

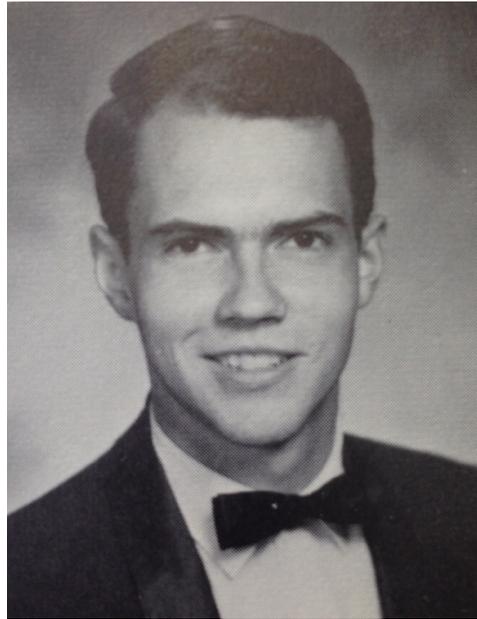
THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

When Don Kiser and his wife, Sharon, graduated from Southeastern University (Lakeland, Florida) in 1972, they felt God's call to minister among the migrant workers of Eloise, Florida. They moved into the impoverished community and started knocking on doors of people often considered to be outcasts in society. Over the next 25 years, the Kisers developed a thriving ministry among the migrants of central and south Florida.

In the 1970s and 1980s, many migrants in Florida lived in utter squalor. They lived in camps provided by the owners of the orange groves where they worked. Raw sewage ran in the streets between decaying shanties, liquor stores, and rusted-out mobile homes.

Eloise was considered a "permanent" migrant community, as some lived there all year instead of following the crops. Most churches did not know how to minister to the migrants. They didn't want dirty, smelly, barefoot children on their church



carpet, and the deeply ingrained problems of the adults seemed an insurmountable obstacle to ministry.

It was in this environment that the Kisers, at the young age of 23, felt called to minister.

Read "Migrant Town Minister" by Stephen Strang on pages 14-17 of the April 20, 1975, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/april201975. 



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TOP STORIES FROM PENEWS.ORG

SUNDAY,
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2017



LIGHTS UP SPREADS GOSPEL VIA MUSICAL THEATER

PAGE 2



YIELDING TO GOD OF HIS SEASONS

PAGE 5

WALKING A HIGHWAY FOR SPEED THE LIGHT

PAGE 5

DEBUNKING BEAUTY IMAGE LIES

PAGE 6

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MORE INFORMATION.

VALLEY FORGE PRESIDENT NAMED [PAGE 3](#) • LEADER IS HIGH ON THE LORD [PAGE 4](#) • PASTOR DONATES BAKED GOODS [PAGE 7](#) • THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY [PAGE 8](#)



LIGHTS UP SPREADS GOSPEL VIA UNCONVENTIONAL MUSICAL THEATER

BY GINGER KOLBABA

Brent Grosvenor began preparing to perform on Broadway while still in high school. And his Lewiston, Idaho, regional theater director, Fred Scheibe — who had performed on Broadway for 14 years — saw real talent in Grosvenor. Scheibe predicted Grosvenor would be a star three years after arriving on the Great White Way.

“He’d groomed other performers who went on to Broadway or Hollywood, so he was convinced I would do the same,” Grosvenor says.

After Grosvenor accepted Jesus as Savior in his senior year in high school, however, he felt he needed to leave behind dreams of attending Julliard and stardom to pursue more God-honoring endeavors, even though he didn’t know what that would look like. His director took it hard and told Grosvenor to tell God that the world needed his talent.

God already knew. As Scheibe prepared Grosvenor for stardom, God prepped him for a different purpose. While studying for the ministry at Trinity Bible College and then at Northwest University, Grosvenor sensed God leading him back to the stage — this

time to use his talents not for his own fulfillment, but to introduce unreached people to the gospel and to disciple and strengthen Christians.

In 1997, Grosvenor and his wife, Tami, founded Lights Up, a professional theater company/ministry, based out of Crossroads Community Cathedral. The East Hartford, Connecticut, church has a 900-seat, state-of-the-art auditorium. Lights Up also travels throughout the U.S. and Europe, sharing the good news through the performing arts.

“When you put music and stories together, you have the most effective way to influence someone’s thinking and behavior,” Grosvenor says.

In the thousand shows Lights Up has performed, thousands of people have dedicated their lives to Christ or made recommitment decisions. After each performance, the cast offers an opportunity to respond to the gospel, whether through a traditional altar call or, if performed at a theater, through a more conversational approach. In those instances, Grosvenor shares a brief message, based on the particular show running, and invites people to

PASTOR DONATES BAKED GOODS

BY IAN RICHARDSON

In just over a year as lead pastor at Council Bluffs First Assembly of God, Bill Hartman has established a reputation as “the doughnut guy.”

Through his 5-year-old side hobby called “Bill’s Bakery,” Hartman has become well-known not only for the made-from-scratch baked goods he brings to church functions, but also for those he distributes gratis within the community.

Hartman has provided doughnuts, cinnamon rolls, and other baked goods to first responders, businesses, and organizations, allowing him to bless others while becoming a familiar face within the community. Hartman and his wife, Linda, came full circle to pastor in the western Iowa city of 62,600.

During their years at Trinity Bible College, the Hartmans took jobs at Fran’s Bakery, where they learned to make a variety of tasty items such as doughnuts, cinnamon rolls, apple fritters, and long johns from scratch.

Hartman fell back into the baking groove five years ago when, while pastoring in Arlington, Washington, he



purchased a 20-quart mixer and the church bought him a tabletop fryer.

Since moving to Council Bluffs, Hartman has made dozens of doughnuts for the local fire and police departments, as well as local businesses, neighborhood block parties, and statewide events for the Iowa Ministry Network. Other times, he simply takes a dozen or two around the community to see where God leads him.

“Watching our pastor spend his time and his gift – working through the night making doughnuts and serving the community – sets the tone,” says Sheri Kasper, children’s pastor at the church. “It has really prompted the congregation to step up and step out.” 

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.”

PASTOR IS HIGH ON THE LORD

BY GAIL WOOD

Jordan M. Hodges' most unlikely journey from druggie to pastor came to be during incarceration.

At 19, Hodges sat in jail, serving an almost two-year sentence for selling and using meth. While behind bars, Hodges listened to a pastor share the good news. He made a life-changing conversion, turned his back on drug addiction, and opened his arms to the redeeming grace and forgiveness of Jesus.

Today, Hodges is lead pastor at the downtown campus of Christian Faith Center, an Assemblies of God congregation in Nampa, Idaho — the part of the city where he grew up, selling bags of marijuana in high school.

"I realized not everybody in high school had 50 bucks, but they had five," Hodges says.

Soon, smoking dope advanced to using ecstasy and meth. Sometimes he'd inject as much as \$1,000 of meth a day. To support his addiction, Hodges moved large amounts of drugs for gangs. Late one night while high on meth, police attempted to arrest Hodges, who stands 6 feet, 8 inches tall. Hodges saw laser beams from the guns aimed at him. Panicked and high on drugs, he suffered a cardiac issue before police could pump his stomach.

Hodges went to prison after being convicted of delivering two ounces of meth, worth about \$7,000.

"I remember sitting in my jail cell



and I'd just cry as the presence of God came over me," Hodges says.

Hodges, 30, now is part of the six campuses of Christian Faith Center, which draw 1,500 weekly attendees. The spiritual hunger exhibited by Hodges impressed Monty R. Sears, senior pastor at the main campus.

"It's one of the most amazing life changes I have ever heard of in my entire life," says Sears, who initially offered Hodges an office job at the church, licking stamps and mailing letters, plus doing janitorial work.

Almost six years ago, Hodges says God called him to plant a church in north Nampa, the same area where he dealt drugs.

"I lived in hell for several years of my life, and I think that just made the bondage that people live in on a day-to-day basis so much more real to me," Hodges says. PE

YIELDING TO GOD OF HIS SEASONS

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

At 12, Emilio De La Cruz started taking drugs, which triggered a lifestyle of crime and violence — as well as stays in juvenile jail. In an altercation at 17, a shotgun discharged, and police arrested Emilio. He started to read a Bible in his cell.

Placed on probation, De La Cruz accepted a girlfriend's invitation to attend a Spanish-language Assemblies of God church.

"From that moment — I didn't recognize it then as the touch of the Holy Spirit — I lost all desire to use drugs and to drink," De La Cruz remembers.

Almost immediately upon conversion, De La Cruz sensed a call to ministry. After attending bible college, he became an AG evangelist, married his wife, Elvira, and spent 14 years pastoring a Mexican church, Centro Cristiano, in Manson, Washington.

In 2000, De La Cruz moved to Avondale, Arizona, and began a Mexican church with 10 people. Today, New Life Covenant Church has 250 regular attendees. De La Cruz leads both English and Spanish-language services.

The congregation includes a few former drug addicts and ex-gang members, some of whom have gone through a men's discipleship program and live in a residential home on church property. PE

WALKING A HIGHWAY FOR SPEED THE LIGHT

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Last year, Andrew Brown, as a member of First Assembly (now Legacy Church) in Hot Springs, Arkansas, youth group, wanted to do something significant for Speed the Light (STL), the Assemblies of God youth missions effort. He decided to do a 113-mile fundraising walk from Hot Springs, Arkansas, to Texarkana, Texas.

Brown, 20, who also recently became the church's assistant youth pastor, was joined by his friend, Andrew Diehl, on the walk over their spring break in March. Brown's girlfriend, Destiny Clowers, 19, who also attends First Assembly, and Sarah Reynolds, 18, were the support team, praying for the young men as they walked and providing a car full of food and beverages for them.

"The mornings started off in the 60s, but by the afternoon, the temperature would climb to the mid-80s," Brown says about the walk. "You could just feel the heat coming up from the pavement through the bottoms of your shoes — and being on the highway, there wasn't any shade."

During the walk, the walkers told curious drivers (who stopped to see if they needed help) about what they were doing and why — many of the motorists then donated towards their effort. Altogether, they raised more than \$3,000 for STL! PE



DEBUNKING BEAUTY IMAGE LIES

BY PATTI TOWNLEY-COVERT

As a 10-year-old girl, Angela Lynne Craig's father informed her that if she didn't lose weight, she wouldn't be socially acceptable. Ridicule by her peers added to her insecurity.

The instability of her parents' marital status complicated matters. Craig's dad married four times, her mother three. Craig says she suffered from loneliness until sixth grade, when she finally made a friend — a pastor's daughter.

Invited to church, Craig says she accepted Jesus as Savior. As a senior in high school, the popularity-seeking Craig lost weight and stopped attending church. Yet nothing — not dates, partying, or becoming a people-pleaser — filled the empty void left inside.

It took a five-car pileup for Craig to truly surrender to Christ at age 24. Though Craig suffered a traumatic brain injury that left her with a sixth-grade reading level, God's plans for her could not be thwarted. For the past nine years Craig, now 48, has served as women's ministry team director for the AG's Northwest Ministry Network, which encompasses Washington and Idaho.

Due to her chaotic upbringing, Craig

didn't want to ever marry or have children. But meeting Mark changed her mind. Together they went back to church, and now they've been married for almost 20 years, providing a stable home for their two sons, Austin, 17, and Bret, 15.

Craig sensed the ministry call when her youngest was a toddler. She returned to school and earned a 3.9 grade point average for both her bachelor's and master's degrees. In 2015, her master's thesis turned into the book, *Pivot Leadership: Small Steps...Big Change*. Shortly thereafter, Craig says her non-Christian doctor expressed astonishment at how, despite ongoing struggles with reading and memory, Craig not only could succeed academically and write books, but also thrive as a wife and mother.

A few months ago, Craig started Northwest Ministry Network high-challenge equipHER groups that already have over 400 participants.

"Women are coming from all over, meeting in person and online," Craig says. "Many women are finding us through social media, coming from outside the Church, wanting to know their purpose." 

consider inviting Jesus into their lives.

"When people hear and experience these shows, their lives are touched," says his wife, Tami. "It's incredible to be part of it and to feel God's presence infused through the whole thing."

Even though Lights Up has experienced tremendous success in reaching people for Christ, keeping the ministry going financially has proved challenging.

"It's expensive to produce a Broadway-quality show," Grosvenor says, regarding the 35 yearly performances of various full-scale "runs" put on locally and on the road. As a nonprofit ministry, Lights Up relies on donations from organizations and individuals who have caught the vision.

An ordained Assemblies of God minister, Brent acts as the company's creative director — writing, directing, producing, and performing each show. Tami, content to be behind the scenes, serves as the production manager who handles sound, lights, and the set.

Lights Up's productions include annual holiday offerings, such as the Christmas shows *Prince of Peace* and Easter's *The Passion of the King*. In addition, contemporary offerings, such as *Lost in Vegas* and *Mystery*, focus more toward reaching secular audiences. Lights Up also licenses the musicals to churches and theater companies. In June, the Grosvenors will take a new show, *The Keys*, to Poland. 

VALLEY FORGE PRESIDENT NAMED

David S. Kim has been chosen as the 10th president of the University of Valley Forge (UVF), concluding a yearlong search to lead the Assemblies of God school in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania.

On April 5, the UVF Board of Trustees affirmed Kim as president, and also elected Ron McManus, who had served as interim president, as the university's first chancellor. Don G. Meyer served as president from 1997 to 2016.

Kim has served in a variety of international and entrepreneurial leadership positions. He is a 1997 UVF alumnus and holds a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary. Ordained by the AG in 2004, Kim has

been a church planter and led several Christian schools.

With his wife, Rebekha, Kim has four children: Lauren, Taylor, Nichole, and Elijah. The Kims lived in Ecuador, where he served as the CEO of Terrayork Cacao, a cacao exportation company. In 2015 he became chair of the UVF Department of Intercultural Studies. He began serving as the university's chief operating officer in December 2016.

"It is my firm conviction that UVF must be devoted to equipping the next generation of leaders to be completely in love with Jesus, fully devoted to following Him, and empowered by the Holy Spirit," Kim says. 