

EPILOGUE

The road to Lindsay, California, boyhood home of Archie Word, is straight as a string once you leave Tulare and head East on California Highway 137. Three miles out of Lindsay you come to a four-way stop where fruit stands offer travelers fresh strawberries, tomatoes, pomegranates, oranges, almonds, and pistachio nuts.

Highway 65 brings you into Lindsay, "The Friendly City," population 8,271. Shade trees surround City Hall, a beautiful structure done in Spanish motif. Indeed, about three-fourths of the city's population are Chicano. Main Street boasts a Bank of America, Western Auto and True Value stores, a Mexican market, bakery, and a video store which vies for

business with the Lindsay Theater, once frequented by a young Archie Word – especially when Billy Procter was selling tickets. The “Yaller Dawg” saloon (where men once boozed and brawled) is nowhere to be seen; however, a Thrift Store, operated by members of the Lindsay Christian Church, is visible.

Many of the residential homes in Lindsay are covered with red tile roofs. Shade trees offer a welcome relief from the California sun. The Junior High School is named after Steve Garvey, one-time ballplayer for the Los Angeles Dodgers. But Lindsay’s real claim to fame is her olive orchards and orange groves. Each April an “Orange Blossom Festival” is held in the “Olive Capital of the World.”

Beyond Lindsay lie the Sierra foothills, brown in April, the welcome rains of spring not yet having come to green them up. In the shimmering distance I can see Lindsay Peak – where Maggie Word used to drive her children by horse and buggy to church picnics. A friendly native points out Elephant Back, once visited by two young lovers at the end of World War I.

Just four miles south of Lindsay is the smaller town of Strathmore where you can buy a box of juicy oranges for \$7 at the Jessup Orange Works, a large packing house. Sunnyside School, where Archie received part of his education, still stands. But two miles south of town nothing remains of the old home place. Nothing, that is, except a faded red barn which stands alone in the middle of an olive orchard. The wind blows softly through the bare branches as I stand by the side of the road and try to imagine the happy sights and sounds of bygone years.

Back in Lindsay once more I visit the Lindsay Christian Church, membership 120, at the corner of

Elmwood and Frazier. Paul H. Leavens ministers to this congregation, described by one member as a “Senior Citizens’ church.” (Later I learn that Leavens is the son of Willard Leavens, the man who performed the wedding ceremony for my father and mother.)

The present church building where Leavens preaches is not the same one in which Archie preached his great revivals. But the congregation, unable to part with the memories of the past, has kept up the first building. In 1953 they moved the old church building to the east side of the property where it is presently used for fellowship dinners. The building is fondly called “Memory Hall.”

I step into Memory Hall and one of the first things I see is a large black and white picture on one of the walls. Posed are hundreds of people standing outside the old church building. A huge canvas banner stretches across the side of the building: “Hear A. Word Preach The Word,” one of Archie’s revivals in Lindsay during the 30s. Row after row of men stand erect in their starched collars, ties and suits. Women and young girls smile sweetly at the camera. A row of little boys wearing caps, jackets and knickers sit cross-legged on the grass. It is a magic moment forever frozen in time.

I stand in the back of the building and close my eyes. And for a moment of my own I can almost hear the strains of a great revival crowd singing, “Yes, we’ll gather at the river” – can nearly hear the familiar and welcome sound of that “Voice of Thunder” before it catches and breaks into tears.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Many of the men and women who played an important part in the life of Archie Word have died. Among them are: W.S. Lemmon, Vivian Lemmon, Eugene C. Sanderson, E.V. Stivers, J. Willis Hale, Harold E. Knott, V.E. "Daddy" Hoven, Howard Hutchins, Roy and Dorothy Shaw, Jesse Kellems, Teddy Leavitt, Ross Guiley, C.H. Hohgatt, Joseph Applegate, J. Michael Shelly, James A. Pointer, Orval D. Petersen, Garland Hay, S.E. Childers, Clifton and Amy Phillips, Ed Whisler, Dwight Hackett, Ray Oberholtzer, Lertis Ellett, Wesley Tottingham, Margaret Nahigian Boyer, Charles A. Foster, Walter Stram, Hal Martin, Lewis Mick, Don DeWelt, C. Adrian Sias, C.I. Kenney, James Matthew Alley, Elston Knight, Don Jessup, Leon

Appel, Orlin L. Mankamyer, Stewart Baker, R.E. Elmore, Leo Yoder, Morris Butler Book, Ernest Beam, Bill Jessup, Lester Deal, T.R. Applebury, Lee Fiksdal, and Calvin Parks.

Florence Word was moved from the care center in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, to a nursing home in Portland, Oregon, shortly after Archie's death in 1988. On January 29, 1992, at 2:30 in the afternoon, she passed from this life to the next. Daughters Esther and Barbara were at her bedside when she died. A memorial service was held February 3 at the Crossroads Church of Christ in Portland. Tom Burgess, Warren Bell and Victor Knowles officiated. She was laid to rest by her beloved husband in Willamette National Cemetery, a briar and a lily lovingly placed in her hands.

Tom and Esther Burgess continue to serve the Crossroads Church of Christ in Portland, Oregon. The new \$1 million complex includes the Archie Word Memorial Prayer Chapel. On January 18, 1992, Esther wrote: "I feel Dad would be pleased with the job you have done on his life story. Perhaps it will lead someone to know the Lord — to see just how much can be accomplished when the heart is truly converted."

Archie Word's namesake, Arch Word Jr., is an elder at Crossroads, shepherding some of the very people his father preached to for 33 years.

Donald and Margaret Hunt still live in Ottumwa, Iowa. *The Voice of Evangelism* began its 47th year in 1992; Midwestern School of Evangelism commenced its 46th year. Hunt exchanges preaching duties with William Payne at the Pennsylvania Avenue Church of Christ in Ottumwa.

Burton W. Barber preaches to the Locust Grove Church of Christ, Galax, Virginia. (Both Hunt and

Barber have survived heart attacks in recent years.)

James McMorrow lives in Cincinnati, Iowa. Ozark Christian College honored him at their 50th anniversary celebration in Joplin, Missouri, as the lone surviving graduate of the class of 1942.

Lafe Culver preaches to the Washington Street Church in Ottumwa, Iowa.

Richard M. Ellis directs a Christian Youth Ranch near Ottumwa, Iowa.

Don Hunt, Jr., Archie's first grandson, lives in Centerville, Iowa, singing and preaching with the Gateway Singers.

On December 19, 1991, Ron Hunt suffered a broken neck while surfing in Hawaii. A full recovery is expected. Hunt ministers to the East Oahu Christian Church in Honolulu.

Loren and Barbara Brink live in Portland, Oregon, where Loren serves as an elder of the Duke Street Church of Christ. Their son, David, is the minister. Both father and son teach at Northwest College of the Bible.

Jenelle Word Green lives with Loren and Barbara Brink.

Nellie Word Arnold lives with her husband on a ranch near Brownsville, California. Anna Jean Rodda lives with her husband, Don, in Mishawaka, Indiana (where Billy Sunday held his last revival). Don preaches to the Lowell Avenue Church of Christ. Their son, Stan, lives in Northglenn, Colorado, where he has started a new church.

On August 31, 1989, Don Pinon resigned from the Bluffview Church of Christ in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, and moved to Colorado where he established a new church, Westminster Church of Christ and Bible col-

lege, Rocky Mountain School of Evangelism.

The Bluffview Church of Christ in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, hired a graduate from Midwestern School of Evangelism, Mike Mouton, to be their new minister. The 7th and Q church in Gering practices "mutual ministry" with four men sharing the preaching.

Edwin DeVries is executive director of Nationwide Youth Roundup near Sedalia, Colorado.

J. Charles Dailey resigned after a 35-year ministry with the Minnehaha Church of Christ in Vancouver, Washington, and currently serves as Director of Development for Northwest College of the Bible.

Lee Turner, founder and director of Key Communications, Portland, Oregon, continues his radio ministry to Southeast Asia.

Warren Bell ministers to the Valley Christian Church in Concord, California.

K.O. Backstrand lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado. "I'm holding all revivals, large or small, that come my way," he reports. "If anyone would be interested in a 'heavy teaching/chart-teaching meeting,' let me know." The chart-teaching ministry of Archie Word lives on!

Dr. Charles Crane is President of Boise Bible College in Boise, Idaho.

William E. Paul preaches to the Crown Hill Church in Seattle, Washington. After previewing this biography in its manuscript form, he wrote, "This work will long outlive both of us. It is a significant contribution to the biographical literature of gospel preaching in general and the Restoration Movement in particular."

Russell Boatman has retired as Dean Emeritus at St. Louis Christian College and lives with his wife, Lutie, in Florissant, Missouri. Following Brother Word's

death, he wrote, "*Don't* hurry up with that book. Give it the time it deserves. Few men I have known are as deserving of a carefully researched biography."

Elsie DeWelt lives in Joplin, Missouri, and carries on her work with the DeWelt's "fourth child"—College Press. Before he died, Don DeWelt read the first half of this biography in manuscript form, alternately laughing and crying.

Dave DeWelt lives with his family in Atascadero, California.

Woodrow and Minnie (Mick) Phillips live in Turner, Oregon. Minnie says, "I shall always give thanks for Archie's preaching and leading me to Christ."

Carrie Jessup lives in San Jose, California. On September 14, 1990, Bill wrote, "How thankful I am that . . . sometime before his death he (Archie) wrote me that he considered me his best friend. How precious the last 20 years of fellowship were."

Elery Parrish resides with his wife, Wilma, at the Crouse Butte Century Farm near Newberg, Oregon.

Harry Chapin, "The Smiling Singer," is retired and lives in Vancouver, Washington.

William Siefke is retired and lives in Eugene, Oregon.

F.J. Winder lives in Milwaukee, Oregon. He has written a book on the instrumental music question, *Music of the Saints*.

Esther Nahigian Jackson lives in Baker City, Oregon, and still plays the organ each Sunday.

Dr. Bruce Oberst teaches college in Roseburg, Oregon.

Boyce Mouton preaches for the Christian Church in Carl Junction, Missouri. He still regrets not being able to talk Archie Word into being videotaped in his "Ven-

tures in Faith" video series. (Two video tapes of Archie preaching were made by family members late in his life.)

Earl Chambers carries on with his Sacramento-based television ministry, "Which Way America?" (now seen on cable and satellite).

Bob Chambers preaches to the Scottdale Church of Christ in Scottdale, Pennsylvania, and has recently authored a book, *Heaven*.

The Reyman brothers hold forth in preaching ministries: Rodney, Reno, Nevada; Darrell, Las Vegas, Nevada; Harold, Crescent City, California.

Carol Lankford is preaching in Hayward, California.

Edward Werner is preaching in Coos Bay, Oregon (where Archie Word held more revivals than anywhere in his career).

Marion McKee is preaching in Myrtle Creek, Oregon.

Harold Buckles is still preaching in Salem, Oregon, and editing *Good Reading* (in its 26th year as of 1992).

Malburt Prater, a stroke victim, lives in Scottsbluff, Nebraska.

Melvin Traxler has retired and lives in Fossil, Oregon.

Hal Watkins has retired and lives in Turner, Oregon.

Kenneth Broad is preaching in Star City, Indiana.

Hugh M. Olson lives in Cascade, Idaho.

Last, but not least, Dale V. Knowles. Dad is in his 54th year of ministry (as of 1992), preaching for the Church of Christ in Bristow, Iowa.

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Time

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Christian Evangelist
Christian Herald
Christian Standard
The Church Speaks
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The Good News
Impact
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The Canton Christian (Canton, OH)
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The Inavale Christian (Inavale, NE)

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