

History of the Dallas Church

The events of this history were provided by one of the original members, Mr. Rowan Lundy, by a local newspaper published from 1951 to 1964, and by many other long-time members of the Dallas Church through the years. This information is as accurate and thorough as we can get.

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Mr. Raymond Coia and Mr. Carol West have had an evangelistic campaign November 10 through December 31, 1956. All words, attendance had grown to 40-50 adults. Services were held on Tuesday nights in the Labor Temple in Dallas. At the end of the campaign, Mr. Friddle's position was transferred to Tack, West Virginia. Because of an extreme frost, services were moved from the Labor Temple to the Oak Cliff YMCA at Lemitt and Beckley. The growth was slow but steady.

Oak Cliff YMCA - 1011 2 Beckley 1957-1959

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## History of the Dallas Church

The events of this history were provided by one of the original members, **Mr. Rowan Lusby**, by a local newspaper published from 1961 to 1966, and by many other long-time members of the Dallas Church through the years. The information is as accurate and thorough as we've been able to gather and verify.

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The **Dallas Church** started **August 3, 1956** with 23 adults and 10-12 children. **Mr. Jimmy Friddle** was the pastor.

The Dallas area reached from Terrell to Waco and from Wichita Falls to Durant, Oklahoma. Some brethren who had relatives in the Dallas area drove all the way from Lubbock.

### Labor Temple - 1956-1957

**Mr. Raymond Cole** and **Mr. Gerald Waterhouse** held an evangelistic campaign November 18 through December 21, 1956. Afterwards, attendance had grown to 40-50 adults. Services were held on Friday nights at first, but were soon changed to Saturday mornings. At that time, the meetings were held at the **Labor Temple in Dallas**.

**Mr. Friddle** pastored the Dallas Church from Big Sandy. In **June of 1957**, he was transferred to Tacoma, Washington. Because of the extreme heat, services were moved from the Labor Temple to the **Oak Cliff YMCA** at Tenth and Beckley. The growth was slow but steady.

### Oak Cliff YMCA - 10th & Beckley 1957-1960

**Mr. Kenneth Swisher** served in the Dallas area after **Mr. Friddle** left. The **Swishers** covered a three-way church circuit which included Dallas, Big Sandy and Minden, Louisiana. In 1957, **Mr. David Jon Hill** became the pastor of the Dallas and Houston churches. **Mr. Hill** lived in the Houston area.

The first group baptism took place on **January 7, 1957**. Those baptized were **Mr. & Mrs. Stanford, Mr. & Mrs. Woods, Rosie Smith, Mr. Carlisle, Mr. Edward Smith, Mr. & Mrs. Briscoe**.

In 1957, **Mr. Friddle** ordained **Otis Rowell** the first deacon in Dallas. Then in 1958, **Mr. Hill** ordained **Rowan Lusby** as the second deacon.

**Mr. Hill** returned to Pasadena to teach at the college. And, in fall of 1959, **Mr. Richard Prince** became the pastor of the Dallas and Houston Churches with **Mr. Cecil Battles** as his assistant. Both **Mr. Prince** and **Mr. Battles** lived in the Houston area.

### I.O.O.F. - Odd Fellows Hall - 100F Pearl St. - Downtown Dallas Aug 6, 1960-1962

The Church soon outgrew the YMCA in Oak Cliff and, on **August 6, 1960**, moved to the **I.O.O.F. Lodge on Pearl St.** in Dallas. Services were held in Houston in the mornings and Dallas in the afternoon. **Mr. Prince** drove from Houston to Dallas most Sabbaths.

There were several brethren living in the Waco area so **Mr. Prince** started a Bible Study there on **March 3, 1962**. Nineteen adults attended. It was held every other Sunday night.

At the Feast of Tabernacles in 1962, **Mr. Cecil Battles** was ordained a local elder. Shortly afterward, he moved to the Dallas area. This was the first time the Dallas minister actually lived in the Dallas area. In **1963**, **James Rhome** was ordained the third deacon in Dallas.

In **November 1963**, **Mr. Ben Chapman** came from England to Big Sandy to oversee the establishment of a recording studio at the new college there. He became the **co-pastor** of the Dallas church with Mr. Prince. Mr. Chapman and Mr. Prince ordained **Harry Wilson**, **Alton Head**, and **Jim Currie** as deacons and **Mrs. James Rhome**, deaconess.

#### Park Cities YMCA - 6000 Preston Rd., University Park 1963-1969

Again the church outgrew the hall. And on **January 5, 1963**, a move was made to the **Park Cities YMCA** on Preston Rd. in North Dallas. Services were changed from PM to AM, so now Houston met in the afternoon.

A Ft. Worth Church was in the planning. This led to a Ft. Worth **Spokesman's Club**. In 1963, **E.B. Vance** and **Wiley Briscoe** were ordained deacons. They, along with 285 more brethren, started the Ft. Worth Church on July 4, 1964. (*So, can we look forward to another 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in 2014??*) Most of the first 287 members were from the Dallas churches.

About this time, **Mr. Prince** returned to college for a refresher and **Mr. Chapman**, with the help of **Mr. Battles**, pastored both Dallas and Ft. Worth churches. Then **Mr. Ronald Kelly** arrived at the college in Big Sandy in **1964**, and became the pastor of the Dallas Church. **Mr. Chapman** was then the pastor of Ft. Worth and **Mr. Battles** assisted both men.

The Dallas and Ft. Worth churches were very close. The Holy Days and other special events were held together for years - until they grew just too large to continue.

In the summer of **1966**, Mr. Battles was transferred to pastor a church in New Mexico. **Mr. Kenneth Martin**, a graduate from Big Sandy, became **Mr. Kelly's** assistant. **Mr. Mark Cardona**, a student at Big Sandy, trained one summer under **Mr. Martin**. In **1967**, **Mr. Ozzie Engelbart** became **Mr. Martin's** assistant.

In **1966**, the church had grown too large for the YMCA so a second service was added. There were now an **AM** and a **PM** service. In **1968**, **Jack Smith**, **Jack Campbell**, **Dwain Crisman** and **Merle Cunningham** were ordained deacons. The Church continued to grow and in **late 1969-early 1970** moved to the **Garden Center at Fair Park in Dallas**.

#### Garden Center - Fair Park - Late 1969 - 1981

In **1969**, **Mr. Martin** moved away to pastor a church in Alabama and **Mr. Engelbart** became the assistant pastor under **Mr. Kelly**. In **1971**, it was finally decided to no longer pastor the church from Big Sandy so **Mr. Engelbart** became the Dallas pastor. **Mr. Mark Cardona** returned to Dallas as **Mr. Engelbart's** assistant.

The church was growing rapidly. In **1971**, a series of Bible Studies were held by **Mr. Kelly** and **Mr. Engelbart** at the Garden Center.

Dallas was host to a program entitled, "*Garner Ted Armstrong Speaks Out*". The event was held at the Dallas Music Hall in Fair Park. The lectures and Bible Studies were received very well in the area with the result that two or three Bible Studies were held as follow-ups for those showing further interest. Several were added to the church at this time.

In 1972, the first local church elders, **Jack Campbell** and **James Currie**, were ordained by **Mr. Kelly** and **Mr. Engelbart**.

**Mr. Bob Hedge**, as a ministerial trainee, and **Mr. James Lee**, as associate, served under **Mr. Engelbart**. **Mr. Jim Servidio**, a college student, also served one summer. **Mr. Engelbart** ordained **Paul Petranek**, **Charles Bailey** and **Alex Mitchell** as deacons.

**Mr. Engelbart** returned to college in Pasadena and, in 1973, **Mr. Jim Kunz** became the pastor. **Mr. James Lee** moved to become the pastor of the Ada, Oklahoma church and **Mr. Barry Chase** and **Mr. Wade Whitmer** came to assist **Mr. Kunz**. After some period of time, **Mr. Chase** left the ministry. **Mr. Whitmer** was ordained a local elder by **Mr. Kunz** but soon left the ministry, also. **Mr. Jim Lee** returned to Dallas as associate in 1975.

The 70's were a troubled time for Dallas as they were for all the churches. Dallas lost some much-loved brethren during that period. But, the church still grew. In 1974, a church was started in the **Sherman-Dennison area**. Most members were from the Dallas church. Another congregation that grew out of the Dallas churches was in **Waco**,

In 1977, **Merle Cunningham** was ordained a local church elder by **Mr. Kunz**. **Mr. Lee** ordained **Ted Dusek**, **Leo Pease**, **John Rice** and **Sam Wheat** to the office of deacon.

**Mr. Kunz** was removed from the office of the ministry and **Mr. Ray Wooten** came to Dallas in July 1977.

The AM and PM churches shared a pastor. All Church activities were held together as one group. It was now decided to separate the two churches. The PM church became known as the North Church and the AM church became known as the South Church.

**Mr. Lee** returned to college in Pasadena and **Mr. Randal Dick** came in July 1978 to pastor the Dallas South church. **Mr. Wooten** was the pastor of the Dallas North church.

**Charles Collins** was ordained a deacon by **Mr. Dick** and **Mr. Wooten**.

**Mr. Wooten** was in Dallas until June 1978 when he was transferred to Kansas City. **Mr. Dick** oversaw the churches until **Mr. Kenneth Swisher** came in 1979 and became pastor of the North Church.

**Mr. David Gray**, an Ambassador graduate, was ordained as local elder by **Mr. Swisher** and served in the area from approximately 1979-1983. He later became a pastor in another area.

**Mr. Wayne Dunlap** came to the area as associate pastor under **Mr. Swisher** in February 1980.

The North Church and began meeting at the **VFW Post 5076 hall** in Garland in **1981**. The South Church continued meeting in the Garden Center.

Dallas North (later Dallas East) - VFW Post 5076, Garland March 14, 1981-1985  
Dallas South (later Dallas West) - Garden Center 1969 - 1982

The Dallas Churches celebrated their **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** in **August 1981**. Sabbath services were held on August 1st in the Reunion Ballroom of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Downtown Dallas with the sermon given by **Dr. Herman Hoeh**. The afternoon allowed for a time to have some snacks and to fellowship at the Union Station pavilion. The evening included a dinner and formal dance for older teens and adults at the Hyatt. There was also a concert by the Dallas Church Chorale and special guest soloist, Mr. Roger Bryant. The Chorale concert was conducted by Mr. Kenneth Johnson. The next day, August 2nd, the Silver Ambassadors, the senior citizen group, hosted a day of fun at Sandy Lake Park in Lewisville called the Silver Olympics. There were events for all young people from pre-school age through high school. Everyone was given a special Silver Olympics t-shirt and cap.

On **November 13, 1982**, the **Dallas South** church became known as **Dallas West** and left the Garden Center to begin meeting at the **Parker Chiropractic College in Irving** with 398 members. The North church now became known as the East Church and continued meeting at the VFW hall. **Mr. Dick** was the pastor of the West Church and **Mr. Swisher** was pastor of the East Church.

Dallas (formerly South) West - Parker Chiropractic College, Irving 1982 - 1996

On August 18, 1984, **Mr. Dunlap** had his farewell service in Dallas and moved back to California. **Mr. Kenneth Treybig** became assistant pastor to **Mr. Swisher** in **August 1984**. He served until **June 1985** when he was sent to Big Sandy. **Mr. Ross Flynn** came to Dallas in **July 1985** as the new associate pastor.

**Mr. Dick** ordained **Mary Kendrick** as deaconess and **Jack Smith** as local elder in **1984**.

**Mr. Swisher** ordained two deacons, **Richard Velting** and **David Rand**, and **Mrs. Sam Wheat** was ordained deaconess. **Mr. Dale Krebs** and **Mr. Steve Gerrard**, local church elders, served in Dallas for a short time in the mid/late 1980s. Mr. Krebs moved to Lubbock in 1988 and Mr. Gerrard also moved to another area. A better hall opened up and the East Church moved to the **Garland Performing Arts building** in **September 1985**.

Dallas East - Garland Performing Arts Building - 1985 - 1988

In **June 1986**, **Mr. Swisher** was sent to Little Rock, AR and **Mr. Allen Bullock** came to Dallas in **July 1986**.

**Mr. Bill Box**, an elder, served in Dallas East for a short time around **1987-1988**. He was transferred to Cleveland to become associate pastor.

**Mr. Dick** was transferred to Orlando Florida in **April 1987** and **Mr. Frank McCrady III** became pastor of the Dallas West church.

In **June 1987**, **Mr. Flynn** was given three churches in Colorado and **Mr. Gary Smith** came in **August 1987** as **Mr. Bullock's** associate.

In **July 1988**, the East church moved from the GPAC in Garland, to the **Wintergarden Ball Room** on John West Rd. in East Dallas. In **October 1989** they moved to the **Buckner Bingo Hall** a few blocks away at Buckner Blvd and John West Rd.

Dallas East – Wintergarden Ball Room 1988 – Oct 1989

Dallas East – Buckner Bingo Hall Oct 1989 – Jul 11, 1999

**Mr. Smith** was sent to pastor two churches in Ohio in **1990** and **Mr. Ben Faulkner** came as associate until **October 1993**.

**Mr. Bullock** ordained **Wayne Carpenter, Steve Seachord, Bruce Hard, John Payne** and **Richard Glasgow** as deacons. He ordained **Nancy Velting** and **Jane Carpenter** as deaconesses and **Ted Dusek** as local church elder.

Both the East and West churches had grown so large, a **third congregation** was started **June 29, 1991**. The names were changed and geographical boundaries redefined. The **East Church** became **Dallas Central** with **Mr. Bullock** as pastor. The **West Church** became **Dallas North** with **Mr. McCrady** as pastor. And the new congregation, **Dallas South** began with **Mr. Don Hooser** as pastor.

Dallas South – Kroger Bldg. Hampton & Ledbetter, Lancaster 1991-1992

Dallas South – Lancaster Community Center, Towne Centre, Lancaster 1992-1994

Former pastor, **Mr. Randal Dick**, was appointed Assistant Director of Church Administration, International. He decided to have young African Ambassador graduates do some ministerial training before going back to their countries to serve. He chose Dallas because it was close to the college, but more importantly, because he knew the quality of the churches and their leaders.

On **June 8, 1991**, **Mr. Kalengule Kaoma**, an Ambassador graduate from Zambia gave his "Icebreaker" speech (Spokesman Club graduates know that is the one where they told about themselves). He was in Dallas East to train under **Mr. Bullock** for a year. **Mr. Kaoma** was ordained a local elder by **Mr. Bullock** before he returned to Big Sandy for additional training before going back to Africa. His final sermon in Dallas was on **May 30, 1992**.

**Mr. Gabriel Ojih**, an Ambassador graduate from Ghana, trained for a year in the Dallas North congregation under **Mr. McCrady** during the same time period as **Mr. Kaoma**. **Mr. Ojih** was ordained an elder in Dallas and left for Ghana in **1992**.

**Mr. Joseph Mpofo**, a local elder also from Africa, replaced **Mr. Kaoma**. He also returned to Africa after his three months of training in Dallas during the **summer of 1992**.

By the early 1990s, there were **seven** churches which had all grown from the original Dallas Church of 23 members ... there were **three** in **Dallas**, **two** in **Ft. Worth**, **one** in **Waco** and **one** in the **Dennison** area. The five churches in Dallas and Ft. Worth still met together once or twice a year for special Holy Days with about **2200** in attendance.

During the early and mid-1990s, the Worldwide Church of God underwent major doctrinal changes and the resulting difficult times radically affected all the congregations and members.

On **June 26, 1993**, **Mr. Bullock** gave his final sermon in Dallas. He was transferred to Little Rock, Arkansas. In **July 1993**, **Mr. Felix Heimberg** became pastor in Dallas Central.

**Mr. Faulkner** left in **1993** and **Mr. Leon Sexton** replaced him as associate under **Mr. Heimberg** in **October 1993**.

On **April 24, 1994**, a tornado hit the Dallas area and the building the **Dallas South** church was meeting in was destroyed so they relocated to a **Jr. High School in Cedar Hill**.

Dallas South -- Jr. High School, Cedar Hill - May 1994 – 1995

**Mr. Sexton** left the WCG in **Dec 1995**. His family had a passion for the people of Thailand and they later started a foundation, which in large part, serves people in Asia.

**Mr. Hooser** left the WCG in 1995 to attend another fellowship and the Dallas South church members began meeting in homes or attending one of the other Dallas congregations. For a period of time in the early 2000's, there were satellite services of Dallas Central conducted by lay member **Leo Burnett** at the **Westridge Nursing Home** for members in the southern Dallas area.

On **November 18, 1995**, **Mr. Heimberg** ordained as local elders, **Arnold Parrish**, **Richard Lyon** and **Paul Petranek**.

**Mr. McCrady** ordained **Ray** and **Joy Schellenger** as deacon and deaconess and **Doc Gibbs** as local elder during his time in Dallas.

**Mr. McCrady** left the WCG to pastor in another fellowship and **Mr. Heimberg** became pastor of the Dallas North church while remaining pastor of Dallas Central. It was during this time that they left the Parker Chiropractic School and began meeting in Lewisville at the Vista Ridge United Methodist Church.

Dallas North – Vista Ridge United Methodist Church – Lewisville – 1995/96 - current

In November 1996, **Mr. Heimberg** left the ministry to pursue other vocational goals. Early in **1997**, **Mr. Jeff Molnar** became pastor in Dallas Central. He continued what **Mr. Heimberg** had been doing by helping the congregation with all the changes taking place in the fellowship. It was during his time as pastor that Dallas Central began meeting on Sunday. He remained until the end of **1998** when he left the ministry and returned to the secular workforce. Both men were supporters of the doctrinal changes.

After **Mr. Heimberg** left, **Ted Dusek** coordinated the scheduling of guest speakers in Dallas North for an interim period until **Mr. Arnold Clauson** became the pastor. **Mr. Clauson** also pastored two other churches in Denison, Texas and Antlers, Oklahoma.

**Mr. Lynn Hebert** came in **January 1999** and served until **December 2005**. It was during **Mr. Hebert's** time as pastor that the Dallas Central church changed locations from the Buckner Bingo Hall to the **Red Roof Inn** near Saturn and LBJ on July 11, 1999. After a short time, there was another move. This time it was to the **Seventh Day Adventist**

Church on Beltline in Richardson. It also was during this time that the Dallas Central church adopted the new name, **Grace Family Church**.

Dallas Central (formerly East) Red Roof Inn, Garland - July 1999 – December 1999  
Dallas Central (became Grace Family Church) -  
Seventh Day Adventist, Richardson - January 2000 – current location

**Mr. Bob Persky**, regional superintendent, served as interim pastor and then became permanent pastor of Dallas Central/Grace Family Church in **July 2006**. **Mr. Gabriel Ojih**, who had been serving as an elder in the congregation since 2002 and who was a trainee in Dallas North in 1992, was given the office of associate pastor at the same time.

And that brings us to today. A celebration of perseverance, dedication, and of God's blessings, grace and mercy.

If you have additional information to add to this history, please contact Ted Dusek.