

# THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

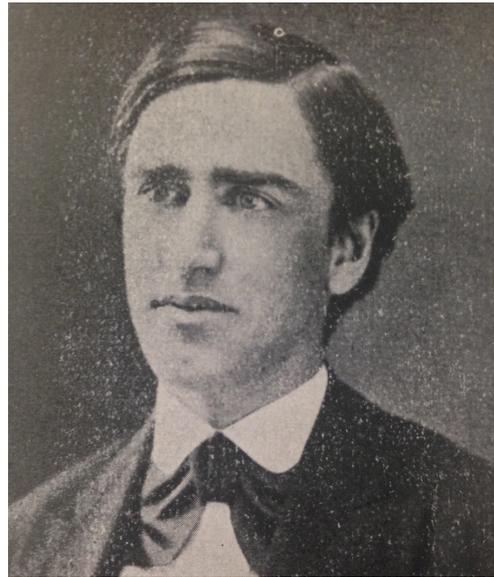
BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

In the U.S., evangelicals and Pentecostals often responded to the 20th-century “Social Gospel” movement — defined by good works, but leaving Scripture behind — by reasserting biblical truths. Some backed away from social action, concerned that an emphasis on good works could distract from “the more important duty” to preach the Word.

Outside America, missionaries were often surrounded by great suffering and felt compelled to minister in both word and deed, including Albert Norton, an early Assemblies of God missionary to India.

In a 1919 *Pentecostal Evangel* article, he wrote the following bold statement, which argues that Christian preaching must be accompanied by works of compassion:

“A Christianity that coldly sits down, and goes on its routine of formal work, and allows its fellowmen to starve, or to be obliged to go through all the hard sufferings and exposure connected



with famine, without effort to help them, might as well quit its preaching.”

*Pentecostal Evangel* editor Stanley H. Frodsham responded. He asked readers to send famine relief to Gospel Publishing House, which he promised would “be promptly sent to the field.”

Read Frodsham’s article, “Plague and Famine Raging in India,” on pages 1-2 of the Feb. 22, 1919, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at [s2.ag.org/feb221919](http://s2.ag.org/feb221919).



PENTECOSTAL  
EVANGEL  
NEWS

A COLLECTION OF THIS WEEK’S  
TOP STORIES FROM PENEWS.ORG

SUNDAY,  
FEB. 26,  
2017



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## HOPE IN THE ALASKA WILDERNESS

BY ROBERT E. MIMS

To say the predominantly Native American town of Bethel, Alaska, is remote is an understatement. Located on the west coast of the nation's largest geographical state, Bethel is 400 miles west of Anchorage and accessible only by boat or airplane.

The 7,000 inhabitants don't live in a picturesque village depicted in Alaska travel brochures. Bethel's low-lying flatlands are cold and wet much of the year, and with the brief warmer summer weather comes clouds of bugs. More than 11 percent live below the poverty line, and there are problems of homelessness, alcohol and drug abuse, and domestic violence.

Yet Assemblies of God U.S. Missions Intercultural Ministries missionaries Anthony and Kristin Nelson, along with their seven children, are sharing the gospel through actions that, in a community historically leery of missionaries, speak volumes.

They launched what has become the Bethel Dream Center in September 2013, and have been making a difference ever since. They serve a hot meal, provide a bed on a subzero night, and give drug and alcohol counseling.

"From the beginning, our ambition has been to do the work no one else is doing, or wants to do," Anthony Nelson says. "Most people who come to us are at the lowest moments of their lives."

It began when the Nelsons moved into an aged, donated building.

"Maybe it should have been condemned, but we got to work, and God has sent all kinds of people to help," Nelson says.

The Nelsons initially raised enough money to make some repairs and to build an apartment on the second floor. That allowed the missionaries to cut down on their overhead, and to reinvest money that would have gone toward a mortgage back into their ministry.

Still, the downstairs of the structure — where the Dream Center and its programs would be based — remained unfinished as funds ran short. At first, the Nelsons served hot soup to the hungry on the streets of Bethel, and when Alaska's long, harsh winter came, the soup line moved into a first-floor hallway.

A building project by Samaritan's Purse at the nearby Alaska Bible Seminary helped the Nelsons secure the critical first floor improvements

## DISABILITY DOESN'T DETER MISSIONARY

BY ANN-MARGRET HOVSEPIAN

He uses PowerPoint to project the text of his messages when he preaches and his sister Beth interprets during phone calls. Yet Bradley Mattrisch doesn't let his speech or mobility challenges — direct results of developing cerebral palsy soon after his birth — stop him from proclaiming the gospel and teaching Scripture.

Mattrisch, ordained as an Assemblies of God minister since 2006, serves as an Intercultural Ministries U.S. missionary associate with Special Touch Ministry. (STM)

At age 12, Mattrisch attended STM's first Summer Get Away camp, and sensed a ministerial calling. Mattrisch has remained plugged in to the ministry since. He also excelled at Teen Bible Quiz competitions, graduated from Southeastern University, taught Sunday School, got involved in singles' ministry, and took further studies from Global University. He joined STM full time about nine years ago. Though his day-to-day focus is the information technology needs of STM, Mattrisch

also follows up with those who make new salvation commitments at camp and guides the curriculum program of the ministry, writing many of the lessons himself.

While STM co-founder Charlie Chivers didn't doubt Mattrisch's calling or ability, he wondered whether Mattrisch would have opportunities within the Church to use his gifts.

"People with disabilities are rarely given platforms," Chivers says.

Mattrisch says his biggest challenge has been the pressure he sometimes feels from those who suggest he doesn't have enough faith to be healed.

"When I go to different places, people want to pray for me to be able to walk, to receive a miracle," Mattrisch says. "I trust in God whether a miracle comes or not. God will reveal His glory in the future. Heaven will be so much better!" 



### 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."



## INWARD FOCUS – NOT ALWAYS A BAD THING FOR THESE YOUTH

BY DAN VAN VEEN

When it comes to giving to Speed the Light (STL), the youth at New Hope Assembly in Urbandale, Iowa, have found that taking a little time to focus inward has proven to have a very positive outward effect.

Brian Smith, the young adults/lead youth pastor at New Hope, explains that in past years, youth have supported the leader-directed efforts to raise funds for missionaries through STL. However, this past year, youth not only looked to leaders to facilitate giving, they looked to themselves.

The result was, by all standards, remarkable. In 2015, New Hope, which averages about 2,000 in attendance, gave over \$79,000 to Speed the Light. Last year, with a youth group of approximately 200, the church almost doubled its giving to nearly \$151,000 — its best giving year ever!

Smith explains that when Zach Hill, the middle school pastor, decided to shoot half-court shots as a fundraiser, getting pledges for each basket made, it helped students understand that they could use their God-given talents to

raise money for missionaries.

“We had a hockey player take pledges for every time he hit the cross bar with the puck in 30 minutes, another student shot 3-pointers, another did one-handed football catches — and they raised thousands of dollars!” Smith says.

Students also decorated and sold coffee mugs and T-shirts, put on a bake sale, held garage sales, baby-sat, and gave thousands of dollars in special offerings.

James Weaver, lead pastor of New Hope, says one specific STL project really inspired giving.

“Our people really got excited about the Africa Oasis Project,” Weaver says. “Two things that triggered the energy was the humanitarian side of clean drinking water and the spiritual side where souls are won for Christ — it really struck a chord with our people.”

Smith agrees. “Our youth group grew deeper spiritually as they became less focused on themselves and their needs and focused on other people who need to hear about Jesus.” 

## FOUNDER OF TURNING POINT TO SPEAK AT GC LUNCHEON

BY DAN VAN VEEN

David Jeremiah will be the featured speaker for the Discipleship Ministries/Influence Music luncheon to be held Aug. 9 at the 2017 General Council in Anaheim, California.

Jeremiah, who has served in San Diego as senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church since 1981, is the founder and voice of the daily radio program, *Turning Point*, which is offered on 2,200 radio stations worldwide. The program’s television companion is also accessible by an estimated 200 million viewers.

“We are thrilled to have Dr. David Jeremiah as the keynote speaker for this year’s discipleship luncheon,” states Ryan Horn, director of Discipleship Ministries. “Dr. Jeremiah has dedicated his life to bringing greater awareness of God’s Word to the multitudes. His unique ability to communicate the Word of God appeals just as much to the unsaved as it does to those who are in a committed relationship with Christ.”

The luncheon, to be held at the Anaheim Marriott, is value-priced at just \$15 — but space is limited. Those interested who have not yet registered for General Council should add the luncheon to their General Council registration form; those who have already registered, call Convention Services at 417-862-2781, ext. 4052. 

## AS BGMC SMASHES GIVING RECORD, PEN-FLORIDA DISTRICT LEADS THE WAY

BY DAN VAN VEEN

National Boys and Girls Missionary Challenge (BGMC) Director David Boyd has announced that two BGMC records were broken in 2016. Not only did BGMC break its previous annual giving record by more than \$831,000, the Peninsular Florida District became the first-ever Assemblies of God district to give more than \$1 million to BGMC in a single year!

According to Boyd, the total giving to BGMC in 2016 was \$7,843,886.85 — a 12 percent jump in giving over 2015’s record total.

“Right now, district by district it seems BGMC is waking up,” Boyd says. “Last year, right at 40 districts went up from the year before and half of those had record years!”

The Pen-Florida District has a passion for BGMC, as for the 11th consecutive time it led the nation in giving, only this time in record fashion. The district gave a record total of \$1,186,079.33 to BGMC in 2016. In fact, eight of the top-10 churches that gave to BGMC in 2016 were from the Pen-Florida District.

The Wyoming District was also recognized as it led the nation in per capita giving to BGMC with an average of \$17.76

However, BGMC isn’t slowing down. Boyd says the goal for 2017 is \$9 million! 

# SPREADING THE EVANGELISTIC FERVOR

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Martiz Ware accepted an invitation to New Hope International Christian Center in Norwalk, California, as a self-proclaimed “bona fide sinner” in 2010. Today, he is assistant pastor.

Ware and his then cohabiting partner, Rebecca, visited a service at the invitation of a friend. He says Pastor Eric Angeles and his wife, Ruth, displayed patience and kindness in presenting biblical truths. Ware commends other congregants for prodding him and Rebecca to make changes.

“It transformed our lives,” Ware recalls. They accepted Jesus as Savior and wed. Ware has been on staff since 2014.

After his conversion, Ware began a lunchtime Bible study among his staff at California State University-Long Beach, where he is director of administrative services. Employees from other departments have joined the weekly sessions in his office, too.

“It’s changed the whole work environment,” says Ware, 49. “There is freedom to talk about Jesus. People are not afraid to ask for prayer.”

Angeles, who has been lead pastor since he migrated from the Philippines in 2001, hopes additional outreaches will broaden the scope of New Hope’s lay ministry.

“We’re seeing a surge of energy because they’re now part of the ministry team,” says Angeles, 57. In



Martiz and Rebecca Wade

2016, Angeles participated in the yearlong Acts 2 Journey AG Trust Church Transformation Initiative, which resulted in evangelism and discipleship becoming key areas of future focus.

The church already is involved in annual outreaches to the community that include sponsoring a Light the Night/Trunk or Treat event for children that features hot dog and toothbrush giveaways, as well as a free Filipino-style barbecue where backpacks are distributed to 1,000 children. Ware is enthused by the involvement of teenagers and young adults in the church.

“The fervor of youth and young people can make a difference in the community,” Ware says. “They are boldly evangelizing friends and are dauntless in celebrating God.” PE

needed to move the feeding program — along with a children’s ministry, youth, and other activities — inside a warm, welcoming environment. The Moravian Church, the seminary’s sponsor, initially donated the Dream Center’s building.

Samaritan’s Purse project manager Dan Burton suggested helping out the Nelsons when the organization concluded work at the seminary. The Nelson family cooperation with other denominations to address urgent local needs impressed Burton.

“We could see that Anthony has a lot more vision for the community than any other groups there,” Burton says.

The Nelsons have officiated at

funerals for locals who have died too young, and offered words of comfort and hope in the wake of a string of suicides. The Nelsons believe they have helped make a dent in the toll of depression by working with others to listen to the suffering and counsel them in practical and spiritual matters.

One was Rose, a woman from one of the area’s 50-plus native villages who walked into the Dream Center early one morning as a desperate alcoholic near suicide. Anthony and Kristen prayed for her, listened, and encouraged her. Rose returned to her village, and Nelson soon received a text message: *Feeling right at home. Awesome feeling. Don’t miss the alcohol at all, thank Jesus.* PE

## SEU LAUNCHING SCHOOL OF WORSHIP

BY MICHAEL STEINER

In the fall of 2017, Southeastern University (AG) in Lakeland, Florida, will launch a School of Worship. Southeastern is restructuring its oldest, largest, and fastest-growing academic college, the College of Christian Ministries and Religion (CCMR). The School of Worship will be the first of the changes in the CCMR, with the goal of equipping and inspiring the next generation of worship leaders in the local church.

“We believe in creating a school where an above-industry-standard level of excellence is combined with a heart for leading believers in authentic worship,” said David Cook, Southeastern’s worship pastor and an alumnus.

Cook and Dan Rivera, another

Southeastern alumnus, are working together to create a cutting-edge worship training experience. The School of Worship will combine instrumental and vocal development academics with theological and ministerial courses to provide a fully accredited practical degree. The School will also focus on developing hands-on experience in worship leading, songwriting, and service producing.

“Our ultimate goal is to develop students who have a deep love for the local church, who can inspire, encourage, and equip future church congregations with authentic worship experiences,” said Rivera.

The School of Worship is scheduled to begin accepting applicants in the fall semester of 2017. PE