



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY DARRIN J. RODGERS

The Pentecostal church in Cuba exploded in growth during a series of evangelistic and healing services throughout the island nation in 1950 and 1951. Several church leaders in Cuba, including Luis Ortiz, Dennis Valdez, Hugh Jeter, and Ezequiel Alvarez, hosted Pentecostal evangelist T. L. Osborn, and about 50,000 people made professions of faith in Christ.

Jeter, an Assemblies of God missionary, wrote, "It was a common occurrence in many Cuban cities for crowds of 10,000 to 15,000 people to fill a baseball stadium or city park night after night to hear the gospel and to be prayed for."

The revival effected immediate and

lasting change. Jeter noted, "Thriving congregations suddenly came into existence in places where previously we had had no work at all. The entire stock of the Bible society was quickly sold out. The miraculous was continually in evidence and people were convinced that of a truth God was in our midst."

When asked if the revival could be duplicated elsewhere, Jeter stated, "I know of no reason why it cannot happen anywhere else in the world."

Read Jeter's article, "Lessons from the Cuban Revival," on pages 6, 7, and 22 of the May 17, 1959, issue of the *Pentecostal Evangel* online at s2.ag.org/may171959. 



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FIGHTING RACISM WITH LOVE

BY JENNIFER M. NELSON

African-American student Shadoria Anderson could have lashed out in retribution when members of the Ku Klux Klan visited the campus she attended bearing signs that read, “Black lives don’t matter.”

The white supremacy group protested at the University of Mississippi because of the school’s decision to remove a flag symbolizing the Confederacy. Anderson also witnessed other students making remarks on social media about lynching black protesters and their allies.

But rather than responding with revenge, Anderson reacted to acts of racial injustice on campus with efforts to fight even harder with love to win souls for Christ.

Anderson is not fighting alone. She has the backing of others in the Chi Alpha group at the University of Mississippi. Although the Assemblies of God U.S. Missions ministry group is only three years old, students already have been able to change prejudicial attitudes on the campus in Oxford.

“Racial reconciliation at Ole Miss through Chi Alpha starts with reconciling students to Christ and ends

with reconciling them to each other,” says Mack Clements, director of the ministry at the school.

Last fall, members of XA — one of the most diverse groups on campus — erected a wooden wall as part of the Chi Alpha Diversity Project. They painted “How can you address racism?” across the paneling in big black letters. Students, including Anderson, stood armed with markers and listening ears for those wanting to write or talk.

By the end of two days, students had plastered the wall with comments filled with all kinds of emotions. Some denied that racism exists. Others expressed anger. A few admitted feeling confused. But students also shared hope and a desire to right the wrongs, Anderson says.

The project received positive feedback from administration, professors, and students, despite the fact that it took two months to receive permission to erect the wall, according to Clements.

“The students loved having a safe place to express themselves,” he says.

After some students finished sharing their thoughts and opinions, they

UNITY TO REACH THE COMMUNITY

BY DEANN ALFORD

When Oliver Lora-Ovalles became pastor of Eternal Rock Assembly of God four years ago, he believed the then inner-city southwestern Detroit congregation of 150 required a revitalized vision.

Everyone in the church spoke Spanish, but the congregation included a dozen nationalities from throughout Latin America, each with distinct cultures. To unify the congregation, Roca Eterna deacons represent the array of nationalities in the church. Lora-Ovalles often lets the deacons know in advance the concepts he plans to deliver in the pulpit, to ensure the message is relatable to different ethnicities. Every third Sunday, the church celebrates its diversity through a “cultural day,” which features the attire, history, and tradition of a nation represented among attendees. The church invites missionaries from the designated location to speak as well.

There also has been a priority equipping Roca Eterna members to evangelize and serve the surrounding area.



“The key is looking for things we have in common in all the community,” says Lora-Ovalles. “Beyond the differences, we can unite to be a blessing to the community.”

The church launched outreaches targeting problems that impact the neighborhood. For instance, Roca Eterna, in conjunction with the National Kidney Foundation, conducted three “BodyWorks” courses. This eight-week health program addressed diabetes, which is more common among minorities, by teaching better eating and shopping habits.

“We started with members and then extended the program to other families,” says Maricruz Moya, the church’s community liaison. “We want to make sure the community knows we’re here and available to help out.”

Attendance today at Roca Eterna has climbed to 400. 

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.”



DOMES HOMES FILL VITAL NEED

BY DEANN ALFORD

After the Holy Spirit burdened Klayton Ko with finding shelter solutions for Hawaii's growing problem of homelessness, the senior pastor of First Assembly of Honolulu had a fiberglass igloo assembled on the church courtyard. Eighteen months later, that igloo remains on the grounds as a reminder of the urgency of the crisis and the church's mandate to take action.

"Nobody wants homelessness on their back door, but if we don't deal with it, it's going to end up on our front door," Ko, who is also superintendent of the Hawaii Assemblies of God, proclaimed at the Second Faith Summit on Homelessness, an April 28-29 gathering of island churches, nongovernmental organizations, and other faith groups working to end the predicament.

"It's time for the faith community to get involved," Ko exhorted. "Government itself cannot solve the problem." Hawaii's Gov. David Y. Ige delivered a keynote address at the event, which drew more than 200 people.

Upon learning that the church would

have to abandon its plans for requiring participation in Bible studies and church life in its holistic program if it were to accept government funding, First Assembly nixed pursuing such a partnership. The city has helped the program by cutting years-long wait times for essential building and other permits, says Daniel Kaneshiro, First Assembly's facilities pastor and director of its homeless program.

First Assembly has raised more than \$200,000 to open The Shelter in mid-summer. The community consists of a dozen fiberglass igloos — nine for housing families of single moms and their children, one to house an on-site manager, two for men's and women's shower and bathroom facilities — on four acres at the church's Windward campus. The community can accommodate up to three-dozen people.

Hawaii AG supports the igloo shelters as a district project. Individual church involvement can range from sponsoring the \$10,500 purchase of a 314-square-foot dome to helping minister to The Shelter's residents. 

ANYTHING GOES?

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

A new Gallup poll suggests that Americans have unprecedented tolerance for a variety of unbiblical sexual behaviors. The annual Values and Beliefs survey shows a record 73 percent of Americans agree that divorce is morally acceptable, up from 59 percent when Gallup instituted the poll with specific moral questions in 2001.

In addition, 69 percent find nothing wrong regarding sexual relations between an unmarried man and woman. That is an upturn from 53 percent 16 years ago.

Likewise, 63 percent have no qualms about gays or lesbians engaging in sexual relations. That has risen from 40 percent when the pollster first posed the question in 2001.

Meanwhile, 62 percent agree that having a baby outside of marriage is morally acceptable, an increase from 45 percent in 2002.

Although far from a majority, a record 36 percent of Americans now call viewing pornography morally acceptable. That represents a slow but steady rise from the 30 percent who thought so when the question became part of the analysis in 2011.

"The Gallup poll takes the temperature of our culture," says Assemblies of God General Superintendent George O. Wood. "The Church needs to be the thermostat to the culture. If ever there was a time when we are called by the Lord to be salt and light, it is now." 

BREAKING UP HARD NEW ENGLAND SOIL

BY PETER K. JOHNSON

New England states symbolize hard soil for spreading the gospel. Leading cities such as Hartford, capital of Connecticut, hover in the bottom 10 of Bible-minded cities nationwide, according to Barna Group.

Yet Crossroads Community Cathedral (CCC) in East Hartford flourishes as the largest AG church in the Southern New England Ministry Network. Shattering the region's irreligious image, combined attendance at CCC's four services approaches 2,500 congregants.

"We have done the sacrificial work to build bridges to reach the lost," says Terry Wiles, senior pastor.

Beginning as a storefront mission in 1951, CCC moved into a new building just before Wiles joined as pastor in 1981. Although he found the church spiritually solid, he realized there needed to be greater ethnic diversity to reflect the larger Latino community of the area. Today the church reflects a broader multicultural attendance, drawing people from many nations.

Wiles and his multiethnic staff of 20, including his son Sean who serves as executive pastor, work alongside 150 deacons and elders.

"We nurture servant leaders and train them," he says. "One of their primary roles is praying for people at the altar."

Invitations for salvation end every service. On average, around three dozen people give their lives to Christ every weekend. 



CLASSIC TRANSPORTATION TO GOD

BY KEN WALKER

Although Steve Preston is never sure where spiritually oriented conversations at Kansas car shows will lead, he knows they strike a nerve.

The founder of Highway Chapel connects with the gearheads who display street rods, old trucks, antiques, and other vehicles every Sunday. An invitation came last fall for Preston to join a weekly lunch group of guys who have been attending car shows together for decades.

“We’re reaching people that don’t go to church,” says Preston, who with his wife, Becky, is a former AG pastor and church planter. “We’re having a ball.”

Preston served as a staff member or lead pastor of four congregations before becoming a church planter with the AG SoCal Ministry Network. Two years ago, Preston turned his car show hobby into a full-time U.S. Missions ministry when he moved to Valley Center, Kansas.

“There are car guys everywhere,” says Preston, who drives his screaming red 1965 Ford Ranchero,

a coupe utility vehicle, to shows.

Although not in mint condition, the Ranchero has been “hot rodded” a bit with a mild camshaft, new intake and carburetor, headers, a new lower front end and raised rear, wheels, and larger tires.

“People come up and say, ‘We saw you at another show. I have a family problem. Would you pray for me?’” he says.

Preston says being a part of the car enthusiast lunch group provides an opportunity for him to build deeper relationships, especially because several of the regulars are reaching an age where health problems are common and they are open to prayers for healing.

“That’s why God called Pentecostal missionaries to this ministry,” Preston says. “It’s not an academic exercise.”

The Prestons are finding a receptive approach to their ministry techniques at Valley Center’s LifePoint Church, where they attend weekly worship services during off season. 

wanted to learn more about the idea behind the wall project. This opened up opportunities for students to talk about the gospel. XA members also told visitors about a sermon series Clements would preach about racial reconciliation during an upcoming midweek service. During that service, members of Chi Alpha prayed about biased attitudes on campus. As Anderson and some of her friends looked at the wall and the many hurts, they began to cry.

“We felt like the weight of the world was on our shoulders,” she says. “We wondered, *How are we going to break the bonds of this?*”

But as the service ended, several students thanked representatives of the XA group for raising awareness, she says.

“Having people come up and say, ‘I want to help. I want to be an ally,’ that was the best moment for me,” Anderson says.

Forty more students, including some not part of Chi Alpha, signed up during the gathering to help with the XA Diversity Project and efforts to bring about racial reconciliation.

Although Anderson is graduating this month, she will return to the University of Mississippi as a U.S. Missions missionary associate. 

NATIONAL KIDMIN17 CONFERENCE MAKES A STRONG IMPACT

BY DAN VAN VEEN

More than 1,000 children’s pastors and leaders came together for the national KidMin17 conference held April 19-21 at First Assembly of God in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

The conference offered 120 workshops, 10 super sessions, and three general sessions to glean from. Although attendees were unified in KidMin17 giving high marks, it was the third general session that touched hearts.

During that session, Abby Anderson, a children’s pastor in Iowa City, Iowa, was presented the “Big Impact” award. The award is given to an individual who sees obstacles as opportunities for God to do big things.

Anderson was then surprised with gifts: \$5,000 to assist with the

makeover of the church’s children and kitchen areas, a consultation from PlainJoe Studios to help maximize the space, donated remodeling labor from U.S. MAPS RVers, food for the year from Convoy of Hope, and \$5,000 from AGTrust to reduce her college debt. Anderson was stunned!

Patsy Dennis, the children’s ministries director for the Kentucky District, and Dick Gruber, a professor with the University of Valley Forge, were also each presented the Lifetime Achievement award. Josh Dryer, a children’s pastor in Alaska, was recognized with the Young Leader award.

The KidMin17 audio bundle is now available through My Healthy Church. 