I. The Early Years

Andrew Harvey Argue has been called "the greatest Pentecostal evangelist Canada produced." He was born in 1868 at Fitzroy Harbor, near Ottawa, Ontario. A.H. Argue was the grandson of a Methodist layman who had emigrated from Ireland in 1821. His grandfather, George Argue, had been converted under the preaching of Gideon Ouseley, a fiery Wesleyan evangelist. He set sail for the New World, and brought with him five stalwart sons, all over six feet in height. The family landed at Quebec and settled in the Ottawa Valley where they built a log home. Upon its completion, the sons invited the neighbors to what were to be the first Methodist services held in that region of Canada. One son, John Wilson Argue, was both a farmer and a Methodist lay preacher in Fitzroy Harbor and, later, in North Dakota, where he moved with his young family.

Among John's children his son Andrew (A.H.), was a talented violinist who played for the local school dances. John disapproved of his son's participation in these dances, and prayed for him, a fact which A.H. would never forget. The turning point in Andrew's spiritual state came during some revival services conducted in the community by Salvation Army workers. There seemed to be little response and the local dances went on unhindered. One night, as Andrew prepared to play his violin, there flashed into his mind the picture of his father praying for his salvation. Suddenly, the decision was made—the violin was put in its case—and he rushed to the revival meeting where he went forward at the first invitation. Halfway to the altar he received an assurance of sins forgiven. As a young man, A.H. married a Canadian girl, Eva, who had been converted among the Methodists and had ministered briefly with the Salvation Army. This couple moved to North Dakota where two of their children, Harvey and Zelma, were born. After a five year stint at farming, the Argues returned to the Manitoba capital where their other four children, Beulah, Eva, Watson, and Edwin were born.

It was an astute move, for Winnipeg was then at the heart of an economic boom that affected the entire Canadian West. Together with two of his brothers, A.H. began a real estate business that proved to be very successful. Winnipeg was the gateway to the virgin lands which attracted millions of European emigrant home-
steaders. From 1901 to 1911, the Winnipeg population grew, reaching a total population of 450,000. Housing and land was in great demand and the Argue firm prospered, not least of all because in boomtown Winnipeg it was said that “God and A.H. Argue are the only two persons that can be trusted.” At the same time, A.H. was keenly interested in promoting the work of the Lord, and he utilized his business acumen and increasing wealth to support various local ministries.

Andrew also became active in the support of Holiness causes and was well-known as an effective Methodist “ranter,” or lay exhorter, both in the West and in Ontario. He became a close friend of Dr. George Watson, who came to Winnipeg to proclaim Holiness doctrines and to teach the “deeper truths” of the Second Coming. So highly was this man regarded by the Argues that they named one son, Watson, in his honor. Many other Holiness Movement workers were known by A.H., including Miss Markle, a Mennonite from Ontario who had come to conduct a mission in Winnipeg. Markle was among the earliest in the city to receive a Pentecostal experience. She later married A.G. Ward who came into the Pentecostal Movement via the Methodist and the Christian and Missionary Alliance groups. His son, C.M. Ward, became a prominent Assemblies of God clergyman whose work as a Pentecostal evangelist was to carry him throughout North America. Another was Anglican clergyman Archdeacon Phair, who at first opposed the Pentecostal revival under the leadership of A.H. Argue, though he was sympathetic to Holiness teachings. A.H. was also familiar with some of the American Holiness leaders, among them Bishop J.H. King of the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church.

It was also in Winnipeg that he became familiar with Divine Healing teachings, for it was there that he was healed of a “chronic internal trouble” of some years' standing. When Dr. A.B. Simpson of the Christian and Missionary Alliance visited the city in 1906, A.H. went for prayer; but a day passed without any sign of improvement. Then, suddenly, the healing power of God went through him and the work was done. From that time on, the Argue family believed and taught Divine Healing. Eva Argue often prayed for her children in the years following when her husband was an itinerant evangelist, and she saw them miraculously healed. No doubt this religious background made A.H. a keenly interested consumer of news about the Holiness Movement and the new “Latter Rain Movement” of the early twentieth century.

Even before the Pentecostal experience arrived in Winnipeg, news of extraordinary works of God in many other places had already come. Information from the 1904 Welsh Revival stirred the