

AG's Richard Dortch Passes Away

Richard Dortch, the former Assemblies of God Illinois District superintendent and Assemblies of God executive presbyter died Tuesday morning at 9 a.m. in Palm Harbor, Florida. He was 79.

According to the AG website, Dortch served as a pastor early in his ministerial career, and was also a missionary to Belgium from 1959 to 1964. There he helped found and lead Emmanuel Bible Institute in Andrimont.

While pastoring in Alton, Illinois, in 1967, Dortch was elected as secretary-treasurer for the Illinois District. He serving in that capacity until 1970.

Dortch wrote several books about personal integrity and restoration, the AG reports. Until just prior to his death, he hosted a long-standing two- to three-hour prayer service, called *America's Prayer Meeting*, on weeknights on the Christian Television Network. The broadcast reached 55 million households. Dortch is also former PTL vice president.

At the age of 15, Dortch heard a young evangelist named Oral Roberts preach the gospel and call sinners to repentance. In the Sunday evening service at the First Assembly of God Church in Granite City, he answered the call of God and became a Christian.

Dortch once said, "For as long as I can remember, I knew God had called me to preach. There was a brief time, when, as a young man playing baseball, I considered becoming a professional ballplayer. In my heart, I knew all I really wanted to be was a minister."

Dortch is survived by his wife, Mildred, his two children, Deanna Collins and Richard, three grandchildren and a great-

grandchild.