

# We inherited a revival!

By EVERETT L. PHILLIPS / *Field Secretary Emeritus for Africa*

I HAVE SEEN in progress the greatest revival, to my knowledge Africa has experienced in the past 30 years.

For 50 years, we have had missionaries in Oriental Province located in the northeast corner of Congo. Our work has grown steadily through the years, but now something new and startlingly different is happening in the capital city—Kinshasa.

Six years ago, a group of missionaries residing in Kinshasa told me that among their people there was a growing interest in the Pentecostal experience. I came home to the Foreign Missions Department with their main question in my heart: "Why don't you send missionaries to Kinshasa? We are confronted by hundreds of people with questions regarding Pentecost which we cannot answer."

It has taken the Foreign Missions Department some time to send our first missionaries there, but God in His own way was making provision for these hungry hearts in Kinshasa.

Thirty years ago Jacques Vernaud was born of missionary parents in Gabon, West Africa. Brother Vernaud Sr. was a pioneer missionary supported by the Assemblies of God of France. Jacques grew up interested in missionary work and after graduating from Bible school in England felt definitely called of God to return to Africa.

He went to Brazzaville where he began his missionary work. God began to bless immediately, and many were saved. Most of these new converts were from Kinshasa, the capital of the Republic of Congo, just across the Congo River. Realizing that the Kinshasa people were much more responsive to the gospel, the Vernauds felt led of God to cross the Congo River and continue their missionary work in Kinshasa.

Daily, people were saved—many from high government offices and positions of leadership in the business world. Many "church people" were baptized in the Holy Spirit. Pastors and their congregations received the Pentecostal experience and became members of the organization headed by Brother Vernaud.

Realizing his need for assistance, Brother Vernaud invited T. L. Osborn to come for a revival, and God blessed in an unusual way. Thousands made decisions for Christ; many were healed; many filled with the Spirit.

Because of the rapid growth in total number of converts and churches, Brother Vernaud, at Brother Osborn's suggestion, asked the Assemblies of God in the USA to provide missionaries to assist in guiding the work.

It was my privilege to visit the Congo in May 1970 and to receive

from the executive committee, composed of 22 national leaders and the missionaries, a report of God's work in Kinshasa. At that time, there were 15,074 adult members; 15 churches; 16 schools, including two high schools; 314 schoolteachers; and 11,051 schoolchildren enrolled. This entire work had been financed by the national church.

The executive committee presented one strong request to me. That was to establish a Bible school to train our current leaders and new young people who felt called to minister to their people.

This group has begun to send evangelists to other large cities, and several strong churches have been started hundreds of miles from Kinshasa. These efforts too are completely financed by the national church.

The offerings in the larger churches in Kinshasa are taken in white enameled basins four feet in diameter and eight inches deep. I have never seen so much money given by one congregation in Africa as was heaped in those large basins in a service in Kinshasa on Easter Monday.

Brother and Sister William Lovick have transferred to Congo and are working side by side with the Vernauds. In addition, the Dale Lees and the Billy Burrs have been approved for these new areas in Congo.

In June 1970 the Foreign Missions Board approved working with this national church and also invited Brother and Sister Vernaud to unite with us. Brother Vernaud, at our invitation, is planning a trip to the United States and will in time receive appointment by our Foreign Missions Department. In due course, you will be hearing a direct report from Brother Vernaud about the great work the Holy Spirit has accomplished in Kinshasa and other cities of Southern Congo.

This is God's day for the Congo!

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