

GEORGE O. WOOD: An 'Unlikely' Bridge Between Generations

The leader of the world's largest Pentecostal denomination, George Wood serves as an unlikely bridge between the generations, styles and ministry models that make up the Assemblies of God (AG).

With more than 3 million members, the AG is one of the few groups reporting growth during an overall decline in the U.S. church. Worldwide, the AG has more than 67 million members.

The active leader shows no signs of slowing down, recently releasing his newest book, a devotional on the gospel of Mark. With his term as general superintendent extending through 2017, the former pastor has no plans to retire soon. "In this age and era, age is not a critical factor," says Wood, the son of a pastor and missionary who spent three childhood years in China. "When I was elected at the end of my 65th year, I asked God for strength and wisdom. I still feel I have strength and I probably still have wisdom. If the general council wants me to serve (again), that is an option."

Since his appearance on the cover of *Charisma* two years ago, Wood presided over the denomination's centennial anniversary. Held in conjunction with the triennial World AG Fellowship Conference, the event attracted 8,000 people from 120 countries.

"That was a powerful spiritual event," Wood says.

During his tenure the denomination has planted nearly 2,300 churches, boosting its overall U.S. total to more than 12,800. It hopes to average one start daily during 2015. While those are encouraging statistics, the one that makes him smile is that a third of its U.S. members are under 25. "If you don't have young people you don't have a future," Wood says. "If the

early church could prosper in the midst of Roman persecution,
I have every hope the church today can shine.”—*Ken Walker*