

Moving the Ship

How a Pentecostal businessman is helping the Assemblies of God advance with unified vision

When George O. Wood was re-elected general superintendent of the General Council of the Assemblies of God in 2009, he was given a mandate. “I clearly heard the Lord say, ‘George, get your hands on the business.’” Becoming something like an NFL talent scout, Wood began searching for the right business team. He had a providential encounter with one such “recruit” when he met Sol Arledge at a church function where he was speaking.

Arledge and his wife helped build his in-laws’ small manufacturing operation into a multimillion-dollar business and into one of the largest private employers in Louisville, Ky., with more than 900 employees. At age 38, Arledge and his wife had retired to serve full-time in volunteer youth ministries.

Wood, who had decided the AG headquarters needed to upgrade its infrastructure and church resource offering, needed a businessman led by the Spirit to accomplish this goal, and his interest was piqued by Arledge’s background. But Arledge, who visited the ministry headquarters to get a look at the operation, came away feeling overwhelmed.

“The task was so immense. I really needed guidance from the Holy Spirit,” he says.

As Arledge spent time alone praying for guidance, he experienced a vision. “It was so profound that I was reluctant to share it,” he says. The next day in a meeting with Wood, he sat in on a conversation with best-selling author Bruce Wilkinson (of *The Prayer of Jabez* fame) and was caught off guard when Wilkinson asked Arledge to reveal a vision he had received.

Reluctantly and with considerable prompting, he shared that he had seen the AG national headquarters moving as a huge ship with 30 to 40 tugboats attached. But there was a big problem: The tugboats, representing the various departments and ministries, were pulling in different directions rather than moving together. The ship couldn't move forward and the stress threatened to pull it apart.

Wood immediately affirmed the vision and said that steering things in one direction would succeed. He asked Arledge and his wife to help him, and they set to work. The elected AG leadership subsequently named Arledge as chief operating officer of the national headquarters and helped him to assemble a management team.

Together, they have developed the My Healthy Church resourcing brand, a new publishing arm called Influence Resources and cutting-edge, tech-based educational products. They've also developed strategic partnerships with church and parachurch organizations to strengthen their resource brand reach.

"We are focused on fulfilling Dr. Wood's mission of growing healthy churches," Arledge says. "We're linking to the experience of the older generation and listening to the younger generation to help craft how we are relevant to the culture of this day without sacrificing our biblical values. We've developed a unique delivery system that will reach this younger culture.

"The Holy Spirit is an integral part of all we are and do," he adds. "Whether in business or ministry, everything is always about honoring the Lord and blessing His people. As a Pentecostal I know we can't succeed at anything unless we are led and empowered by the Spirit."