine fellow" and "Daddy of the Alley Rats," was born in Artesia, California, August 29, 1905. His grandparents, living in Callao, Missouri, were converted to Christ when the revival fires of the Restoration Movement swept through Missouri during the Civil War days. After Bill's grandfather was killed in an uprising, Bill's father accepted Christ, becoming a life-long member of the Church of Christ. The Jessup family moved to the San Joaquin Valley and helped establish churches in Turlock and Ceres. Bill accepted Christ when he was 12 and grew up in the Ceres church, dedicating his life to the ministry during a revival in 1924. He enrolled at EBU the same year, taking one semester before returning as a full-time student in 1925. "We were very close during those college years," said Bill. "We palled around together, played basketball and softball together on the college team."²⁸

Jessup remembers Howard Hutchins:

Ted, as we called him, was a joy to be around. He was a happy-go-lucky fellow who came to school from Marysville, Calif., about the same time we did. You

could hear him laugh all over the EBU campus. Even though he was full of fun, he was also very serious. I remember him best in his role of leadership in our student prayer services. Ted was a little older and many of us looked up to him. He preached at Noti during his school days and did a great work. Following school he had long ministries at Klamath Falls and Oregon City. He spent his retirement years at Winema where he was a great help in that Camp and Mission Program.²⁹

(Archie had only been in Eugene a week when he ran into an old high school basketball opponent from Woodlake who was now playing basketball on the freshman team for the University of Oregon. He brought the coach of the Oregon basketball team, "Spike" Leslie, to Archie's room in an attempt to get him to switch schools. Archie declined but reveled in the new respect he got from the men in the dorm!)

Archie found a job at the Oregon Electric freight office, working from 6:30 to 9:30 in the morning (fifty cents an hour) before his classes started. Later he got another job tending a furnace, which meant getting up very early, a habit he kept the rest of his life.

Singing was why he went to school in the first place and he gave it first place in his efforts. He enjoyed singing in the church choir. His first time the choir sang "Lead Me Gently Home Father." "Instead of having a solo in the chorus there were about thirty doggone good basses hitting it out as one voice and if it didn't roll out, man! Sounded just like the old pipe organ had twins and they were both bawling at once. It surely is a pleasure to be able to sing in Professor Hohgatt's choir!"³⁰

The wonder of study was also catching his attention. "My classes are becoming more interesting," he

wrote Billy on September 29. "I spent the afternoon delving into Newman's *Church History* and McGarvey's *Christian Evidences*. We are handling ancient manuscripts in Religious Education and the virgin birth of Christ in N. T. Exegesis. Very interesting to state it mildly."³¹ He found his research into the Behistun Rock and Rosetta Stone "exceedingly interesting." All freshmen students were required to memorize Psalm 1, 23, John 1:1-14 and Matthew 5:1-16, a task which he took on with new determination. He was beginning to enjoy his new type of friends, surroundings and activities — picnics, "weinie bakes," canoeing and other wholesome outings in the great Pacific Northwest. He especially enjoyed climbing Spencer's Butte, eight miles south of Eugene. It was at the top of the butte, looking down on the city, that he had time to think about many things: Florence, his new friends, his recent interest in spiritual matters, his future. Indeed, what did the future hold for this 24-year-old freshman student who now found himself in an Oregon "preacher factory"?

Notes

1. *Scottsbluff Star-Herald*, Mar. 24, 1985
2. Interview with Archie Word by Don Hunt, Jr., Feb. 1988
3. *Star-Herald*, *ibid*.
4. Interview with Nellie Word Arnold, April 22, 1990
5. Interview with Archie Word by Don Hunt, Jr., Feb. 1988
6. *Ibid*
7. Author's interview with Donald G. Hunt, Feb. 13, 1989
8. *Coos Bay World*, July 14, 1979
9. *Eugene Register-Guard*, June 14, 1981
10. *Galax Gazette*, April 7, 1982
11. *Springfield News*, May 30, 1981
12. *Eugene Register-Guard*, June 14, 1981
13. *Christian Evangelist*, March 21, 1951

14. *Life Story of Archie Word*, pp. 11,12; *Galax Gazette*, April 7, 1982; Interview with Archie Word by Don Hunt, Jr., Feb. 1988.
15. Author's interview with Effie Bachman Bayley, April 22, 1990
16. Letter to Archie Word from Florence Procter, July 13, 1925
17. Telegram to Archie Word from H.C. Shropshire, Aug. 31, 1925
18. Author's interview with Nellie Word Arnold, April 22, 1990
19. *World Evangel*, Nov. 4, 1926
20. Letter to Florence Procter from Archie Word, Sept. 13, 1925
21. *Life Story of Archie Word*, p. 12
22. Letter to author from J. Willis Hale, May 12, 1989
23. *Ibid*
24. Author's interview with J. Willis Hale, July 13, 1990
25. *Life Story of Archie Word*, p. 12
26. Letter to author from Dorothy Shaw, April 24, 1989
27. *Ibid*
28. Letter to author from Bill Jessup, Mar. 3, 1989
29. *Ibid* Mar. 11, 1991
30. Letter to Florence Procter from Archie Word, Sept. 22, 1925
31. *Ibid* Sept. 29, 1925

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CONVERTED TO CHRIST (1925-1926)

I wonder if someday, when I've attained more of a Christian character, if my life and testimony will help someone try to straighten out, and get on Christ's side.

—Archie Word, after hearing a "real testimonial meeting" at a Teddy Levitt revival, Dec. 1925

When did Archie Word really become converted to Christ? There are varying opinions as to the exact time of his spiritual transformation. Donald G. Hunt, Word's son-in-law and compiler of *Life Story of Archie Word*, believes it was during the first semester of Archie's freshman year at Eugene Bible University.

When he was ready to make a spiritual decision, he went to a Wednesday night Bible study and prayer meeting, and even though there was no invitation

given he went forward, reconsecrating his life to God.¹

In early October, 1925, Archie's main ambition was to use his voice in singing, rather than preaching. "I don't think I'll be a preacher," he wrote Florence. "Am not turned out that way. Would much rather sing. Oratory is fine, but haven't had enough of it to tell whether I'll like it or not."² In spite of his preference to sing, one of his professors, Louisa Kellems (the mother of evangelist Jesse Kellems), made a kind of prophecy concerning him. Archie described the "prophecy" to Florence: "Mrs. Kellems told me, before the whole class, that some day I would be one of the outstanding preachers of the institution. Maybe so, but I think Hohgatt's prophecy will come true first. Then after I have been in the Evangelistic field for some years I suppose I may gradually go into the preaching end of the business of fishing for the Savior of men, who says, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of MEN!'"³ So by late October, after being in a "preacher factory" for less than two months, Archie Word was thinking about the evangelistic field, either in singing or preaching.

His reference to Hohgatt's "prophecy" is interesting. Cyrus Hershell Hohgatt taught music at EBU and was the choir director at First Christian Church, where Archie was now a member. Archie referred to him as "a jolly good fellow," a man who "just makes folks sing whether they want to or not." He was one of Archie's early heroes: "I hope I can be as great a person as he is some day." The music professor, like Mrs. Kellems, saw great potential in the young man who came to school with a whiskey flask in his hip pocket. In early November Archie wrote to Florence:

"Hohgatt told me that I had great possibilities in life work, even told the class that I reminded him of the great Rodeheaver, who leads the singing for Billy Sunday. . . . But I am not, for I realize the amount of work that is necessary to make a complete Evangelistic singer — let alone the best in the world."⁴ To be compared with "Rody" was pretty heady stuff for a freshman student but it was music to his ears.

THE CONVERSION OF ARCHIE JAMES WORD

Slowly but surely the Spirit of God was having his way with the former California roustabout. At this time he was still attending the movies, ("The Freshman" and "The Ten Commandments"), and even got into an occasional scrape. This time, however, the fighting was a little more "sanctified." At a Freshman-Sophomore Mix, Archie was led into a dark room and told to bow down to the Sophomores. This to an ex-sailor, ex-pugilist! Archie told Florence,

A. J. didn't bow down and as a result he's got a blistered B. and a skinned fist and a sore ear. And six Sophs are nursing everything from a swelled-up eye to one loose tooth or a darn sore belly. It was a disadvantage fighting in the dark and in a room filled with chairs and tables. They finally had to turn on the lights to get hold of me and call in the whole class. But boy! Boy! When they did get at me they all poured it on. But I never bowed down to the Sophs All of the others except one [Bill Jessup — Author] bowed down to the Bums, but it happens to be one of my hobbies to bow down to nothing but God and his power.⁵

It would not be long until Archie Word would fulfill his own words and bow to the power of God. "My

greatest wish," he told Florence, "is to serve Christ first and then you, my own dear." He admitted, "I've sinned much . . . if God is a just God, I'm afraid some day he is going to give me some punishment. There is only one thing that will save us and that is Christ's plan of salvation and sin's forgiveness."⁶ He was still not sure which way to go — evangelistic singing or preaching — but now believed that God had providentially brought him to EBU. "He is the guiding hand in having me here. He has led me through many strange places but I firmly believe he intends to make something out of me in the end." He closed this letter with a postscript: "My own Poogey, please pray for me, that I may learn to pray too!"⁷

Archie also believed that God had something good in store for Roy Shaw. "I expect he will be a power in His kingdom some of these days. That is my prediction at least." In this Archie was not wrong. Roy Shaw did become a power for God. Together, he and Archie enjoyed many years of labor in the kingdom of God. They both started out as singers and wound up as preachers.

On Wednesday, November 4, Archie sang his first solo in chapel, singing "In the Garden" with "all of the soul I could muster." Afterwards the budding baritone was euphoric: "If I can only get to be a wonder in this world of music I'll be so happy!" A few days later he was invited to sing at the First Baptist Church at Eighth and Pearl in Eugene. He sang Sankey's "The Ninety and Nine," and also sang "Must I Go and Empty Handed" in a male quartet. He was so excited that he was planning to forego Christmas vacation and a trip back to Lindsay so he and Roy Shaw could sing for some evangelists during the break. "Dear, I feel it is

my duty to do all that God will let me do to further his cause. Therefore, I shall endeavor to save men and women from sin and unto Christ during my vacation." That very night he attended his first prayer meeting. Archie's closest friends had been urging him to attend the weekly prayer meetings, held in an upper room in the men's dorm, but he had been putting them off. "No, I'm too busy," he told them. But on this particular night, he found himself drawn to the upper room. He entered the room late, just in time to hear some of his friends praying for him. "This touched him deeply."⁸ The next day he wrote Florence, "I went to student body prayer meeting last nite, and I think if I can possibly get around I will not miss another one of them . . . I'll learn to pray in time."⁹

It took him one week. November 11, 1925, became Archie Word's spiritual "Armistice Day." He declared his truce with God and made full surrender to the Almighty. A broken Archie wrote to a happy Florence:

I am for the first time in my life trying to live for Christ. Last nite at our house prayer meeting I offered my first prayer. It was very short but to the point. All of the fellows here want to help me. They are a wonderful lot. I am so happy in my work, and all I am looking forward to is to grow in power for Christ."¹⁰

It is touching to imagine the scene at the house prayer meeting. Archie James Word, now 24, ex-sailor, ex-prizefighter, ex-bootlegger; the man who saw himself as a "briar" and every one else as "sissies"; the fellow who came to school with a whiskey flask in his hip pocket — who asked J. Willis Hale, "Is everyone here going to become a blankety-blank preacher? — the boy who would bow to no one except God,

kneeling in deep contrition with boys who loved him and had been praying for his soul, young men like Bill Jessup, Roy Shaw and Howard Hutchins. Let us draw the curtain on such a sacred scene.

Archie Word got up from his knees a new man — a *renewed* man. The promise of Revelation 3:20 was his. A lukewarm Christian had heard Christ's voice. He had opened the door of his heart. Christ had come in to sup with him! He would never be the same. Nor would the multiplied thousands who would some day come to the foot of the cross because of the powerful preaching and tearful pleadings of Archie Word.

Archie's prayers were now for the souls of men. Five days after his conversion experience he wrote Florence, "I am glad to hear that the church in Lindsay is growing. May it be ever thus, not in Lindsay alone but all over the world." The next day he encouraged Billy to start using the American Standard Version of the Bible (the ASV was used exclusively at EBU for memory work). "If you are studying out of any other it would be a good idea to change" (Archie used the ASV the rest of his life). Then he issued what was almost a command: "You will come here next year and study with me the work that the Master would have you to do!"¹¹

Prayer was a wonderful new experience for Archie. "Our house prayer meetings are coming to mean more and more to me. They are so much help. Builds us all up to pray and get our minds closer to God."¹² "Prayer is medicine for the soul and prayer with you, dear, will be healing from heaven."¹³ "The Christ of God," as Archie loved to refer to Him, had challenged his life. If he ever preached, he would preach just like Christ! "The Christ of God, when He rebuked the

Pharisees, severely and repeatedly, knew that they were the ones that were [going] to cause His death . . . but did He flinch? No! Not once. And I intend to be like my Master." He also had kind words of praise for one who had helped bring him to a life of full surrender — Florence. "No one could influence a life as you have mine."¹⁴

Another influence was about to enter his life in the person of Teddy Leavitt, a rough-and-tumble revivalist who used to go into logging camps and whip the toughest man in camp, then preach the Word of God with equal power and results. On Saturday night, December 5, Archie tucked away a men's quartet in "Blackie," and drove to Santa Clara to sing for Leavitt's revival meeting. Archie was moved by the service.

It was an inspiration to all who attended and during it all I wondered if some day when I've attained more of a Christian character, if my life and testimony will help some one to try and straighten out, and get on Christ's side. It would be entirely too interesting, I'm afraid, for most people's nerves, so I'll leave it with my God and my memory until he sees fit to use it for his purposes.¹⁵

The next Sunday he sang before over 2,500 people at First Christian Church in Eugene. Later in the week the teacher who had helped Archie regain his faith in God, Harold Knott, left for Africa. Archie was similarly moved by Knott's farewell sermon in chapel. On December 22 he offered his first formal prayer at a church service in Saginaw, Oregon. When the service closed the preacher announced that Archie Word, who was there as a soloist, would pronounce the benediction! Archie said, "I did, such as my language could muster on a moments notice, but first I asked

my God to guide me in what I should say.”¹⁶

Christmas and New Year’s Eve, 1925, had a new meaning for Archie. “I am looking forward to the time,” he wrote Billy, “when we shall have a home in which to help each other with cheer and gladness.” He saw the new year in at a church Watch Night service at Creswell, Oregon. “All we can do is trust God for the good that is to come to us if we are true.”

GROWING IN GRACE — AND GRADES!

The New Year seemed to infuse Archie with new zeal to plunge into new ventures and enterprises in the Christian life. Along with several other class mates, including Roy Shaw (“jolly, good as gold, a mighty fine Irishman”), Archie was living in rented quarters at 1065 Alder Street. Mrs. G. H. Smith was their landlady and the young men had family worship every morning before breakfast. Archie continued to attend the house prayer meetings every Wednesday night. “A nice lot of fellows, clean and loyal Christians every one of them.”¹⁷

His athletic ability was rewarded by the officials at the college when he was named Gym Instructor early in January. The new duties not only gave Archie an opportunity to keep up on his physical program but also provided him with an additional \$25 per semester. He set a rigorous pace for the male students, most of them several years younger than himself.

His favorite class was New Testament Exegesis, which he called “a real joy.” By this time he was into the book of Acts, “the most interesting work” he had covered thus far. He got a B on his semester exam in New Testament Exegesis but received all A’s in the rest of his classes.

As well as excelling in athletics and academics, Archie was developing a desire to witness to others what he was learning in the classrooms of EBU. “Everyone is telling his or her experience and so I’m tickled pink about mine,” he wrote Florence in early January. She wrote back, asking his advice about witnessing to a mutual friend in Strathmore. Archie replied, “In order to know what to do to be saved it is indeed simple. Read Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 2:38; and 3:19. And be sure to have him get an American Standard Version, for it is the most direct translation from the Greek we have.”¹⁸ When he received word in late April that his cousin, Joe Christmas, had died, he was visibly upset. “Joe was not a Christian. Possibly had never considered Christ or His plea all his life,” he lamented.¹⁹

Along with other students at EBU, Archie was learning practical ministry skills, like hospital visitation. “Hospital work and shut-ins are wonderfully appreciative folks, and my best and happiest times are usually spent with them. (It is) glorious how you feel after helping the helpless.”²⁰ In later years, hospital calling would become a hallmark of Archie Word’s ministry. He had a genuine concern for the hurting and spent many hours by their bedside, praying for them in that wonderful gravel voice.

“THEN SINGS MY SOUL!”

Archie Word came to EBU on a music scholarship and singing — evangelistic singing — was now his great love. He began his singing ministry with the church in Halsey, Oregon, driving there each Sunday to sing solos. It was not long before Dwight Hackett invited him to accompany him to Woodland, Washington, to

sing for the church there. Other Oregon towns where Archie Word sang that semester included Corvallis (where he also sang at the Corvallis Children's Home), Crabtree, Santa Clara, Perrydale ("pioneer folks drove in from seven or eight miles in their buggies"), McCoy, Junction City, Creswell (with Roy Shaw), Beaverton, Springfield and Scio.

One week in January a special guest came to EBU, Fred Fisher. Archie was ecstatic. "I led in Evangelistic Singing class before Fred Fisher, the greatest Evangelistic Chorus leader in the whole world."²¹ Fisher sang for Billy Sunday for 11 years, and Archie was tremendously impressed with the great man. Professor Veltie Pruett privately told Archie that within a year he would be in great demand as a soloist and song leader. But Professor C.H. Hohgatt warned him one day about getting "the big head" over his singing abilities.

THE SCIO REVIVAL

Archie had not yet developed a love for preaching, although he admitted, "The more I sing the more I believe there is a sermon in every song."²² In early February he turned down a chance to preach. "Had a chance to preach this morning but did not feel quite equal to the proposition. Yet I believe I will a later date, sometime."²³ Everywhere he went to sing he was subjected to good preaching, especially in Ross Guiley's revival at Santa Clara, where Archie first began to sense the thrill of preaching the Word.

In the spring of 1926 Professor Guiley asked Archie to be his song evangelist for his revival with the church in Scio, Oregon. This would prove to be yet another turning point in the young singer's life. Scio was a small town of about 500 people with a strug-

gling congregation. Archie described Scio as a "ruff neck town." The match-up could not have been better: a former "ruff neck" in a revival in a "ruff neck" town.

Only a dozen people came out the first night of the meeting, March 20. The reason? The Ku Klux Klan was holding a big rally! After the disappointing first night's service Guiley and Archie attended a party at the local gym. Archie wanted to get up and announce the revival to the crowd, but his professor/revivalist thought it not best. Archie was somewhat put out but was not deterred from further efforts at letting the townspeople know about the meeting. One morning he walked to the local creamery and personally invited every employee to come to the meeting. He took part in a local town team baseball game but was upset by the swearing that went on. "I must admit it sounded rotten to me — nauseating." This from a sailor who used to turn the air blue!

The calling efforts and community involvement paid off. Soon there were 40 coming to the meeting, then 60. The Scio newspaper reported, "Singing Evangelist Word has charge of the music and puts his whole soul in it." Still, Archie was not satisfied. "These folks have died a spiritual death," he said. "We have got to arouse them some way." Day after day and night after night he threw himself into the revival effort. "This evangelistic meeting business is not all roses," he admitted. "It takes nerve and more nerve and then a little more nerve to keep things moving along."²⁴ But at the end of the week there was sweet fruit for their hard labors — three high school young people were baptized and one adult placed membership with the Scio church. At the close of the meeting, Archie declared his

intention to preach some day, but lamented,

Oh, how I wish we could stay another week, at least, or maybe a month. House was nearly full tonight. I intend to preach some day but I do not know when and for how long. Do hope I can win others if I love it myself. There is much joy in the love you send me, Dear, but I got more satisfaction tonight in knowing that I had a part in winning those folk for a cleaner life than I've ever had before.²⁵

(In the ensuing years it would be a trademark of an Archie Word revival to "stay another week at least or maybe a month" until the Holy Spirit broke the meeting open with conversions to Christ.)

HIS FIRST SERMON

As the end of his first school year approached, Archie felt a rush of conflicting emotions. "I can't hardly wait to get home," he confided to Florence, "and yet it is going to be hard to break away from the school associates here."²⁶ One student in particular had gotten a hold on his heart. Her name was Frances Picklesimer, a piano accompanist for Archie and other singers. She and Archie spent many hours together in practice, travel and singing engagements. There may have even been a slight romantic attachment but whatever existed between them was lost when she suffered a nervous breakdown from her schedule and other activities and found it necessary to return home. Practically the whole student body went to see her off at the train station. Archie described the house prayer meeting that night.

Prayer meeting was wonderfully inspirational. I've never heard so many persons in one place praying for

the welfare of one person, Frances. . . I do not bawl very often, but honestly I could not help it. I just busted out and so did Shaw, up in our room. We'll be just about like two lost puppies, for she played for us both.²⁷

From that day on Archie and "all the fellows" wrote letters to Frances until graduation, May 28.

The church in Scio was taken with Archie Word, calling him back to sing on May 3. Archie developed a real rapport with the little congregation and even tried to get Florence to apply for a teacher's position in the community. He was now 25 and thinking seriously of marriage. One day he got a letter from his brother Walter who took him to task for not marrying Billy. "Hoss" thought his brother was not doing Billy right by keeping her on the string. All that was about to change.

Archie was still singing at every opportunity that came his way. On May 14 he participated in the Final Recital, held at First Christian Church in Eugene, singing "The Great Judgment Morning" before 3,000 people. But it was May 23, just five days before school ended, that became a red letter day in the life of Archie Word. That was the day Archie Word preached his first sermon at Crabtree, Oregon.

The man who had cursed the "preacher factory" at EBU was about to preach for the very first time. Joseph Applegate, a sophomore at EBU, was the student preacher at Crabtree, a little town 60 miles north of Eugene. Archie described the setting:

Preached my first sermon yesterday at Crabtree, Oregon. Spoke on 'My Christ.' The house was full of well wishers from all over the Scio country as well as Crabtree. Almost as big a crowd as on Mother's Day.

Just after the prayer and before the sermon M. Van DerPool's little 4-year-old brown-eyed girl brought me the finest bouquet of flowers. How I appreciated them and the thought came to me of some day having a little brown-eyed girl of my very own.

The sermon, so I was told, was a success. It was original with me and it called forth many compliments. Just the same, I'm wearing the same sized hat this a.m. . . .

I'm sending you one of the roses and the card attached, as memories of my first sermon. I have a call from the board at Scio to come and preach for them next year but haven't accepted yet. I am worn out . . . but I'm so full I've just got to spill over.²⁸

A woman who was present that morning wrote to Maggie Word, telling her how proud she should be of her son who had preached such a fine sermon. The letter pleased Mother Maggie to no end.²⁹

Finally, Archie's first year at school came to an end. It was time to say good-bye to dear friends he had once called "sissies." "So long, Roy! See you this fall, Bill! Thanks for your prayers, Hutch! J. Willis, I'm glad you told me to hang in there!"

Friendships had been forged for eternity.

NOTES

1. *Life Story of Archie Word*, p. 13
2. Letter to Florence Procter from Archie Word, Oct. 6, 1925
3. *Ibid*, Oct. 24, 1925
4. *Ibid*, Nov. 5, 1925
5. *Ibid*, Oct. 25, 1925
6. *Ibid*, Oct. 29, 1925
7. *Ibid*
8. Author's interview with Nellie Word Arnold, April 22, 1990
9. Letter to Florence Procter from Archie Word, Nov. 4, 1925
10. *Ibid*, Nov. 12, 1925
11. *Ibid*, Nov. 16, 1925

12. *Ibid*, Nov. 21, 1925
13. *Ibid*, Dec. 3, 1925
14. *Ibid*, Dec. 7, 1925
15. *Ibid*
16. Letter to Florence Procter from Archie Word, Dec. 22, 1925
17. *Ibid*, Jan. 20, 1926
18. *Ibid*, Feb. 26, 1926
19. *Ibid*, April 21, 1926
20. *Ibid*, May 14, 1926
21. *Ibid*, Jan. 26, 1926
22. *Ibid*
23. Letter to Florence Procter from Archie Word, Feb. 2, 1926
24. *Ibid*, Mar. 20, 1926
25. *Ibid*, Mar. 26, 1926
26. *Ibid*, May 26, 1926
27. *Ibid*, April 7, 1926
28. *Ibid*, May 25, 1926
29. Author's interview with Nellie Word Arnold, April 22, 1990

6

THE LONGEST YEAR (1926-1927)

I cannot tell why the Lord chose me to preach. . . . He knew of my past mistakes and waywardness . . . my miserable failures, but He chose me, and He has blessed my ministry. . . It will always be a mystery to me.

—Archie Word, Oct. 8, 1960

One thing was bothering Archie Word about his return to Lindsay for the summer of 1926, and it had nothing to do with Billy. It was his old pals. What was he going to do when he was linked up with them again for another season of fumigating fruit trees? They knew the kind of man he had been before he went away to Bible college. Perhaps news of his conversion had even drifted back to Lindsay. Would they

put him to the test? Would he be able to stand up to the test? Many years later he testified that a promise from the Lord Himself gave him the inner strength to conquer the heat of temptation in the summer of 1926.

THE PROMISE

In Archie's American Standard Bible he underlined Matthew 28:20, "And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." He testified,

That promise . . . meant a great deal to me the first summer of my experience as a Christian. I had been away to school for a year where I was converted. The year was up, and I was going to return to my home and work with the same gang of men that I had worked with the previous year. They had been gamblers, profane and vulgar in speech. I knew just about what they thought of the average preacher, so I knew I was going to be 'on the spot,' and I needed help, and here was God's promise to do just that.

The work developed just as we had planned, and I was thrown with that element which is contrary to Christian ideals. But the Lord kept His promise, and much to my surprise, when we went out on the job to work, the man whom they had chosen for my partner was a very fine young athlete who was also studying for the ministry. We hit it off together just fine, and by the grace of the Lord we were able to do the largest night of 'piece work' in the fumigation of citrus trees that any team had ever pulled up 'til that time. There was a respect built that summer by the Lord keeping His promise to me that worked to the saving of souls some five years later when I was called to conduct a meeting in that city [the great Lindsay revival of 1930 where 136 people were converted — Author].

. . . They knew how far from God I had been, how weak I had been in the flesh, and how worldly I had

been just the year before. And when they saw 'I AM WITH YOU,' and how it worked, they could not help but be impressed with the power of God as manifested in the victory they saw daily and nightly as we worked together.¹

Nearly every day he was taunted by his former companions in sin. "After I was converted and was back in my hometown," he once recalled, "I passed the 'Yaller Dawg' pool hall. From way back inside a voice yelled out, 'Hey, Word. Where is your Bible?' "2 A year ago he would have charged in and busted the man's lip; now he bit his own lip and walked on.

THE BRIAR AND THE LILY BECOME ONE

Archie Word and Florence Procter had gone together, off and on, for more than a decade. His own family thought it was high time he married. For about a year he had wanted to get married, but felt that he could not support a wife while going to college. All that changed one fine summer day, July 7, 1926. Nellie Word Arnold says,

After one year at Bible college he came home an entirely different man. . . One day when he came home for lunch, he said, 'I wonder how much money I have in the bank?' He told Billy, 'If I have twenty dollars in the bank, we'll get married today!'

He phoned the bank and found he didn't have quite that much but Billy assured him that if he didn't have that much, she'd help him out. He went that afternoon to Visalia to the county courthouse and got their marriage license and they were married that evening in her home that she and her father shared [Mrs. Procter had died earlier — Author].³

Now that Archie had said "Yes" to Jesus, Florence

was ready to say "I do" to Archie. Brother Joseph R. Speck, the preacher at Lindsay whose preaching from the book of Revelation used to scare Nellie to death,⁴ drove out to the Procter place to perform the ceremony. The bride wore a voile cotton dress she had made herself. Archie chafed under the starched collar and tie. But how rapidly the hearts of the young lovers must have beat as they looked deeply into each other's eyes and they stood, hands interlocked, before the big preacher in the Procter living room.

"Do you, Archie Word, in the presence of Almighty God and these witnesses here present, promise to love, and cherish, and protect, this woman, Florence Procter, whose right hand you now hold; do you promise to provide for her in health and in sickness; do you promise to be true to her, forsaking all others, and cleave unto her and her only until death you do part?"

The preacher stared sternly at Archie. He had heard about this wild and wayward California youth! Without hesitation, Archie replied, "I do."

Shyly, Florence repeated her vows. "I do."

"Then," boomed Brother Speck, "By the authority of the State of California, and by the still higher authority of the Word of God, I now pronounce you husband and wife, and what God hath joined together let not man put asunder!" He snapped his Bible shut as Archie took Florence in his arms.

The Briar and the Lily were one.

The newlyweds left for a brief honeymoon in Stockton, returning to Lindsay where they stayed with Elmer for the few remaining weeks they had together. Archie would come home each night, weary from fumigating. Florence would have a meal waiting for

him on the kitchen table. As he would eat she would rub his aching shoulders and back. The days sped by and soon it was time to part once more. Florence had already signed a contract with the Strathmore school district where she would teach grade school and coach high school girls basketball at \$160 a month. She put up a brave front the day Archie left for Oregon, but collapsed in tears when he drove out of sight in old "Blackie." It would be many long months before they saw one another again.

THE LONGEST YEAR

When Archie returned to Eugene in the middle of September, he rented a room for \$16 a month from Harold and Violet Knott, who lived at 968 Alder Street. He got a job washing dishes at a frat house at the University of Oregon and continued to serve as gym instructor at EBU. His sophomore classes were: Gospel Solo, Psychology, New Testament Exegesis II, Elocution and Oratory, Evangelistic Singing, Pastoral Theology and Chapel. "Psychology is by far the most interesting of all my classes," he wrote to his wife in California. "And Romans is taking on a new life for me."⁵ He also tried Latin, but dropped it after a valiant struggle.

Archie knew this was going to be "the longest year" of his life, separated as he was from his new bride. "You have written to me as almost everything — schoolboy, runaway, sailor, bum, salesman, prodigal, sweetheart, pal and now as husband."⁶ Florence would write to Archie twice a day for the next nine months (none of the letters remain), while Archie would write to her nearly every day (she kept all his letters).

In the fall of 1926 there were 40 churches in Oregon being served by students from EBU. When a dozen new churches opened up, over 100 young men applied for the openings! Earl Mick wanted Archie to take over a church where he had been preaching, but Archie refused, begging "lack of knowledge of church work." He had also made a prior commitment to J. Michael Shelly to sing for him each Sunday night at Junction City. Archie had caught Shelly's fancy while singing for him in a revival at Hebron. Still, Archie had not completely ruled out preaching. On September 26 he preached his second sermon at Crabtree. Two days later he was thinking of a regular preaching point: "Next year, when we go out to our preaching point, we'll get along fine."⁷

Singing, however, was still his number one priority. During the first semester of his second year at EBU, Archie sang at churches in Hebron, Junction City, Union, Santa Clara, Crabtree, Alvadore, Franklin, Halsey, and Corvallis. Most of the time it was solos, but by this time he had a male quartet known as the WACO quartet (Word, Allison, Chapin, Olson). October 4 was a typically busy Sunday. He led singing for the Sunday School and church service at Junction City (for which he received \$2.50), drove to Union school for an afternoon songfest, then drove 70 miles to Crabtree for the Sunday evening service where he led songs and also preached (receiving \$5.00), returning home late Sunday night with Roy Shaw in "Blackie" (the car lost a rear end costing \$19.88). A net loss of \$12.38 but a net gain of "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

One Sunday night he was late to church because he was busy warning a girl about the pitfalls of the dance.

If anyone knew the dance business, it was Archie Word! The same Sunday night the Junction City church was instrumental in voting out movies being shown in the local theater on Sunday nights. Sundays were especially lonely for the newlywed husband. "Tomorrow is Sunday and if there is one time that I long for you and miss you more than any other time, it is on the Lord's Day, for all through our life that is to be our big day."⁸ One Saturday he enjoyed watching a football game between Oregon and Washington (although the Ducks lost 23-9).

THE SANTA CLARA REVIVAL

Archie's studies were building a strong conviction concerning the New Testament church. "We have been studying the united church in I Cor. 1:10," he told Billy. "We should be a united church, but until all manmade creeds are ready to come into the New Testament church of Christ, there can never be union."⁹ He soon got an opportunity to put his new convictions into practice. Professor Ross Guiley invited Archie to be his song evangelist during a revival with the Santa Clara church November 7 through December 7, 1926. James A. Pointer, Oregon State Evangelist, would be the visiting revivalist.

Each night Archie led the revival choir, accompanied by a seven-piece orchestra. He would also precede the message with a solo, singing such numbers as "Master, The Tempest Is Raging" and "When They Ring Those Golden Bells." After the first two weeks of the meeting, the congregation took up an offering of \$20.22 for Archie. He celebrated his good fortune over a bowl of chili at the Toastwich Shop with Roy Shaw. Pointer's pointed preaching had a positive

(almost emboldening) effect on Archie. He said, "I'm getting many lessons in sermon building from him. I'm even conceited enough to believe I could improve on some of them. Will try to anyhow."¹⁰ God had providentially brought another person into his life who would influence him for good.

Thanksgiving came right in the middle of the Santa Clara campaign. Archie spent the day counting his blessings in the home of "Mother Jesse" at Crabtree. "Mother Jesse" became Archie's surrogate mother while he was in college. She adored him, calling him, "you ugly sweet thing you." On his way back to Eugene the ex-bum picked up a hitchhiking bum and witnessed to his captive audience. This was a Thanksgiving Archie could truly be thankful for. He wrote Florence,

It was through your prayers and mother's prayers that I am where I am now. . . . You have changed my life by your example, prayer and gentle influence more than anything or anybody. . . . Truly we have a wonderful work ahead of us. . . . Through God's guidance and watchful care over us we shall succeed in enlarging Christ's kingdom."¹¹

At last the Pointer revival drew to a close. At the end of the campaign the Santa Clara church took up another love offering for Archie. This time it totaled \$45.48 — more than twice as much as before. In addition, the appreciative congregation offered to pay Archie's second semester tuition costs on a personal note at no interest. Archie was deeply touched, but refused the offer. He was so homesick for his bride that he honestly felt he would not be back for the second semester. To his dying day, Archie Word held the Santa Clara church in the highest esteem.

But to celebrate his good fortune, Archie did a rather strange thing. He took several EBU students to a late show. He later confessed to Florence that he felt like a "sneak" and believed that the Lord "punished" him in a dream for breaking his "Christian etiquette." He then made a vow: "So help me God, as long as I live [I will] never go to another moving picture unless I have the word of a Christian that the play is O.K."

THE FINEST WORK IN THE WORLD

Archie was thrilled when one of his best friends, Roy Shaw, announced just before Christmas that he was going to marry Dorothy Jessup, the sister of another of Archie's best friends, Bill Jessup. It reminded him that he would soon be home for Christmas with Florence. "How I love little kids," he told her, "and won't we be happy when we can have a pair of our own."¹² As it turned out, the Words would have three pairs of kids!

During the Christmas break Florence managed to talk her lonesome husband into returning to EBU. When he got back on campus, Professor Stivers asked him to sing for him at the Springfield church, which Archie did, with "fear and trembling." His favorite songs to lead at this time were "Power in the Blood" and "We're Marching to Zion." After his stint at Springfield, he wrote, "It's the finest work in all of God's world, helping men and women to see Christ . . . no other work in the world could keep us apart for a week, let alone nine months."¹³ Two weeks into the new year (1927) he declared, "My purpose now is to serve Christ with all my house, for life . . . it's great to be young, to be planning and working toward a future . . . let us go on and on in the footsteps of the Master!"¹⁴

During January Archie attended Brother Van Winkle's revival at the big First Christian Church in Eugene every night that he could. His WACO quartet sang at Oregon City one night for Bulgeon, "the great Union evangelist." On January 14 he reminded Billy to pay his Masonic dues in Lindsay. (It would be several years before he would sever his association with the Masonic Lodge, smiting them hip and thigh from the pulpit.)

THE DALLAS MUSIC MINISTRY

In mid-January the church in Dallas, Oregon, became an important part of Archie's life. A fellow student, Orval D. Petersen, was preaching in Dallas and invited Archie to come to Dallas, 60 miles north of Eugene, each Sunday where he would be paid \$6 a week for his singing and song leading. Archie was considering two other offers at the time: the Springfield church (which was slow in making an "official" offer) and a church in upstate Oregon, recommended by V.E. "Daddy" Hoven, who saw possibilities in Archie. But Archie still felt he was not ready for all that went with a pulpit ministry. He had only preached three times up to now. Still, a preaching ministry remained in the back of his mind. He told Florence, "We'll have a church to preach in next year if we have to organize one."¹⁵ He accepted the Dallas offer.

Each Saturday Archie and Orval D. Petersen left Eugene about 10:30, stopping in Corvallis at noon for lunch at the Peacock Restaurant, arriving in Dallas around two in the afternoon where they spent the rest of the day calling. On Saturday nights, while Orval was working on his sermon, Archie worked with the choir and other special numbers for the song services on

the Lord's Day. Sunday mornings he would lead the congregational singing, conduct the choir and teach the high school class. Afternoons were spent in calling and leading a young people's Christian Endeavor class. During the Sunday evening service he would lead the singing and bring a solo before the sermon. His first selection was "The Touch of His Hand on Mine," sung before 250 people.

Working with his first full-fledged choir (14 sopranos, five altos, six basses and one tenor!) and a six-piece orchestra, plus a pianist and organist, was quite an undertaking for the young music minister. On February 26 he confided to Florence, "(We) had our first choir 'stink' tonite Pray for me that next Saturday night I may get it all fixed up. I do not want strife among my choir members, and what's more, I will not have it at all. I'll pray over it this week and act at our next meeting."¹⁶ Sure enough, next Sabbath the trouble was settled "very nicely." By the end of the year the choir had doubled in size to 50 members, the church board raised his pay to \$10 a week, and the choir took up a special offering of \$26.70 to show their appreciation for his patient work with them. "Word, it's from our hearts and we love you," they told him on May 2. He continued his association with the Masons in Dallas because he felt they would help him get acquainted in a new town.

The young singer continued to receive numerous invitations during his Dallas ministry and when it did not interfere with his studies or weekend ministry, he would accept. During the second semester of his sophomore year he sang with Roy Shaw for Dr. Dunn's revival at Coburg (Shaw also sang for Garland Hay's great revival in Warrenton — 75 confessions of

faith). Dr. Shelly had Archie sing for him in his revival at Creswell in February. Archie sang two of his favorites: "The Holy City" and "The Great Judgment Morning." Shelly was effusive in his praise:

Brother Word sings the gospel in a way that reaches my heart more than any man I have ever heard.¹⁷

Archie also sang at Harrisburg, Independence, Loraine, Pioneer, Franklin (where Bill Jessup was preaching), Springfield, Fall City and Junction City. Vera Champee was his piano accompanist for many of these appointments. The WACO quartet was invited to sing live over radio station KGEH in Eugene May 6.

On May 15 the Dallas newspaper announced that Archie Word would give a "Sermon in Song" at the eight o'clock service. By 7:30 Sunday evening the building was filled, the balcony starting to overflow. Archie, dressed in his old Navy uniform, sang "Lost Ship" in the white light of a spotlight and then gave a 15-minute sermon on "The Sensations of a Man on a Sinking Ship." The "converted ex-sailor" told the crowd about the night the *South Dakota* was torpedoed and he found himself in the Atlantic, crying out to God for mercy.

By the end of the school year, the Dallas church invited Archie to stay on for the summer. Archie had planned to return to Lindsay for another summer of work in the orchards, but the Dallas offer was too good to refuse. The church agreed to provide a furnished house for Archie and Florence, would continue to pay him \$10 a Sunday, plus guaranteeing him a job in a local sawmill at \$120 a month. The deal was struck and Florence joined him that summer.

LIFE WITHOUT BILLY AT EBU

Archie worked extra hard on his studies, partly to crowd out the lovely vision of his wife, many miles away from EBU. He was rewarded with all A's for the second semester, except for Psychology, where he received a B+. He worked out with Bill Jessup — playing catch, lifting weights and canoeing on the Willamette River. He even climbed through the ropes at a special Men's Night function and fought a 205-pounder to a four-round draw. But his greatest fight was with moodiness. In late March, he wrote Florence,

I'm a hard egg to get along with. Moody, high as the heavens one minute and deep as the sea the next. . . . I'm not nearly as good a servant of God as I was the Devil. . . . I'm depending on your help to help strengthen me out, keep me level. I need an equalizer — to keep me on an even keel. . . . You make me ashamed for the home-sickness I've shown. You've been braver than I; always looking on the brighter side of life and then — not content with that — you try to help me to buckle up and look the world in the face.¹⁸

The movies still had their lure for the lonely husband and student. "Swore I'd stay clear of movies," he told Billy on March 21, "but tonight I was lonesome." He explained,

Didn't want to hear Small's sermon over again, so I went . . . the story was Catholic but it brought out some good morals. . . . Made me see that I never was as low down as some men are. But there is no telling where I would be had it not been for you and mother praying for me. . . . The frat house is closed this week. I had to eat down town. Ate at a chop house and had a good meal for 15 cents. Had the pleasure of associating

with the low folks . . . but I did not join in their swearing. Sometimes it is hard to realize that I was once like that in heart and mind. Makes me almost shout, praise God, for the influence of the gospel in my life.¹⁹

When *Ben Hur* came to Eugene in April, Archie stood in line for two-and-a-half hours, paying 75 cents to see the epic movie, "because of its foundation." He critiqued the blockbuster movie as "marvelous" but "not true to the Book."

Archie turned 26 on April 21, 1927. Florence sent him a beautiful leather briefcase which he used for many years in which to carry his Bible and notes. He once said that the only possession he prized higher was his wedding ring.

One night Billy had a dream about them ministering together in Lindsay some day. Archie replied, "I'm afraid you have an exceptionally good visualizer because it will be many moons before we'd ever undertake such a job." Then he added, "A prophet is not without honor . . . and Lindsay is no exception to the rule."²⁰ But there are always exceptions to the rule, as Archie and Florence would find out in only three more years.

Billy's lifelong dream of being a foreign missionary some day was never shared by her pragmatic husband. She still felt a strong call to go to a foreign land, but Archie cut her off, almost abruptly. "Missionary work is very interesting," he said, "but I think . . . local work will keep us on our toes right here."²¹ In time Archie would travel to the British West Indies and Alaska (before it was a state), but Billy never saw her dream come true.

Archie was still enjoying his work in Dallas. The day he turned 26 he testified, "I wouldn't give the joy of

one day's services in Dallas for a Locomobile with a crooked drive shaft and all of its owner's money."²² Earlier he had declared, "Every time I go to Dallas I am more thoroughly convinced that the Lord has cut me out for a minister and for nothing else."²³ (In just four more months, the Dallas church would formally request that Archie James Word be ordained to the ministry.)

Graduation services were held at EBU May 28. Archie Word, two years previous, had cursed this "preacher factory" and everyone in it. Now he had nothing but praise for the school. "If EBU can fix up a bum like I was, it can help anyone."²⁴

THE LILY COMES TO OREGON

Mrs. Archie Word made her first appearance in Oregon in June, 1927. She swiftly set about in making their house in Dallas a home. Archie was working at the Wonder Sawmill, moving 4 x 4's five days a week. Like all sports fans that summer, he probably followed Babe Ruth's remarkable season in the newspaper (Ruth connected for a record 60 home runs). But Sundays were given in sweet service to the Lord. It was, for both of them, a dream come true.

Archie began his third year of school at EBU in September. It can be noted in his class schedule that music was now conspicuous by absence, an absence that reflects his growing desire to be a preacher of the Word. Victor E. Hoven and Harold E. Knott remained two of his favorite teachers. His classes for the first semester included Homiletics, Hebrew History, Hebrew, Christian Missions, Oratory, Spoken English and Chapel.

On August 5, 1927, the Dallas congregation

requested that Archie Word “be officially ordained to the preaching of the Word, for the following reasons:”

1. He has since his conversion been noted for his faithfulness to the church and has lived a consistent Christian life.
2. He has a natural fitness for the sacred work.
3. His faithful companion is in full sympathy with him in his calling and will accompany him in college training.
4. He will matriculate from Eugene Bible University.
5. We have seen his work in this congregation and have heard him preach.²⁴

The document was signed by H. S. Butz, Chairman of the Board; Eugene Hayter, Clerk of the Board; and Orval D. Petersen, Pastor. A similar recommendation was made by the Santa Clara congregation and was signed by J. J. Nicolle, Chairman of the Board; Mrs. C. Strome, Clerk of the Board; and Ross Guiley, Pastor.

What thoughts must have raced through his mind the day he knelt to be ordained! Years later he admitted,

I cannot tell why the Lord chose me to preach. . . . He knew my weaknesses. He knew of my past mistakes and waywardness. He knew I had made some miserable failures, but He chose me, and He has blessed my ministry, and it will always be a mystery to me. I can't explain why He ever gave me a second thought. . . . There are some things we must leave to God.²⁵

Archie arose from the laying on of hands, ready to lay his hand to the plow and plow a furrow in the kingdom of God—deep as the blade would go and straight as an arrow shot from a bow. The apostolic challenge rang in his ears: “Preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke,

exhort, with all longsuffering . . . be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry” (II Timothy 4:2,5).

A. Word was about to preach The Word.

Notes

1. *The Voice of Evangelism*, Dec. 18, 1948
2. *Ibid*, Sept. 1975
3. Letter to author from Nellie Word Arnold, Feb. 1, 1989
4. Author's interview with Nellie Word Arnold, April 22, 1990
5. Letter to Florence Word from Archie Word, Sept. 21, 1926
6. *Ibid*, Sept. 22, 1926
7. *Ibid*, Sept. 28, 1926
8. *Ibid*, Oct. 23, 1926
9. *Ibid*, Nov. 3, 1926
10. *Ibid*, Nov. 10, 1926
11. *Ibid*, Nov. 27, 1926
12. *Ibid*, Dec. 6, 1926
13. *Ibid*, Jan. 5, 1927
14. *Ibid*, Jan. 12, 1927
15. *Ibid*, Jan. 22, 1927
16. *Ibid*, Feb. 26, 1927
17. *Ibid*
18. *Ibid*, Mar. 21, 1927
19. *Ibid*, Mar. 22, 1927
20. *Ibid*, April 21, 1927
21. *Ibid*, April 22, 1927
22. *Ibid*, April 11, 1927
23. *Ibid*, April 22, 1927
24. Letters recommending Archie Word's ordination, Aug. 5, 1927
25. *The Voice of Evangelism*, Oct. 8, 1960

7

HOLY TOLEDO! (1927-1930)

His farewell sermon was his parting blow at the forces of evil. Straight-forward, clear-cut blows rang throughout the building, staggering blows to sin. . .Praise God for Brother Word!

—Roy Shaw, on Archie Word's farewell sermon
at Crabtree, Oregon, in 1928

Things simply could not have been better for Archie Word in the fall of 1927. He was reunited with his beloved Billy; back in school with his old chums; freshly ordained to the ministry of the Word. Perhaps his only regret was leaving his work as song evangelist with the Dallas church. He was excited about an offer to preach on a regular basis for the church in Crabtree, Oregon. He had preached his first sermon there

and the folks remembered him with fondness. Now they wanted him to be their preacher every Sunday. Archie did not hesitate to accept their invitation.

THE BLESSING

Archie's Homiletics professor, S.E. Childers, warned him, "Never lift your voice above tone number four. Use modulated tones in oratory."¹ But this was not for Archie Word! He believed in Professor Isaiah: "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and declare unto my people their transgression, and to the house of Jacob their sins" (Isaiah 58:1). That wonderful singing voice was now being used to proclaim the everlasting gospel to his little flock in Crabtree. Each weekend was a new experience; each month he grew in zeal, passion and power. "Mother Jesse" and the rest of the congregation loved this lively young preacher and his lovely preaching companion. One of the members, a Sister Cole, became so enraptured with the young evangelist that she desired him to have the family blessing before she died. Archie related the story of "The Blessing."

In my first preaching point there was an older couple by the name of Cole. They were then in their late seventies, but they never missed a service. He had been an old pioneer preacher, often rising at four A.M. and walking ten or twelve miles to preach. They had a family of eight children, but one of their sons had been killed in action in Europe during World War I.

While we were having dinner with them one Sunday, she said, 'Brother Word, I want you to have Charlie's blessing before I die.' I was young and did not know what she meant,' but I knew if she wanted me to have it, it would be good.²

Four years would pass before Archie would receive "The Blessing."

Some four years later I was in a meeting in Mill City, Oregon, and received a telephone call to 'Come to Stayton, please, because Sister Cole is near death.' I rushed down there some twenty miles to find the whole family gathered (there) . . .

She was sitting up in a rocking chair, and as I came in she bade me kneel by her chair, where she placed her hand on my head and began to pray for me. . . As she prayed, she passed out momentarily, and Brother Cole took over her prayer until she came to again, and then she went on to ask God to bless me and my ministry. How she loved the Lord! Tears were streaming from all faces as they listened to her last prayer. . . . Unable to say, 'Jesus,' . . . her lips feebly mumbled, 'YASHUA, MY LORD!'³

Archie Word arose and went 60 years and more on the strength of that old pioneer preacher's wife's blessing.

BURYING THE DEAD

The weekend ministry in Crabtree not only called for preaching and visitation, but other ministerial duties as well — like conducting funerals. The first two funerals Archie conducted in that little Oregon town stood in stark contrast, one with the other.

In my first ministry we had a lady by the name of Stewart converted. She was the only Christian in her whole family. All the rest were 'hellions'. . . (When) she died, I was called to come to their home. . . . When I stepped up on the porch, they all rushed into my arms and hung onto me, crying . . . broken-hearted and hopeless.

(A few days before I had called on Sister Stewart's

mother, and she had boldly told me that she believed Jesus was just a plain bastard. . . . A grandmother of that nature does not make believing grandchildren.)

The day of the funeral half of the family sat on one side with the father, and half on the other side with the mother, for they were divorced. After the people had gone out and the family was given opportunity to view the body, the mother fainted three times and the father once. The whole family passed by the casket and cried, kissed the corpse, and wailed, 'We will never see her again!' (That was the truth, for she was a Christian and they were not.)⁴

(When Archie Word would tell these stories in years to come, his voice would quaver and be punctuated by sobs. Few men could relate accounts of death and dying with the emotion and pathos that Archie Word put into it.)

Archie's second funeral in Crabtree was a much happier affair than the first.

My second funeral was that of an old retired preacher. He had three grown children and had lost his first wife. Later he married a younger woman and they had two little girls. He died suddenly, and I was called to officiate.

It was in the same family where they [the Stewart family – Author] had wailed and cried in hopeless despair, but what a difference this time. The older children came home for the funeral. They all sat together, and when the family came to view the body, there was the light of hope on each of their faces.

One of the boys lifted up his little half-sister so she could see better, and the wife lifted up the smaller one. And as the wife sat down again, she turned to them all, and said, 'Don't weep as those who have no hope, for we will see Daddy in a short while.'

Christ makes the difference between heaven's hope and hell's despair.⁵

A WELCOME WORD IN HARD TIMES

Sometime in the fall of 1927 Florence blushed and told Archie that he was going to become a father. The two had longed to have a family and now their dream was about to come true. On March 9, 1928, Margaret Marie Word was born in Eugene, Oregon. How proudly they bundled her up and took her with them to Crabtree that first Sunday. It would be the first of countless church services that little Margaret would attend with her Daddy preaching.

Times were becoming hard in 1928, especially for farmers. Farm product prices plummeted by 40 per cent in the 20s. Over 500 banks failed between July 1, 1928, and June 30, 1929. Five thousand banks would go out of business between 1929 and 1933! The Words ate a lot of Willamette Valley squash during those hard times. That was because it was free!

The first place I preached paid \$12.50 a week, and I had to drive 40 miles up and pay my own gasoline bill. Those people were pretty well-to-do farmers. Every fall they had what they called their auction sale. The women brought in quilts and every kind of thing that women can make with needles and thread. (They brought) canned goods and squashes and pumpkins. I ate more squash that year than I ever ate in my whole life. They would give you squash because they couldn't sell them.⁶

With the Great Depression just around the corner, Archie was beginning to "feel the pinch." He had house rent due, bills to pay, a wife to support, a new baby to feed. But God's people always take care of their own. In addition to his preaching duties at Crabtree, Archie was also teaching the high school class on

Sundays. These young people came to his aid in an unexpected way.

One Sunday morning I was detained at the church building about five minutes before getting over to the school building where my class met.

Nobody knew our financial circumstances, but the Lord knew we were broke. When I walked in that morning to teach my class, the class had taken up a collection, which they had been working on for a month (unknown to me). In the sack they presented were sixteen dollars in silver – more than my weekly salary. It was just the same as from the hand of God.⁷

Archie attested that incidents like this happened hundreds of times in his ministry. In time, the good people of Crabtree raised their young preacher's salary to \$15.00 a week, then \$17.50, then \$22.00. "When the church raised him to \$15.00, the treasurer became angry," recounts Donald Hunt, "and when it raised him to \$17.50 he ceased being treasurer and wouldn't come back to church. The few times he did attend, he refused to shake hands with Brother Word, letting it be known that he was 'particular with whom he shook hands.' "⁸

THE CALL

The summer of 1928 found Archie working in a cannery in Eugene. The pay was good and Archie planned to continue his weekend preaching at Crabtree. But something happened one day. God brought another person into his life – one who would change his life forever.

Garland Hay was a sandy-haired West Texan who had come to Eugene Bible University with nothing but a fifth-grade education, a wife and five children and a

burning desire to be used of God. Archie later said of him, "He stirred more churches, built more churches, revived more churches than anyone in the state of Oregon."⁹ One hot summer day the bespectacled preacher laid his hand on the shoulder of Archie Word and it was like God Himself coming down from heaven to confront Archie on the assembly line. Archie certainly never forgot that day!

I was in beet juice up to my elbows with hands blistered from handling hot cans when a hand was laid on my shoulder and a friendly voice said, 'Archie, I want you to go with me and help me conduct a meeting in one of the hardest fields in Oregon. Others have tried, backed by state funds, to open up a work there, but have failed. THE LORD NEEDS YOUR VOICE over there to sing in that meeting.'

I said, 'I can't. I have a wife and baby, and I have to get ready for school.' I explained my financial predicament, and how I had always been pretty much to look ahead and prepare for emergencies.

Then Brother Garland Hay said, 'You have dedicated your life to the service of the Lord, haven't you?'

I answered, 'Yes.'

'Well, then, if He wants you to serve Him, don't you think He is able to see to it that your family and you are taken care of while you serve?'

Then he quoted the promise, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.'

That just about closed the deal with me. I just sat there for awhile, and pretty soon I said, 'Oh, I'll go.'

That night I quit my job and went to work trusting Jesus to see me through.¹⁰

HOLY TOLEDO!

The Bible says that Elijah and Elisha left a smoking ox yoke to enter the work of God together. Garland Hay and Archie Word left a steaming cannery in

Eugene to launch the work of God in Toledo, Oregon. By the time they would finish their summer's work, the hard-to-crack town would become a veritable "Holy Toledo." Though he had been preaching regularly at Crabtree, it was in Toledo that Archie really learned to wield the sword of the Spirit. He went there to sing, but wound up preaching the final half of the protracted meeting.

We went into an ungodly town that was run by a large lumber company. Brother Hay rented the old 'Western Theater' building. . . and we began to preach and sing the gospel of Christ. Margaret sat on top of the piano while Mom played and I sang. . . . It was right next to a saloon, a bar and pool hall with a thin wall between us. They tried to outdo us for noise [but] we had them beat. We were there six weeks. Up until this time I had had very little success in my ministry. I had done the very best I knew how, but it was not good enough.¹¹

Then, in the providence of God, something happened!

In the third week of the meeting, Brother Hay came down with a terrible mastoid infection which necessitated his slowing down on the preaching. It got worse. It would just blow the top of his head off if he tried to preach. He told me I would have to take over and do the preaching.

I was scared to death, and tried every way known to a coward to get someone else to come in and fill in, but it was no use. He worked me over, so I preached. I stepped out and preached as if I had never preached before and Brother Hay did the exhorting. Sometimes the exhortations were longer than my sermons, but we worked together and God blessed us mightily.

That is when I learned to preach. I preached for three weeks, then Walter Stram came in and preached

for three weeks. When we got through we had 80 members. Nobody had heard of such a thing back then. At the end of the meeting, the new congregation insisted on my coming to lead them in the work. I was cared for financially, my preaching power quadrupled, and my ministry widened, all because the Lord kept His promise, 'Lo, I am with you always.'¹²

One of the 80 converts in the Toledo campaign lived only a few days after his conversion to Christ. He came forward on a Saturday night, was baptized Sunday afternoon and gave a testimony at the Sunday night service, saying he had never been so happy in all his life. Then tragedy struck.

There were no services on Monday, but on Tuesday afternoon, we were called to the mill hospital for an emergency. There was the new Christian. He had been 'run through' by a split off of an Edger machine. Life was ebbing from him, but in his last minutes of consciousness, he said, 'I'm glad I came to Christ . . . and He saved me.'¹³

This incident was a driving force in Archie Word's invitation appeals from then on. Since we never know what may happen tomorrow, NOW is the day of salvation!

Garland Hay, the man who "stirred more churches, built more churches, revived more churches than anyone in Oregon," was tremendously pleased with the results of the protracted church planting effort in Toledo. In the *World Evangel*, the official organ of EBU, he reported, "On August 22 we went into Toledo . . . the first evening we had nine people besides our Gospel workers present. However, our attendance steadily picked up . . . people who lived in Toledo for years say they never saw such attendance

in any religious service in Toledo . . . at the close of the third week I took down with mastoiditis, but Brother Archie Word . . . took over the preaching and did a good job of it. There was a total of 129 responses to the invitation . . . church was organized. . . pastor's salary all pledged, and Brother Archie Word has accepted the pastorate. Archie will make them a fine pastor"¹⁴

"IT'S BLACK, IT'S BLACK!"

Before Archie resigned at Crabtree and took over the new work at Toledo, a family from Colorado moved to Crabtree and the man got a job in the local brick kiln. He was a short, chunky man with a stubby black pipe clenched between his teeth. Archie called on him, trying to get him and his family to come to church. He was rebuffed. "The old lady and kids will probably be down," he told Archie, "but don't look for me." True to his word, the man never came to church. Just after Archie left Crabtree, something happened.

My labor closed, and Roy Shaw came to take the leadership He had been there only a short time when at the close of his morning service, one of the boys from that home (the one who usually stayed home) came into the service wide-eyed and crying . . . 'Dad is dying, and he wants to see you.' Roy rushed out to the car and hurried down to the house. The hard-boiled man who promised he would not be in church was stretched out on the bed heaving his last breaths on this earth, and with every sob he kept repeating, 'It's black, it's black.' He was so far gone that the preacher could not get anything through to him, but the whole family stood there helpless while he kept repeating, 'It's black, it's black,' until he finally died.

It is black and hopeless going out to meet God without Jesus the light that shines in the valley of death."¹⁵

With a "tinge of sadness and regret," Archie resigned his ministry at Crabtree in the fall of 1928. In his report to the *World Evangel*, Archie said, "No young minister ever had a more loving, patient and helpful people to assist him on his entry into a life's work for Christ our Lord."¹⁶ His dear friend, Roy Shaw, was unanimously called to be the new preacher at Crabtree. Roy's first report to the *World Evangel* included the account of Archie's farewell sermon at Crabtree:

Crabtree has had some memorable days in its history, but one of the most outstanding was Rally Day . . . the climax . . . 'Word's Farewell Words' . . . house full . . . a glowing tribute to Brother Archie Word's work in this community . . . Brother and Sister Word were presented with a beautiful set of silver . . . his farewell sermon was his parting blow at the forces of evil. Straight-forward, clear-cut blows ran throughout the building, staggering blows to sin . . . seven left behind the world and accepted Christ . . . Praise God for Brother Word . . . a great day, a great sermon, a great victory.¹⁷

Thus ended the Crabtree ministry and began the Toledo ministry, an equally happy and fruitful ministry which lasted until his graduation from EBU, two years later. Archie actually took a cut in salary to accept the work in Toledo. Crabtree had been paying him \$22.00 a week and Toledo's offer was \$17.50. Archie accepted the Toledo offer: "I thought there was more opportunity in Toledo with 3000 people than in Crabtree with 40. I had 50 miles shorter drive each week, but I saw the opportunity to win more people to Christ. I had a

nice association and they said a successful ministry at Crabtree."¹⁸

It was not long before the new church outgrew the Western Theater building, where Archie had learned the fine art of revival preaching. They succeeded in filling the Kiwanis Club building and Knights of Columbus building before moving to the Toledo High School auditorium. Here is where Archie and Florence developed the "Booster Club," something they used with great success in their five years of revival work on the West Coast. Every day after school they would meet with 100-150 school children, teaching them Bible verses, choruses and the books of the Bible. This is where Margaret began her extensive Bible memory work, though but a mere child.

On Sunday afternoons Archie took a boat up the Yaquina River to the Moody School House where he would preach. Converts had to walk across a railroad trestle to get to the river to be baptized.

Archie reported regularly on the progress of the growing church in the Toledo newspaper: "The Bible School is growing steadily . . . two more 'Believers' were buried with their Lord in baptism . . . We will have a Bible study class in the home of Mr. McKensie, the manager of the J.C. Penney store, next Saturday at 7:30. . . . We had a full house Sunday P.M., almost too full to be comfortable. . . . At our services, 'Everyone is always welcome.' A. Word, pastor."¹⁹

The Crabtree church had been supported by auctions but at Toledo Archie began preaching on tithing. The church grew, both financially and numerically. Two hundred people were added to the church in the two years of the Word's ministry in Toledo, an even 100 each year. Teddy Leavitt and G.W. Hay came for

revivals. The Words' salary was raised to \$25.00 a week. Having outgrown every available building for rent in Toledo, they embarked on a building program. Archie started a visitation campaign to heighten interest in the need to build their own church building.

One man I knew to be tighter than a Scotchman, so I told the men I would interview him personally. We came into his spacious front room, so luxuriously furnished, and were sweet-spiritedly seated in comfortable chairs. Before we could broach the subject of our visit, the man we had come to see said, 'I know why you men have come, so I assure you I want to give my widow's mite.'

I said, 'Brother _____, I will be delighted if you will give one half as much as the widow did.'

He laughed heartily and replied, 'Brother Word, do you know how little the widow gave? Why, it took two times as much as she gave to make a farthing.'

'Yes,' I said, 'But Jesus said she did cast in ever ALL HER LIVING.' 'And,' I added, 'if you will just give one half of all you possess, this church will be able to send out at least three missionaries for ten years and have a nice 'back log' in the bank for any unforeseen emergencies.'²⁰

The man was not impressed with Archie's logic and refused to give anything to the new church. (Nevertheless, a new \$6000 church building was erected.) That was in 1929. Archie said that from 1929 to 1936 the man lost every cent he had, lost his health and lost his son to a drunkard's death. "It never pays to cheat God," he warned people from then on.

HIS FOURTH YEAR AT EBU

The young student preacher's fourth year classes included Hebrew II, Restoration History, Evangelistic

New Testament, Hermeneutics and Typology, Old Testament Exegesis, Pulpit Oratory and Chapel. One of his class subjects, Restoration History, was very timely. Great changes in the Restoration Movement had been taking place while Archie was in college and some of his instruction was very much like a "current events" class.

A year earlier, 1927, the first North American Christian Convention was formed, holding five days of services October 12-16 in Indianapolis, Indiana. Since the turn of the century, when Archie Word was born, liberalism was making slow but sure inroads into colleges and churches of the Restoration Movement. James DeForest Murch, noted historian, declared that liberalism was introduced by "the Disciples Divinity House, the *Christian Century*, the Campbell Institute, and the Congresses promoted by a small coterie of 'forward looking' brethren." Textual criticism and German rationalism — at first heard only in Protestant circles — were now being put forward in some Restoration colleges. In a firestorm of protest, new colleges were started: McGarvey Bible College and Cincinnati Bible Institute (1923); Cincinnati Bible Seminary (1924); Manhattan Bible College (1927); Atlanta Christian College and Pacific Bible Seminary (1928). "Open membership," especially as it was being practiced in some places on the foreign mission field, was a great question of concern in the 20s. The United Christian Missionary Society (UCMS) was coming under increasing fire from conservatives. When the UCMS abandoned the Leslie Wolfes and Manila Bible Institute in 1926, another firestorm of protest was set off. The "independent" missionary idea arose and found great favor with the "conservatives." Plans were

made in late 1926 to set up a preaching convention "independent" of the old International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ). "There were to be no resolutions, no bitterness, wrangling, or protesting," according to Murch.²² Many historians see 1927 as the "official" break between the Independent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ and the liberal Disciples of Christ. Without a doubt Archie heard much about these happenings in the then-conservative Eugene Bible University, who had on its faculty staunch conservatives like V. E. "Daddy" Hoven and Harold E. Knott.

One day Archie had to make a trip to Portland. On the return trip to Eugene he picked up a couple of hitch-hikers. What happened next shows the great change that had come over the ex-sailor's life. The men had no sooner gotten in Archie's car until they began to turn the air blue with their language. Archie put up with it for about a dozen miles before he pulled off the road, turned off the engine and said, "Get out!" The men stared at Archie, who reached over, unlatched the door, and "with one big heave" helped the first man out. The second man scrambled over the seat to join his companion in the pouring rain. Then Archie got out, locked the car doors, and approached the frightened men. He told them he was an ex-service man and that he knew all those words, plus more. But now he was a Christian and he did not appreciate that kind of talk. He said, "If you fellows want to ride with me and talk decently or just keep silent, o.k., but if one more cuss word comes out, out you go. Do you want to ride?" It was raining and still over 100 miles to Eugene. Sheepishly, the men got back into the car with Archie. "From that point on,"

said Archie, "they got a one hundred-mile-long sermon." After a bit the men actually started to listen to what this strange man was saying and one of them later wrote to Archie, thanking him for the sermon. "No one ever talked about Jesus to me from their heart to my heart all my life," the man confessed.²³

About a month before the 1928-1929 school year came to an end at EBU, a second Word came into the world. Florence Barbara Word was born April 23, 1929, just two days after her Daddy's 28th birthday. Although she was named after her mother, she would be called Barbara. Now little Margaret had a playmate.

One month later, school was out for another year. Archie received all A's and B's. Two of the graduates were men who had helped Archie get a start in the ministry: Joseph Applegate, who had first invited Archie to preach at Crabtree, and Orval Petersen, who had worked with Archie for over a year in the Dallas ministry. Archie's own graduation was now just a year away.

FIGHTING INDIANS, ATHEISTS AND LIBERALS

With two children in tow, Archie and Florence continued their pleasant drive over the mountains each weekend to labor with the young church in Toledo. One day the young father saw three reservation Indians fighting in the street in front of a pool hall. No-gooders inside had put the Indians up to fighting each other. But now the fight had gotten out of hand. The Indians had pulled knives on each other, trying to cut each other to pieces. Archie Word, who used to love to brawl, stopped his car, got out, and waded into the fray, trying to break up the fight. Soon the Federal Police arrived, restored order and carted the Indians

off to jail. Archie dusted off his clothes and went on with his work in "Holy Toledo."²⁴

Archie not only tussled with Indians in Toledo, but fought with liberals in Seattle. While attending a preaching convention at the Seattle Civic Auditorium in 1929, Archie was mistakenly thought to be from Toledo, *Ohio*, by a young liberal. He invited Archie to a special meeting of the Campbell Institute at a big downtown hotel. Dr. A. W. Fortune, a liberal, was to be the principal speaker. On the ride to the hotel someone asked Archie what church he was with in Toledo.

"There is only one church in Toledo. I am from Toledo, *Oregon*."

There was silence in the car for about two blocks. Then someone blurted, "You will think we are a bunch of heretics."

After another long silence, someone asked, "What school are you from?"

Archie replied, "I am still in Eugene Bible University in Eugene, *Oregon*." Then he told them he was not afraid of them because he had fought a bunch of atheists in the Seattle town square the night before.

For four nights Archie listened to everything from the "acceptance of the pious unimmersed" to the "sex dance in the main auditorium of the church in Chicago where E. Scribner Ames preached." He heard about plans to promote the Disciples' Pension Fund so they could keep their young preachers from going over to the Episcopalians. He listened intently as they discussed how they planned to have a president of the Disciples' convention who was a modernist, sprinkler and fighter against holiness.

"I listened for four full evenings until the final few

minutes when I secured an opportunity to speak," said Archie. "Then I simply said,

Gentlemen, I have had my nose broken three times already, and I expect the next time it gets 'bopped,' it will be one of you who will do it because I want to warn you that I am going to unsheathe the Sword of the Spirit, and I intend to stick it clear through every one of your false doctrines, and I intend to expose what I have heard here wherever I go among true believers.²⁵

To his great surprise, when he sat down there was thunderous applause. Evidently there were many in the crowd that day who did not go along with "rank infidelity" and appreciated the courage of this young Turk who dared to take on the liberals in their own lair. From that day in 1929 to the day of his death, Archie Word was an arch foe of liberalism, in any form, among the Disciples of Christ.

Archie's fifth and final year in Eugene began in September, 1929. He took only two classes at EBU, Doctrine and Expository Preaching, plus Chapel. By this time he was also taking classes at the University of Oregon, managing to get into a "lively discussion" with a professor on the meaning of the Greek word for "baptize."²⁶ Within a month the country itself was about to be "dipped, plunged and immersed" in what came to be known as The Great Depression.

The 20s had been marked by falling farm prices and failed banks. Industries had not shared the wealth with the workers. The average price of common stocks on the New York Stock Exchange had more than doubled from 1925 to 1929. Many people were "speculating," investing heavily in the stock market, hoping to make a killing on future price increases. But

on October 24, 1929, soon to become known as "Black Thursday," stock prices took a dramatic downturn. Prices remained fairly stable on Friday and Saturday, but on the following Monday they took another tumble. On Tuesday, October 29, while Archie was in class and Florence tended to the children at home, there was a great panic as stockholders sold a record 16,410,030 shares. The market had crashed and with it, the hopes and dreams of millions. Many people lost jobs, businesses, homes, farms. Bank after bank went under. Some people found themselves reduced to selling apples, living in ramshackle "hobo jungles" or "Hoovervilles." "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime" was not just a popular song of the Great Depression — it was, in many cases, stark reality. How would it affect the Words?

HIS FIRST DEPRESSION-ERA REVIVALS

It was in these grim times that Archie Word went forth to conduct his first full-fledged revival. He and his singer, Harry Chapin, song evangelist at Toledo and member of the old WACO quartet, averaged 49 cents a week for each of their three weeks of revival labors.²⁷ The revival meeting at Marcola, Oregon, northeast of Eugene, began December 20, 1929. A bright orange handbill was drawn up by fellow student William Siefke, minister at Marcola. It billed the bespectacled Harry Chapin as "The Smiling Singer of God," while Archie was dubbed "The Fighting Evangelist." On the reverse side of the handbill, some of Archie's sermon titles were printed: "The Power of the Bible," "Hide and Seek With the Devil," "The Four Biggest Fools in Marcola," "What Think Ye of the Christ?," "A Painted Face," "Saint or Sinner on the

Witness Stand?," "Shaking Out Snakes," and "The Last Suicide in Marcola."

Night after night the smiling singer sang the praises of God while the fighting evangelist fought with sin and the devil. The always nattily attired preacher was all over the platform, raising his fist, clapping his hands, pointing his finger, lifting up his voice like a trumpet. The invitation was given with tearful pleading. At the end of nearly four weeks of revival effort, 52 people had been added to the Marcola Church of Christ (Christian Church): seven placed membership, six came from denominations, one rededicated, and 36 confessed Christ and were baptized. Archie reported on this revival effort, and his continuing labors with the Toledo congregation.

During the Christmas holidays Brother Harry Chapin and I held a short meeting in Marcola where William Siefke is the pastor. The field was ripe unto the harvest. . . . We returned to our Toledo field where we found . . . 115 wading through snow and ice to the Lord's house. We rejoice in the splendid loyalty of this 'baby' church and we hope to see it grow and double its membership again this year. . . . It's good to be home, so now it's work, watch and pray.²⁸

If Archie was somewhat reserved in his evaluation of his first revival effort, William Siefke was not.

On December 20th began one of the greatest meetings in the history of the Church of Christ here under the leadership of Brother Archie Word, Evangelist, and Brother Harry Chapin, song leader. For three and one half weeks the Gospel in all its purity, simplicity and power was preached in sermon and song. . . . Many stated that never had this community been so stirred by the Gospel or the devil so routed as during this

great campaign. Brother Word is not only a powerful straightforward and convincing speaker, but is also an outstanding personal worker. Satan was not spared in any manner, shape or form for Word left no corner untouched.²⁹

There would be no stopping Archie Word on the revival trail from this moment on. His next revival, in early 1930, probably February, saw 22 added at the Christian Church in Newport, seven miles west of Toledo, where Brother Beery preached. "Hear WORD Preach the WORD!" was the slogan used on the handbill. "Ex-Sailor and Prizefighter is a Fearless Fighter for God." Once again Harry Chapin served as his song evangelist and Lucile Schutt was his chalk artist, a popular thing in those days. One night in particular remains in the memory of Harry Chapin (no relation to the popular singer of recent years).

One evening after a very spirited meeting and all had left the meeting house (except one man who was talking with Mr. Word), Lucile and I returned to the home where we were all rooming. As it was a lovely evening and we were both 'keyed up,' we went for a walk in the cool evening air. The ocean was only a short distance so we walked over to a bluff and looked down on the waves as they dashed the shore. Then a car drove down the the beach some distance away, and the driver turned so the lights of the car shone out on the water. Two figures got out of the car and walked out into the waves. Lucile and I were amazed and mystified. We wondered what was going on. Still wondering, we returned to our house, there to find a man in my room changing from wet clothes into dry clothes. This was the man who had stayed later at the church, was converted that night and true to the Scriptures, Mr. Word had taken him down to the ocean and baptized him the same hour of the night. There was

rejoicing at the church the next evening!³⁰

(Chapin recalled another time when Archie booked himself to be two places on the same date. He asked Chapin to fill an appointment four miles from Toledo, near the bay. Though Chapin was a singer, not a preacher, he consented, walking the four miles, preaching as best he could. He had the wonderful experience of baptizing five young people in the bay, his very first baptisms. Encouraged, he took additional schooling at Butler, then did mission work in Nevada for six years, holding later ministries in California, Oregon, Wyoming, Colorado and Wisconsin. Today he resides in Vancouver, Washington, and says, "Archie was fair, honest, hardworking, and very dedicated and committed to the ministry of Christ.")³¹

FAREWELL EBU AND TOLEDO, HELLO REVIVAL TRAIL

Archie Word delivered his graduation oration in May, 1930. Now a confirmed pacifist, his address was entitled "The Will To Have Peace." He believed, "the same senses and avenues of approach to the human mind can be used to promote peace as have been used to prepare for every war. . . . If men can be taught to love war and hate their fellowmen, they can also be taught to hate war and love their fellowmen." His speech (which is the first manuscript we have of his writing, later published in *The Church Speaks*) concluded, "Let us face this crisis of our career with an educated mass determined to have peace, clinging to our rock, Democracy: holding to our faith in others: looking ever upward to the 'God in whom we trust,' and winning the hearts of our sister nations as we

have won the hearts of their millions of immigrants who have come to our shores, and then shall 'The Will to Have Peace,' reign forever in the lives of men."³²

May 26, 1930, the 35th graduating class of Eugene Bible University received their degrees at First Christian Church in Eugene. H. W. Brunk, Berkeley, California, delivered the commencement address. V. E. "Daddy" Hoven offered prayer for his graduating boys and girls and President Childers conferred the degrees to 29 graduates of the class of 1930. Among those receiving their diplomas on that long awaited day were Ard Hoven (Victor's son), Howard Hutchins, Bill Jessup, Roy Shaw, Elery Parrish, J. Michael Shelley, Earl F. Downing, F.J. Winder, Garland Hay, Vivian Lemmons (W.S. Lemmon's daughter) — all dear friends of Archie Word, who received a B.A. It was a glad-sad day: gladness for receiving their diplomas; sadness that they would have to say good-bye to each other.

Archie and Florence continued with their labors in Toledo through the summer of 1930. Earlier Archie had said, "This is one of the most consecrated congregations I have ever preached for."³³ The summer months came and went. Then, in what was bound to have been a big surprise and shock to the "baby" church in Toledo, Archie Word abruptly announced his resignation one Sunday in October. "After two years of happy service with the church in Toledo, Oregon, I took to the road in evangelistic meetings."³⁴ No one really knows why he decided to leave the located ministry and become a revivalist. A student from EBU, D.R. Crediford, took over the Toledo work and reported,

Began my work with this loyal congregation Nov. 1.

Brother Archie Word has done an outstanding piece of work here in the last two years. He left the field with about 120 consecrations and a \$6000 church building.³⁵

The Toledo newspaper said, "While here Rev. Word made a host of friends, laid the foundation for a good church building and built up a good sized membership, all of whom will be interested in his success . . . as he goes into his evangelistic work, for which he is highly qualified."³⁶

After five long years of school, marriage, two baby girls and one baby church, Archie and Florence Word were about to embark on a journey that would take them on the road for five long years of revival work on the West Coast — right in the middle of the Great Depression!

Notes

1. *The Voice of Evangelism*, Jan. 15, 1949
2. *The Other Day*, p. 8
3. *Ibid*
4. *Ibid*, p. 56
5. *Ibid*, p. 57
6. *The Voice of Evangelism*, June, 1967
7. *The Other Day*, p. 30
8. *The Life Story of Archie Word*, p. 13
9. Interview with Archie Word by Don Hunt, Jr., Feb. 1988
10. *Ibid*, and *The Voice of Evangelism*, Dec. 18, 1948
11. *Ibid*
12. *Ibid*
13. *The Voice of Evangelism*, Dec. 27, 1952
14. *World Evangel*, n.d
15. *The Other Day*, pp. 37, 38
16. *World Evangel*, n.d
17. *Ibid*
18. Interview with Archie Word by Don Hunt, Jr., Feb. 1988
19. Toledo, Oregon, newspaper, n.d

20. *The Most Often Preached Sermon of Jesus*, p. 11
21. *Christians Only*, p. 237
22. *Ibid*
23. *The Other Day*, p. 22
24. Interview with Archie Word by Charles Crane, n.d
25. *The Other Day*, p. 5
26. Author's interview with Nellie Word Arnold, April 22, 1990
27. *The Voice of Evangelism*, June, 1967
28. *World Evangel*, Feb. 6, 1930
29. *Ibid*
30. Letter to author from Harry Chapin, Sept. 11, 1989
31. *Ibid*
32. *The Will to Have Peace*, original manuscript, 1930
33. *World Evangel*, Feb. 27, 1930
34. *The Voice of Evangelism*, Dec. 18, 1948
35. *World Evangel*, Jan. 15, 1931
36. Toledo, Oregon, newspaper, Oct. 30, 1930



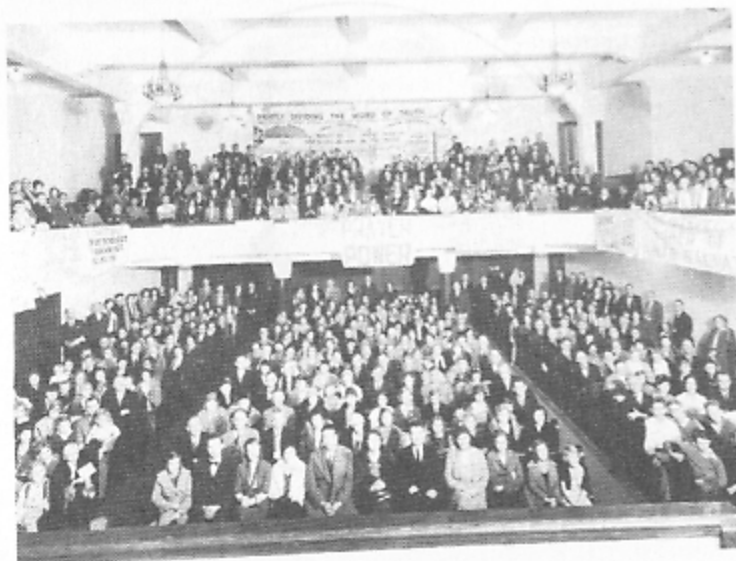
Esther and Margaret Nahigian were not scared to work with Archie!



Pencil sketch of A. Word drawn by Andrew Whitten during revival at Dufur, Oregon (1933)



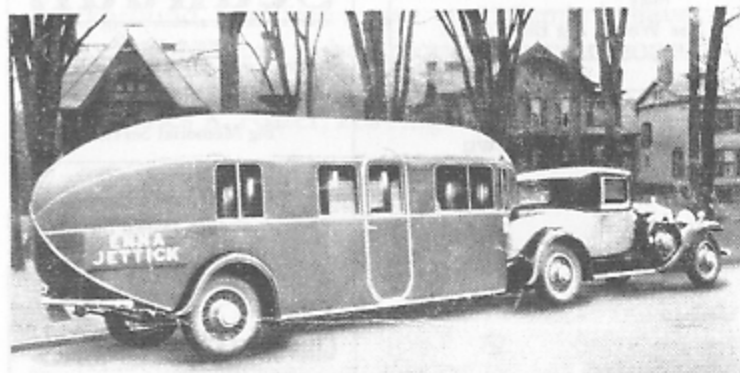
Revival crowd at Coos Bay, Oregon (1930). Archie is at top left.



Charts and banners were an A. Word trademark.
Bakersfield, Calif. (1932)



Street banner announces revival in Corona, Calif. (1932)



New car and trailer given by grateful converts
to "The Word Revival Team"

A. WORD REVIVAL

Starts His Third
with the
Lindsay Church of Christ
FRIDAY, MARCH 1
(7:30 p. m.)

"HEAR
A.
WORD
PREACH
THE
WORD"



LINDSAY
IS
A.
WORD'S
HOME
TOWN

A. WORD, Evangelist

Hear These Opening Messages:

Friday, Mar. 1—"God's Method for a Revival."
Saturday, March 2—"The Biggest Tale Bearer
in the Town of Lindsay."

LORD'S DAY—Mar. 4—
Morning—"HOW TO HAVE A REAL
REVIVAL."
Night—"GOD AND ETERNITY."

Monday Night—REST NIGHT—
Tuesday, Mar. 6—"The Gospel — Why Some
People Love It and Why Some People
Hate It."

See Word's Big Bible Chart
THE GOSPEL AT A GLANCE

"Round Three" in
the old home town

Handbill from revival in
West St. Helens, Oregon (1931)

HEAR A. WORD

PREACH

"THE WORD"

AT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
Beginning September 12th

TO
PIET
ORCHESTRA
SPECIAL
MUSIC



GOD'S
MESSAGE
IN
MEX
LANGUAGE

Is Jesus and His Fight Complete?
HEAR THIS FIGHTER FOR GOD!
Sixth and Central, Marshfield, Oregon
The WORDS ARE DIFFERENT

First use of "Hear A. Word
Preach The Word" slogan (1931)

Scandal!

SUNDAY P. M.

"What Keeps the Churches Apart"

SATURDAY P. M.

"Big Memorial Service"

FRIDAY P. M.

"Last Will and Testament
of John Brown"



Church of Christ Tabernacle

8:00 P. M.

If You Miss This, You Lose

PART III

(1930-1934)

"AMERICA'S FOREMOST EVANGELIST"

"I have heard quite a number of the world's great
revivalists in the past sixty years. . . . With all this as a
background, I am free to say, and I firmly believe,
Archie Word to be America's foremost
evangelist today."

—Charles A. Foster, *Los Angeles Times*, 1933