



REACH

Reach

Part 5

August 29, 2021

Today I want to begin our time together with sharing a story with you all. In May of 1924, a self-described “country preacher” by the name of E.L. Tanner brought his tent to town here in West Monroe and set up his revival tent at the end of Stella Street where it intersects with Trenton Street in West Monroe; at the time most roads were dirt with clover fields. He preached revival meetings from May 1924 to June 1924 before taking a short two month trip to Point, LA and Calhoun, LA.

While in Calhoun, a thunderstorm destroyed his revival tent therefore forcing him to seek property to establish a local fellowship for preaching the Gospel and building a Community of Faith. He discovered two lots at the east end of Cypress Street; one with a big four bedroom house and the Lord gave him favor to purchase those lots. It was from this humble beginning that set the course for the First Assembly of God of West Monroe to be founded and occupied this location for the span of 93 years. This is the Genesis of what is now known as The Assembly West Monroe.

First Assembly of God West Monroe was opened by the Arkansas Louisiana District of the Assemblies of God on April 1, 1924. Our Church was Incorporated under the Laws of Louisiana in Ouachita Parish on September 29, 1924 with nine charter members; The Tanners (Brother and Sister Tanner in the picture), Mrs. Lizzie Guinn, and three couples that were deacons: Brother Doss Weems and Sister Weems and his wife, Brother Price Martin and his wife, and Brother E.P. Davies and his wife.

First Assembly of God West Monroe became affiliated and recognized by the General Council of the Assemblies of God and was officially set in order on April 25, 1925 with 74 members; several of those 74 members noted still have generational representation in our church to this day.

In 2015, The Assembly West Monroe began the process of making the greatest step of faith in its 91 year history. The Assembly was preparing to sell its properties, purchase a new location in the heart of West Monroe and transplant a Church that had been at one location for almost a century. The Church Body rallied behind the Leadership Team and we stepped out into the unknown with Prayer and Faith as our Guide as the Lord began to work mightily amongst our body to be a part of a Miracle.

It was through this transition that has created the culmination of our success as a Church Family and as an Assembly of God Church. We are The Assembly West Monroe with a rich history of Faith, Prayer, and Pentecostal Expression as we press forward towards our future as a Church, as a Community, and as the Body of Christ.

In January of 2020, our Church made another great step of Faith forward in electing me as the Lead Pastor of this Great Church. Under the direction of my leadership over the past year and a half, we have set a course to be debt free as a Church, are working towards establishing strong avenues of discipleship, experiencing authentic Pentecostal expression in our services, and having a heart for our community. We are The Assembly West Monroe and the Best is still Truly yet to Come!

Now the question must be asked, “why did I just share all of this history with you?” Because we are Church with a rich history of and deep roots in the Pentecostal Faith long before our doctrinal stances and public expressions of Pentecostal demonstration were ever accepted much less tolerated. If we were all to take a look back at where we have come from, where we are and where we are going, one truth rings true about our Church; we value generational diversity and ethnic diversity within our faith community.

And as a Church Family, we are and will continue to be known as a Church that celebrates Ethnic and Generational Diversity as we reach towards our Brothers and Sisters in Christ no matter their age, ethnicity, or stage of life! We will not be known as the white church or the black church; the old church or the young church; The Conservative Church or the Progressive Church. We will be known as The Assembly West Monroe because this is who we are.

We are Diverse in every way, we like it that way, and we celebrate that. We find value in people, we find value in their stories and their unique gifts and it is our desire as Church Leadership to empower all of you to leverage who God has made you to be for the sake of advancing His Kingdom; and not our own.

Here at The Assembly, we find value in the infusion of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity, the inclusion of our faith experiences and the unique perspectives that culture provides. This Is Us! We Appreciate Diversity because the courts of Heaven set the Standard! Revelation 7:9-10 ESV, “⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

If we do not value cultural diversity within the Church, then how can we be expected to value the cultural diversity of Heaven! Acts 17:26-27, “He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷ so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;”

Jesus said in the Gospel of Saint Matthew 6:10, “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!” If it is the will of God for every nation, for every tribe, every people group and every language to be found in Heaven then shouldn't the same be found within His Church in the Earth?

And if we claim to be Pentecostal and cling to Acts 2 experience then there is no greater indication of a Pure Pentecostal Experience than for every nation, every tribe, every people group and every language to be found within this great body of believers known as the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ!

You cannot hold racial prejudices nor generational bias and then in turn claim to have had a Born Again Experience; The Purest Expression of Authentic Pentecostalism is when you can lift up the name of Jesus with other people who do not look like you, who do not have the same background as you, or have the same experiences as you. Authentically Pentecostal People Love People Authentically.

In the story of the life of Jacob found in Genesis 27, we discover a scared young man who has had the seed planted in his heart by his mother that if he doesn't look like his brother Esau, smell like Esau, live like Esau, walk like Esau then he is not going to get his Father's blessing.

In this story, we discover a young man who was deceived by his mother into thinking that he would not receive a blessing from his Father, unless he first looked like his brother, smelled like his brother, lived like his brother, walked like his brother. And how often has the church fell into the trap of thinking that we can only fellowship with one another if we look like one another? Sunday seems to be the most segregated day of the week but not in this House!

As the Pastor of this great Church body, I refuse to allow us to fall into the trap of religion that deceives people into thinking that unless they look like someone else, smell like someone else, live like someone else, has what someone else has, drives what someone else drives, dresses like someone else dresses that they won't receive the Blessing of their Heavenly Father because they don't look like someone else.

All I want to know is are you born again? Have you been washed in the Blood of the Lamb? Are your sins atoned for? Are you filled with the Holy Ghost? Are you reading your Bible? Are you serving Jesus? My goal is not to make you look like me! My goal is to challenge you to live like Him!

At The Assembly, we find value in the infusion of generational diversity of people who love Jesus, the inclusion of our faith experiences and the unique perspectives that generational diversity provides!

In 1 Samuel 3, the text records a very interesting beginning to Samuel's prophetic ministry under his mentor, Eli. You can find the text in 1 Samuel 3:1-10 and it is in this story that Samuel, a younger generation, keeps hearing the prophetic call of God by calling his name repeatedly and it took Eli, the Older Generation, to help him discern the calling.

Notice the Necessity of Exchange between Samuel and Eli (The Older Generation and the Younger Generation) Samuel was laying down asleep and could hear a voice calling him but he couldn't discern the voice. Eli understood God's call because he had been there before, thus he discerned what Samuel was hearing.

Samuel was hearing the call but didn't know what to do or how to respond to it. Eli knew what to do but wasn't hearing the call! It was only when the two generations connected, that the purpose of God was revealed!

Observe the truth of this text, it took the younger generation being willing to give ear to the call and it took the older generation being willing to give instructions on how to receive it. when both generations mutually respected the anointing upon each other, the Word of the Lord will be made manifest in to the Earth.

I've shared the following truth before but I feel that it bears repeating considering our focus today in this message.

In the Gospel of Saint Mark Chapter 6:35-38 "35 When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour is late. 36 Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread; for they have nothing to eat."37 But He answered and said to them, "You

give them something to eat.” And they said to Him, “Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them something to eat?”
38 But He said to them, “How many loaves do you have? Go and see.”
And when they found out they said, “Five, and two fish.”

Now when we look into the Gospel of Saint John Chapter 6:9, we discover that it was a young boy who gave the fish and bread to the Disciples. We do not see this recorded in the Gospels of Mark nor Matthew.

The disciples were adept enough to know that there was a problem, but did not have resource enough to respond to the problem. They were able to define what was wrong, but they had a difficulty in their lack to provide a solution to a present problem.

The younger one had the solution, but wasn't in the position to respond to the problem. But in his little greasy bag w/ 2 fish and his five loaves of bread - he had the stuff but he didn't know what to do with it. The disciples knew what to do with it, but they didn't have the stuff. And I firmly believe that in this difficult hour that the Lord Himself is bringing us to a place that will force the generations represented in this room to work together.

The older generations are likened unto the disciples, we know how to have church, when to shout, when to stand, when to kneel. We know the value of The Word, of Worship, and Spiritual Warfare! We need the younger generations to keep us real, refreshed, and roaring with the power of the Spirit! Often times, the younger generation can fall into the trap of zeal with no wisdom; but even so, the older generation can fall into the trap of wisdom with no zeal!

And the Younger Generation needs us to teach them the Word, demonstrate pure Worship, and to show them how to effectively war in the spirit! Young Folks, younger generation! Listen to me today. Do you remember Solomon's Son, Rehoboam?

If you are not aquatinted with who he is then look him up in the Scripture. He refused correction and instruction from his counsel of men who were older and wiser than he and he lost it all because he refused to listen. He preferred the applause of men and he lost his kingdom! (Speak on my relationship with my Board and my Mentor/Pastor (all older than me by 15 years or more; my pastor has been actively pastoring longer than I've been alive) (Leadership Principle: Everyone needs a Paul, a Barnabas, and a Timothy)

Hear Me Clearly This Morning: God is not going to move us forward as a Church until we humble ourselves and are willing to work together across ethnic boundaries and intergenerationally between generations. If Jehovah is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, then we should be a Church of Our Generation, Their Generation and the Next Generation! If Heaven is represented by every kindred, tribe, tongue and nation then let be also in His Church. It is our task as a church body to Reach but we will never reach the Nations if we cannot reach across the Pew. We never embrace our global calling until we can first embrace those standing around us. We are The Assembly West Monroe and this is Who We Are!