



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY GLENN W. GOHR

Missionettes, the original name of the national girls ministries program of the Assemblies of God, celebrated its first birthday 60 years ago. Now called National Girls Ministries Girls Clubs, the program was launched in 1955 as an extension of the Women's Missionary Council (now Women's Ministries Department).

Early in the 1950s, the Women's Missionary Council (WMC) began to develop the Missionettes program in response to the need to minister to girls and to establish a systematic plan for the older women to train the younger women (Titus 2:3,4).

Missionettes was introduced at the WMC Conference at the 1955 General Council. It was enthusiastically

received. The program was created for girls ages 12 through 17, with the intent to involve girls in church ministries. One of its primary focuses was missions.

The first Missionettes club was officially chartered in January 1956. Since then, the clubs have continued to be organized across the United States and in many other countries. Through the years, modifications have been made to include younger ages, but the ultimate purpose of winning girls to Jesus Christ and teaching them to live victoriously has never changed.

Read "Missionettes — One Year Old," on pages 28 and 29 of the Jan. 19, 1957, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/jan191957. 



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SUMMIT FINDS MILLENNIALS EAGER FOR MISSIONS

BY MARK FORRESTER

Students gathered in Houston from college campuses across the U.S. for the fourth World Missions Summit January 4-6. The event, which occurs once every four years, was preceded by 10 weeks of prayer and fasting for a great spiritual awakening.

The meetings kicked off with an incredible challenge.

“There are 6,000 unreached people groups and more than 6,000 in attendance tonight,” stated a Christian worker from a sensitive area on the opening night. “We can reach the world for Christ in one generation!”

Students packed into every available seat, then onto the floors at Houston’s George R. Brown Convention Center. The attendance was nearly 50 percent more than the previous record at The World Missions Summit (TWMS).

TWMS pairs missionaries from across the globe with college students, encouraging them to “give a year” of service “and pray about a lifetime.”

And it seems the students at the 2017 Summit came with hearts prepared to do just that.

“Over 6,000 university students and global workers experienced an outpouring of the Holy Spirit’s empowerment to go into all the world and preach the gospel at our fourth World Missions Summit,” says Greg Mundis, executive director of AG World Missions. “Almost 2,000 students committed to give a year and pray about a lifetime in missions.”

Many of the students in attendance came from Chi Alpha groups at state schools. Chi Alpha Campus Ministries is present on over 300 colleges and universities.

The unique atmosphere of TWMS blends experienced missionaries with eager students to face the realities of life overseas and to become inspired to take their gifts, talents, and abilities to the far ends of the earth.

The TWMS exhibit hall was a place filled with such encounters. In a matter

BORN AGAIN BAR DRAWS PRAISE

BY ROBERT MIMS

Not long ago, the old Sportsman’s Bar & Grill was a place with a gritty reputation, pouring spirits for the residents of Cascade, Montana. But even taverns can be born again.

In April 2015, the fledgling Canyon Life Assembly of God bought the downtown landmark. Today, it is the Holy Spirit that flows in a banquet room-turned-sanctuary for about 40 worshippers — and at the church-run, storefront Homestead diner, the homemade caramel rolls are favorites.

For Pastor Mark J. Nelsen, preparing Sunday’s sermons and managing the restaurant along with wife, Jessica, are just two sides of the same ministry coin in the town of 700.

“The Homestead has been our main outreach,” he says. “The goal is for people to come in for a burger or whatever and also have a God encounter, something as little as seeing that someone cares about them.”

The church participates in multiple outreaches, but it’s probably renovating the former bar that has earned Canyon

Life the most admiration thus far.

Cleansed with prayer and elbow grease, the building has been transformed both structurally and spiritually. Townsfolk have noticed, offering gratitude and praising the restaurant online.

Mary Lemieux, whose duties at the diner range from manager to, at times, janitor, definitely sees faith in all aspects of her work.

“I view all of the work here at The Homestead as unto and alongside the Lord,” Lemieux says.

So far, the church and eatery’s increased visibility in the community hasn’t translated into Canyon Life expanding beyond its three dozen regular attendees.

However, Mark sees his ministry in much the same way as cutting firewood. It’s a process, he says, where felling a tree is followed by trimming and cutting the wood for the stove.

“We view discipleship the same way, as a process, and each part is vital,” he says. 

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.”



JESUS WANTS TO BAPTIZE YOUR CHILDREN IN HIS WONDERFUL SPIRIT

BY JARED LASKEY

I was praying one night, having just put my 5-year-old son to bed, when he walked in. I was praying in the Spirit and he said, “I want to speak Spanish.”

I smiled and said, “I am not praying in Spanish, but in tongues.”

I then explained to him, “Praying in tongues is a language that Jesus gives you when you ask His Holy Spirit to fill you up. It helps you pray when you may not know what to pray, and it equips you to be a powerful witness to tell people about Jesus.”

I asked my son, “Would you like the Holy Spirit to fill you up and give you a language that helps you pray to Him?”

He said, “Yes.”

We prayed, the Spirit of God filled him up, and he started praising God in tongues.

Several years later I was putting my twins to bed, saying our prayers.

I felt the presence of the Holy Spirit wanting to fill them. I said, “Would you like the Holy Spirit to fill you up?” After they said yes, we prayed together, and then my 4-year-olds were praising God in a beautiful prayer language!

Years before this, I worked at a residential treatment foster care facility and was watching over six kids one night. One of them asked me how to pray in tongues. I explained it to them in a way I thought they could understand. Knowing that the question was a divine encounter, I asked them if they would like God’s Holy Spirit to fill them up and give them tongues.

Answering yes, I led them in a simple prayer and they were all baptized with the Holy Spirit!

Through these encounters, I learned that God’s Spirit wants to baptize our kids. He loves children as Jesus revealed in His life and ministry. 

THE REAL SOURCE OF LIFE

BY ERIC TIANSAY

An Assemblies of God U.S. missionary says she has seen God move in more ways than she can count in the largest Vietnamese community in the nation through a church she helped plant.

In August 2013, Liz Tran, who is with Missionary Church Planters & Developers, and her Vietnamese husband, Nhat, launched Source of Life Church in Westminster, California, in the heart of an area called Little Saigon.

The Trans didn’t have a church planting team — just themselves. But nearly half the people in attendance for the first service were people Nhat met and prayed for on the streets. Many wanted to testify about how God had healed them.

Shortly after the start of the church, a man connected with a local Vietnamese television station visited. He asked if Nhat would like to preach on television. They received 15 hours of free airtime on a local Vietnamese TV channel.

“Nhat would do a brief gospel presentation and then people could call in for prayer,” says Tran, who has three young children. Afterward, Nhat uploaded all 15 hours to YouTube. Subsequently, Vietnamese living around the world have logged on and watched, and called the church, now averaging about 60 a week, for prayer. 

PICKING UP THE GOSPEL SHOES

BY CHRIS MAXWELL

Assemblies of God evangelist Will T. Jones, the founder of Awakening Ministries International, is familiar with athletic success. He also knows about deep hurts. Serving as staff evangelist at People’s Church in Oklahoma City, and continuing his ministry around the world, Jones seeks to proclaim Christ and help set hurting people free from bondage.

Zollie L. Smith Jr., executive director of Assemblies of God U.S. Missions, believes Jones is making that happen.

“Will Jones has committed himself to God’s strategic plan of salvation by compassionately making sure that everyone has an encounter with Jesus,” Smith says.

Jones carries a burden for people because he remembers his own pain — seeing people he cared for fall victim to violence and the lure of money and having his best friend, who had a heart defect, die in his arms.

After college, Jones, 29, pursued playing pro basketball in Europe. He received invitations to NBA camps of the Phoenix Suns and Milwaukee Bucks.

“I knew that God could use me in a much greater way if I yielded to His dream for me rather than continued to pursue mine,” Jones says. “So, I laid down the hoop sneakers and picked up the gospel shoes.” 



RUNNING ON THE GROWTH TRACK

BY KEN WALKER

Mark Benton II, a health care administrator with the U.S. Army's Medical Service Corps, is part of the wave of newcomers the past two years at LifePoint Church.

This growth has nearly doubled the size of the Assemblies of God congregation in Clarksville, Tennessee. In addition to record attendance of just over 2,000 the Sunday before Thanksgiving, another 400 watched services online.

However, Benton says it isn't numerical growth that has drastically affected his spiritual life, including altering plans for a 20-year Army career to include becoming a military chaplain.

"Being part of LifePoint has challenged me to look through the lens of God's eyes instead of mine," Benton says.

While Lead Pastor Mike R. Burnette credits God for the explosive growth, he says practical reasons include expository preaching and refusing to bend biblical truth for seeker-sensitive purposes. The approach is working: LifePoint recorded 200 conversions in 2016.

While stressing scriptural beliefs, LifePoint appeals to unchurched and

de-churched visitors by stationing greeters everywhere, from the parking lot to the auditorium. Guests are encouraged to visit small groups, which meet in homes throughout the week.

Located close to Fort Campbell, which covers parts of Kentucky and Tennessee, around 60 percent of the congregation comes from a military background. LifePoint hasn't grown by catering to church members, though. Burnette says leaders want to empower Christians to reach the spiritually lost and give attendees an environment where they feel safe bringing unchurched friends.

"I wanted to pastor a church where I would want to go if I wasn't working there and wasn't saved," says Burnette, who came to Clarksville 6½ years ago when the church had only 85 regular attendees. "Everything is about moving people closer to Christ."

To help do that, the church offers a four-week growth track, which starts with an explanation of the spiritual journey of knowing God and an invitation to follow Christ. Other steps review building authentic relationships, discovering one's God-given purpose, and connecting people with opportunities to serve. 

of steps, students would sip Turkish coffee, write Mandarin characters, grind corn in traditional African fashion, or sit on a straw floor for personal stories from the Pacific Islands.

"We were approached by students who were geologists, jet pilots, engineers — all asking how they can serve to help reach the unreached," says Africa missionary Bill Moore.

AG World Missions Mobilization director Jeff Hartensveld says, "Very soon, like it or not, we will be handing the baton for the Great Commission on to the next generation. I believe God has uniquely designed them to bring us to the finish line of that age-old command of Christ to go to every nation. They are compassionate, they are mobile, and they desire the authentic power of the Holy Spirit in

their lives."

In fact, 53 percent of the U.S. Assemblies of God is under the age of 35. While many Millennials (18-34) have fallen out of churches in the U.S., the Assemblies of God has grown by more than 10 percent in that same age range within the past decade.

"I believe each student and campus missionary can expect to be used by God in ways we have never seen," says E. Scott Martin, national director of Chi Alpha Campus Ministries. "The Lord had spoken that we were about to witness the greatest student awakening in history, and that The World Missions Summit 4 would be a precursor to this great awakening . . . This is an awakening of Kingdom courage, abandonment, power, discipleship and covering." 

A CHANGE OF FORTUNE

BY DEANN ALFORD

Rose L. Stevens had a thriving full-time business as a Gypsy (Roma) fortune-teller in Florida when suddenly her husband of 28 years died of a heart attack.

Subsequently, her long resistance to Christianity and family members' invitations to church melted, and Stevens began devouring the Bible.

Through the Global University courses, Stevens has become a certified Assemblies of God minister. And in November, 18 years after coming to faith in Christ, she became the only AG-credentialed female Gypsy evangelist.

Stevens, 63, says she used to believe God gave



her the inside information about her customers, but she now acknowledges, "It was the god of this world."

As she delved deeper into Scripture, Stevens resolved to walk away from fortunetelling.

Within months, she moved to Phenix City, Alabama, to care for her father. Her parents' home — and their fortunetelling business — was almost directly across the road from First Assembly of Phenix City. 