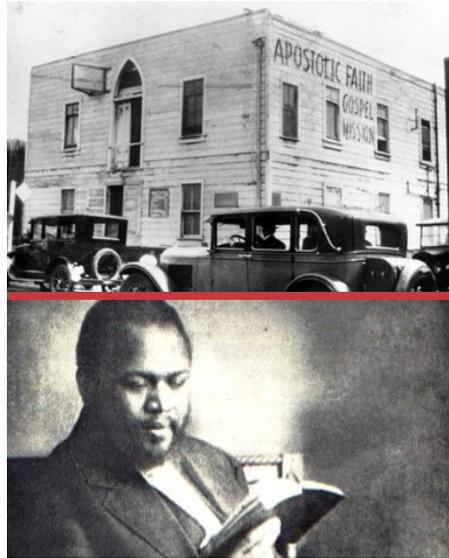


THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

It was an unlikely location for an event that would change the face of Christianity. In the summer of 1906, revival erupted in the newly formed congregation meeting at the small, rundown Apostolic Faith Mission at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles. Critics attacked the congregation because its mild-mannered black Holiness preacher, William J. Seymour, preached racial reconciliation and the restoration of biblical spiritual gifts. The Azusa Street Revival, as it is now known, soon became a local sensation, then attracted thousands of curiosity seekers and pilgrims from around the world.

The spiritual intensity of the revival was red hot for more than three years, making Azusa Street one of the most significant Pentecostal centers in the early 20th century. Just over 110 years later, the Pentecostal movement, broadly construed, now claims over a half billion adherents, the second largest grouping within Christianity



after the Catholic Church.

In 1916, Frank Bartleman, one of the participants at Azusa Street, wrote a fascinating eyewitness account about the revival.

Read Bartleman's article, "The Pentecostal or 'Latter Rain' Outpouring in Los Angeles," on pages 4, 5, and 8 of the March 11, 1916, issue of the *Weekly Evangel* (the predecessor to the *Pentecostal Evangel*) online at s2.ag.org/march111916. 



PENTECOSTAL
EVANGEL
NEWS

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TOP STORIES FROM PENEWS.ORG

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PASTOR NARROWLY ESCAPES TORNADO

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

An Assemblies of God pastor who started a church in a growing community six months ago lost his home in a tornado Monday night, but says he sensed God's protective hand as he and his sons huddled in the family's garage.

Jason R. Williams, who launched Valley Community Church in Grain Valley, Missouri, last September, was at home around 8 p.m. with his sons Ty, 11, and Talon, 8, when the electricity momentarily flickered off.

Talon already was in bed asleep and Ty expressed anxiety about the threatening weather. Jason prayed with Ty and assured his son that the Lord was watching over them. Realizing that meteorologists had forecast the possibility of tornadoes in the region, Jason wrapped Talon in blankets, and he and his sons headed for the garage after power went out again. The garage was the lowest point in the home they rented in Oak Grove, east of Kansas City, Missouri.

"We weren't even in the garage for 30 seconds when real strong winds and hail began hitting the house," Williams says. "Five seconds after that,

the garage door was sucked out like a balloon."

Still holding Talon, Jason pushed Ty to the concrete floor against the back wall of the garage. Jason and Ty tripped over bicycles.

Just then an outer wall of the garage collapsed inward. The wall missed the heads of father and sons by inches, stopped by a tool chest and a rolled-up playground inflatable.

"We fell in just the perfect spot," Williams says. "Otherwise the wall would have landed on top of us."

Debris churned through the air and cinder blocks fell, but Williams says God continued to protect him and his boys from harm. He estimates the tornadic activity took less than a minute.

Once the trio emerged from their sheltered spot, Williams realized the house had been lifted and moved about 30 yards southeast into the backyard.

"The tornado picked the house up off its foundation," says Williams, a Central Bible College graduate. "There's no fixing it."

Soon afterwards, his wife of 18

DISTRICT SCHOOL OF MINISTRY - MONEY BACK, GUARANTEED!

BY DAN VAN VEEN

Imagine going to college, but when you graduate, in addition to a diploma you get a check reimbursing for all the tuition you paid!

A fantasy? Not for those becoming ordained ministers through the School of Ministry in the Southern California (SoCal) Network.

In 2008, then SoCal District Superintendent Ray Rachels assigned Gordon Houston, then assistant superintendent, the task of creating a school of ministry for new ministers for the district.

"The first thing we did was create the School of Ministry which allows individuals to systematically move their way through to earning their credentials," says Houston, who now serves as secretary/treasurer for the network. "We didn't know it would explode!"

Beginning with just one center in 2009, the School of Ministry now has 12 English-language campuses and three Spanish-language locations throughout the SoCal Network. Last year, the

School of Ministry offered 183 different classes led by 70 instructors and professors through 15 campuses.

"A student can complete the educational requirements for a certified credential in as little as nine months, and each class only costs \$129," Houston says, adding that when the student is ordained, those fees are refunded. "The reason we can do this so affordably is that our instructors do this out of a sense of ministry and only receive a small stipend for their time — we could never do this otherwise."

The quality of education is also very strong, Houston says.

"All of our instructors are required to have at least a master's degree," he explains. "We currently have an agreement with Vanguard University that the courses are transferable as upper education units."

The program has proven so successful that 40 to 50 percent of all newly credentialed ministers for the SoCal Network have come through the School of Ministry. 

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."



CALLED TO ISOLATED SPOTS

BY DEANN ALFORD

Iberia, Missouri, population 736, is a half an hour away from a Walmart. Its one small factory produces hazmat suits. Many livelihoods depend on the farms and cows and turkey barns that punctuate the landscape.

There is a fair deal of poverty, according to Chip Sanders, pastor of Iberia First Assembly of God, which has an average Sunday morning attendance of 65.

“We have single parents who are just scraping to get by,” Sanders says.

In 2012, his wife, Rebekah, lost a kidney to cancer but, like many others in Iberia, the family cannot afford health insurance. Sanders supplements his small salary from his church with substitute teaching and part-time seasonal work.

Nevertheless, Sanders believes God called him to minister in a small rural community where he could join the volunteer fire department. The family moved to Iberia five years ago as part of a lengthy commitment.

“In a rural community especially, if you’re not willing to invest at least 10

years of your life, you aren’t going to come to a place where you’re fruitful,” says Sanders. “When we bring the gospel to the community, it takes time. We’re here for the long term.”

“Government doesn’t have an answer to what’s going on in rural America,” says Steve Donaldson, co-founder of Rural Compassion. “If the church takes its proper place of leadership, we can see incredible things happen.”

Iberia’s problem with heroin, methamphetamines, and prescription drugs mirrors that of many small communities across the nation. Those vices contribute to societal woes such as crime, single-parent homes, and a lot of grandparents raising their grandkids. Victims of domestic abuse in a community where everybody knows everybody often feel as if there’s nowhere safe to turn for help.

“In a small town, a pastor needs to pastor the whole community,” Donaldson says. That means active involvement in institutions such as the local school or fire department.

ROYAL RANGERS TAKING ON AMBITIOUS EFFORT

BY DAN VAN VEEN

The Royal Rangers national office has been making an effort to raise awareness of its annual Master’s Toolbox missions projects among district and local leaders.

The effort has paid off. According to Karl Fleig, national Royal Rangers director, the department has seen double-digit growth in giving to Master’s Toolbox over the last two years, with giving totaling \$101,682.07 in 2016 — the first time that giving to Master’s Toolbox has exceeded \$100,000.

However, Fleig believes that’s only the beginning of what Royal Rangers are capable of doing for missions.

“Our next Master’s Toolbox project is going to be a two-year effort that will result in 700 Royal Rangers outposts being planted in East Africa, an East African Royal Rangers Training Center being built, and the Royal Rangers curriculum being translated into Swahili,” Fleig says. “Our goal is to raise at least \$200,000 each year.”

One of the main purposes behind Master’s Toolbox is to instill in boys a heart for missions and to help them understand the value of being givers.

“We’re raising a generation of Christlike men,” Fleig says, “and we want their relationship with Christ to impact all areas of their lives — their time, their talents, their finances — all devoted to Christ.”

ACTS 2 JOURNEY IMPACTS HISPANIC CHURCH

BY AMBER WEIGAND-BUCKLEY

The Acts 2 Journey isn’t just for English-speaking churches — as *Ciudad De Esperanza* (City of Hope) AG and Pastor Armando Doblado have recently discovered.

Doblado participated in the Acts 2 Journey sessions with pastors and leaders of several churches from the Southern Latin District. Through the experience, the Acts 2 Journey provided Doblado and City of Hope AG (a four-year-old church plant) with a checklist and a strategy to focus on critical issues to keep them moving in a healthy direction.

“The Acts 2 Journey challenged me as a leader and as a servant,” Doblado says. “It pushed us as a leadership team to go further, do things differently, and be open to change and new ideas.”

The leadership worked to improve three main areas at the Atlanta, church: training for hospitality workers, increasing and retooling space for children’s ministry, and making each Sunday an “experience” that begins as soon as people open their car doors in the parking lot. And with the aid of a larger building, the church’s attendance increased from the mid-50s to over 80.

“Acts 2 has also challenged churches in our district to look at ministry from a different perspective and help us embrace change,” Doblado says.



NFL QUARTERBACK CARSON WENTZ: AN AUDIENCE OF ONE

BY STEPHEN GLASSER

In the following article, Stephen Glasser, a Chi Alpha campus missionary at North Dakota State University (NDSU) in Fargo, shares his view of the faith journey of his friend, Carson Wentz.

Carson Wentz's dream of becoming an NFL quarterback turned real when he was drafted second overall in the 2016 NFL Draft by the Philadelphia Eagles.

When I met Carson, he already had a solid relationship with Jesus at NDSU. His Christian teammates had helped him realize there was more to life than football. Over the next couple of years, we met together regularly to talk, read the Bible, and pray. Oh, and eat. We did a lot of eating.

I began to understand something about Carson. Although he was a rising football star, he craved deep and authentic relationship with God and people. He was surrounded by people, but lacked true Christian community.

Chi Alpha became that community for Carson. He began attending our weekly on-campus worship service

as often as he could as well as our Sunday night service.

Over those two years, Carson's faith continued to grow. During his senior season, he started to help lead the football team's Bible study. He invited teammates and friends with him to Chi Alpha and to church.

Carson doesn't give partial effort to anything he does. He gives his all in everything. When it comes to his faith, he is no different. I love that about Carson.

In his final game for NDSU, he led his team to their fifth-consecutive FCS National Championship, claiming MVP honors along the way. Since then, his rise to the NFL has given him a great opportunity to share his faith.

On his social media posts, Carson uses the hashtag #AO1, which stands for "Audience of One." The motto serves as a reminder to Carson that everything he does, he is to do it for the glory of God. It reminds him he truly is called to ministry right where he is. He desires to use his influence to make the name of Jesus Christ famous. That is how he lives his life. 

years, Jennifer, and the couple's 14-year-old daughter, Tessa, arrived home from cheer practice for a tearful reunion.

The storm blew out numerous windows in the home and destroyed most of the family's belongings. The Williams spent much of Tuesday sorting through the remains, and they were able to salvage some clothing left intact.

Grain Valley is in Jackson County and located on Interstate 70 east of Oak Grove. The population has grown to around 15,000 today from 5,160 in 2000. Williams formerly served as a staff pastor at the nearby EPIC Church in Independence. Valley Community

Church is a Parent Affiliate Church of EPIC Church, where Bobby Hawk is lead pastor and his wife, Vanessa, is a prekindergarten teacher.

"It's definitely a miracle that they're alive," Bobby Hawk says of Williams and his two sons. "My wife put it best when she said it's better that we're scurrying around trying to collect resources to help them replace their stuff rather than planning funerals."

Hawk is optimistic that God will be glorified through the tragedy.

"My prayer is that God is going to use this to give them an opportunity they wouldn't have had otherwise," Hawk says. 

HOPING FOR HAPPIER TRAILS

BY CHRISTINA QUICK

Growing up on the edge of Appalachia in eastern Tennessee, Keith A. Hall saw staggering poverty firsthand. Years later, while serving as an AG missionary associate in Ecuador, Hall sensed God calling him to return to the U.S. and minister to a new generation of Appalachians. Last spring, he and his wife, Alicia, became Intercultural Ministries missionaries to the at-risk youth of rural Appalachia.

"The struggles and challenges in rural Appalachia are far-reaching," Keith says.

Depression, drug abuse, and unemployment are chronic issues in the Appalachians. Many children grow up in impoverished single-parent homes with few positive role models and little hope of a better future.

Keith is a former teacher and basketball coach, and Alicia is an ex-teacher. Their education background has helped them connect with school leaders. The Halls recently started Bible clubs at two schools in rural Cocke County, Tennessee. At another local school, they pioneered a Christian-based Trailblazers Running Club that doubles as a physical education class. Though participation in the club is optional, every student in kindergarten through eighth grade opted to join.

A Smoky Mountain Dream Center is also in the works, that would provide housing for women rehabilitating back into society, a fully functional farm where students can learn the value of work and responsibility, and a horse therapy program. 