

THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY GLENN W. GOHR

A heart-wrenching true story titled “Freddie’s Christmas” appeared in the *Pentecostal Evangel* 85 years ago this week. “Freddie” referred to Frederick Arthur Graves (1856-1927), the noted songwriter who became an early leader in the Pentecostal movement.

Freddie was in a family of four boys and one girl. The children were taught to love and trust God. Sadly, Freddie’s father and mother died within three years of each other, and the children were sent to different homes.

Freddie was taken in by Mr. Hollis, who wanted a boy to help with farm chores. Hollis was cruel to the boy — once giving him a Christmas stocking like his other children, only filling Freddie’s stocking with nothing but wood shavings, and laughing at the boy’s tears. Despite ongoing cruelty, the Lord enabled Freddie to forgive Hollis.

Years later Freddie became a minister of the gospel, transferring his ordination to the Assemblies of God in 1916. Graves’ testimony inspired him



to write numerous songs, including “He Was Nailed to the Cross for Me,” “He’ll Never Forget to Keep Me,” and “Honey in the Rock.”

Read Vina Graves’ article, “Freddie’s Christmas,” on pages 6 and 13 of the Dec. 19, 1931, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/dec191931.



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TOP STORIES FROM PENEWS.ORG

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THE BROTHERS’ ICE CREAM DREAM

PAGE 2



SPECIAL DELIVERIES TAKE TO THE ROAD

PAGE 3

THEY FLED TO EGYPT

PAGE 4

VETERANS RECEIVE CHRISTMAS SURPRISE

PAGE 5

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MORE INFORMATION.

RETIRED FOR THE KINGDOM [PAGE 5](#) • A CHRISTMAS VISION FOR KARA [PAGE 6](#) • “KIDS FOR KIDS” FINDS WARM RECEPTION [PAGE 7](#) • THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY [PAGE 8](#)



THE BROTHERS' ICE CREAM DREAM

BY GINGER KOLBABA

What better way to make money for two entrepreneurial-minded brothers, Blake and Nolan Shofner, than to sell ice cream?

Three years ago, the Princeton, Illinois, siblings took their idea to their parents, Jason and Monica, who agreed to purchase a used handicap-accessible bus, which they planned to turn into an ice cream truck.

The boys were thrilled with their prospects, but were unable to get the business going because the Shofners ended up using the truck as their main vehicle after the family van broke down. Then they suffered another setback. Nolan, who was born with spinal muscular atrophy, a disease that's left him unable to move and requires a full-time caregiver, lost his night nurse, so Jason and Monica had to step in. For nine months, with limited sleep, time, or resources to focus on refurbishing the ice cream truck, the boys' dream stalled.

Nolan, 16, and Blake, 13, continued with other activities, including involvement with the youth group at The People Church in Princeton.

In 2014 the family headed to a National Youth Ministries Momentum conference. While there, Blake and Nolan caught the vision for missions and wanted to raise money for Speed the Light. Blake and Nolan determined they could raise \$4,000. But how?

Immediately, Blake knew. The ice cream truck.

Nolan agreed. "We wanted to get involved because some people don't have the chance to know Jesus," he says.

Soon word got out about the brothers' goal — and that the truck needed work. The Shofners were stunned when Boys and Girls Missionary Challenge (BGMC) offered to pay \$10,000 for the repairs, which included new tires, an air conditioning unit, serving windows, refrigeration unit, and a generator.

However, between issues with Nolan's care and the other family vehicle continually conking out, the truck sat unused. Still, when Momentum '15 came, Blake pledged to raise \$3,000. Nolan pledged \$12,000.

"I couldn't believe it," says Monica,

"KIDS FOR KIDS" FINDS WARM RECEPTION

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Justin Kochs, the children's pastor at Central Assembly of God in Springfield, Missouri, says he wanted to help his Sunday morning Kidzone kids (kindergarten to fifth grade) do a unique BGMC Christmas project. When he heard about the Kids for Kids program, he found his answer.

"Kids for Kids is a program where kids raise funds to buy baby goats for ministry personnel working with people in Northern Asia. These people have never heard the gospel and are living in extreme poverty," Kochs says. "The goats are given to the villagers — each goat costs \$85."

The average annual income in the villages is less than \$440 a year — so a trio of goats would cost more than a half-a-year's salary!

Goats can be used for milk, making cheese, breeding, selling, and even meat. The gifting of goats can lead an entire village out of poverty and also gives ministry personnel opportunities to share the gospel.

"My goal is to help our kids develop hearts of active compassion," Kochs

says. "I want our kids to understand the Great Commission — that not only are there children in the world who have never heard about Jesus and live in extreme poverty, but that they can do something to change both of those things."

Kochs also coordinated with the leaders of the children's Christmas musical to host a post-musical fellowship/fundraiser. Following the musical on Dec. 4, they held a Kids for Kids fundraiser, offering cookies, wassail, and hot chocolate for any donation.

"We used about 15 minutes that Sunday morning to allow the kids time to decorate cookies for the fundraiser," Kochs says. "This way, all the kids were involved in helping make the fundraiser a success."

Over \$2,000 was raised — enough to buy about 23 goats! 



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."



THEY FLED TO EGYPT

BY GEORGE O. WOOD

Throughout the world an unprecedented number of people have fled for their lives, seeking a place of safe harbor for themselves and their families. Many are now living in a foreign land, dependent on the goodness of strangers.

This mass movement of people reminds us as Christians that our Bible is full of stories about people who migrated. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Naomi, David, Jeremiah form just a few prominent examples of displacement. Add the family of Jesus to the list. Remember? They fled to Egypt for safety from Herod's attempt to kill the infant Jesus.

Someone in Egypt opened their hearts to the family of Jesus, and Jesus Himself. They provided sustenance and opportunity for them to stay safe, to stay alive. We can do no less for those who are now in a desperate flight for safety.

We remember that Jesus Himself, in the last days of His ministry, said, "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and

you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me" (Matthew 25:35-36).

I'm confident that part of the stories Jesus heard as a boy were from his parents who told Him of the kindness of people who took care of them in Egypt. He may also have heard some stories of people who discriminated against the family.

At this Christmas season, let's remember the Word teaches us that "he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each of us" (Acts 17:26-27). This movement of people has not surprised the Holy Spirit.

May the Holy Spirit help us to open our hearts, hands, our time, and finances to minister the care and love of Jesus to people who are in such desperate need at this Christmas season. 

VETERANS RECEIVE CHRISTMAS SURPRISE

BY DAN VAN VEEN

They're old, many are restricted to wheelchairs or walkers, they require long-term skilled nursing care, and, what too often is forgotten, they're heroes.

The 200 veterans who live at the Mount Vernon (Missouri) Veteran's Home have all devoted a portion of their lives defending America's freedom. However, whether it is dementia or disability, they have a difficult path before them.

Recently, David and Brenda Pantleo, U.S. missionary motorcycle chaplains through AG U.S. Missions Chaplaincy Ministries, were told of a need the veterans were experiencing.

"There are 200 residents... who are living and receiving care there," David says. "The home only had five electric razors to share with the 186 men."

Working with American Legion Riders from Post 639, Brenda spearheaded raising funds to surprise the veterans with an early Christmas gift. They raised nearly \$6,500 and purchased 186 electric razors, 200 body washes, 200 toothbrushes w/holders, 200 lotions, and 200 bags of candy.

On Dec. 15, David, Brenda, a minister friend, and three members from Post 639 went room-to-room to presenting gift bags to veterans.

"It's important that the veterans who served our country with distinction not be forgotten," says Manuel Cordero, senior director of Chaplaincy Ministries. 

RETIRED FOR THE KINGDOM

BY RACHEL DAWN HAYES

In 1997, at the age of 78, Fonda Kavanaugh retired from a 33-year career as an X-ray technician and radiology instructor. Soon after, her pastor, Ron Traub of Sioux Falls First in South Dakota, asked her to join the church staff as prayer and visitation pastor. Kavanaugh far exceeded the expected 20 hours a week on the job. She ministered to the shut-ins and hospitalized, and would spend entire days waiting and praying with the families of those undergoing surgery.

"She was the best hire I ever made," Traub says.

In addition to her rounds at nursing homes and hospitals, Kavanaugh also began teaching a class on Wednesday afternoons for seniors in the congregation.

About a year into the position, Traub asked Kavanaugh to become a credentialed AG minister, which she happily did. She continued in the prayer and visitation pastor role for nearly 13 years, retiring when Traub did in 2010. However, at 94 she still leads Bible studies and directs the senior choir at Sioux Falls First.

"I will continue to pray with people when they ask, and they quite often do," she says. 



A CHRISTMAS VISION FOR KARA

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Kara Hubbard is seeing Christmas for the first time this year. For 18 years, she has lived in darkness.

The born-blind first-year University of Arkansas at Little Rock student began receiving her sight at a Chi Alpha Campus Ministries retreat in October. Her vision has gradually continued improving since then.

At birth, doctors diagnosed Hubbard with optic nerve hypoplasia; her optic nerve never developed properly. Until a couple of months ago, Hubbard could only perceive degrees of brightness, but couldn't distinguish any objects in front of her.

Hubbard's mother, Tonya Wallace, says she began receiving visions from the Lord a couple of years ago detailing that her daughter would receive her sight. Wallace told Hubbard about the visions just before the semester started and the two began praying together about them coming to pass.

Hubbard's life began to change at a Saturday night service during the retreat.

"My mom's vision foretold all of what would happen, including the way it was going to happen," Hubbard says.

Two female students from other Chi Alpha groups — women who didn't know Hubbard — came up to her and said the Lord had told them Hubbard needed prayer for healing.

The two students began praying, and then many others joined them. Petitions to God stretched over an



hour. Hubbard began seeing the room growing brighter; she could differentiate shadows, and eventually motion by the end of the night, although everything still appeared blurry. For the first time, Hubbard could make out the ground on which she walked.

Hubbard got baptized the next day. She went to the baptism without the need for her white cane that for years had prevented her from bumping into objects. As Hubbard emerged from the water, her eyesight improved further.

"I could feel my vision coming into focus," Hubbard says. "I could see differences in skin tone and I could see clarity of faces."

Hubbard believes her eyesight will be completely restored. But for now, she is mobile on her own for the first time and able to decipher colors.

"It's changed my life in lots of ways," Hubbard says. "I don't believe there is anything impossible with Jesus." 

who noted that Nolan remained adamant. "We're encouraged to pray big. Nolan was teaching me a lesson in faith!"

By August of this year, the truck was finally ready to make its debut. Their first stop was the AG National Fine Arts Festival in Louisville, Kentucky. But on the way, another hardship struck. Ten minutes from the venue, the ice cream truck broke down. With no other option, the Shofners had it towed to the festival.

"It's been like this ever since we got that \$10,000 gift!" Monica laughs. "Every two weeks some breakdown would happen."

SPECIAL DELIVERIES TAKE TO THE ROAD

BY CHRISTINA QUICK

Kendra Faulkner and Christine Boesch attend Faith Memorial Church in Sandusky, Ohio, where Faulkner serves as children's director and Boesch runs an afterschool program. Seeing the needs in their diverse county — where many impoverished families live in isolated neighborhoods with little access to public transportation — led them to co-found a nonprofit organization.

Launched in October 2015, OHgo is a mobile outreach that uses converted food trucks to reach needy families that might otherwise have difficulty accessing services. Volunteers travel to disadvantaged neighborhoods, where they host events and deliver goods, such as school supplies, Christmas gifts, and books.

The family believes the disappointments teach lessons.

"Speed the Light is about providing vehicles to help missionaries spread the gospel," says Jason. "We get that, because it's essential to us too, because we have to safely transport Nolan with all his medical equipment. But the experience added a whole other layer to why the boys are so passionate about raising this money."

"We definitely get it now!" Monica agrees.

"It's awesome that we're able to be part of helping people know Jesus," Blake says. "When things get tough, He'll help us through it." 

"OHgo has partnered with local schools to help target the children that are most in need," Faulkner says. "We are able to make deliveries to those areas, create learning experiences in their environment, build trusting relationships, and facilitate kind acts."

They already have delivered more than 2,000 books through its mobile library, served more than 500 meals, and worked with local schools to implement a curriculum, OneK1ndAct, which encourages students to treat one another with kindness.

OHgo's largest outreach was Project Happy Christmas. During this event, teams of 60 volunteers went door-to-door delivering hundreds of shoeboxes containing small Christmas gifts and toiletry items. 