



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY GLENN W. GOHR

When people reflect on *Revivaltime*, the long-standing weekly radio broadcast of the Assemblies of God, they often think of the speakers, C. M. Ward and Dan Betzer. But the ministry of the choir, made up of students from Central Bible College (CBC), was just as important.

The AG released the first *Revivaltime* broadcast on Easter Sunday, 1950. Three years later, the program was broadcast from the Bowie Hall auditorium at CBC and began airing on the ABC Radio Network with C. M. Ward as the speaker. Through the years, over 1,300 people ministered as choir members and musicians under the leadership of Cyril McLellan,

Revivaltime's longtime music director. The choir practiced during the week. Then on Sunday afternoons, beginning in January 1962, a bus would transport the students to the auditorium at the AG national office. Two songs became hallmarks of every program: "All Hail the Power" and "There's Room at the Cross."

Revivaltime was a ministry that touched lives through the message and songs. The choir prayed often. Their focus was not on performance, but on ministering the gospel through song.

Read "Why They Sing for *Revivaltime*," on pages 16-17 of the April 15, 1962, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/april151962. 



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BIBLE COLLEGE STUDENTS TRAINED IN WYOMING WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

BY ROBERT E. MIMS

If you find yourself stranded in the wilderness, Duke Edwards can feed, shelter, and warm you with just his wits, a knife, a piece of high-carbon steel, and a shard of flint, while keeping any curious grizzlies away with a can of bear spray. And, if it's the wilderness of the spirit that needs rescuing, Edwards can lead a prayer to ignite a saving relationship with Christ.

Edwards' dual identities serve him well in remote Pinedale, Wyoming. A recognized "super minimalist" survival expert (he has appeared on National Geographic Channel's *Myigrations* program), Edwards also is pastor of Wilderness Church

Edwards, his wife, Beth, and their four children ages 6 to 14, launched the AG congregation in 2013. Edwards depended on relationships, built one person at a time, to create a congregation.

While Sunday attendance fluctuates — Pinedale is a community where many live by subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering, coming and going with the ebb and flow of drilling in the region's natural gas and oil fields

— a core of about 70 people consider the rented space in a former oil company building their church home.

A desire for volunteer outreach has made all the difference, and not only among the church's regulars. Wilderness Church regularly offers 10-week to two-year internships to North Dakota's Trinity Bible College students and graduates preparing to enter pastoral or missionary ministries.

Training includes rotational preaching. Last summer, Wilderness Church sponsored 10 interns, and Edwards would like to boost it to a dozen this year.

At some point during their stays, the church gives interns \$500 for community outreach projects. Free barbecues, a dodgeball tournament, and Edwards' favorite — gift baskets for area veterans containing homemade treats, food supplies, and personal care items — introduce local residents to caring Christians.

At the end of their internships, students also get a taste of the raw outdoors with Edwards as their guide.

As out-of-the-way as Pinedale is

HOLY SPIRIT CONFIRMS GOD'S LOVE

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Six years ago, Nyo Chaw and his family moved to Worthington, Minnesota, leaving his father behind in Myanmar.

John Nau, youth pastor for Solid Rock Assembly in Worthington, distinctly remembers when Chaw and several of his friends began coming to youth group about two years ago as 13-year-olds.

"I called them future leaders," Nau say, laughing. "They were a real handful — desperate for attention and demanding it by causing disruptions."

Although some of the boys stopped attending, Chaw continued to come. In 2015, he accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior at church camp.

Chaw plugged into the church and his faith grew, but Nau knew the conflict the teen was experiencing — his father never came to Worthington and he died a Buddhist.

But then God intervened. In September 2016, Chaw was visiting a church friend, Fernando Rodriguez. Fernando's father, Carlos, asked to pray over Chaw.

"Nyo had started talking about his dad, and we could see how sad he was, so we all started to pray for him," Carlos Rodriguez, 38, explains. "All of a sudden, I started feeling the Holy Spirit in me, like a fire in me, the Lord told me to start talking, so I started talking in English so Nyo could understand as my language is Spanish. Then the Holy Spirit prompted me to speak in tongues, so I did."

Suddenly Chaw began weeping and responding to Rodriguez's prayer, reaching out and gripping Rodriguez in a tear-filled hug.

Chaw later told Fernando that when Carlos was praying in the Spirit, he had been speaking in his (Chaw's) native language, Karen. In Karen, he had told Chaw that God loved him like a father!

Fernando was stunned, but Chaw confirmed that he had understood everything Carlos prayed!

Since that time, Chaw has grown even deeper in his faith, while Nau says the testimony has been an encouragement to many, including himself. 

THE ABCs OF SALVATION

ACCEPT that you are a sinner, and God's punishment for your sin is death and separation from God forever.

BELIEVE that Jesus paid God's price for your sin when He died on the cross.

CONFESS "Jesus, I believe You are who the Bible and history declares You are — the Son of God. I humble myself and surrender to You. Forgive me. Make me spiritually whole. Change my life. Amen."



BIGGER BETTER FOR SMALL CHURCH

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Licking Assembly of God, although invested in its community through outreaches and school events, was, due to its location, out of sight and out of mind.

But now this Missouri church is “front and center” as in November the congregation purchased a 23,000-square-foot former discount store located at the intersection of the two highways that run through the small community of 3,100.

“This was a step of faith for us,” says Pastor Paul Richardson, “but it’s been great.”

Towns folk questioned the wisdom of the “step of faith.” But as they stepped back to watch, it soon became evident that this church — now with abundant space for community events — was a God send. Now they are cheering the church on.

Currently 8,000-square-feet have been remodeled, which is, by itself, twice the size of the former church building. The expansive space has drawn attention and church attendance is steadily growing, now up to 120-140

a week.

“The old church had reached its limits by far,” says Josh Kane, who is Student Ministries director with his wife, Amanda. “Kids are excited and they want to invite their friends — there’s an excitement that wasn’t there before!”

Kane says the children’s church has doubled in size and the teens have gone from an average of six to now as many as 20 kids.

“With the extra space, we can do a lot more activities,” Kane says. “This summer we’re going to do a karaoke coffee house and have a Nerf war — outreaches we could never have done before.”

“A lot of things are coming together,” Richardson says. “Things are finally beginning to tip for us. I believe it’s the culmination of years and years of ministry and now, being out in front, with that big new building.”

“I can see it [the church] bringing more people into our city,” says Mayor Keith Cantrell. “A church that size is a ‘win-win’ for the church and city.” 

FILIPINO PASTORS STRESS OUTREACH

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Most people don’t embark on their first pastorate at the age of 59. But Nick Garife felt up for the challenge.

In 2015, Garife planted Gateway Assembly Church in South Gate, California, just 7 miles southeast of downtown L.A. Garife has lived in the community since 1994, including the last 11 as director of the Teen Challenge Ministry Institute.

South Gate is 96 percent Hispanic. Garife is Filipino and doesn’t speak Spanish. Nevertheless, around 80 people are showing up for Sunday services at the multiethnic Gateway Assembly Church, including a variety of contacts Garife had during his Teen Challenge days.

Gateway Assembly is a parent affiliated church under the auspices of Lord of Harvest LA, pastored by fellow Filipino Benny Aranas. For years, Aranas sent troubled kids to the nearby Teen Challenge program that Garife operated.

Lord of Harvest LA is located in a historic Filipino district. Aranas, 67, says first-generation worshippers love to sing songs in the Tagalog language, which is a mixture of Filipino and English. Both services are in English. Aranas, who immigrated from the Philippines 35 years ago, has noticed that many young adult Filipinos in the U.S. — including two of his four children — are marrying Caucasians. 

BEATING BARRIERS IN SECRETIVE CITY

BY SEAN WHITE

Pastoring a church in a city with one of the highest rates of Ph.D.s per capita and near a major national scientific laboratory presents a unique challenge.

Shawn Amburgey became pastor of New Beginnings Los Alamos in New Mexico in 2008, when only seven people attended. Today, an average of 225 people show up on Sundays. Half of the adherents are involved in some kind of volunteer ministry in the church.

Los Alamos, site of the atomic bomb developed during World War II, is still dominated by Los Alamos National Laboratory, which employs 10,500 people in the city of 12,000.

For those who work at the laboratory, much of what they do is secret. This makes it difficult to get to know people, because they are afraid they might disclose something in conversation that could get them in trouble.

“When I got to the end of my message and said, ‘Everyone close your eyes,’ people got up and left because they didn’t want to interact,” Amburgey says. In such an atmosphere, attendees often don’t come to faith until numerous visits.

New Beginnings focuses on building relationships and trust in the community. An annual Easter egg hunt, now in its eighth year, draws over 1,200 residents and requires more than 100 volunteers. The church also distributes shoes to 600 children in local schools. 

LEARNED LESSONS PAID FORWARD

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Jimmy Doyle Smith spent 17 years incarcerated in Texas prisons. Now he voluntarily goes behind bars daily as part of his job.

Smith, 49, is a substance abuse counselor at the East Texas Treatment Facility in Henderson. Yet from 1994 to 2011, he served time after being convicted of three felonies. Smoking crack cocaine became his favorite recreational activity in college.

“I started doing wild and crazy things I never dreamed I would ever do,” Smith recalls. That included selling drugs and hanging out with dangerous people.

Fearing rival gang members were outside his door, he began shooting. It turned out he fired upon police. No one was hurt in the scuffle. However, in addition to a charge of possession with intent to deliver cocaine, Smith faced aggravated assault and attempted capital murder felonies.

“Usually if you shoot at the police they shoot back,” Smith says. “This was a turning point for me, because I realized somebody greater than man was protecting me.”

In prison, Smith connected with volunteers from Calvary Commission, a ministry founded by AG Chaplain Joe Fauss. Upon being placed on parole in 2011, Smith moved to Lindale and stayed for 2½ years in Calvary Commission’s aftercare program.

Smith has completed his bachelor’s degree in social work and become an



associate pastor.

For the past year, Smith has worked as a full-time substance abuse counselor in the lockdown prison treatment facility in Henderson. Smith teaches 56 men in a dorm setting and has a caseload of 25 inmates he meets with in individual sessions. His contacts include some of the men with whom he served time.

“Some of the guys hate me,” Smith says. “They see me as one of their own who got out and crossed the line to the other side.”

But Alicia Dovel, the program director who hired him, says the fact that Smith has a “street degree” that provided him firsthand experience helps in his job.

“I wish we had more people like Mr. Smith,” Dovel says. “If everybody was unashamed and knew they could move forward past hurts and hang-ups, there wouldn’t be so many people staying in their addictions for years.” 

— considered the most remote town in the continental U.S. — the family home is even more isolated, on a 40-acre spread three miles from the nearest neighbor, a cattle rancher. The 7,500-foot elevations bring long, harsh winters as well as plentiful moose, elk, pronghorn, deer, and bighorn sheep, not to mention fishing, for the family’s table.

A large portion of food for the household comes from the land. The animal is butchered for its meat, but other parts are used for other purposes. Edwards uses a plethora of skills learned from other outdoorsmen to tan hides and to make bows, arrows, leather shoes, purses, duffle bags, and

even pants. He also melts down fat for tallow for candles.

The leather goods, along with Edwards’ abilities as an outdoors and hunting guide, welder, and equipment and construction repairman, bring in money for the relatively few items the land and the family’s own hands or trading cannot provide. The nearest town of any size is Lander (population 7,700), located 135 miles southeast.

Edwards estimates that despite there being a dozen other churches in the Pinedale area, 90 percent of local residents won’t attend any of them.

“That’s where outreach and an outpouring of understanding and the love of God come in,” Edwards says. 

SCHOLARSHIP HELPS HOMELESS STUDENT STAY IN COLLEGE

BY AMBER WEIGAND-BUCKLEY

God is faithful. That is the testimony of Kelly Roe, a 2016 Making THE Difference (MTD) Scholarship recipient and theater major at Evangel University (Springfield, Missouri).

“I entered EU as a freshman and fell in love with the school,” Roe says. “I am learning academia and being stretched spiritually; this school means the world to me.”

However, Roe’s testimony is not limited to God making a way for her to pay school bills. She has overcome many obstacles, including a broken home, the death of her mother, and the physical and emotional abuse she experienced while at home, which led to her present homelessness.

Her sophomore year, after her mother’s death, Roe returned to school to focus on God’s calling for her to become a teacher.

The following year, as funds became increasingly tight, Roe shared her challenges with Evangel’s financial aid department. As a result, she received a dependency override and became eligible for grants. The MTD Scholarship was one of those blessings.

“If it had not been for scholarships, there would have been no way for me to return to school,” Roe says.

The MTD Scholarship is funded by AGTrust, in partnership with the Alliance for AG Higher Education. 