

# Charles Parham traveled to Texas with a group of about fifteen workers to, in the words of Sarah Parham, "lay siege to the city of Houston in the name of the Lord." The campaign lasted about one month.

Parham to Orchard. Parham, often weak physically, had suffered a physical relapse at the Joplin meeting. The Olyers convinced Parham that rest and the warmer weather of South Texas would be good for his health. Parham accepted the invitation and arrived in Orchard in April 1905 for a three-week recuperative vacation.

The climate did agree with Parham but he was not given to rest. Soon after arriving in Orchard, a revival broke out. Parham stayed his allotted three weeks and then returned to Kansas. Later that summer he returned to Texas with a group of about fifteen workers to, in the words of Sarah Parham, "lay siege to the city of Houston in the name of the Lord." The campaign lasted about one month. W. Fay Carothers, a holiness pastor from the Houston suburb of Brunner and later a key leader in the Apostolic Faith, was an early convert. After the campaign, Parham returned to Kansas.

In the fall of 1905, Parham brought another group of workers to Texas intent on establishing the Apostolic Faith message across Texas. Included in that group was the young Howard Goss who would go on to be the first general superintendent of the United Pentecostal Church. The group traveled by train. The train schedule necessitated that the group change trains in Alvin, Texas, a small town southwest of Houston.

The group decided not to waste the layover. It was about noon, so the workers made their way from the train station to the main street of Alvin. They held an impromptu street service. One of the ways Parham typically attracted a crowd was to dress his workers in robes from the Holy Land, which depicted life in Bible times. He would lecture on the robes and then move to the message of the Pentecostal outpouring. A large crowd gathered, hungry for this new message, and God poured out His Spirit.

Alvin was the home of Millicent McClendon, who would later become an outstanding evangelist and the wife of Howard Goss. Millicent had visited Frank Sanford's Shiloh community in Durham, Maine. Sanford established the "Holy Ghost and Us Bible School" at Shiloh, and

Parham had visited Shiloh and had been influenced by it before the Topeka outpouring. Millicent may have received the Holy Ghost while at Shiloh and may have contributed to the spiritual hunger of the Alvin residents. For whatever reason, Alvin became an early center of Pentecostalism in Texas.

Texas became a key player in the early development of Pentecostalism. Parham went on to establish a Bible school in Houston. From that school hundreds of workers spread across the state of Texas. Soon the cities and towns of Texas experienced the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. The school also produced another prominent figure in early Pentecostalism, William J. Seymour. Seymour was an African-American Holiness preacher who attended the school at the invitation of Lucy Farrow. Seymour left Houston for Los Angeles and became the leading figure in the renowned Azusa Street revival.

One hundred years have passed since that Alvin revival. Pentecostalism has grown from a few thousand to 500 million adherents. Every so often it is important to stop and wonder at "what God has wrought." ❧



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