



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

Ernest Swing Williams (1885-1981), was a participant in the Azusa Street revival in 1906 and later became the general superintendent of the Assemblies of God between 1929 and 1949. During his tenure he brought great stability to the AG Fellowship in the United States.

Williams' article in the Dec. 29, 1934, *Pentecostal Evangel*, noted how people felt uncertain in regards to the next year. But he encouraged readers saying, "It is a time for the Church, the Bride of Christ, to trim afresh her lamps, to replenish her vessels with spiritual oil, to look diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God, lest any

root of bitterness springing up trouble and defile us."

Williams said we must look to "Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, seeing in Him our sufficiency even when our faith and our strength seem small." He also casted vision for the AG to advance evangelism at home, as well as in the foreign fields for the coming year. "This will require, not only desire, but money, strength, and purpose," he said.

Read the article, "Looking Toward the New Year," on pages 1, 6, and 7 of the Dec. 29, 1934, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/dec291934. 

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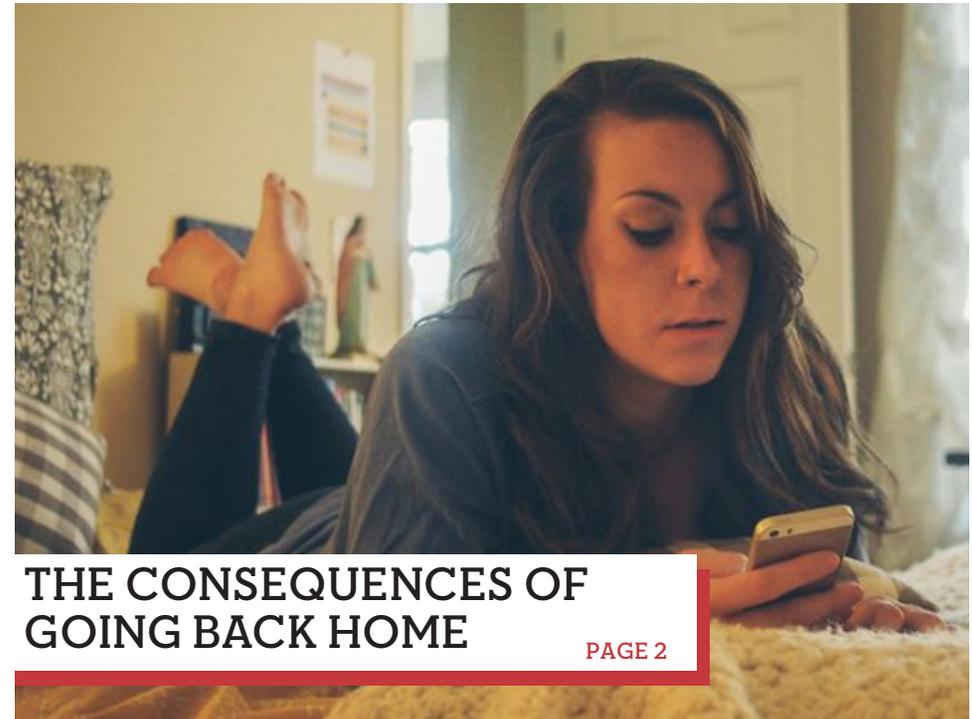
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TOP STORIES FROM PENews.org

SUNDAY,
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THE CONSEQUENCES OF GOING BACK HOME

PAGE 2



WOMAN HEEDS THE GOSPEL VISION

PAGE 3



REPAINTING THE CANVAS

PAGE 5



PREPARING FOR THE LONG HAUL

PAGE 6

TRANSPARENT WITH TRAGEDIES [PAGE 4](#) • BUILDING TOWARD THE 2017 GENERAL COUNCIL [PAGE 5](#) • A LIFE WELL LIVED, A MINISTRY WELL DONE [PAGE 7](#) • THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY [PAGE 8](#)



CONSEQUENCES OF GOING BACK HOME

BY PATTI TOWNLEY-COVERT

When Luke Womack graduated from college in 2011, he soon discovered that his bachelor's degree in business administration didn't guarantee a job. After months of sending out résumés, Car Max finally hired him as a used car salesman. Before that, Womack says, he was so desperate for work that he became a cook at Chick-Fil-A.

Neither position was what he had envisioned while earning a college degree. Though Womack, now 27, says he was grateful to owe only \$5,000 in student loan debt, he came to a stunning realization.

"If I went out and rented a place with an entry-level income as a 21-year-old, I was not going to be able to kill the student loan," says Womack, of Riverside, California. So he asked his parents to let him move home for a year, and they agreed.

A recent Pew Research Center study indicates that Womack isn't alone. For the first time since the U.S. Census began tracking such data in the 1880s, adults ages 18 to 34 are

slightly more likely to be living in their parents' residence instead of living with a spouse or partner in their own household. Though the study indicates that the postponement of settling into a romantic relationship with either a spouse or significant other is a strong contributing factor, economic issues also play a critical role. The lack of jobs and low wages make financial independence difficult, especially for young men.

Bobby Willis, 26, a third-year law student, agrees that it's the economy. "The cost of living is high and there's a lack of well-paying jobs," says Willis, who moved back home with his parents last summer while working for a nearby law firm. His father is Bob J. Willis, pastor of Northpark Community Church, an AG congregation in Fresno, California. Bob Willis believes some millennials (who are ages 21-35) simply aren't taking responsibility.

"This is the most coddled generation ever," says Bob Willis, 57. "Parents, educators, and even the Church

LIFE WELL LIVED, MINISTRY WELL DONE

BY DAN VAN VEEN

"His son told me how his dad had always said that he wanted to die doing what he loved," says a somber Dan Dangerfield, children's pastor at Life Church AG in Williston, North Dakota. "And that's the one thing of comfort right now — he died on his way to church wearing his Royal Rangers uniform."

David Rockstad, 60, was a living example of a man with the right priorities — God first, then family, followed by service to the church — though often all three priorities intertwined.

Rockstad has been leading Life Church's Royal Rangers program for decades. Over the years, he's impacted thousands of boys' lives.

According to Dangerfield, Rockstad died while driving to church on Dec. 7. He would be found slumped over the wheel of his car, unresponsive.

Hundreds attended Rockstad's funeral, including several of his Frontiersman Camping Fellowship Rangers who stood and wept openly beside his casket. But perhaps nothing was more telling than when after the



service, Lead Pastor Chris Walstad happened upon a young Ranger standing in front of Rockstad's closed casket, crying.

"He had written a letter to God," Walstad says, "and through his tears, he was reading it out loud in the otherwise empty auditorium. He read, 'Dear God, I love you and I hope you tell David to read this and send a sign to your children.' Then he paused and began again: 'Dear David. I wish you were still here because you were awesome. You were awesome, your son says you have a big heart and love, and you have a great soul, and I hope you could be down here giving your children a great big hug.'"

"Dave gave kids a reason to connect with the Royal Rangers program here," Walstad says with emotion. "We're all going to miss him." 

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."

TRANSPARENT WITH TRAGEDIES

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

For more than three decades, AG Intercultural Ministries missionaries John and Doris Knoles have ministered to Native Americans, many of whom have experienced heartbreaks, ranging from alcoholism to unemployment.

In the past couple of years, John Knoles, 67, also has served as a contingency chaplain at Luke Air Force Base in Glendale, Arizona. In addition, Knoles is an AG health care chaplain, which allows him to connect with military personnel through the Veterans Affairs Health Care System in Phoenix, where he distributes free Bibles and crisis line information every week.

In such contexts, the Knoles endeavor to offer hope to those they encounter, be it a Native American worried about a pending divorce or unemployment, or a veteran dealing with chronic pain from a war injury, PTSD, or survivor guilt.

Tragedy isn't merely a theory for the Knoles. They've experienced it firsthand with the deaths of their only grandchild and, 12 years later, their only daughter.

In 2003, Naomi, their then-unmarried 26-year-old daughter, felt overwhelmed by daily living and decided to end her life. She took nearly 100 sleeping pills and acetaminophen capsules. But she woke up in the morning, and then her thoughts turned to sparing her 9-month-old baby, Anna Marie, from life's despair.

Still under the influence of the



massive overdose — plus postpartum psychosis — she smothered her daughter with a pillow.

Naomi served the minimum 10-year sentence after a second-degree murder conviction. Upon release, she anticipated helping other women who struggled with postpartum depression. She wed a Christian man and they seemed happy.

However, a miscarriage renewed internalized postpartum depression. Because of her criminal record, Naomi — who had been a bank assistant vice president — couldn't even gain employment at a fast-food restaurant.

In August 2015, Naomi took her own life, just after her 38th birthday.

As with the death of their grandchild, John and Doris didn't see Naomi's suicide coming.

Because the Knoles share from their own devastation, the confidential counsel they offer Air Force personnel is well received.

"Part of the healing process is to help others to heal," Doris says.

"The loss of our precious Naomi has increased my sensitivity and burden for all who suffer with any form of depression," says John. PE

BUILDING TOWARD THE 2017 GENERAL COUNCIL

BY DAN VAN VEEN

The New Year has begun and excitement is building for the 57th General Council, which will be held Aug. 7-11 in Anaheim, California.

"I'm convinced that God has something in store for 2017 that may be unparalleled in its scope and impact," states AG General Superintendent George O. Wood. "I've been approached and contacted repeatedly by ministers and leaders who have confirmed that message through prayer, visions, and confirmations of their own.

"I believe the Spirit is going to be at General Council in a powerful and demonstrative way," Wood adds.

Following the line-up of speakers Aug. 7 and 8 at the Influence Conference, General Council will begin with Wood's keynote address on Tuesday evening, Aug. 8. Other speakers during the week include AG World Missions Executive Director Greg Mundis; AG U.S. Missions Executive Director Zollie L. Smith Jr.; AGWM missionary evangelist Jason Frenn; Dallas/Fort Worth Gateway Church Senior Pastor Robert Morris; lead pastors of Freedom Church in Carrollton, Texas, Kendall and Starla Bridges; and lead pastor of GT Church in Reading, Pennsylvania, Bryan Koch.

"God will pour out His Spirit, because revival is eminent," agrees Jason Frenn. PE

REPAINTING THE CANVAS

BY MELISSA MCKEEHAN

When Kevin D. Geer took over in 2012 as lead pastor of Canvas Church in Kalispell, Montana, he thought the church needed a major makeover, even though 700 people attended each week.

Theater seating replaced the pews, a lobby addition allowed congregants to gather before and after services, and modern worship music brought a relevance to young attendees. The body formerly known as Kalispell Christian Center, rebranded as Canvas Church.

The changes struck a chord in the city of 22,000 in the northwest corner of the state known as Big Sky Country. In the past four years, attendance has nearly quadrupled, to an average of 2,700 people each week.

With all the differences, though, Geer says altering beliefs found in God's Word is non-negotiable.

Geer believes the key to church growth is providing an atmosphere of excitement where people feel comfortable inviting friends. The new look and surroundings at Canvas Church have demonstrated an appeal to multiple generations.

As part of the rebranding process, the church has been more intentional in joining community events. Canvas Church has invested in billboards, had members become lunch buddies in local schools, bought coffee cards for foster parents, and delivered gift baskets to teachers on the first day of school. PE

PREPARING FOR THE LONG HAUL

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

During her childhood, Kate Angelo experienced living in an old school bus without electricity or running water; repeatedly being abducted by both of her divorced parents, in the process uprooted from her home and school with only the clothes on her back; her grandmother committing suicide while caring for her; being left at home by herself for weeks at a time as her father worked as an over-the-road trucker; abuse from being scalded by water, chained to a tree, and choked by her father's girlfriend and the girlfriend's daughter; abandonment by her mother for months with no money to care for her and two younger siblings; and ultimate placement in a pair of foster care homes.

Kate wed just after turning 18, and, unsurprisingly, the marriage didn't last long.

Despite all the trauma and chaos, Kate today is a well-adjusted, confident, and godly 38-year-old wife and mother. She and her 43-year-old husband, Jerry — who dealt with a lengthy court battle to gain primary custody of his neglected children — today lead Marriage Awakening. The Springfield, Missouri-based ministry is designed to help congregations develop strong marriage ministries.

The counseling and mentoring the Angelos provide at marriage conferences and workshops is full of real-life examples given their ruffled



backgrounds. The Angelos want to counter the unbiblical advice many people receive — even from other churchgoers — that encourages divorce: *You married the wrong person; God wants you to be happy; you need to follow your heart.*

“A lot of times people get divorced because others encourage them to do it,” Kate says.

“People get more education before getting a driver's license than they do before getting married,” says Jerry, who in 2012, after an 8-year legal tussle, gained full custody of his now 16-year-old son, John, and 14-year-old daughter, Haley. Jerry and Kate have been married since 2006. Kate has two sons from her first marriage, Logan, 19, and Gavin, 17.

The Angelos are in the final stages of adopting a fifth child, an 11-year-old foster child, Isabella.

“There are additional stresses and problems in blended families,” Kate says. “Spouses in second marriages have to work extra hard to get rid of selfishness.” 

haven't trained this generation to live independently.”

Willis believes the Church needs to help parents learn basic parenting skills so they can prepare their children to go out and live on their own. Northpark offers a six-week class preparing the parents of high school juniors and seniors for an empty nest.

At the same time, Willis says this new demographic creates opportunities for the Church.

“Millennials who live at home longer tend to come to church with their mom and dad,” Willis says, and that opens up the possibilities to engage them in

ministry.

Womack also started thinking strategically about millennial needs within the Church.

“The average student loan debt is \$31,200,” Womack says. “Just tallying up how long it took me to pay off my loans, most graduates would have to stay at home for six years to pay them off.” And that is problematic, especially for those wanting to go on the mission field.

“Debt threatens opportunity,” Womack says. “Any kind of debt will force someone to say ‘no’ to other opportunities.” 

WOMAN HEEDS THE GOSPEL VISION

BY CHRISTINE TEMPLE

Raised by a Hindu mother and atheist father who immigrated from India, Suprina Walvekar, 36, struggled with her spiritual identity from adolescence into her adult years.

Walvekar studied prophecies from many world religions, and eventually became part of the New Age movement.

“I kept going to astrologers, psychics, and tarot card readers,” says Walvekar, of Bloomfield, Michigan. She even kept Hindu idols above her bed.

At the age of 30, after watching an evangelist on television, Walvekar committed her life to Christ. She says she sensed God had been with her during her entire spiritual quest. She kept her plans to be baptized a secret from her parents.

Soon after being saved, her Hindu

idols fell off a shelf in her room three times in one day.

“I knew that God was giving me a choice, and I had to proclaim my faith,” she says.

On the day of her baptism, her father followed her to her church and tried to prevent her from going through with it. As she shared her testimony with the congregation, her father stood crying in the back of the sanctuary.

Walvekar says her parents briefly kicked her out of their home near Detroit, but their attitudes have improved as they've seen a change in her. Walvekar is trusting God for the salvation of her family members. 

