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“HEAR A. WORD PREACH THE WORD” (1930–1931)

The meeting at Lindsay means more to me than anything else. One hundred and thirty-six converted! Those I had played cards with, drunk with, cussed with and everything else. To see them converted. In my own home town!

—Archie Word in 1988, on the
great Lindsay revival of 1931

When 29-year-old Archie Word took to the revival road in the waning months of 1930, he had all of the following in his worldly possession: a five-year diploma from EBU, a leather briefcase filled with sermon outlines and song books, an American Standard Version of the Bible, a box full of charts and banners, several three-piece suits, dress shoes with spats,

a wife, two small daughters, a 1929 Chevrolet, and a trailer that was six feet long and 42 inches wide. They hadn't been on the road very long when it became apparent the little trailer was just that — too little. Archie traded for a trailer six feet wide and 20 feet long. There were no brakes at all on the trailer. When he wanted to stop, it was with the car brakes alone. Archie built bunk beds in the back of the trailer for Margaret and Barbara to sleep in while they traveled (this was before there were laws governing trailers). A man in Fowler, California, helped Archie streamline the trailer so it would be more aerodynamic. Most of the roads were gravel or dirt in those days. When they traveled at night, Florence would ride in the back with the children, covering them with blankets to keep the dust off them. It was primitive travel, but all very exciting. They were on the road for Jesus!

THE WORD REVIVAL TEAM

When "The Word Revival Team," as they called themselves, pulled into town, Archie and the local preacher would attach a loudspeaker on top of the trailer (this, too, before there were noise ordinances). The two would then drive up and down the streets, inviting the town to the revival meetings. Sometimes they would even sing and preach over the loudspeaker. Archie would also whitewash the title of his evening sermon on the side of the trailer so people could see what he was preaching on that particular night. These were the only sermons he ever whitewashed or watered down! He would wash the title off the next morning and slap on the new one for that night. Usually the titles were provocative, designed to stir people's interest in the service.

Archie and Florence operated for five years on faith. They never charged for their services. Their arrangements were quite simple: "furnish us with a house to stay in while we are here, give us food to eat, and take up an offering once a week (usually on Sunday night) for our salary." Most evangelists during the Great Depression were receiving offerings every night and several nationally known revivalists were openly critical of Archie Word's method of financing his meetings.

Archie normally began his meetings on a Sunday, preaching on one of his favorite themes, Christian evidences — why we believe in God, Christ and the Bible. Mondays were always "rest nights," even though the meeting had just started. But no quarter was given on Saturday night, "the devil's night." Archie reserved his most blistering sermons on sin for those nights! All of his revivals were open-ended "protracted" meetings; going three, four, five or six weeks at a time, every night except Mondays. The Words booked their own meetings. For five years they were booked two years in advance.

One of the outstanding features of an A. Word revival was the extensive chart teaching he would do for 10 or 15 minutes each night, prior to the hour-long message. Some people remembered more from his chart teaching than they did from his preaching. One man was converted just from reading the charts each night! Another notable feature was the "Booster Club" that Archie and Florence would teach each afternoon to as many school children as they could cram in the church house. Here, verses were memorized, choruses were learned, and Bible quizzes were given. On Friday nights the Words would amaze the community by bringing out the children and doing a rapid-fire

program, showing the proud parents how much their offspring had learned about the greatest book in the world in just a few afternoons. Archie would also visit every high school he could, giving speeches to the entire student body that were inspirational and motivational in nature. This interested many young people in the local revival.

Archie Word had been influenced by great revivalists when he was in Eugene. One of the first revivals he ever attended was Teddy Leavitt's revival at Santa Clara in 1925. During that meeting Archie had wondered if he himself would ever be able to help people find Christ like Leavitt was able to do. Now he was about to find out. Archie had also come under the revival preaching of Ross Guiley and James Pointer. He had learned to preach during the great Toledo revival with Garland Hay and Walter Stram. He had two revivals of his own under his belt, Marcola and Newport. Whether anyone else on the West Coast was ready for revival or not, Archie was ready and raring to go!

Many folks living on the West Coast in 1930 were ready for revival. Nature abhors a vacuum, even in a depression. Most people didn't have too much left after the stock market crash of 1929. The Great Depression (Archie called it the Deeppression) was setting in, and the effects were beginning to be felt. Millions were out of work. Few had any cash reserves. When there are no material things to be had or enjoyed, folks will finally turn to the spiritual matters of life. One good thing about the Depression — it sent people back to church. Now they were ready to listen, ready for something better. Their empty cup was stretched out, ready to receive something — anything — from God. Revivals were a way of filling those

empty cups.

Archie Word spoke the language of the common people. He was fundamentalist to the core. He believed in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, the deity of Christ, the atoning death of Christ on the cross, the bodily resurrection from the grave, the second coming of Christ, judgment, a literal heaven, and a hell so real you could smell the smoke and feel the fire. No modernist, he. His preaching could be summed up in three words: "Repent or perish!"

THE BILLY SUNDAY OF THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

Archie Word thundered against the same sins in the 1930s that Billy Sunday had railed on in the 1920s — dancing, booze, tobacco, card-playing, Biblical criticism and modernism. Whether he would admit it or not, he was greatly influenced by the flamboyant, often controversial, Billy Sunday. Archie Word *was* the Billy Sunday of the Restoration Movement from 1930 to 1935 on the West Coast.

Billy Sunday was a temperance Republican. So was Archie Word. More than that, Sunday was anti-Democrat. So was Word. Sunday was not against the lodges. For a long time, neither was Word. Sunday believed in tithing. So did Word, emphatically so. Sunday, we are told, quit the movies after his conversion. Although it took Archie a while longer, he eventually gave up the picture shows. Billy preached mainly topical sermons and wasn't much on expository preaching. Archie was a topical preacher, though he could excel at exposition when he chose to. Sunday would often stop his preaching to tell a mother to take her crying child out of the service. So did Word. Billy, a former athlete,

was energetic in his sermon delivery. So was Word, the ex-pugilist. Most of all, Billy Sunday was colorful in his preaching. So was Archie Word.

The first five years of Archie Word's revivals (1930-1935) were the last five of Billy Sunday's campaigns. Archie took Billy's circular that he gave to his converts, "remodeled" it a bit, and gave it to his own converts. A comparison of the four-page pamphlet reveals them to be nearly identical. Both have the picture of the evangelist on the front page and a line at the bottom for their personal signatures (W. Sunday and A. Word). Both express joy over the new convert coming to Christ. Both encourage the Christian to paste the pamphlet in their Bible. The inside pages of the pamphlets offer 10 rules for spiritual growth. Both state that a Christian's growth "depends upon yourself." The first four points are virtually identical, even to the Scripture references and sub-points: study the Bible, pray, win souls, stay away from bad people. Two other points are identical: giving and not becoming discouraged. Again the Scripture references are the same. The main difference between Word's new convert circular and Sunday's is that Sunday urged people to "join some church." Archie Word was not so general! The entire back side of his circular is a chart on the Church of Christ — its origin, organization, name, creed, discipline, sin of division, ordinances (the Lord's Supper and baptism), and purpose.

Even a cursory glance at photographs of Billy Sunday and Archie Word in their heyday show similarity in their style of dress: silk ties, three-piece suits, spats. Archie even combed his hair the same way. Still, Archie Word did not resort to Sunday's sensationalism, use of "Union" meetings, utilize common "trade

secrets" of the revival circuit, exclude Negroes from his meetings, preach salvation by faith alone, or send converts to the church of their choice. Archie Word believed strongly in the principles of the Restoration ideal, preaching against denominationalism and contending for the New Testament church.

MARSHFIELD, OREGON

A Call Girl Answers the Gospel Call

The first "official" revival of The Word Revival Team took place at the Church of Christ, 6th and Central, Marshfield, Oregon. Today Marshfield is known as Coos Bay, a fishing town on the Oregon coast. The meeting ran from November 5 through December 15, 1930. Florence led the singing and Archie preached sermons that brought out the town: "The Four Biggest Devils I Have Met in Marshfield" and "The Four Biggest Fools in Town." Some "poison" had been sown in Marshfield about Archie before he hit town, but it was "deeply covered up by prayer meetings and splendid fellowship."¹ By the end of the meeting, Clifton and Amy Phillips, ministers at Marshfield, were thrilled by the 93 responses to the gospel invitation.

We have just closed what we are convinced is the greatest revival meeting ever held in Coos Bay. Brother A. Word is a man of the Book. If his power is understood it lies in his loyalty to the *Word*: he preaches the Gospel, condemns sin and brings conviction to the sinner . . . If you want sin stirred to its depths and your church brought back to the New Testament doctrine, call him; if not, we advise you to leave him alone.²

Clifton and Amy Phillips (parents of Woodrow Phillips) were both ordained ministers of the gospel.

Amy and Archie would banter back and forth over the matter. Archie liked to call her Amy "Simple" McPherson, a clever takeoff on Aimee Semple McPherson, a famous woman preacher in Los Angeles. Not to be outdone, Amy called Archie "Hitler" Word! But all such quick witty replies were made with smiles and laughter.

One day Archie and Clifton were out calling. As they walked along, Clifton wondered if they couldn't make a play on words and come up with an advertising slogan for Archie. Clifton said, "Archie Word. Preaching the Word." Archie replied, "Hear A. Word Preach **The Word**." And thus the catchy catch phrase was born that would eventually land Archie Word in *Ripley's Believe It Or Not*.³

Archie praised both the Phillips ("consecrated, inspiring and diligent") and the congregation ("prospects are splendid for one of the strongest New Testament churches in the state"). The Words were unanimously asked to return for another meeting in October, 1931. (Archie would return to Marshfield-Coos Bay for more revivals than anywhere else in his long career.)

During the first Marshfield meeting, a lady from the "red light" district saw the light and was converted to Christ. She had a husband who truly loved her, but her conduct became so shameful that he took their only child and left. The woman worked as a telegraph operator by day and as a call girl by night. (One might say that she was in the communications business.) One night she was sitting on a pool table in a pool hall, drinking beer right out of the pitcher. A zealous personal worker from the church walked right into the pool hall and gave her a revival handbill of

Archie's meeting. One of the sermons advertised was, "The Ten Commandments."

She took the handbill and sniffed. "I have broken all of them but one. I guess I will go down and hear about that one." (We are led to wonder which one, but that shall remain a mystery.)

True to her word, the part-time harlot went to hear Word. "During the sermon," said Archie, "I made the statement that a woman that is immoral may listen to the world call her a 'Hot Mama,' 'Some Chicken,' 'Sweet Baby,' or 'Everybody's Doll,' but the truth of the matter is, 'You are a whore, and God says all whores are going to be in the lake of fire!'"⁴

This kind of preaching, which many would find offensive, went straight to the heart of the part-time harlot. After the sermon was over, she invited Archie to visit her home. Archie went, taking with him Clifton Phillips, and pleaded with her to give up that kind of degrading life. A few nights later she came down the aisle and gave her life to Christ. Her conversion was genuine. Soon after the meeting closed, she took a Bible correspondence course and scored nearly 100% on all the questions. She joined the church choir. Six months later she was playing the piano in Sunday School. One year later she had not only won her husband back, but had won him and her son to Christ. Their home was united again — this time in Jesus — all because a preacher had loved her enough to "tell it like it is."

ELMIRA, OREGON

The Conversion of "Shorty," the Dance Band Leader

Flushed with the success of the Marshfield meeting,

the Words moved on to Elmira, west of Eugene. This time the handbills read, "Hear A. WORD Preach the WORD."

One of the 69 converts during the meeting was a man named Shorty. It was the last Sunday of the revival and Archie had been hitting the dance all through the meeting. He knew that Shorty, a dance band leader in Elmira, had been coming to the nightly services (except on Saturday nights). That final Sunday afternoon Archie went to see Shorty. He had barely been seated when Shorty piped up, "Preacher, you've been hitting the dance pretty hard, but you know, I haven't seen any of this awful stuff you have been talking about."

Just then Shorty's wife stepped out of the bedroom. She had been converted during the meeting and was deeply concerned over Shorty's soul. She sat down next to Shorty, took a slip of paper from her bodice, and looking right at him, said, "Shorty, you know about _____" and then began to name girls who had gone bad and boys who had gotten drunk at his dances.

At this Archie bristled. "Shorty, your memory is short, too. Now I know you have lied to me, and you are trying to hide your cussedness instead of getting under the blood. Why don't you give in to God and get right with Him, right tonight?" Shorty just hung his head in silence.

The final night of the Elmira revival saw Shorty come to the revival and hop up in a window where he could look over the crowd. When the invitation song was sung, he hopped down and "plowed his way to the front, bawling like a child in humble repentance." Within one year, Shorty led every man in his dance

band to Christ. The only member of his orchestra who rejected Christ was a hard-hearted woman who played the piano.

"The next summer when we came through Eugene," said Archie, "the folk asked us to come out and preach for them again. Shorty was in charge of the Bible School that morning. Before the sermon he took that old tenor banjo that he had used to pollute sinners with, and he sang one of the sweetest songs I have ever heard. Conviction, conversion and salvation made the difference between a musician for the devil and one for God."⁵ Converts in an Archie Word revival understood conversion and the change Christ could make in their lives.

LINDSAY, CALIFORNIA

The Great Lindsay Revival

The meeting that eventually meant more to Archie Word than all the hundreds of revival meetings he would conduct in his storied lifetime began January 16, 1931, in his beloved home town of Lindsay, California. What conflicting emotions must have raged within the breast of the 29-year-old evangelist the day he pulled into his home town. Old friend Roy Shaw was now the preacher in Lindsay. It would be good to see Roy and Dorothy; Luther, Maggie and Nellie once again. But he would also be facing many of his old companions in sin. How would they respond to this former bootlegger, boozier, and brawler? Putting these fears aside, Archie plunged into the revival, determined to see many of his old friends converted to Christ.

Archie and Roy stretched a huge banner between two banks on Honolulu Street, "Hear A. Word Preach

the Word!" The *Lindsay Gazette* announced his coming in bold headlines. Roy Shaw had plastered the town with large revival posters. Arresting sermon topics were whitewashed on the trailer and printed on handbills and cards: "If the Dead Could Speak, What Would They Say?", "Seven Steps to Hell," "Short Beds and Narrow Covers," "Four Outlaws as Old as Man," "What It Means To Be a Christian," and "Why I Am a Christian." The latter two sermons must have been of special interest to the good citizens of Lindsay and Strathmore. They knew old Arch from his wild outlaw days — now he was claiming to be a Christian!

Archie's unconverted old cronies down at the Yaller Dawg saloon must have enjoyed several laughs at his expense.

"Hey! D'ja hear who's preachin' down at the Church of Christ?"

"No. Who?"

"Old Arch Word, that's who! Now, whatta ya think of them apples?"

"I think its all a bunch of horse apples, that's what I think!"

"Haw, haw, haw!"

Nevertheless, Archie invited all his old school chums who were still in the area to come to the meeting. One man said, "Arch, I don't want to come down there to your meetings. I'm afraid I will get too much religion." Archie replied, "Allan, there will come a time when you will be worried because you think you do not have enough religion!"⁶

Sadly, Allan never did come to the meeting.

One of Archie's old bosses did come, however. As he left the meeting one night, he told Archie, "I intend to get right with God just as soon as I get this mortgage

paid off. I'm working 16 hours a day to get out of debt. When I come to the Lord, I do not want to miss any of His services." But Archie's ex-boss did not get right with God during Archie's meeting — or for that matter, ever. Years later Maggie sent Archie a clipping from the *Lindsay Gazette* which told of police finding the body of a man under a car, wrapped in canvas. A rubber hose led from the man's mouth to the exhaust pipe of the car. It was Archie's old boss.

But many people came to the Lord during the Lindsay revival. Shirley Wilson Chambers was just a small girl during that first Word revival in Lindsay.

I shall always be grateful that in January of 1931 Brother Archie Word came to Lindsay, California, for a revival meeting. . . . During that meeting, on February 21st, my mother, father, brother and sister were all baptized into Christ. . . . There was standing room only — even had speakers in the basement. . . .⁷

But the thing Shirley remembered most was the fabeled "Booster Club" for children.

Another high point of that revival was the Booster Club for children held every afternoon after school. Bible questions were asked and answered in unison. . . . Scriptures and books of the Bible memorized and many choruses learned. Every Friday night a time was given in the service for the children to give a sample of the things they had been learning. . . . There were 200 children in attendance in the afternoons. These wonderful experiences . . . as a child had a great influence on my decision to become a Christian in 1933. . . .⁸

Archie drilled the children in the Booster Club with 122 questions that he would ask from the Bible.

Questions like: Give the origin of the word "Bible." Name the main divisions of the books of the Old Testament. How many books of Law are there? Name them. When did all of these writers write? What is the difference between a Disciple and an Apostle? To whom, particularly, did Matthew write his gospel? For what purpose did Matthew write, especially? By what name is Matthew's gospel distinguished? How many times does he use the word "kingdom"? With what period does Matthew deal especially? Upon what does he base his entire gospel?

Archie would also drill the children on key doctrines and practices, like: Is the old Mosaic Law binding upon Christians today? What benefit is the Old Testament to us then? To whom did the sacrifices of the Old Testament point? How many of the Ten Commandments are recorded in the New Testament? Which one of the Ten Commandments is left out of the New Testament? Is there any place in the New Testament after the resurrection of Christ where anyone, either Jew or Gentile is commanded to keep the Sabbath day? What day do we keep? Why do we meet on Sunday instead of Saturday? (Seven answers were expected from Archie! "On that day . . . Jesus rose from the dead; Jesus met with His disciples . . . The Holy Spirit came . . . The Gospel was preached . . . The Church was established . . . The disciples met to break bread . . . They took up their collection.") What does the Sabbath commemorate? What does the Lord's Day commemorate? Who instituted the Lord's Supper? What is it called? With whom do we commune? When should it be observed?

Even a child who attended an Archie Word revival in those days was thoroughly indoctrinated!

(Like many of Archie's young converts, Shirley later went to San Jose Bible College. There she married an up and coming evangelist in the mold of Archie Word, Earl Chambers.)

Day after day Archie and Roy called in the warm California sun in both Lindsay and Strathmore. One day they knocked on the door of Lola House Austin in Strathmore. Lola was a Methodist and her husband was a member of the noninstrumental Church of Christ, but neither one was going to church.

Archie and Roy Shaw came through Strathmore, stopped at every house, and invited us to come to church. It pleased my husband to think someone thought enough of him. We went on a Saturday night and he went forward to rededicate his life (voice breaks - Author) and I went forward. There would not be a Lindsay church today if there had not been the number of people converted under Archie Word.⁹

Effie Bachman Bayley (who grew up with Archie) and Alpha Carter Engleking (another convert of the 1931 campaign) agree with Lola: "We wouldn't be in the church if it weren't for the preaching of Archie Word."¹⁰ But both also agree that Florence played an equal part in their spiritual progress: "He helped bring us to Christ but Billy fed us in her ladies' Bible classes (over 50 women came)."¹¹

Dorothy Shaw said a wall was actually removed from the church building to hold twice the crowd for the revival.

That meeting I will never forget. January was a good time for a meeting as it was a slack time for the oranges, olives and grapes. Archie was well-known throughout the area. He was known as a wild young

man who drank too much and was sure to be in the middle of any trouble in the community. So when the advertisement went out that Archie Word was coming as the Evangelist for a revival meeting, every one was interested. The building was packed every night for four weeks with standing room only. It was thrilling! Archie preached powerfully. Christ was exalted and Satan and sin condemned. As a result, 138 people came down those aisles to accept Christ, most of them by baptism.¹²

Folks came from far and near to hear the powerful preaching of a prodigal son who had come back home. People from every denomination came. Roy Shaw said, "They couldn't get around the teachings that were given each night. Brother Word is a great teacher, using Brother Hoven's chart on the church every night."¹³ Indeed, no fewer than 40 people forsook their denominations and became members of the Lindsay church during the meeting.

Maggie came each night but Luther — a member of the Baptist church in Strathmore — came only a night or two, joining the overflow crowds outside. He would not enter the building.¹⁴ It is doubtful that Archie could even see the silent figure of his father standing in the darkness.

The preaching of Archie Word was described by Roy Shaw after the meeting.

Brother Word is a fearless preacher and he hits straight from the shoulder. He calls sin by its first name and uncovers it with forceful and dynamic preaching. If you want a straight-forward Gospel preacher who preaches the Gospel without sidestepping, then call Brother Word; if not, you had better leave him alone.¹⁴

As he would preach each night in the white frame

church house on the corner of Elmwood and Frazier, Archie would recognize many familiar faces in the audience: people he had grown up with, gone to school with, sinned with. He had been providentially rescued from sin, death, and hell; how he wanted them to be saved for all eternity! The house was packed, the air was electric, the Spirit's power was at work. Night after night he extended the invitation with a breaking voice. How his face lit up with joy as friend after friend stepped out from their seats and walked the aisle of repentance to be warmly greeted at the front by the strong hand of Archie Word.

But one particular night, after a good number of people had responded to the invitation, it was Archie Word who was in tears. The hour was getting on toward ten and most of the folks had left the church house for their homes. Roy was picking up in the auditorium when he heard sounds of sobbing in the basement. Thinking it might be yet another sinner who had remained to talk with somebody, Roy went downstairs and saw a sight he would never forget. There in the semi-darkness knelt Archie Word, crying as though his heart would break. He looked up as Roy approached. A shaft of light behind Roy fell on his upturned, tear-stained face. There was a haunted look about Archie. A recent tragedy was mirrored in his eyes.

"Oh, Roy," he began in a quivering voice. "One of those ladies who came forward tonight." He stopped. His whole body shook. He tried to go on. "She . . . I . . . we . . . once . . ." He could go no farther, collapsing into the arms of Roy Shaw.¹⁵

Archie Word, the man who once said he had committed every sin except murder, was remorsefully

reaping what he had sown.

The Lindsay revival of 1931 was called "the greatest meeting that has ever been held" in Lindsay. A total of 136 people came to the Lord (77 were baptized and 59 came by statement). The protracted meeting lasted six weeks and four days, closing on March 2, 1931. The congregation unanimously voted to have The Word Revival Team return for another meeting in January. Roy Shaw reported to the *Christian Standard*, "Meeting by Brother Word was most constructive and beneficial of any that has ever been held in history of church here."¹⁶ In the *World Evangel*, he wrote, "Many were reconsecrated during the meeting and a great number decided to live clean for Christ, leaving their tobacco in its varied forms completely out of their lives."¹⁷ (Tobacco-hating Maggie must have loved this revival.)

Nearly 60 years after this great revival, people in Lindsay still fondly refer to it as *the* revival in Lindsay. In 1990 I visited the town and talked to three ladies who have vivid memories of the revival. "He sure saved a lot of people," said Alpha Engleking. "He knew the language to get at them – to shock them." Effie Bayley agreed. "He would scare them. He knew so many people in town. He knew what their lives were like." Lola Austin dabbed her eyes, "If it hadn't been for Archie, we wouldn't be Christians today."¹⁷

Following the Lindsay revival, the Words headed for Coachella, California, "a country where there has never been a successful meeting held."¹⁸ All that was about to change!

Notes

1. *World Evangel*, Jan. 15, 1931
2. *Ibid*
3. Author's interview with Woodrow Phillips, July 13, 1990
4. *The Other Day*, p. 62
5. *Ibid.*, p. 20
6. *Ibid.*, p. 47
7. *The Life Story of Archie Word*, p. 114
8. *Ibid*
9. Author's interview with Lola House Austin, April 21, 1990
10. Author's interview with Alpha Carter Engleking and Effie Bachman Bayley, April 21, 1990
11. *Ibid*
12. Letter to author from Dorothy Shaw, April 24, 1989
13. *World Evangel*, April 15, 1931
14. *Ibid*
15. Author's conversation with Ed McSpadden July 12, 1989
16. *Christian Standard*, April 12, 1931
17. Author's interview with Austin, Engleking & Bayley, April 21, 1990
18. *World Evangel*, April 15, 1931



WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD (1931–1932)

I told them who I was, and that I had been invited to their dance. I took it for granted that when I am invited anywhere, they want me to preach. With that I began to speak . . . When I got done, the orchestra struck up a waltz. One couple went out to dance. . . .

— Archie Word, on his famous
dance hall sermon in 1931

COACHELLA, CALIFORNIA **Threatened by a Prohibition Bootlegger**

Stanley Bond, one of Archie's classmates at Eugene Bible University, was the preacher at Coachella, a town south of Palm Springs, surrounded by several Indian reservations. Bond considered Word's revival,

which closed April 13 with 52 decisions, to be "the best revival campaign ever held in Coachella Valley." He described Archie as a young preacher whose "enthusiasm and zeal know no bounds . . . a tireless worker (who) spends most of his daytime hours calling in homes."¹ (Bond and Word put over 1300 miles on Archie's Chevrolet during the meeting.) The bootleggers in Coachella threatened to have the outspoken evangelist arrested, but Archie would not be stopped by their intimidation. Bond reported, "He was greeted with capacity houses nearly every night."

An Archie Word revival was the only show in town in those Depression-era days. In a report to the *Christian Standard*, Bond compared Word's preaching to that of John the Baptist:

When it comes to calling sin by its first name and denouncing it in plain, everyday language, I do not think he would take second place with John the Baptist . . . There are several good pairs of dancing pumps and deserted tobacco-stands for sale cheap around here . . . Brother Word used his great church of Christ chart night after night, presenting the church as found in the Bible. He made clear he has never met a congregation that completely measures up, and proceeded to hit every one, including ourselves . . .²

ST. HELENS, OREGON

Archie Baptizes a Swede in the Columbia River

The Church of Christ tabernacle in St. Helens was located behind the Fire Department. Somehow it was fitting. Revival fires were about to break out in this upstate town. Upon his arrival, Archie was dismayed to find "only 16 loyal members actively engaged in the work of the Lord, but, oh! such loyalty . . . it was only

through their genuineness that the cause prospered so well."³ He praised the local preacher, George H. Ellis, for "taking hold of a difficult situation in a manly way." The situation he referred to was "scandal" and "open opposition of denominational churches." For four weeks Archie bucked the opposition until an event took place that led to three final weeks of great revival. An incident involving a big Swede at a Sunday School picnic on the banks of the Columbia River was the turning point.

Harry Chapin, "the Smiling Singer," had come down from The Dalles on a Saturday night to sing for the revival. The next day a basket dinner was held in a park, high above the roaring Columbia River. As honored guest, Archie was given the first dish of home-made ice cream. But there was salt in his ice cream, so Archie wandered off from the group, looking for a place to discard the tainted ice cream without hurting anyone's feelings. A big Swede spotted him and asked him if he was the man who was preaching in St. Helens. Immediately Archie struck up a conversation with the seeking sinner.

"Vonce over in the old country," the Swede began, "I vanted to be baptized. They vanted to pur vater on me. I told them, 'No, I vant to be *baptized*.' They refused. Then I vent to a Baptist preacher and asked him to baptize me. He talked for avile and finally told me he vould baptize me into the Baptist church. I did not vant that — I only vanted to be baptized into Christ."

When the Swede had finished, Archie spoke. "Well, I will baptize you into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for the remission of your sins, and HE will add you to His church, and I am ready to do it

right now."

The Swede looked down at the Columbia River. "No, I am not ready now. Things have changed in my life."

Archie asked, "Are you still a sinner?"

"Yes. I am a verse sinner now than I was then."

"Do you need Christ's salvation?"

"I certainly do."

Archie pressed on, ice cream bowl in hand. "Do you believe Christ's blood can cleanse you from all your sins?"

A long pause. Then, "I do."

Quick as a wink, Archie struck. "Why not repent of your wickedness right now and turn to Christ for His mercy? He is able to save you when you are ready to be saved."

The man hesitated for a moment, then said, "I have no clothes here to be baptized in."

Without missing a beat, Archie replied, "I don't have any clothes here especially for baptism, but I have this suit on, and if you want to be baptized in your clothes, I will go down into the water with you in my good suit, right now."

Smitten by Archie's sincerity, the Swede sobbed, "I will go!"

The preacher and the sinner walked down a long stairway that had been built by bootleggers in the Prohibition era. The church folks from the picnic followed them down to the water. The Swede reached into one pocket, took out his watch and fob, and handed them to Florence to hold. Then he reached into his other pocket and pulled out a snuff can. He hurled it into the bushes, crying, "I no want you anymore." The two men then waded out into the

Columbia. Just before Archie immersed him, the Swede spoke up.

"Preacher, please wait." Then, lifting his tear-stained face to heaven, he prayed in Swedish. When he had finished his prayer, he said, "You do not understand a Swede, but God does. Now I am ready."

When the Swede came up out of the water, the folks on the shore said that his face "fairly shone with light and happiness."⁴

The "river baptizing scene," publicized in the local newspaper, broke open the gates. Each night the converted Swede would bring from one to three car loads of friends and neighbors to the revival meeting. He would hang his coat in the lobby, turn to Archie, and say, "Brother Vord, I cannot sing dees songs, but ven day sing dem, my heart yust goes like dis." He doubled up his arms and swung them back and forth. The planing mill, where he worked as a foreman, became a changed place because of his conversion.

A grand total of 33 people (all adults except one) made their way to the river and were baptized. The meeting closed June 8 with Brother Ellis reporting to the *Christian Standard*:

Brother Word (is) one of the coming evangelists of our brotherhood. He delivers the message without fear or favor, but kindly and convincingly; he is a fighter for God, and I do not hesitate to recommend him to any of our people who might be casting about for a strong doctrinal evangelist.⁵

YONCALLA, OREGON

A Meeting That Was Too Well Attended

"The women have cleaned the church and the men have painted it preparing for the Word meeting which

begins Friday night," wrote a newspaper reporter. The meeting began June 18 with Archie's sermon, "What I Would Do If I Were the Devil." As it progressed for five weeks, the reports in the local newspaper became more and more optimistic:

There will have to be more seats for Sunday . . . Mr. Word is not afraid to speak out on modern evils . . . 'Why So Many Denominations?' drew one of the largest audiences of the meeting . . . Seating capacity is twice its normal size and extra seats have been secured . . . Breaking all records . . . After one week the house has been enlarged to twice its formal capacity . . . Last Tuesday evening there were many turned away . . .⁶

The crowds were simply too great for the little church to hold. The biggest crowds came on Friday nights when the "Booster Club" kids displayed their new knowledge of Scripture and choruses. In the *World Evangel*, Ed Whisler reported, "35 added . . . 25 by confession and baptism and 10 by letter and statement." He saw Archie as "a mighty preacher and teacher . . . he scathingly denounces sin . . . punctures modernism . . . leaves denominationalism without a leg to stand on . . ."⁷

Yoncalla unanimously called the Words for a return meeting.

CARLTON, OREGON Gossip Hinders the Gospel

"Carlton has had some great evangelists in the past," reported Bill Jessup, Archie's old classmate at EBU, now preaching in Carlton, "but Brother Word is by far the greatest evangelist on the coast."⁸ The five-week revival began July 24, 1931, with Florence singing,

Archie playing the cornet and preaching the Word. The local Baptist church even dismissed their regular services to hear this "ex-sailor and prizefighter" preach the Word. "The biggest crowds for a summer campaign that this church has ever witnessed in its history have been on hand," said Jessup.⁹ But despite the record crowds, only 14 people responded to the invitation — the smallest number of responses ever in an Archie Word revival in the glory-filled years from 1930-1935.

Years later Archie discovered why "only" 14 people came forward out of the record numbers that attended the Carlton revival — ugly gossip!

A woman had told the people there that when our second child (Barbara) was born, I wouldn't speak to my wife for six months because it wasn't a boy. She told this all over town — really great advertising!

I didn't (find out about it) until 15 or 20 years later when her son in Portland recognized me and said his mother was very sick and wanted to see me. I went over and I found she had been . . . paralyzed on one side. As I stood there by the side of her bed, she poured out her heart in contrition and told me the ungodly thing she had done and why it was that the meeting in Carlton had only a few converted.¹⁰

The Lookout carried reports of the Carlton campaign. Archie said, "William Jessup . . . is one of the best informed ministers regarding the needs of his field that I have ever been with . . . truly consecrated, able and true."¹¹ Jessup noted, "Have just completed one of the best meetings in the history of the local church . . . Capacity houses nearly every night of the six week's meeting: 11 found salvation in Jesus Christ and three came to rededicate their lives; four homes

that were broken were united in Christ . . . the Words are a power in the kingdom of Christ."¹²

THE SECOND MARSHFIELD MEETING Archie Fights "The Battle of the Blue Mouse Theater"

When Archie Word returned to Marshfield (Coos Bay), Oregon, in September of 1931, he found himself facing a "Union Meeting" at the very same time his meeting was to be conducted. On the back of his revival handbill, he scrawled a footnote: "Bucked 13 Denominations in a Union Meeting led by Jess Kellems in the Blue Mouse Theater." (Kellems was now divorced and preaching for the Disciples of Christ.) At one time, Archie had attended Union meetings, even singing for a few while in college. But now he was firm in his opposition to such cooperation with the denominations. On September 21 he wrote Roy Shaw:

Bless your heart, old man, for the encouragement and the prayers of the saints in Lindsay for us here. God knows we need it, with Jess and his brother (Homer — Author) leading the music . . . We are not depending on our eloquence to win, but rather the Gospel and nothing but the Gospel. Right against wrong and that to the death is our motto . . .¹³

Archie had been advised by some not to buck Kellems, thereby "branding" himself in the brotherhood and ruining his chances of becoming "a great evangelist in the brotherhood." Archie was undeterred.

I'm going to go over and hear Jess tonight as it is my rest night, but before I go I am having an understanding with the Doctor that I will take no part in the ser-

vice whatever, not even pray. I can't conscientiously (pray) for that kind of work, so will be above board.¹⁴

On Monday night, September 21, Archie went to hear Kellems at the Blue Mouse Theater. He preached that night on "The Philosophy of Repentance." What Archie heard broke his heart.

I listened for 45 minutes to a man who was supposed to be a great preacher, but there was nothing said that would cause a sinner to have a change of mind or turn from his sin. Sin had taken all the 'preach' out of the man. The old call of years gone by to men to turn from sin unto God was gone.¹⁵

For six straight weeks Archie Word and Clifton Phillips (the preacher at Marshfield) fought the Battle of the Blue Mouse Union Meeting. In the end there were 75 responses to the invitation (40 by baptism and 20 coming out of denominationalism). Phillips said, "This campaign was a teaching service from beginning to ending and Christian Unity was stressed in a most forceful way."¹⁶ During the meeting Archie preached three sermons over KOOS radio at the invitation of the station manager, a Baptist. On the last night of the meeting the man and his wife united with the Christian church, even though it cost the woman her Sunday School class and the man his clerkship in the Baptist church.

The second meeting at Marshfield marked several new changes in Archie's revival methods. One change was going from passing the offering plate one night a week to simply placing an offering box by the door. Archie explained the change to Roy Shaw:

Just have a chest by the door where the Christians can

put their offerings and save the man of the world the embarrassment of having to put in a nickel when the collection plates come around. It is N.T. fashion and working out fine. We do not get so much cash silver, but we make ends meet and the Lord blesses it to going farther than he did the other way. Church here (Marshfield) at the request of the board last Sunday morning decided to do away with the offering plates entirely in the church service.¹⁷

From the Marshfield meeting on, Archie Word encouraged and practiced this "New Testament fashion" (though it was decidedly Old Testament in reality, II Chronicles 24:8-11). In his 33-year ministry with the Montavilla church in Portland, an offering plate was never passed. Some brethren even came to see the offering plate as "unscriptural." A few even called the practice "sin."

Another revival innovation begun during the second Marshfield meeting was the practice of speaking to high school assemblies. An imposing figure, the 6-foot 200-pounder would address the assemblies with a standard speech on the four fundamental foundations of life: physical, mental, moral, and spiritual. After the assembly he would secure a letter of recommendation from the high school principal or superintendent to present to the powers that were in the next community he conducted a revival. The students sat up and listened to this man who had known sin from the inside out.

OVER 500 DECISIONS FOR CHRIST IN FIRST YEAR

With the close of the Marshfield meeting in October, 1931, it had been exactly one year since Archie and Florence had started The Word Revival Team.

Across America 4.8 million people were now out of work, but the Words had plenty of work to do. Archie reported to the *World Evangelist*;

We determined to go wherever we were called . . . the motto of our team has been, 'The Gospel Only Makes Christians Only and Restores the New Testament Church.' We believe the Lord knew more about organizing a church than all the theologians since His time, and that goes for the Men and Millions movement, Interchurch world movement, U.C.M.S. and the Pension fund or anything else that hinders the progress of the simple church of the Lord . . . We thank the Lord that it was our privilege to attend Eugene Bible College where we were well equipped . . . to do the work of an evangelist and to meet without fear the adversary. Especially do we thank the Lord for Dear old 'Daddy Hoven.'¹⁸

From October 1930 to October 1931, the Word Revival Team reported a total of 510 decisions for Christ.

LAKEPORT, CALIFORNIA

Archie Is Invited to a Dance, Where He Preaches the Word!

Lakeport, California, was a resort town of about 3,000 people, located on the west shore of Clear Lake, north of San Francisco. Pleasure spots abounded, but Dwight L. Hackett and the church on First Street "had been working and praying for a great revival in Lakeport for nearly a year."¹⁹ The meeting commenced November 1, 1931, and ran for seven straight weeks. Archie opened with "Heave Ho" and "Why I Believe in a Personal God." The Lakeport newspaper reported that "packed houses" greeted the Words each night;

"people driving as far as 26 miles to be present," this in spite of gasoline rationing. On Friday, November 20, Archie preached on "Why I Am a Christian." In this sermon he always told about the night the *South Dakota* (the newspaper incorrectly called it the *San Diego*) "went down off New York harbor." A reporter wrote, "Here in Lakeport he has found several men who were also on the ship when she sank. Mr. Word has in the past been instrumental in leading many of his old companions to Christ."²⁰

The revival in Lakeport is best remembered as the time when Archie Word accepted a dancing church member's dare to attend a dance. On Saturday nights (Archie called it the "devil's night") he would normally preach on sin or the devil. For example, his Saturday night sermons in Lakeport were: "What I Would Do If I Were the Devil," "The Helpfulness of the Devil," "Seven Steps to Hell," "Four Outlaws as Old as Man," and a real crowd-pleaser, "Shaking Out Snakes!" One Saturday night he declared, "Since I have become a Christian, I have never been invited to a single dance." As he was shaking hands at the door, a pert young lady told him that she could not see anything wrong with the dance. Furthermore, she invited the 30-year-old preacher to the dance the next Saturday night. Archie said he would come if she would give him a written invitation, which she was happy to do.

The next Saturday night, after the revival service was over, Archie said to Dwight Hackett, "Come on, Dwight. We're going to a dance!" Hackett nearly "fell over dead," but Archie was insistent. "I mean it, brother. I have been invited to a dance, and I intend to go!" The two preachers got into a car and drove to the American Legion hall, where the dance was already in

progress. They arrived about 10:30, presenting the written invitation at the door. The doorman wanted to take it before the two preachers got inside the door, but Archie was adamant. "I will hang on to it until we get IN the door!"

Once inside the dance hall, Archie strode up to the band leader and asked him to give him the "ruffles" after the next dance was finished. "I want to make an announcement," he said. Sure enough, as soon as the number was over, the band leader called for the "ruffles." Silence fell over the crowded dance floor. With great alacrity Archie sprang to the platform and faced the crowd. He introduced himself, told them he was a preacher, that he had been personally invited to the dance, and whenever he was invited anywhere, he naturally took it for granted that he was invited to preach! As the dumbfounded band leader looked on, Archie launched into a 40-minute sermon on the evils of the dance and the power of Jesus Christ to save lost sinners! He spoke from personal experience about his sordid life in the dance business in Fresno; how it had ruined his life and the lives of many others. "Then I told them of the Lord Jesus Christ who was able to bring far greater joy to a person's heart than any dance ever thought of giving."

About halfway through his famous dance hall sermon, the young girl who had invited Archie to the dance walked in. She turned crimson when she saw Archie preaching away. When the sermon was over at last, the orchestra struck up a waltz. Only one couple dared venture out on the deserted dance floor. The girl refused to speak to Archie.

But the daring play of Archie paid off handsomely. Before the Lakeport revival was over, the girl came

forward and made a tearful confession of her waywardness. "Before that meeting was over," said Archie, "that girl led her unconverted boyfriend to the Lord and about two dozen other young people back to the Lord whom she had misled . . . for the first time their old hard worldly shell was pierced." They repented of their "dancing, card playing, and jazzing around." This broke the meeting wide open, with over 100 decisions.

The results were that there was a whole church breaking from the world and publicly admitting their sinfulness . . . The whole church was revived. Over 100 responded to the gospel invitation, and that year the church took the banner for northern California for the greatest gain in attendance and activities in all departments.²¹

Of the 101 decisions in Lakeport, 54 were baptized, 37 rededicated their lives to Christ, and nine placed membership. Dwight Hackett reported to the *World Evangel*, "The heavenly Father has poured out a blessing far exceeding anything we had hoped for. Scores have been saved from sin; many church members have been turned from lives of indifference to lives that will count mightily for the Master."²²

THE SECOND LINDSAY REVIVAL A Convert from the "Yaller Dawg" Saloon

It was with double anticipation that Archie and Florence returned to Lindsay for a second meeting in their home church. Florence had not sung at all at the Lakeport meeting; nor would she at Lindsay. Another Word was about to enter the world. The return meeting began New Year's Day, 1932. Roy Shaw led the

singing, with Roy Oberholtzer at the piano. The *Lindsay Gazette* announced: "Returning to Lindsay . . . Rev. and Mrs. Archie Word will begin a new campaign at the Church of Christ . . . called back because of their excellent work achieved at the last meetings . . . have been in Lindsay for several days, enjoying a well-deserved rest after having preached 395 nights in succession and traveled nearly 20,000 miles. Among West Coast evangelists, Mr. Word has been most successful in reaching men for Christ . . . (he) attributes his success to an unshakable faith in Christ, a whole-souled desire to see souls saved, and fearless preaching of the gospel."²³

Capacity crowds once again greeted the "home-town-boy-made-good." In fact, "many services have been too crowded for comfort, with many turned away for lack of room."²⁴

On Mondays, the traditional "rest day" for the Words, the revival team took their ministry to a state camp for unemployed men at nearby Pinehurst. The headlines in the *Lindsay Gazette* read: "WORD PREACHES AT PINEHURST LABOR CAMP: Men Ask for Another Service Soon."

A total of 185 men gathered in the mess hall of the camp to hear Roy Shaw sing and Archie Word preach. The men were working six hours a day for the state and county in exchange for meals and a place to sleep at night. A reporter wrote, "They liked the sermon because it was delivered in a fearless, yet spiritual manner. They liked Brother Word because he proved to be a man among men."²⁵ Throughout the second meeting in Lindsay, Archie preached to the men at Pinehurst every Monday.

Four weeks into the meeting, the Words were

blessed with another addition to their family, Jenelle Procter Word, born January 25, at Grandma Maggie's house. Another bunk would have to be built in the trailer. By this time, Margaret was nearly four and Barbara was approaching three. They had already been in more church services than most folks managed to attend in a life time.

(Soon after the Lindsay meeting, little Jenelle was diagnosed as having Turner's Syndrome, an abnormality of the sex chromosomes. There were only 300 cases of such in the United States at that time. Aunt Nellie, a nurse, took her to a doctor in Los Angeles who recommended a plastic surgeon to operate on the folds of skin and webbing in the neck.)²⁶

Among the hundreds of people who came to hear Archie preach were Bill and John, retirees who spent most of their time playing pool and swapping dirty stories down at the "Yaller Dawg" saloon. One Saturday night the two men attended the revival. As they walked home, Bill said, "John, that was a good sermon Archie preached, wasn't it?"

John went straight up into the air. "_____, no! Archie did not have any business talking the way he did!"

"But, John. What he was saying was true, wasn't it?"

John snorted. "I'll never go back to hear that young fool preach again."

The two men walked on in silence. Then Bill spoke. "Well, I am."

And he did. Within two weeks Bill was converted to Christ. Despite his vehement protestations, John did come back for one more hearing, but went away just as unrepentant. But Bill was another story. A retired carpenter, he dug out his tools and started fixing up

everything he could find that was broken or worn out in the church building. He got a new Bible and began to read it. He never missed a church service. After Archie left town, Bill began to call with Roy Shaw and won people to the Lord. While Archie was in a meeting in Pomona, he got a letter from Roy. Old John had been playing cards with a Baptist deacon at the "Yaller Dawg" saloon. They got into an argument and John picked up a chair and tried to brain the backslidden Baptist. Other men in the saloon broke up the fight and sent the deacon out the front door (he normally sneaked out the back door). They sent John packing out the back door. He walked about 30 steps and fell face-first in the alley, dead as a doornail. When they turned him over, he had a mouth full of gravel. Archie was grieved to hear of John dying in such a manner, outside of Christ.

By the end of the six-week meeting, a total of 71 people had surrendered to the call of Christ; 17 couples came to start their homes in Christ. Archie wrote in the *World Evangel*, "Not since the scandalous escapade in Marshfield where denominationalism and high-powered 'United' forces banded against us have we had such a delightful time. Practically every church in the town had from one to three weeks of revival or loyalty meetings while we were there."²⁷ Shaw called it, "the greatest meeting in the church's history."²⁸

On a sad note, the Lindbergh baby was kidnapped and killed during the last week of the Lindsay meeting. Florence and baby Jenelle would remain in Strathmore while Archie went off to Corona, California, "where the clouds of division hang like vultures over a people who once pled for the unity of God's people on the

Bible and the Bible alone."²⁹

CORONA, CALIFORNIA

How the Media Saw Archie Word

Some of the best newspaper writeups of Archie Word's revivals were in Corona, just east of Los Angeles. Daily newspaper coverage was one of the best things that could happen in those days. A sampling of some of the big black headlines from each day's newspaper editions reveals the impact the Word revival had on Corona:

FORMER BOXER TO CONDUCT REVIVAL SERVICES IN CITY
 REVIVAL CAMPAIGN OPENS LAST NIGHT WITH ENTHUSIASM
 Corona People Pleased With Word; Hard-Hitting Worker in Field
 CHURCH OF CHRIST REVIVALS ATTRACT HUGE AUDIENCES
 LIONS CLUB ENJOY SPLENDID ADVICE FROM EVANGELIST
 EVANGELIST HITS HARD AT SIN IN STIRRING APPEAL
 PRONOUNCE WORD TALK LAST NIGHT BEST OF SERMONS
 PUBLIC IS HUNGRY FOR PURE GOSPEL, REVIVALS PROVING
 Evangelist Word Preaches Most Stirring Sermons In Services
 WORD DISCUSSES FORCES KEEPING CHURCH DIVIDED
 Prejudices, Opinions, And Preachers Separate Church, He Says
 REVIVAL TO RUN TWO WEEKS MORE
 REVIVAL LEADER POINTS WAY TO CHRISTIAN UNITY

The Corona reporters loved Archie Word, describing him as follows: "He does not 'pull his punch' when swinging at the devil."

"He drove home truths in rapid succession, with a power which reflects his remarkable personality."

"His message was plain, and the audience struck with the simplicity of the plea were greatly impressed."

"The great audience was forced to admit the strength of the message as Evangelist Word drove

home his point with clear and unusual illustrations."

At the end of the six-week's labor, a total of 92 people had responded to the invitation, according to J. Michael Shelley, the minister of the Church of Christ at 9th and Main. In the *Christian Standard*, Shelley wrote:

Brother Word is both a splendid preacher and an untiring personal worker. His teaching from Bible charts proved very effective, converts coming from the Catholic and Mormon groups, as well as many of the Protestant denominations . . . This entire town has been stirred . . . the church has been left in a strong, healthy condition, both financially and spiritually.³⁰

POMONA, CALIFORNIA

A 13-Week Revival Lands the Local Preacher in San Quentin!

The longest-running revival that Archie Word ever conducted was in Pomona, California — 13 weeks! Near Los Angeles (where the 1932 Olympics were being held), Pomona was larger than any city where Archie had preached up to this time. Several other revivals were in progress in the Los Angeles basin when Archie came to Pomona to conduct a revival for the East Side Christian Church, located on the corner of Pasadena Street and Towne Avenue. A.B. McReynolds, "the Texas Evangelist and Lecturer," was holding forth at the First Christian Church in Long Beach; David Eugene Olson, "Scientist, Author, Debater and Lightning Evangelist," was preaching at the Fetterly Avenue Church of Christ and South Broadway Church of Christ in South Los Angeles; Dr. Charles Reign Scoville, whom S.S. Lappin called one of the four "really great revivalists in the history of the

Restoration Movement," was holding a revival at First Christian Church, right in Pomona. On one of his "rest nights," Archie attended Olson's revival and received from the founder of EBU an autographed photograph of Olson's huge wall chart, "Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth," plus another photograph of Olson's church chart. If he ever got over to hear McReynolds it is not clear; one thing that is clear, however, is that Archie Word constantly got after McReynolds for his cigar smoking. He seemed unimpressed by the great Charles Reign Scoville and some of "Scoville's methods," like the pink circus-like tickets promising children that "Dr. Scoville will give a dollar to some child tonight." Nevertheless, Archie kept all these handbills, photographs and tickets in his personal scrapbook. (It is the opinion of some that Archie Word could have surpassed the numerical success of revivalists like Scoville had he resorted to "Union Meetings.")

Archie had come to the Los Angeles area because a visiting delegation of 150 people from Pomona had come to his opening night crusade in Corona. The local preacher in Pomona, however, was not too hot on Archie Word coming to conduct a revival in his church. For one thing, he chewed tobacco and carried four fat cigars in his front coat pocket. After the first week of revival, he called for a vote to close the meeting. Predictably, the vote failed. For the next eight weeks he called for a vote to shut down the campaign, failing each time. One can only imagine how he must have chafed under the preaching night after night, week after week, month after month! The preacher was a member of practically every lodge in town, and usually nailed down the job of secretary. He soon developed the practice of writing post-dated checks.

Six weeks after the revival finally came to an end, the preacher was arrested on bad check charges and sentenced to five years probation, following 90 days in the Los Angeles county jail. An ongoing investigation revealed the fact that he had been arrested several times before this episode, mostly on finance charges, and that he owed back rent in a number of places. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that the bad checks had been written to a Los Angeles beer parlor. Archie Word said the man was eventually sentenced to San Quentin.³¹

The arduous and gruelling campaign resulted in 91 conversions. Archie called it "one of the hardest fought battles I've ever experienced."³² In addition to the unbelievable behavior of the preacher, a well-to-do member went around Pomona speaking evil of the revival. (Perhaps he did so because he had publicly promised to put a dollar in the offering box every night of the meeting — and the meeting lasted 91 days!) Not only that, during the revival Archie was threatened with violent, bodily harm. After the preacher's arrest, the Pomona church called Archie back for a brief interim ministry until Lewis Mick could come and take the pulpit. During this time 28 more people were added, bring the total number of conversions in Pomona to 119.

Notes

1. *Christian Standard*, April 24, 1931
2. *Ibid*
3. *Ibid.*, June 12, 1931
4. *The Other Day*, pp. 77, 78
5. *Christian Standard*, June 9, 1931
6. Yoncalla, Oregon, newspaper accounts, June, 1931
7. *World Evangel*, n.d.

8. Carlton, Oregon, newspaper account, July 24, 1931
9. *Ibid*
10. *The Voice of Evangelism*, 1967, p. 174
11. *The Lookout*, n.d.
12. *Ibid*
13. Letter from Archie Word to Roy Shaw, Sept. 21, 1931
14. *Ibid*
15. *The Other Day*, p. 24
16. *World Evangel*, n.d.
17. Letter from Archie Word to Roy Shaw, Sept. 21, 1931
18. *World Evangel*, n.d.
19. *Ibid*
20. Lakeport, California, newspaper account, Nov. 21, 1931
21. *The Other Day*, pp. 89, 90; *The Voice of Evangelism*, Dec. 6, 1958
22. *World Evangel*, n.d.
23. *Lindsay Gazette*, Jan. 1, 1932
24. *Ibid.*, Feb. 9, 1932
25. *Ibid.*, n.d.
26. Author's interview with Nellie Word Arnold, April 22, 1990
27. *World Evangel*, n.d.
28. *Lindsay Gazette*, Feb. 9, 1932
29. *World Evangel*, n.d.
30. *Christian Standard*, May 7, 1932
31. *The Other Day*, p. 64
32. *World Evangel*, Oct. 15, 1932.

10

FAME AND FORTUNE BECKON (1932-1933)

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

—Charles A. Foster, California assemblyman,
publisher and editor, in 1933

Archie Word had now reached a critical point in his life. The media was giving him unusual attention in California. A promoter made him an offer that could bring him both fame and fortune. What was he going to do?

ELSINORE, CALIFORNIA

Archie Is Offered Big Money To Go Big Time

"Famous Evangelist Arrives Tomorrow," shouted

the headlines in the local Elsinore newspaper. A church-sponsored advertisement went on to describe Archie as "The Greatest of America's Young Evangelists." The 31-year-old preacher was about to be put to the test on just how "famous" and "great" he could become, should he be willing to pay the price — more accurately put, *take* the price of fame and fortune.

The meeting in Elsinore garnered 52 souls for Christ. While there, Archie spoke by invitation at the local high school and even the Methodist Church. Then came the "big offer." Archie said:

I was in a meeting in Elsinore, California, when a very distinguished man visited our services. He wore a European Vandyke beard and carried a bulging folio. At the close of the service he asked for an interview. He and his wife came to my cottage the next morning about ten o'clock, and he proceeded to tell me how famous he was as an advertiser and publicity medium . . .

He expressed himself as impressed with my ability and offered to (modestly) make me more famous than Billy Sunday and give me far more of an audience to speak to than he had ever enjoyed. (He was going to use public address systems which were just then coming into service in public assemblies.)

He assured me that with his ability, we could have ten thousand people to speak to in almost any large city. He was to take care of the publicity, make the contacts, secure the cooperation of denominational bodies, and in general take care of everything except the preaching.¹

After learning that the "take" would be split fifty-fifty, Archie pondered the offer.

What an opportunity! Preaching to a million people in only a short time, with possibly another fifty million

contacted over the air. I was really getting green-eyed and hungry for some of that publicity, but thank God, I was led to ask, "What about the message I am to preach? Will there be any changes to be made there?"

In the finest diplomatic terms, he proceeded to help me see that certain things that I preached [like repentance from popular sins, baptism being essential to salvation, one church, tithing — Author] would be detrimental to a "Union meeting program."²

Archie said, "I am not interested." Undeterred, the wealthy businessman (an executive with the Gossard underwear company) repeated the spiel all over again. When he had finished, Archie replied as he had before, "On those terms, I am not interested." A third time the executive went through the proposal. A third time Archie said, "I am not interested." Vandyke beard bristling, the businessman snapped his folio shut and stalked to the door of the cottage. Turning to face Archie one last time, he retorted, "Young man, you are a fool!"

Still, God looked after the young preacher and his family. On the last night of the meeting in Elsinore, a wealthy woman came forward, promising to rededicate the rest of her life to Christ. She also proceeded to give the Words and beautiful new 16-foot four-wheeled trailer — complete with a public address system!

BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA

Filling the Balcony in Bakersfield

The Word Revival Team began a six-week meeting with First Christian Church, 16th and I Streets, with 350 people out for the first night's service, September 23, 1932. Charles Hulme, minister of the Bakersfield

congregation, reported that crowds during the campaign surpassed the 800 mark.³ "The balcony was filled the last night of the meeting for the first time in the history of the church. The people had to sit on 'risers' because there were no chairs. They did not expect anyone to ever have to use the balcony."⁴

A total of 128 people responded to the preaching in Bakersfield. Hulme reported to the *Christian Standard*:

I have not heard for many years anyone preach the Bible with such fidelity and power. He teaches Bible doctrine every night in a pre-service . . . He is the most fearless preacher I have ever heard and condemns sin unsparingly . . . The church was crowded every night for 45 nights in this city which has a bad reputation for securing a crowd for an evangelist.⁵

(The church wanted Archie to come back for another meeting, but a disgruntled element in the U.C.M.S. decided they wanted "a man who would give them a nice quiet meeting."⁶ Nevertheless, over 300 turned out on a Saturday night to hear Archie preach in a city park meeting sometime later.)

NEWBERG, OREGON

A Meeting Filled With "Pentecostal Power"

Eleven million people were out of work in America when the Words pulled into Newberg for their last meeting of 1932. Elery Parrish was the minister of the church which met at the corner of Second and College Streets. Parrish, a home-town-boy-made-good, baptized at age 12, a fellow student with Archie at Eugene Bible University, looked forward to the reunion. In time, the two men became known as "the

Peter and John of the Restoration Movement in Oregon"⁷ because of their respective natures. After five weeks of revival in Newberg, the local newspaper quoted Archie as saying, "I believe if it took Saul three years to hold a meeting, it ill behooves an ordinary man to try to hold one in ten days."⁸ It would be a cold day in July before Archie Word would hold a ten-day meeting! This particular meeting ran six weeks, closing the 15th of January, 1933, with 90 responses — 50 by "primary obedience" — "the greatest revival held in Newberg for many years."⁹ In a letter of recommendation from the elders and minister, Parrish wrote:

We have never seen a man more tireless in his efforts, more unselfish in financial matters, or more earnest about winning the lost to the Lord . . . His wife is a splendid, consecrated, talented, and willing helper in the gospel. We . . . commend Bro. Word to congregations everywhere who want a real evangelistic meeting filled with Pentecostal power.¹⁰

(Three months after the Newberg meeting, Elery wrote Archie that someone had written to him wanting to know about Archie "splitting the church" and leaving it in an "awful mess." Parrish was filled with "righteous indignation" over the charge, and told Archie the revival was still going on in Newberg — "13 baptisms last Sunday . . . great victories . . . 277 last Sunday . . . over 100 in mid-week service . . . Doesn't look like the church split to me, does it to you? . . . I don't know of any evangelists outside of you and Teddy [Leavitt — Author] that I would trust in the pulpit here.")¹¹

Now it was on to tiny Dufur, Oregon, and one of the greatest revival meetings Archie Word ever

experienced. The year 1932 was history. The Word Revival Team had helped bring 653 people into the kingdom of Christ. In far away Europe, Adolf Hitler had seized power in what was soon to become Nazi Germany. Here in America, the Word family bundled themselves into their 1929 Chevrolet and drove through the beautiful Columbia Gorge to begin yet another revival meeting in the Great Depression years.

DUFUR, OREGON

Half the Town is Converted!

The great Dufur revival began January 15, 1933, and "ended" February 26 with 162 decisions for Christ — 61 baptisms, 73 reconsecrations, 18 placing membership, and 10 life recruits. Ed Whisler was the minister of the Christian Church in Dufur, a little town of 300 south of The Dalles. His wife, Mary, played the piano; Florence led the singing; and Archie preached as he had never preached before. The Methodists came out in "full force" the first night of the six-week meeting. So did many others in the surrounding area, "some from as far west as The Dalles and east to Wamic and Tygh Valley . . . Harmony and Friend districts. Some have driven 15 miles every night one way."¹² This in the middle of the Great Depression! One Sunday afternoon chairs were set up for 300 people (the population of the entire town) for a basket dinner.

Two conversion stories in Dufur merit retelling. The first was that of a chef in the local hotel. He was a "hard-faced, hard-talking old sinner who had lived a mighty rough life."¹³ He and his wife began attending the meeting. Archie and Ed Whisler went to call on the man and his wife in the hotel. To the astonishment of the whole community, the hard-bitten chef and his

wife surrendered to the Lord and were baptized. Few thought they would stick, but stick they did. Archie and the converted chef forged a friendship that lasted 30 years, Archie being called back to Dufur to conduct his funeral many years later.

One afternoon Archie and Whisler knocked on the door of a retired Methodist minister. The man invited them in out of the cold to visit. No sooner were they seated until the Methodist minister spoke. "I have been down to your meeting a few times, Mr. Word, and have repeatedly heard you say a sinner must be immersed in order to be saved . . . If you can show me from the Bible, or any reputable commentary that I should be immersed for the remission of my sins, I will be there tonight to be baptized."

Archie thought for a moment, then asked, "Do you have *Clarke's Commentary* or *Wesley's Notes on the New Testament*?"

"I have both of them."

"Would you please get them and read for us the comments on Romans 6:4?"

"Surely." The old preacher got up and walked confidently over to the book shelf, found the volumes, returned to his chair and sat down. He turned to the section on Romans 6:4 and began to read aloud, "'Buried with him in baptism' was referring to the ancient form of baptism . . ."

Archie stopped him right there and asked him to read it again. He did. Then Archie said, "Mr. Dillinger, if that was the action of the primitive church under the Holy Spirit-inspired apostles, who has the right to change it? And do you believe we ought to go by the example of the inspired apostles?"

"Yes, I believe they spoke and instructed by inspira-

tion, and from what that Scripture says I see I should be immersed." Then he added, "This has bothered me for some time."

Archie pressed on. "We will expect to see you at the church tonight, and I will baptize you according to what you believe the Bible teaches."

Dillinger's answer was firm: "I will be there."

But he did not show up at the meeting that night. The next morning Archie nearly collided with him as he came out of a store. "Mr. Dillinger, I thought you were a man of your word!"

Almost in tears, the old retired preacher replied, "Brother, I meant to be there. I intended to be there and keep my word, but when my wife came home, I have never seen her act so wild in her life. She called me an old hypocrite and a fool and reminded me — almost yelling — of what all my Methodist friends would say." He paused. "I think for the welfare of my home, I had better wait awhile."

Several years after the Dufur revival had ended, Archie was invited to speak at The Dalles on a rally program. There he met a woman who looked familiar. "You do not remember me, do you?" she asked.

"Yes, I do," Archie replied in his brusque fashion. "You are the lady who would not let her husband be baptized in Dufur in 1933!"

Somewhat taken aback, the woman recovered. "That is why I am here. I have driven all alone down here just to tell you that before Daddy died, he was baptized." Then she added, "And I was baptized. Our daughter and her husband were baptized too. I knew you would rejoice to know about it."¹⁴

Even a mid-February blizzard could not quench the revival fires that were burning in the old wood-heated

church at Dufur. Fifty-five years after the Dufur revival, Archie referred to it as,

The biggest revival meeting we ever had . . . When we came into Dufur, I looked at it and said, "Oh, Mom . . ." (but) you know, that meeting got on its way . . . snow on the ground . . . coldest weather they ever had . . . and people rode horses . . . drove their tractors . . . put wagons on behind and picked up neighbors . . . We'd have that building full . . . the furnace going full blast all day long to have the building warm enough . . . They didn't have raised seats so they put a table on the platform (and) I stood on the table . . . and before it was over we had 162 conversions. . . .¹⁵

Archie Word believed in a simple form of church polity that was strictly New Testament in origin and practice. He saw the elders as having complete control over every aspect of the church. Many of the churches that had him for revivals in those Depression years made drastic changes in their church government after the revival, as is evidenced in this letter from Whisler:

I just cannot get over thanking you for what the meeting has done for this church. They sure want to do things the N.T. way now . . . The Sunday School does not even take up an offering, but through the tithe gives into the church treasury . . . The C.E., as it was called, no longer has a treasury . . . when the young people want money, they go to the elder that has charge . . . An elder has charge of the Bible Study hour . . . the Ladies Aid, as it was, is now turning all their efforts to charity work and not supporting the preacher. An elder has charge of that work and when they need money they will consult with him. There will be more personal work and less gossip.¹⁶

Archie's revivals not only left their mark on the

churches, but on the communities as well, as was made evident by another letter from Whisler to Word:

We had a wonderful prayer meeting last night . . . That is what your old gospel preaching has done for this town. I have not found it a bad mess after you left, as some predicted . . . I never really enjoyed anything more in my whole life, more than I have the last 6 weeks. I just could hardly say goodbye that morning you left . . . Thank you for what you have done for Dufur. The whole county knows that the gospel has been preached.¹⁷

SAN BERNARDINO, CALIFORNIA The Revival That Set Russell Boatman's Soul on Fire

The impact of an Archie Word revival on the lives of young people cannot be overestimated. Archie Word sent more men into the ministry than any other man in the 1930s and 1940s. "One of my greatest desires," he told the *World Evangelist*, "is to place 1,000 lives in decision to minister for the Lord before I die. One thousand preachers of the Word and unafraid of the Devil, either in the Church or out!"¹⁸

Lertis Ellett, preacher for the Church of Christ meeting at 14th and E Streets in San Bernardino, California, described the results of Archie's revival:

When an evangelist holds a revival meeting in a church and has 62 reponses . . . when sixteen of your finest young people volunteer their lives for full-time Christian service . . . when you see new converts coming in utter surrender and you look over the congregation and see the older members, not motivated by love for Christ but just doing things from force of habit . . . and then in a Spirit-filled meeting you see their hearts stirred . . . and you hear them offering

their lives wholeheartedly to their Savior . . . then you know there has never been a meeting in this church that can compare with the one we have just had with Evangelist Archie Word and his good wife.¹⁹

(In an additional report to the *Christian Evangelist*, Ellett added, "There is not a bridge-club fiend, or a jazz-hound in the membership and but two or three men who still cling to their tobacco — the church membership has been cleaned up.")²⁰

One of the 16 young people who dedicated their lives to full-time Christian service during the San Bernardino revival was Russell Boatman, who called the meeting "the greatest revival and evangelistic campaign that congregation ever experienced."²¹ Young Boatman reconsecrated his life under the preaching of Word, and decided to preach the gospel.

I was converted at age 11, in the wake of my father's dramatic conversion under the preaching of Clayton C. Root. At the time Brother Word entered my life (at age 18) I had not backslidden, but I had failed to grow. I had not taken up smoking, drinking, sex, swearing, etc. But neither was I searching the scriptures or witnessing for Christ. I was just contributing to the headcount at Bible School, Christian Endeavor, and church. Brother Word's preaching changed that! I resented its implication at first. But at a special Sunday afternoon service the last day of a six week's revival, at a service I had planned to boycott (knowing full-well what he was hoping to accomplish), I was drawn as though by a magnet.

Late, late in the extended invitation; long, long after most evangelists would have given up; I not only reconsecrated my life [but] I dedicated my life to the work of the preaching ministry. Never, never for one moment have I regretted that decision, and I am grateful for the one who led me to that decision.²²

Boatman identifies the key to Archie Word's success:

The effectiveness of his preaching was in his pleading. Some say he skinned us alive and poured salt on the wounds. If so, it was the salt of his tears. Towards the end his voice would mellow, his eyes moisten and he would plead with sinners. In that show of "weakness" was his strength. He was a man of compassion, and remained ever mindful of what he had once been. I shall ever love him for shedding tears in my behalf.²³

(Russell Boatman went on to receive his undergraduate degree at Northwest Christian College — Archie's alma mater — and graduate degrees from Phillips University. He served as president of Minnesota Bible College and as Academic Dean of St. Louis Christian College, authoring four books along the way. Archie Word regarded him as one of the finest Bible scholars in the world.)

Something happened at the end of the glorious San Bernardino revival that shows another side of Archie Word that few people ever witnessed — his generosity. The Depression was rough on everyone, preachers not excepted. Ellett, the local minister, had received no salary for several weeks. One night a man called Archie aside and gave him a gift of money. Archie told the man about Ellett's plight and persuaded the benefactor to give the gift to Ellett. But after the meeting was over, Ellett sent the money to Archie with these words: "You didn't fool me one bit when Allumbaugh gave me this money. He never intended it for me. It was for you, and here it is. . . . But that incident was one of the happiest I've ever had, for I had a glimpse of your real unselfish Christian character, and that moment has made me appreciate you all the more."²⁴

Archie Word touched the lives of the preachers he worked with in his five years of revival work on the West Coast. Consider the impact he had on Lertis Ellett:

When an evangelist leaves and the pastor's heart is torn as badly as when he has had to say goodbye to his father and mother, then you may know that there has been a perfect harmony between two souls whose only purpose is to fight sin and save souls. Brother Archie is fearless and fierce in his attack on sin, but back of it there is a great heart of compassion and love. There is neither jealousy, nor selfishness, nor covetousness in his heart. A true Christian will find Brother Word and his wife the finest and most stimulating Christian companionship this side of Heaven.²⁵

The day after the Sunday afternoon service when Russell Boatman and 15 other young people made full surrender to Christ, Ellett praised both Archie and Florence for their work in San Bernardino:

My greatest prayer was that you would stir the hearts of our young people. Yesterday's service saw that prayer answered. And I can't begin to tell you what you have meant to me in my own life. You have strengthened my convictions, and fired my soul . . . You and your sweet wife in your home life with your babies have again stirred a certain portion in my heart . . . Her [Florence's] busy devotion to your babies . . . to the music of the meeting and to those young people with their problems — she has an influence upon the meeting that can't be overlooked.²⁶

The San Bernardino campaign came to a close April 24, 1933, with 76 decisions for Christ. During the meeting an earthquake rocked Southern California, the epicenter at nearby Long Beach. One hundred

twenty-three people were left dead. Such incidents only spurred Archie on in exhorting sinners to, "Prepare to meet Thy God!"

FOWLER, CALIFORNIA

Archie Tabbed "America's Foremost Evangelist"

Archie's meeting at Fowler, California, was a "mission" effort of a sister congregation at Sanger. Sanger's minister, Wesley Totttingham, encouraged the Words to help the little church at Fowler, a congregation which had not had a revival in 12 years, and was down to just eight members (at one time they had enjoyed as many as 300). Totttingham took a month off, giving up his salary to help in the revival effort. Area churches sent delegations each night to boost the attendance — Lindsay, Visalia, Woodlake, Fresno, Selma, Sanger, and Bakersfield. The meeting commenced April 30 and closed six weeks later with 51 additions to the local church. In the *World Evangel*, Archie reported:

The Fowler meeting has just closed in a blaze of glory for the power of the gospel of Christ . . . the power of the Lord swept through the dead bones and the meeting closed with 50 added, a full-time pastor called to take over the work [Totttingham took over the Fowler work, C. Adrian Sias replacing him at Sanger — Author] and the church voted absolutely free from all outside entanglements. They will do their missionary work as a congregation [free from the U.C.M.S. — Author]²⁷

It was during the Fowler campaign that the Word Revival Team became acquainted with the singing Nahigian sisters. The *Fowler Ensign* reported,

Mr. and Mrs. Word have won a warm place in the

hearts of the community. The special music furnished by Mrs. Word, the three Nahigian sisters and other local talent has been an inspiring feature of the campaign.²⁸

Mary, Margaret and Esther Nahigian were Armenians (Fowler was an Armenian settlement). The beautiful, dark-haired, olive-skinned sisters had all been sprinkled but were immersed into Christ during the Word revival. Esther, the oldest of the girls, said Archie's "powerful preaching" was what "put the Fowler church back on its feet again."²⁹ As a child Esther had always dreamed of singing for the Lord. She would often practice leading the singing, watching her shadow all the while. She and her sisters had gained local fame for their musical ability. After the Fowler revival, Margaret and Esther would often appear as the song evangelists for the Word Revival Team. Margaret sang alto and played the piano. Esther sang soprano and, true to her childhood dream, led the singing. When the two Armenian sisters sang duets, they sang *a capella* in such "perfect blend" than no one could tell which part which one was singing.³⁰ After singing for the Words, the Nahigians sang for James Earl Ladd before they got married and left the revival circuit (Margaret Nahigian Boyer died in 1983; Esther Nahigian Jackson has lived in Baker City, Oregon, for the last 50 years). That two of the Word's daughters would have the same names as the Nahigian sisters, Margaret and Esther, is interesting to say the least. Margaret was so named before the Words met the Nahigians.

By this time, Archie Word's ministry had caught the attention of a former California assemblyman, Charles A. Foster, who was also the publisher and editor of

the *Fowler Ensign*. Foster, who had covered campaigns of great revivalists like Gipsy Smith and Dwight Moody, proclaimed Archie Word to be "America's Foremost Evangelist;" a man who could "shake up the dry bones of the deadest church and win the most adamant soul to Christ." Here follows the complete text of his unsolicited testimonial, which thereafter was published in many newspapers across America:

AS ONE MAN SEES EVANGELIST
ARCHIE WORD'S WORK

I have heard quite a number of the world's great revivalists in the past sixty years — calling to mind just now Moody and Sankey (in two campaigns), Robert Cairns (two campaigns), Gipsy Smith, Chapman, Hogan, Newton Revelle, McPherson, B. Fay Mills (in two campaigns — first when he was strictly orthodox and later when he had become Unitarian), and others of lesser note, and I am familiar with the preliminaries, systems of organization and management of helpers — the machinery and psychology of a great revival. I have studied the men and their methods, analyzed their plans for touching the human heart and moving the mind to action. I have expressly noted their method of expounding the scriptures. With all this as a background, I am free to say, and I firmly believe, Archie Word to be America's foremost evangelist today. Given the same support enjoyed by those giants of another generation, he will turn the world upside down spiritually — that is, he will shake up the dry bones in dead and decaying churches and awaken humanity to a knowledge of its sins.

Foster then gave one of the best analyses of Archie Word's ministry to be found anywhere:

Archie Word is a Bible student of an intense nature, "rightly dividing the word." I believe his greatest

power comes from his spirituality and his thorough knowledge of the scriptures, and the enlightened and effectual manner in expounding the same. He possesses a fine analytical mind. He is strong in expository analysis, and possesses a keen understanding of the correlative use of texts — the discernment of how scripture can be made to interpret scripture. None of those among the great names mentioned equaled him in this respect. His natural vocal gifts, too, are a great aid in his work. His marked sincerity and fine unselfish spirit and great heart-desire to bring the world to Christ touches and moves everyone whom he contacts. With the assistance of his equally concerned wife, Archie Word can shake up the dead bones of the deadest church and win the most adamant soul to Christ.

Foster concluded his glowing tribute of Archie Word with these words:

It is my sincere hope that evangelist Word may continue to be the same fearless preacher of God's word, and that he will never give quarter to Modernism, sectarianism or any ungodliness. As long as he shall be led to proclaim the unvarnished truth and defend the simple and all-conquering faith of the unsullied church of Christ, I am certain success will attend his efforts and bless his life. It is a great thing to be a soul-winner and a builder of the kingdom.³¹

This ringing endorsement was pretty heady stuff for a young 32-year-old preacher, but Foster's observations of Archie Word as a revivalist proved to be astute, and nearly prophetic.

While he never turned the world upside down, he certainly brought a great revival of holiness and soul winning in the dead churches he revived during 1930-1935.

MONTAVILLA (PORTLAND), OREGON Carnera vs. Sharkey; Word vs. the Dance!

When Archie, Florence, and their three young daughters pulled into the Montavilla district of Portland, Oregon, in July of 1933, they had no idea that in just a few years they would leave the revival circuit and begin a ministry with the Montavilla Christian Church that would last for more than a third of a century. They had been called for a revival by the Montavilla church, where Walter and Thelma Stram had been doing a great work for God. Walter, born at Goldendale, Washington, on March 12, 1904, was a 1928 graduate of Eugene Bible University. For a time he had teamed up with Garland Hay (the man who taught Archie Word how to preach) in the "Hay-Stram Evangelistic Company," conducting revivals all over Oregon.³² When he came to Montavilla in 1933, he began to preach "storehouse tithing" as God's sole method of support for the ministry of the church. Giving immediately increased by a whopping 1500 percent, in spite of the Great Depression. Still, some members thought it "extravagant" when the Strams purchased a refrigerator!³³

The *Montavilla Times*, which carried daily write-ups of the long meeting, contain some interesting prices for July 1933: three bars of Lux soap for only 21 cents at Dickson Drug; fresh ground hamburger for 10 cents a pound at Olson's Market; a haircut for 25 cents at Jessup's Barber Shop; shampoo with marcel or finger wave for 50 cents at Ethel Ann's Beauty Shop; Bing and Royal Anne cherries could be picked for two-and-one-half cents on the tree (no picking on Sunday). A modern eight-room house could be rented for \$20 a

month; a furnished bedroom in a nice home for only \$6 a month.

Friday's edition (July 21) reported the meeting as follows:

The Word Evangelistic team is leading the church in the greatest revival it has seen for a great many years. Never have greater sermons been preached . . . Comments like the following have been made by people who have heard Evangelist Word: 'I could listen to him all night.' 'He is a greater preacher than Moody or Gipsy Smith.' "³⁴

But in the same edition of the *Times*, the Granada Theatre on 76th and Glisan took out the biggest ad, promoting the "big fight special" — Carnera vs. Sharkey (Primo Carnera became the first Italian to win the world heavyweight boxing championship when he knocked out Jack Sharkey in the sixth round). The only fight in Portland, however, was the one between Archie Word and social sins — especially dancing! The Montavilla Unemployed Citizen League, in particular, took umbrage at Archie's haymaker blows against the dance. The League sponsored a dance every Saturday night and thought Archie was putting their organization and the unemployed down when he preached on the dance (as he did every Saturday night). The executive board even wrote a letter to the *Times*, demanding an apology from Archie for his "slurring remarks" against their dances, which they considered "licensed, orderly and respectably conducted." The Montavilla elders came to Archie's defence, responding with a letter which exonerated their visiting evangelist of ever mentioning the M.U.C.L. by name or making slurring

remarks about the unemployed. They also upheld Archie's preaching against "the dance, morally disreputable movies, and the playing of cards," stating further, "We, as a body, stand for a church that is clean . . . we are backing our evangelist 100%."³⁵ One man was so mad at Archie after hearing his sermon on the dance, that he vowed to "run Archie Word out of town on a rail."³⁶

But the only one who rode the rails out of Portland during the six-week meeting at Montavilla was the devil. More than 130 people responded to the forceful and demonstrative preaching of Archie Word: 59 by reconsecration (including 15 life recruits); 41 were baptized; and 33 were added by letter or statement. Walter Stram called it,

One of the most successful and fruitful revivals ever conducted in Montavilla district was led by the A. Word Evangelistic Team from July 14 to Sept. 4 . . . The deepening spiritual life of the old members was one of the great blessings. If you do not want more spiritual joy among your members, do not call the Words for a revival!³⁷

As he was wont to do, Archie was effusive in his praise for Stram's work:

Had great meeting with Montavilla in Portland with Stram. He has made over 3,000 calls in four and one-half months and has so catalogued them that he can find any man in Montavilla district if he has his name or number . . . Offerings have increased 1000 percent without the aid of the Ladies Aid, Missionary Societies or offering plates. No whoopie or worldly methods . . . tithes and offerings have been scripturally taught and God has given His blessing.³⁸

ONTARIO, OREGON

Archie Dodges a Live Bullet in a Mormon Town!

Once again Archie and Florence teamed up with Clifton and Amy Phillips, this time in a "strong Mormon town" on the Oregon-Idaho border. The meeting got off to a start on September 10 in a Seventh Day Adventist chapel, but after the first service larger facilities were secured at the Thyssen building, right across from the Post Office. Archie and Clifton draped a big banner over the entrance and hung up other colorful charts and banners in the front windows.

One day the local newspaper carried a small news item about the local Episcopal Church having a card party right in the church building. This was too much for Archie. He and Clifton were out calling one day when they met the Episcopal rector on the street. Archie asked him, "Is it true that you had a card party right in the church auditorium?"

"Yes," replied the rector. "But it is quite all right. You see, we placed a sheet over the altar."³⁹ For once in his life, Archie was left speechless.

But Archie was not about to place a sheet over the altar, or cover up what he was going to preach in Ontario. Consider a list of sermons he announced he would preach in Ontario: "Where the Devil Hangs Out In Ontario!"; "Heroes Or Cowards?"; "Hell, Fire and Brimstone!"; and "21 Reasons Why I Am Not a Mormon!" This last sermon must have caused more than a little stir in this "strong Mormon town." One man, in particular, did not care for the sermon!

The night Archie preached his sermon on 21 reasons he was not a Mormon, "the audience groaned

during the whole service." After the service was over, Archie was walking to the house where he and Florence and the girls were staying. He was alone and it was dark. Suddenly, a rifle roared, and "a bullet went right over my head. If it was meant to scare me, it did."⁴⁰ Archie said, "I was around the corner while he was jacking the action. I was in the Navy in World War I and had found out about those things."⁴¹ No one was ever arrested for the attempted shooting of Archie Word. Unscathed and undaunted, Archie finished the revival meeting in this "wild and woolly" border town. Phillips called it, "the greatest single congregation's revival in the history of Ontario."⁴² A total of 95 souls made decisions for Christ, including four life recruits.

From Ontario, Archie filed this report in the *Christian Standard* (which appeared in the Nov. 18, 1933 issue):

OVER FIFTEEN HUNDRED WON IN THREE YEARS

"The Word" Revival Team has finished three years of evangelism in the Western States . . . We left Eugene Bible University, after taking five years of preparatory work, fully decided to enter into the field of evangelism as a "New Testament" team. Consequently, we have not been moving every two weeks. Our meetings have run from three to thirteen weeks in length, and have caused, by the grace of God, nearly fifteen hundred men and women to be converted, baptized or reclaimed.

We have held twenty-one meetings in the three years, and have been recalled for a later date in every instance except three, in spite of the fact that we have been as uncompromising with sectarianism as Paul, and have preached Bible "holiness" more than the usual evangelist does these days.

During this time there have been over sixty decisions to enter the ministry . . . from elders on down to

twelve-year-old youngsters, and this year there are many of them enrolling in the Pacific Bible Seminary and the Northwest Bible College at Eugene.

Our schedule is full for over one year in advance, so we do not write this to secure dates, but merely to report and to encourage some one who is weakening on preaching the restoration of primitive Christianity, hewing off all man-made doctrines, uncompromisingly preaching the truth, and, wherever the opportunity presents itself, "contending earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints . . ."⁴³

MILL CITY, OREGON

Prohibition Ends, But Not Archie's Revivals!

The last meeting the Words held in 1933 was at Mill City, Oregon, a logging community on the North Santiam River, where F. J. Winder, one of Archie's classmates at Eugene Bible University, was minister with the Church of Christ. Archie's big new church chart (his adaptation of V. E. Hoven's chart) arrived just in time for use in the eight-week revival which began October 20. Each morning Archie led a Bible study and drilled church members for personal work. These "extras" paid off with "the most blessed revival" in which Winder had ever participated — 156 conversions, 10 life recruits, 45 signing up to become regular titheers, and the Ladies Aid voted out! After the meeting Winder wrote Word:

God bless you, Archie, for all that you have done here. No one can fail to see the wonderful spiritual transformation that has come over the congregations . . . But more than that, I want to thank you for the help and strengthening that I have received . . . I feel I am closer to God and have courage to attempt greater things for Him than ever before . . .⁴⁴

The elders of the Mill City church were pleased with what had happened in their congregation and community:

Many have testified that never in their lives have they heard so much solid Gospel teaching in so short a period of time . . . The whole town was stirred by his dynamic sermons and the Spirit of God has been more firmly planted in our midst . . .⁴⁵

During the Mill City revival Prohibition came to an end (December 5). Social experts deemed it a failure, but Archie Word remained adamant in his belief that Prohibition had not failed. He continued his fight against booze, urging people to be filled with the Spirit of God, not the spirits of the distillers. A total of 676 people were brought to a closer walk with the Holy Spirit by the Word Revival Team in 1933.

Notes

1. *The Voice of Evangelism*, Sept. 24, 1955
2. *Ibid.*
3. *World Evangel*, Nov. 15, 1932
4. *The Other Day*, p. 86
5. *Christian Standard*, n.d.
6. *The Other Day*, p. 86
7. Letter to author from Elery Parrish, Mar. 27, 1989
8. Newberg, Oregon, newspaper, n.d.
9. *World Evangel*, Feb. 15, 1933
10. Letter of recommendation from Newberg church, Jan. 9, 1933
11. Letter to Archie Word from Elery Parrish, April 7, 1933
12. Dufur, Oregon, newspaper, n.d.
13. *The Other Day*, p. 37
14. *Ibid.*, p. 87
15. Interview with Archie Word by Don Hunt, Jr., Feb. 1988
16. Letter to Archie Word from Ed Whisler, Mar. 14, 1933
17. *Ibid.*, Mar. 3, 1933
18. *World Evangel*, May 15, 1933

19. *Ibid.*
20. *Christian Standard*, n.d.
21. *The Other Day*, p. 128
22. Letter to author from Russell Boatman, Oct. 4, 1990
23. *Ibid.*
24. Letter to Archie Word from Lertis Ellett, April 24, 1933
25. *World Evangel*, May 15, 1933
26. Letter to Archie Word from Lertis Ellett, April 24, 1933
27. *World Evangel*, n.d.
28. *Fowler Ensign*, n.d.
29. Author's telephone interview with Esther Nahigian Jackson, April 19, 1991
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Fowler Ensign* (and many other newspapers)
32. Letter to author from Don Stram, Mar. 20, 1989
33. *Montavilla Memories*, p. 28
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37. *World Evangel*, Oct. 3, 1933; *Christian Standard*, n.d.
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41. *Coos Bay World*, July 14, 1979
42. Ontario, Oregon, newspaper, Oct. 19, 1933
43. *Christian Standard*, Nov. 18, 1933
44. Letter to Archie Word from F. J. Winder, Dec. 22, 1933
45. Letter of recommendation from Mill City elders, n.d.

11

TO TACKLE A THIEF (1934-1935)

Never has such a revival swept this part of the city of Los Angeles.

—Hal Martin, after the Word's 7-week revival
at the Shorb Avenue church in Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA **Archie Tackles A Thief During The Church** **Service!**

Archie and Florence Word began their work with Hal and Evelyn Martin and the Shorb Avenue Church of Christ (92nd and Compton at Firth Boulevard; today known as Watts) on January 7, 1934. There was a flood in the city the first day, hampering the attendance somewhat. Archie's opening sermons were

"One Mile to Hell" and "Is the Bible Scientific?" One of his most popular sermons he preached during the Depression was "The Cause of the Depression and the Way Out." As the meeting progressed, it was announced that Archie would lecture one Sunday afternoon on the subject, "Twelve Reasons Why I Am Not a Christian Scientist." A local resident, a Miss Harris, took Archie to task via a letter to the editor of a Los Angeles newspaper:

I see where a holier than thou evangelist in our district has set aside to sling mud at a religious creed different from his own. I suppose he is a favored individual and has the only reliable religion to be offered, so [he] should consider himself blessed indeed. And while he worries about an audience, the church which he condemns packs 32 edifices in Los Angeles at every service, because they offer a message from Christ instead of engaging in human personality . . .¹

After responding to the charges of the disgruntled Miss Harris (probably in a letter or sermon, or both), Archie noted in his personal scrapbook: "This started interest and after 5 weeks and 6 Sundays the meeting broke and 43 came in Sunday and Tuesday services." The revival came to a close February 18 with a total of 107 responses to the invitation. In his report to the *Christian Standard*, Hal Martin wrote:

This was the first meeting to be held in the church for many years, and in spite of the fact that many said it could not be done, it has happened, and the people admit that it has been the best and most blessed meeting ever held in the history of the church . . . the power of the old-time Gospel has cleaned up the hearts of the members and the church has been left in a peaceful condition, zealous for the work of Christ

. . . Never has such a Revival swept this part of the city of Los Angeles. Many so-called church members threw away their filthy tobacco habit, left behind the 'occasional' drink, young people gave up cards and dancing, and in one remarkable case, a bootlegger in the community came out and out for Jesus Christ.²

Besides the Christian Science hoopla and the conversion of a notorious bootlegger, several other interesting incidents took place in the Los Angeles campaign. Archie's sister, Nell, was a nurse at Methodist Hospital in Los Angeles. Archie was invited to speak at a vesper's service during the meeting. Nell said, "Archie just preached like it was a revival service! He hit sin pretty hard." After the service, the Director of Nursing told Archie, "Well! These are really pretty nice girls!"³

During the meeting in Los Angeles (though some say the incident took place in his next meeting, San Luis Obispo), Archie Word tackled a thief who was stealing from the offering box in the back of the church auditorium. The offerings had not been up to par and someone suggested that perhaps a thief was entering the foyer, where the offering box was placed, and was preying on the profits while the prophets prayed. One night, as the service was being closed with prayer, Archie did what he later said the Good Book said to do: "Watch and pray!" He kept his eyes open while everyone else bowed their heads in prayer. Sure enough, a shadowy figure entered the foyer and dipped into the till. "Stop, thief!" Archie roared at the top of his lungs. He left the platform at top speed, raced down the aisle, and tackled the startled robber on the church steps. Together they tumbled down the steps and out into the church parking

lot where they proceeded to roll about, locked in each other's arms, until the police arrived on the scene and relieved Archie of his burden. Sporting a black eye and a bloody nose, Archie grinned. Would a man dare rob God? Not while Archie Word was around!

One of the 107 converts in the Los Angeles meeting was Hal Martin's own brother. Hal had been praying earnestly for his brother's salvation for a long time. How happy he was the night his brother came down the aisle! The Words had only been gone from Los Angeles a short time when they read in the newspaper that Hal's brother was killed in a freak workshop accident, a short bolt slipping from a spring instantly piercing his brain. Archie later wrote, "How we rejoiced to know that the young man had surrendered his life to the Lord and had his sins removed by the blood of the Lord. No one knows when that time is coming, and it behooves every person to be ready."⁴

During the Los Angeles revival, Archie had a short article published in the Feb. 3, 1934, *Christian Standard*, the first of several to follow in years to come. It was entitled, "Evangelism Every Day."

Evangelism Every Day

I think the chief reason why evangelism has died is that the average church and minister's idea of New Testament evangelism is a meeting once or twice a year, when it is at white heat in their program, and then they forget all about evangelism until next year rolls around. Talk to them about an evangelistic campaign the year around and they think you are crazy. As for myself I can not imagine the members of the Jerusalem church meeting for the Lord's Supper on Sunday morning and *maybe* having services on the same day in the evening, and then closing the church except for the Ladies' Aid or Missionary Society or

sewing circle until Wednesday, when about five per cent of the membership comes out for prayer meeting, then close it up again.

Church members have time for their evening clubs (cards included), many young church members have time for church dances, etc., class parties. Young and old find time to meet and stay until midnight. Visiting the neighbors takes their time on other evenings. But if the minister of the average church should announce that in his church for the next year there would be continuous services every evening, the average church member would faint.

I am convinced that when we begin at home and, as Brother Snodgrass aptly said in his recent article to the *STANDARD*, "get the church Christian," then we will have no trouble keeping the "evangelist" preaching what he ought to preach. Christian people will not stand for "monkey business" evangelism if they are genuinely converted themselves.

Unethical financial systems will vanish when God's people begin to give of their tithes and offerings. Doctrine will live when the Holy Spirit motivates the lives of the Christians. Evangelism will go forth from the streets, shops and benches when we restore Christ as King of individual lives.

I have found from experience why many evangelists have been "unethical" in their raising of funds for the campaign. They were dealing with a people who expected "Service with a smile" and almost free.

—Archie Word

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CALIFORNIA

115 Conversions — Including A Cousin

From Los Angeles the Words headed north to San Luis Obispo for their next revival effort. There they were joined by Margaret and Esther Nahigian, the singing Armenian sisters, and Arthur A. Harriman, minister of the Church of Christ (Christian). Archie spared

neither community nor congregation in his preaching. His message of March 7 asked the question, "If Christ Should Come to San Luis Obispo, Would He Be Crucified?" One Sunday morning he preached "The Funeral Sermon of 100 Dead Members of This Church!" As he had done in Los Angeles, Archie gave a public lecture one Sunday afternoon on the religion of the Christian Scientists. On March 12, his "rest night," he preached for an old friend who was ministering to the First Baptist Church in nearby Paso Robles. Archie preached his famous sermon, "Merrily Going to Hell."

This sermon (15 pages long, printed in large red, black and blue letters) denounced three "popular amusements" of the day: card playing, movies, and dancing. Cards, thundered Archie, were "the backslider's Bible." The card table had replaced the communion table. The second way many "merrily go to hell" was via the theater route. Here he quoted many authorities on the evils of the theater, including one Rabbi Stephen Wise, who said, "They must be the products of moral scavengers!" The third sin, dancing, took up half his notes. "God pity a church whose conception of Christ rises no higher than the bunny hug, turkey trot, fox trot, tango, camel walk, Charleston, Texas Tommy, Hug Me tight, Shimmey, sea gull swoop, SKUNK WALTZ, Black Bottom, Farmer's Upscuddle & Cow Slip, jive, swing, jitterbug, boogey woogey, and rhumba!" Men don't dance to hug their own wives, Archie charged. "He'd just as soon hug a barrel of skinned onions."

The revival in San Luis Obispo, which began Feb. 25 and closed April 8, resulted in 115 responses — 65 alone on the final day of the meeting. One of the converts was Archie's second cousin, Bill Word.⁵

VISALIA, CALIFORNIA

The Preacher Rededicates His Life

On April 15, 1934, the Words began a revival in Visalia, California, a city of about 50,000, north of Lindsay. Archie's old friend and college chum, Bill Jessup, was the preacher at Visalia. He recalls,

This was during the time that liberalism and ecclesiasticism was making inroads into the Christian Churches of California. In 1934 we called Archie for a 6-weeks meeting. During this meeting we had many baptisms and many of the members rededicated their lives. At this time I felt that need in my own life and rededicated my own life to Christ. This was a powerful meeting. Brother Archie preached like I had never heard him preach before.⁶

Archie began by preaching "Why I Believe in a Personal God," one of his favorites. Even though there was "terrible opposition" from modernists and liberals, the meeting caught fire and resulted in 72 conversions to Christ (including eight life recruits) before it ended on June 10.⁷ Jessup points to this meeting as a turning point in his career:

This meeting was used by the Lord to set my soul aflame . . . I publicly rededicated my life to the Lord, and from then on preaching became the compelling passion of my life.⁸

POMONA, CALIFORNIA

Back In Pomona Again!

The last time Archie Word hit Pomona he had stayed for 13 weeks and the local preacher wound up in prison! What would happen this time around? Lewis Mick was now preaching at the Pasadena Street

church. He billed the coming revival, "Straight Preaching For A Crooked Age." Lots of real crooks were being shot down in 1934: Bonnie and Clyde; John Dillinger; Pretty Boy Floyd; Baby Face Nelson; Ma and Pa Barker. Archie was about to shoot 100 men and women down with the gospel. Minnie Mick (who married Woody Phillips after her husband's death), remembers the Pomona revival of 1934:

I remember as a girl Archie was widely publicized in this meeting. The crowds were large. Mrs. Word led the singing each evening and was loved by all . . . I was baptized into Christ by Lewis July 22, 1934 . . . I shall always give thanks for Archie's preaching and leading me to Christ.⁹

Another young girl who came under conviction during this second Pomona revival was Elsie Printz (who later married Don DeWelt, another convert of Archie's in a Portland revival). Elsie's mother and Elsie's twin brother were converted during the meeting, but Elsie was not ready or willing to surrender.

I had the idea that all revivals were of the "Holy Roller" genre and I did *not* want to be a spectacle. The last night of his 6-weeks revival we went late — due to my resistance. I had spent the entire Sunday afternoon pleading, crying and finally throwing myself on the bed in a temper fit. Because I was, in the final analysis, an obedient child, though my eyes were red and swollen — my mouth in a determined set — we went into the packed-out building (inevitably the only seats remaining were way up front, second row). I don't know what he preached. I do know the tremendous conviction I experienced — to the point of gripping the pew in front of me so hard that my knuckles were white. How many, many verses we sang of "Just As I

Am ." Still I did not — would not go. Several weeks later . . . I became a Christian. I am certain the rude awakening from my spiritual lethargy all began when I heard with my heart Preacher Word. I have often thought how the very uniqueness of his name somehow presaged the direction of his life — that of a very dynamic preacher of *The Word*.¹⁰

Archie Word could be very pointed in his personal work too. Consider one post-dinner conversation he had with a hostess during the Pomona campaign.

"Brother Word, you made a statement this morning that I heartily disagree with."

Archie asked her what he had said.

"You said it was impossible for a Christian to be married to a lost person and for them to be happily married."

"Yes," said Archie as he took a sip of coffee. He put the cup down. "Go on."

"I want you to know that I am a member of the church, and my husband is not." She paused, then said with a note of triumph: "And we get along just wonderful!"

Archie's eyebrows shot up. "How can you do that?"

Her answer nearly floored Archie. "We just never talk about Christianity!"

Archie answered, "Sister, you could be married to the devil and get along very nicely with him too — if you never mentioned Christ to him!"

Later Archie wondered, "How can a woman who is a Christian look across the table at a husband whom she loves and believe he is headed for an eternal burning hell and be happy?"¹¹

There were 100 conversions to Christ during the summer 1934 Pomona revival. One of them was a real

estate man who had been attending the nightly preaching services. Earl Mick and Archie went to call on him one day. Archie asked him if he was a Christian.

"No," he replied. "I am waiting until I have a feeling."

"What sort of feeling are you waiting for?"

"I am waiting until I am convicted of my sin." This to Archie Word!

(About this time there had been a number of newspaper stories exposing crooked real estate deals in California.)

Archie reasoned with the man. "Surely a real estate dealer, as slick as you are, does not have to have much preaching to make him, if he is honest, feel a conviction of sin!"

The man smiled, and said, "You are right. But I just have not had the feeling to act as yet."

Archie never gave up easily in trying to convert a sinner in one-on-one work. He continued to press the real estate man. "If you knew where you could purchase a dozen lots in a good location and you could get them for \$1,200, would you hesitate to snap up that bargain?"

Instantly the man answered, "I would buy them this afternoon!"

"Do you believe heaven is of far more value than anything you can acquire on this earth?"

"Yes."

"Then," Archie reasoned, "why do you not give up yourself, your sin, and turn to Jesus, who has a far better bargain for you than 12 lots?"

Before the meeting came to an end, the real estate man had purchased his eternal lot in heaven.

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA

Archie Calls On A Prostitute

For the first and only time in their five years of revivals during the Depression, the Words left California and Oregon and headed across the desert to Flagstaff, Arizona, for their next engagement. They arrived three days before the meeting began and immediately began calling in the neighborhood with the local minister, Mortimer A. Hawk. Archie remembers one call in particular.

I knocked on the door, and a young Negress came to the door and invited me in. I told her we were calling on the homes in the district to invite the folk out to our revival meeting. She listened and asked a few questions that showed she did know something about the Bible. Then she almost crumpled up as she leaned against the doorjamb and began to sob.

She told me, "I am a Baptist preacher's daughter. I was rebellious and ran away from home. Work was hard to find, and I drifted from here to there looking for work. It was hard work, so I got enmeshed with this organization of prostitute hustlers. I am a prostitute and miserably unhappy!"¹³

Archie's heart went out to the unhappy woman. He had three daughters of his own and the thought of them becoming prostitutes some day sent a shiver through his soul. He later used this incident to plead with parents. "Let us all love our children and let them know that we do, so when they are tempted by circumstances or friends, they will be strong in the Lord and faithful to the teaching of loving parents."¹⁴

Hawk had advertised Archie Word as "the greatest Gospel-loving, sin-fighting, heaven-depicting, hell-disclosing evangelist who has ever been in Flagstaff." The

meeting with the Church of Christ at Aspen and Humphrey began August 19, 1934 (the same day Adolf Hitler became president of Germany). As always, Archie taught from his huge Bible charts. Hawk said, "There is not a sermon or lecture in existence that will make the situation clearer than this chart-lecture sermon. The chart that is used covers 1800 years of church history. The lecture given is the result of seven years of research work on the part of the evangelist."¹⁵ On Labor Day, Archie gave a special lecture, "Seven Reasons Why Real Scientific Scientists Reject Evolution." The meeting closed September 17 with 30 responses. It is not known to the author if the black prostitute gave her life to Christ or not.

SANGER, CALIFORNIA

A Grateful Convert Writes Archie A Check

The Words traveled back across the desert in their 1929 Chevrolet and trailer to their beloved San Joaquin valley where, on September 30, they began a six-week, seven-Sunday revival meeting with the Christian Church at 9th and O Streets in Sanger, California. Archie told a reporter from the *Sanger Herald* why his meetings were designed with "revival" in mind:

Some church members are going to hell. The unfruitful branch shall be cut off and cast into the fire. That is why I preach so much to the church members. Unless the church cleans up, gets right with God, she cannot expect to grow and have peace and harmony within.¹⁶

The local preacher, C. Adrian Sias, told the *Herald*, "One of the strongest, and perhaps the most fearless, evangelists on the coast has been called to lead these

meetings." Delegations from Lindsay, Visalia, Ceres, Fresno, Los Angeles, Los Banos, San Luis Obispo, and Dunlap helped swell the crowds, filling the auditorium and spilling over into two rear classrooms. Sias reported a "splendid response from the entire community . . . practically every church in town largely represented . . . all unite in proclaiming Evangelist Word as being true to the Book and absolutely fearless in his exposing of sin, yet in all, loving and sympathetic."¹⁷

One night a man in town told his wife, "I want to go to church." She told him, "You know there is no church on a week night." He replied, "There must be a church service for a poor soul who wants to know the will of God." It just "happened" that he found the church on 9th and O open that night, went in and heard Archie preach. The next day Sias and Word called on the man. He told them, "I believe it was the will of the Lord for me to be there last night that I might be saved."

All afternoon the two men taught the seeker from the Scriptures. He attended a few more nights, then responded to the invitation, going immediately to the baptismal dressing room. After Sias baptized him, he came up out of the water and said in a loud voice, "It is true! I am saved! I am happier than I have ever been in my life! God is so good to me!"

The next morning he went to where Archie was staying, sat down in the front room and took out a check book. Archie told him there were no charges for his services, but the man would not take no for an answer. "I am saved," he told Archie. "I know the joy of salvation. I want to give to spread the message that has saved my life and saved my soul." Archie later thought, "I would to God that more people had that

same sort of appreciation and desire to help others to know the Lord who has saved them."¹⁸ The generous benefactor was one of 38 souls saved in the Sanger revival.

CERES, CALIFORNIA

A 12-Year Split Healed And A '35 Plymouth Given In Gratitude!

Critics of Archie Word often charged that the fiery young revivalist split every church where he preached. A case in point that proves the exact opposite is the great Ceres revival that lasted from November 21, 1934, to January 6, 1935, resulting in the unification of a church that had been split down the middle for a dozen years. Early in his ministry, Archie had made a vow that he would go wherever he was called or invited to preach. But the day he received a call from the Ceres church, Bill Jessup advised Archie not to go — and Ceres was Bill's home church! Bill told Archie, "They will just break your heart like they have every preachers they have had for years." Another close friend and confidant, Roy Shaw, pleaded with him: "Don't go, Arch. Those people cannot be helped." But Archie was adamant. "I promised God I would go wherever I am called."¹⁹ So he went.

C.I. (Charles Isaac) Kenney was the minister of the troubled Ceres congregation. He had studied under J. W. McGarvey, founded the Shorb Avenue church in Los Angeles, and was serving as an elder in the Figueroa Christian Church when Ard Hoven left Ceres and the church called him, "an older experienced man," to try to heal the troubled waters in Ceres. Kenney's son-in-law, Russell Boatman, said, "Ceres was not the kind of church Dad Kenney needed for re-

entry into the ministry, but the Word revival changed the balance of power along with a lot of other needed changes."²⁰ Boatman received a "blow-by-blow" account of the Ceres revival from his father-in-law.

For 12 long years the Ceres church had been split down the middle by a missionary society feud. In the providence of God they called a man who had been accused of being a church-splitter! Kenney wrote in the local newspaper:

Evangelist Word hits sin with the same force he used to use when hitting the line in football. He is not the emotional type, but believes in preaching the gospel in its simplicity and power, and that every soul should live the Christian life.²¹

Once again the Nahigian sisters were present to minister with their sweet-spirited music. Of all the meetings the Nahigians worked with Archie Word, the revival in Ceres stands out the most in the memory of Esther Nahigian Jackson. "There were bad feelings in Ceres, but one night in the meeting the whole church went forward and settled their differences."²² Archie gave it everything he had in his preaching.

I preached for four weeks, and it was like butting my head against a brick wall. But we kept right on swinging the Sword of the Lord.

Then one night it happened. When the invitation was given, people began crossing the aisle and taking each other by the hand. Others hugged and kissed in reconciliation.

This went on for quite some time. Then people began coming down the aisle to get right with God as well as getting right with their estranged brothers and sisters. It was one of the most moving services I have ever been in."²³

Brother Kenney was delighted. Eighty-five decisions in one service! He let the entire community know what happened in the congregation.

A great spiritual revival is now in progress at the Ceres Church of Christ. At one service last Lord's Day there were 62 of the members [who] came and reconsecrated their lives to Christ, five came and united by statement and nine came to make the good confession for the first time and to be baptized into Christ. Besides these there were nine from denominational churches [who] came and reconsecrated their lives to Christ.²⁴

Kenney also sent a report of the reconciliation to the *Christian Standard*, that the brotherhood might know of the unity now enjoyed in Ceres:

Archie Word, Scriptural evangelist, closed 46-day revival; 27 baptisms, 8 by statement. Twelve-year missionary society church split healed by 76 reconsecrations of leading members.²⁵

In addition to all this, a letter was written and signed by every member who had made things right with each other. The letter was 20 inches long and was signed front and back by the penitent members:

Archie Word closed, today, a forty-six day revival with this congregation. He is a loving, fearless, scriptural evangelist, setting in order the unscriptural things in the church. Aided by the Spirit of Christ, and by his powerful gospel sermons, men and women have been won to Christ and a faction of 12 years standing has been healed. Over 70 of the leading members have publicly reconsecrated themselves to Christ, which has placed the congregation on the highest spiritual level it has enjoyed for many years.²⁶

The last night of the unprecedented revival held a big surprise in store for the Words – a brand new 1935 Plymouth!

Then came the last night of the meeting when I was telling the folk goodbye at the door. The men sent a messenger to me to have me come and talk with them. I supposed they wanted some advice on church affairs. Imagine my surprise when I got up to the men's meeting to have them present me with a bill of sale for a new Plymouth automobile! They said, "You will have to go to Detroit to get it, but that will make you take a much-needed vacation!"²⁷

SAN BERNARDINO, CALIFORNIA **Round Two In San Bernardino**

It would be a few more months before Archie could break free from his revival circuit long enough to pick up his new car in Detroit. He began his second meeting with Lertis Ellett and the church meeting at 14th and E Streets just four days after the Ceres campaign closed. The only records of this second meeting that remain are the most important: results. Forty-six people came to Christ, 30 by baptism, 12 by statement, and four reconsecrations. There were also three life worker recruits in the meeting, which came to a close on the last day of February.

LINDSAY, CALIFORNIA **Round Three In The Old Home Town**

"We believe the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation," Roy Shaw told a reporter for the *Lindsay Gazette*. "That is why we called Evangelist Word back for a third time. Lindsay seems to enjoy sound doctrine."²⁸ After an all-night drive from San Bernardino,

the Words started the Lindsay meeting March 1 with Archie preaching "God's Method For A Revival." The next night he preached "The Biggest Tale Bearer in the Town of Lindsay." In his scrapbook Archie noted that there were "fine crowds" but "hard hearts" to greet his preaching the third time in his home town. Still, there were 46 additions in the meeting, which closed March 21, 1935. Another addition of sorts took place nine days after the meeting ended. Anna Jean Word was born March 30, 1935, at Grandma Maggie's house. Now there were four little Word girls: Margaret, Barbara, Jenelle, and baby Anna Jean. It was time to get that new car!

MOTORING MEMORIES

On the Road with the Words

A brand-new grey two-door hardtop 1935 Plymouth was waiting for Archie Word in Detroit, Michigan, thanks to the generosity of the grateful Ceres church. After the Lindsay revival was over, Archie left Florence with the new baby and took a train to the Motor City to pick up their new car. From Detroit he took a side trip down to Kentucky to pick up his father, who had been visiting relatives. Father and son returned to California just in time to attend the funeral of Lloyd Campbell, Florence's brother-in-law, whose airplane had crashed while he was spraying crops in the San Joaquin valley. A few weeks later Florence suffered another loss — her beloved father, Elmer Procter, died.

The Word family had many traveling experiences in those halcyon years of West Coast revivals. Barbara Word Brink remembers two incidents in particular. One involved a lost set of keys and a lost soul.

There were many daily things that happened during our travels that were answers to prayer and real faith-building experiences. The time that we were all ready to leave for another preaching point after the last service, and Dad could not find his car keys. We all looked everywhere, and Dad turned everything inside out . . . The preacher helped us look, and after an hour of fruitless searching, one of the people that had been deeply convicted by the sermon appeared at the church and was baptized on the spot.

As soon as they were through with the baptism, Dad put his hand into his coat pocket and there were the keys in the little coin pocket inside the outer pocket. He just knew that he had looked there, but the Lord knew what was coming and kept us there just long enough for the lost one to get right with the Lord.²⁹

The other traveling memory involved a well-placed highway post and a just-right sized trailer tire found smack in the middle of a deserted road.

Another strange happening was on the road at night. The trailer we were pulling lost a wheel, and the trailer tipped over on its side — right at a steep canyon many hundreds of feet down. The only thing that kept the trailer from plunging over was a nicely-placed white post along side the highway that punched a hole in the trailer but kept our few belongings from being totally lost . . . The only casualty in the whole wreck was a bag of red beans that were scattered into everything we possessed.

Margaret and I were in the car that night and missed being thrown into the ravine. We usually slept in the trailer at night while we traveled.

The wheel was a very odd one and hard to find, so Dad wondered what he was going to do at that time of night. He started walking toward the next town. There in the middle of the road was a wheel and tire just the right size and in good shape — just waiting for him to pick up . . .³⁰

The incident involving the tire not only impressed the little girls with the goodness of God, but was looked on years later by Archie as the nearest thing to a miracle he had ever seen. This story took place early in the Word's years on the road, when they were traveling down Oregon coastal highway 101. The family was on their way to Lindsay one summer night when they pulled into Coos Bay for gasoline. Archie noticed that one of the 19-inch trailer tires was worn almost clear through. He asked the station attendant, "How much for a tire this size?" Even though it was an odd size, the attendant found one on his rack of tires. But it would cost \$13.00. The Words had only enough money to get to Lindsay, so Archie drove on into the night. Soon after the wheel came off and the trailer was tipping precariously on the edge of the steep canyon. The Words spent the night in the car, alternately praying and sleeping. When dawn broke Archie started down the road for help. He had not gone far before he came upon a welcome but almost unbelievable sight.

This was a unique tire. You couldn't get them everywhere . . . [But] there it was . . . practically a brand-new 19-inch straight-side tire, laying right there in the road! And there hadn't been any car pass us by all that night . . . I figured the Lord just put that tire there. I don't know how else it could have gotten there. Nobody went by us, and we were camped right at the side of the road. It was right there where we couldn't miss it. You would think if it had fallen off anything it would have rolled off the highway . . .³¹

Archie found a service station in the next town that morning. "Can you fix my trailer?" he asked the owner. "Yep," came the reply. As the man worked on

the tire, Archie told him about the strange incident. "Did anyone come by your station last night?" he inquired. "Nope," said the man. When the attendant was finished with his work, Archie said, "How much do I owe you?" The owner wiped his hands on a rag, took a long look at Archie, and replied, "You don't owe me nuthin!" Now he was a believer!³²

Just a few months before he died, Archie was interviewed by one of his grandsons in the hospital. He was asked what he would like to share with future generations about the working of God. He replied, "That experience with the tire shook me up."³³ To his dying day he believed that God had placed that odd-size tire right in the middle of Highway 101 just for the Word family.)

FOWLER, CALIFORNIA **Archie Goes To Court!**

On May 12, 1935, the Word Revival Team began another revival at the Fowler Christian Church. In his scrapbook, Archie wrote, "Church is clean, well-taught, no fuss, no crowds, no outside opposition." Some of the sermons he preached in Fowler included "Merry Grass Widows: What the Bible Says About Them" and "When I Was a Thief!" The Fowler church was the home church of Margaret and Esther Nahigian and people came from far and near to hear them sing and Archie preach.

One night Florence was feeling well enough to drive the new Plymouth from Lindsay, where she had been staying with baby Anna Jean, to Fowler for an evening service. After the service was over she headed back to Lindsay. In Kingsburg a policeman pulled her over and gave her a ticket for cutting in traffic.

Florence didn't believe she was guilty of the violation and asked Archie to appear in court with her. When the judge came to the case involving Mrs. Archie Word, he looked up from the bench, and said, "Mr. Word, I'll see you in my chambers!" With a flourish of his robes, he disappeared into a side room. Archie looked at Florence. Florence looked at Archie. What had she gotten her husband into?

Inside the judge's chambers, he spoke. "Mr. Word, sit down." Then he said, "Archie," (and here Archie perked up his ears) "I drove a lot of miles to see you play football, basketball, and baseball. I am Bert Lindquist's uncle. I think your wife has had enough trouble. So, no charge! No charge!"³⁴ Then the judge and the former-athlete-turned-preacher sat for awhile swapping sports memories!

The Fowler revival came to an end June 28 with a total of 30 responses. The Armenian sisters accompanied the Words for their next revival, Oakland, California.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

"Preaching In The Face of The Devil"

United as a family once again, Archie, Florence and their four girls made their way north to Oakland with the Nahigian sisters. On June 30 they began a revival that would last until September 1, 1935. The two-month meeting was held at the Elmhurst Christian Church, 88th Avenue and East 14th Street. One of the Bay Area newspapers called him, "one of the best among the younger preachers of America." A reporter quoted Archie as saying:

While preachers have been sleeping and studying how

to talk without hurting someone's feelings, America has been going to hell. We need a straight, simple gospel for a crooked and bullheaded generation, and I am going to preach it in the face of the devil, some clergymen and laity!³⁵

And preach he did! Crowds doubled the first two weeks, then tripled (this in a summer revival). On Sunday afternoons he gave special lectures on such topics as "Ten Bible Reasons Why a Christian Should Not Dance" and "Ten Reasons Why No One Should Be a Christian Scientist." On one of his "rest nights" the Word/Nahigian Revival Team spoke and sang to a great crowd at the 10th Street Mission in Oakland. Esther and Margaret Nahigian sang at the Oakland Armenian Presbyterian Church one Sunday. Then San Francisco radio stations KGGC and KSFO began to broadcast the revival services. When the celebrated revival finally came to a close 108 people had come to the Lord, 54 by baptism and 54 by reconsecration. This was typical of an Archie Word revival. Not only were sinners converted but many church members "got right with God."

The next revival the Words would conduct would be their next-to-last revival for several years to come, but they had no idea of this as they left Oakland and headed up Highway 101 to Toledo, Oregon. Every mile the new Plymouth covered brought them closer to a new phase of ministry that would last for more than a third of a century.

The August 17, 1935 *Christian Standard* carried an article by Archie called "Can You Imagine This?"

Can You Imagine This?

Can you imagine those early disciples of the

Jerusalem district, when the persecution broke on them, saying, "Well, Lord, I guess you do not want your gospel spread to the ends of the earth. You have destroyed the *easy means* of broadcasting your message. Here this depression has hit us and we have lost our salary so we guess we'll just sit down and wait for an opening."

Note Acts 8:4: "They therefore that were scattered abroad went about preaching the word."

Does it say in church building or on paid salaries? No! Does it say only those who had university degrees? No! Does it say they waited for a recommendation from headquarters? No! They went, and that is what we are to do whether it is depression or prosperous times.

Can you imagine Saul of Tarsus sitting down crying and writing to all the "boards" and "agencies" and wondering why he was out of a job? Then see him as he pens a protest to the publication house like this: "Well, brethren, it has come to a pretty mess when a well-trained man of college qualifications, with personality and spiritual power can not secure a church. Churches all over the land with nice buildings, pianos, well furnished and not a 'call' for a minister. What will I do? What'll I do? Oh, my! Oh, my! Oh, my! Won't some of you brethren send me a solution for our problem?"

Read Acts 9:20: "And straightway in the *synagogue* [not in a furnished building, but in the very place where persecutions had come from] he proclaimed Jesus, that he is the Son of God." Thank God he did not have to have an invitation nor did he demand a hearty reception when he came to town.

Can you imagine why the Pentecostal people with their sometimes illiterate men in their pulpits are found in the streets and in sheds and in missions preaching what they believe to be truth? Why the Mormons who have many times never been in a theological "cemetery" five minutes spend as much as three years of their lives in missionary work? The only

answer I can think of is, that they have some of the real Christian's zeal for Christ. They may not have a "zeal according to knowledge," but God many times honors ignorance, but never lack of sincerity.

This may be one of God's threshing times. Wheat will last, but the chaff that has been depending on high finance and ecclesiastical organizations to land them a soft job while they sit it out in swivel chairs that have been well worn with the pillow are going to fall by the way. Call it "pioneering spirit" if you want to, but I choose to call it the true Christian missionary spirit that has been lost.

Atheistic Red Bolsheviks and anarchists put the average preacher to shame in their zeal for their cause, though it is ungodly as the hell itself. Maybe out of this time of unorganized organization and lack of dependability on men's system, God will raise up a group of men who will truly restore "primitive Christianity."

The only solution I can see for it is to suffer a little bit for Christ, deny ourselves and pick up our cross and follow *Him*.

For the past four years we have been practicing this system and have not been out of a job one minute. In fact the ministry is one field that is never hit by depression. The supply of real preachers is never able to meet the demand of the Lord to "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature [I beg your pardon], every creature."

—A. Word, Evangelist

Notes

1. Los Angeles newspaper, n.d.
2. *Christian Standard*, n.d.
3. Author's interview with Nellie Word Arnold, April 22, 1990
4. *The Other Day*, p. 21
5. *Christian Standard*, Feb. 3, 1934
6. Letter to author from Bill Jessup, March 3, 1989
7. *The Other Day*, p. 39
8. *The Life Story of Archie Word*, p. 125
9. Letter to author from Minnie Mick-Phillips, Feb. 18, 1991

10. Letter to author from Elsie Printz-DeWelt, April 4, 1991
11. *The Other Day*, p. 22
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 104
13. *Ibid.*, p. 95
14. *Ibid.*, p. 96
15. Flagstaff, Arizona, newspaper, n.d.
16. *Sanger Herald*, n.d.
17. *Ibid.*
18. *The Other Day*, p. 66
19. *Ibid.*, p. 19
20. Letter to author from Russell Boatman, Oct. 17, 1990
21. Ceres, California, newspaper, n.d.
22. Author's interview with Esther Nahigian Jackson, April 18, 1991
23. *The Other Day*, p. 19
24. Ceres, California, newspaper, n.d.
25. Report sent to *Christian Standard*, Jan. 7, 1935
26. Letter of recommendation from Ceres, California church, Jan. 4, 1935
27. *The Other Day*, p. 19
28. *Lindsay Gazette*, n.d.
29. *The Life Story of Archie Word*, p. 98
30. *Ibid.*
31. Interview with Archie Word by Don Hunt, Jr., Feb. 1988
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. Oakland, California, newspaper, n.d.
35. *Christian Standard*, Aug. 17, 1935



"The Church at 550," Montavilla (1956)

The Words in front of their
home on Glisan St. (1946)



Archie and his namesake,
Arch Jr. (1945)



"The Billy Sunday of the Restoration Movement"



Young preachers often imitated Archie's fashion

Now sporting a mustache

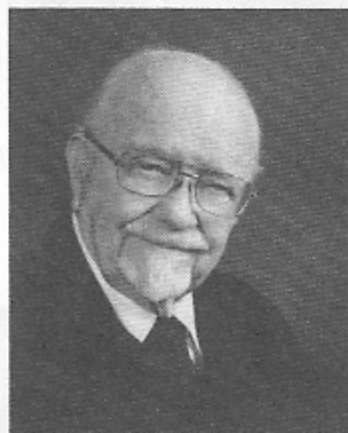


In the early 50s

In the 60s, now with tortoise shell glasses



With white hair and goatee, a dead ringer for Col. Sanders





Walter, Nellie and Archie



Maggie Word (1986)



The Word family at Margaret's wedding (1948). L-R: Arch Jr., Jenelle, Anna Jean, Florence, Margaret, Esther, Archie, Barbara

PART IV

(1934-1967)

THE MAN FROM MONTAVILLA

"No one who hears him can wonder at his power in evangelism. He speaks as one who knows he has divine authority behind the message. He speaks with brilliance, passion, zeal for souls—one of the real evangelists of our time."

—*Christian Standard*, July 10, 1943