



THIS WEEK IN AG HISTORY

BY GLENN W. GOHR

Immediately following a 50th anniversary convention in Springfield, Missouri, the AG sponsored a booth at the World's Fair in New York City in 1964.

Focusing on service and ministry, the display featured five illuminated panels that included a sequence of lighting and narration, and highlighting AG activities both in the U.S. and abroad, with the motto "Jesus Christ, the Light of the World."

The display was open 12 hours daily from April 22 through Oct. 4, as well as an additional six months in 1965. More than 100 trained counselors took turns overseeing the booth, with two persons present at all times.

Among the tools the counselors had on hand was a directory of churches in the U.S. to help people to locate a congregation in their hometown. They also provided New Testaments or a

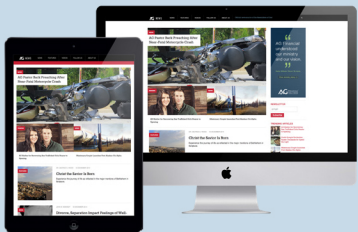
Scripture portion, and tracts dealing with specific areas of interest or need.

Counselors also prayed for needs. A number of visitors accepted Christ as Savior in the booth. Others needed prayer for healing. Still others desired the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

A World's Fair souvenir edition of the *Pentecostal Evangel* was produced to highlight the history, beliefs, and ministries of the AG. The special edition included a testimony of healing, information on the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and inspirational articles by C. M. Ward, Thomas F. Zimmerman, Wesley Hurst, and Stanley Horton.

The AG World's Fair booth recorded 69,008 visitors from all states. Subsequently, registered visitors received a personal letter. Local pastors and district officials followed up with contacts forwarded to them.

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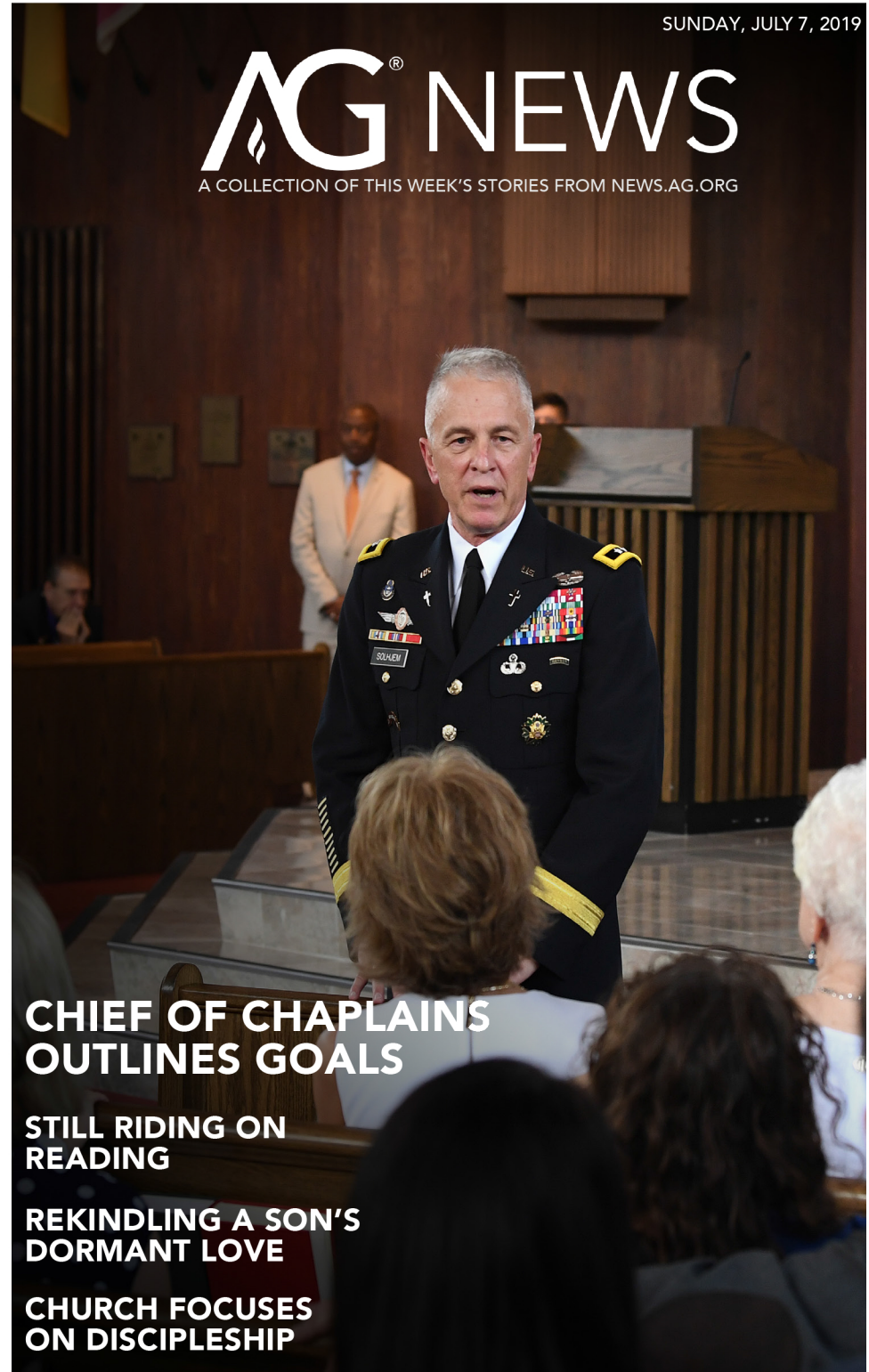
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AG[®] NEWS

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OUTLINES GOALS**

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CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS OUTLINES GOALS

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

New Army Chief of Chaplains Thomas L. Solhjem is establishing priorities as the top spiritual adviser for the military branch's 1.25 million members.

High on Maj. Gen. Solhjem's priority list is investing in developing the leadership skills of chaplains. The professional development of Army chaplains has been impacted by the extended period of persistent conflict since Sept. 11, 2001, due to the necessary shift of religious support operations to the frontlines. A renewed focus on Chaplain Corps calling, identity, and leadership development is needed.

"We've been at war for almost 18 years," says the 62-year-old Assemblies of God chaplain. "As a result of counterinsurgency-type fighting, we have lost a lot of chaplain competencies that served the Army well."

Solhjem has reassessed how the Army recruits and retains quality chaplains. Part of that involves ensuring that chaplains have a strong sense of ministry calling.

"We want people who are passionate

about the souls of soldiers and their families," says Solhjem.

In addition, Solhjem says chaplains must balance remaining true to their faith tradition while serving all members of the Army.

"A chaplain must identify as an officer and a man or woman of God," says Solhjem. "The chaplain must cooperate without compromising, and be a good role model."

Finally, Solhjem says the Army must empower chaplains with the right leadership training, skills, and abilities.

"We have great chaplains doing great work, but we need to get healthier," says Solhjem, who spent a combined 68 months deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. "The Army deserves the best from us, and as leaders we have a stewardship responsibility to deliver what they need."

The new chief views every chaplain as a religious leader and a religious adviser, an emissary who needs to be equipped with the right tools and resources. Each chaplain is charged with caring for the

WALKING FOR EAST BOSTON PEACE

BY ERIC TIAN SAY

Central Assembly has had a strong presence in East Boston since the 1990s, through its youth summer events, clothing pantry, ministry to the children and families of prisoners, English classes for immigrant learners, and prayer walks.

Although pastor David W. Searles is white, Central Assembly is predominantly African and African American. Two-thirds of the adherents are immigrants from Kenya, Nigeria, Liberia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Togo, Angola, Colombia, El Salvador, Haiti, Germany, China, St. Kitts and Nevis.

In 2015, East Boston experienced an increase in youth violence and homicide. In a span of 18 months, five teenagers were murdered in the neighborhood. Searles and Central Assembly became involved through an outreach for at-risk youth, the East Boston Peace Walks, and the formation of the East Boston Trauma Team.

The walks, featuring community leaders, clergy, police officers, elected

officials, residents, and youth workers, are a community-based effort to promote peace in the neighborhood and to build relationships.

"We want our neighbors to know that we are with them and want to support them with our presence and with prayers," says Searles, noting that a team of 10 members from Central Assembly are taking part in the weekly neighborhood walkthroughs this summer. "It's in these walks that we meet young people who need some direction and we are able to engage them in conversations about life and hope, and offer to them the love of God."

Searles says during one of the walkthroughs a young man asked for prayer to get out of the street life.

"We as a church needed to realize that a kid like him will probably never walk through our doors," Searles says. "I can't sit around and wait for him to show up."

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."



REKINDLING A SON'S DORMANT LOVE

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

Adults admired high school student Kye Johnson. The compliant youth earned straight A's in school, never missed services at church, and behaved like a model citizen to his parents, Matt and Karla Johnson of Sulphur Springs, Texas.

But just before his junior year started in 2014, drinking alcohol and abusing drugs became a pattern for the 17-year-old boy. Moreover, Kye experienced a personality change. His sullen moods intimidated the rest of the family, including 8-year-old sister, Alaina.

After Kye punched holes in the home's plasterboard walls and tore framed family photos in half, Matt and Karla searched the internet for a solution and came upon Teen Challenge Adventure Ranch near Morrow, Arkansas.

Months went by and Kye's attitude didn't improve. His parents received a string of vile letters from him with troubling messages: I hate you with all my heart. You are failures.

Kye came home for a visit, but by

that time, Karla had stopped trying to force her son to respond to her desperate pleas.

"I said, 'Kye, it's OK that you don't love me. I love you, but I don't need you to love me; the Lord's love is enough for me,'" Karla responded, putting tough love into practice. Afterwards, Kye attended a church service.

"My eyes opened up that I was really the one at fault," Kye remembers.

When Kye finished the program in August 2015, Karla perceived a change in his countenance and demeanor. As he prepared to go home, Kye put his arm around his mom and told her that he loved her.

"Teen Challenge is not just restoring boys, but rather it's a process for the entire family learning how to respond and react," says Karla.

"I have an understanding of what the gospel actually is now," says Kye, now a 21-year-old student at Montana State University in Bozeman. He attends church weekly and sees a counselor regularly.

CHURCH FOCUSES ON DISCIPLESHIP

BY ERIC TIAN SAY

David Stocker Jr. experienced a paradigm shift concerning discipleship after he took over five years ago as pastor of Brave Church in Miami.

"We grew rapidly and realized that the growth we had wasn't producing life change in people," says Stocker. "Sunday morning experience wasn't enough to cause the growth in lives like we know Jesus intended."

The church had 175 attendees in 2014 when Stocker became pastor, but it has mushroomed to more than 2,000 adherents on two campuses. In the spring of 2018, Brave Church took a new approach. In order to make mature disciples, the church developed its own curriculum called Brave Life, divided into two courses, each 10 weeks long.

"The two levels meet on Sundays together and then we break into groups based on men, women, and teenage groups," Stocker explains. Brave Church also has Dinner Parties: more relational groups that meet throughout the city during the week. Overall, Brave Church has 150 Dinner Parties groups and 50 Brave Life groups, each focusing on discipleship.

Carleigh Gentry, who recently completed the discipleship training, says Brave Life taught her a lot about what Christianity should look like on a daily basis. "It gave me a deeper understanding of what I mean when I say, 'I'm Christian,'" says Gentry.

CLIMATE CHANGE AT AG CHURCH

BY PETER K. JOHNSON

After serving as AG world missionaries in Southern Asia for 16 years, David E. Stewart Jr. and his wife, Lisa, were unaccustomed to New England winters. Raised in the South, Stewart never had experienced howling blizzards until joining New Life Church (NLC) in Leominster, Massachusetts, as lead pastor in 2014.

"I have learned the value of every season God has designed," says Stewart.

NLC also had gone through a time of winter when Stewart arrived. Sunday School programs and the midweek service had been discontinued. In addition, a growing opioid crisis had invaded the surrounding communities.

Today, NLC ministers to a multiethnic congregation, representing 16 countries. Weekly attendance is growing. A new discipleship teaching hour has been introduced between the two Sunday morning worship services. It is held in a renovated basement facility also used during the week by teenagers and young adults.

Leadership U is another program to develop current and potential leaders. Next Steps is a new assessment tool that helps congregants connect to church ministries.

NLC recently opened Living in New Life, a substance abuse recovery program, led by Chuck Zierle.

"I want to help those struggling with addiction," Zierle says.



FRESH VISION FOR THE INNER CITY

BY JOHN W. KENNEDY

New Life Church pastor Jamel Crawford in Des Moines, Iowa, is an African American who has tremendous rapport with young people and a passion for ministering to neighborhood residents, which includes many addicted, immigrants, or poverty-stricken people.

And whatever the race, whatever the gender, whatever the era, the urban center of Iowa's capital city has plenty of residents grasping for a shot at restoring long-lost dreams.

Last August, New Life Church launched the Des Moines Dream Center, directed by Corey and Tami Thomas, and it already is impacting the community. Fourteen of the 18 kids enrolled in a Dream Center mentoring and tutoring art program made salvation commitments to Jesus.

The Dream Center operates a clothing closet that provides new attire for kids. A medical clinic opened in April, beginning with a Christian chiropractor and a Christian dentist donating their services.

Starting in May, New Life began hosting a Thursday evening free meal to unchurched residents living in the area. Vehicles are dispatched to shelters to pick up homeless people. Volunteers from other congregations take turns cooking preservice meals and providing worship during the gathering. A Wednesday night meal already feeds over 100 teenagers in the neighborhood.

A team from Carbondale Assembly of God in Tulsa, Oklahoma, recently came to carry out a makeover at the church, donating an estimated \$100,000 worth of skilled labor and materials. New Life has a renovated multipurpose space for worship, a revamped nursery, and a new café. As a teenager, Crawford attended Carbondale AG, and the church already supports New Life with monthly donations as a missionary endeavor.

"We are proud to claim Jamel as one of our own," says Phil A. Taylor, pastor at Carbondale AG since 1985. "We want to partner with people who want to reach their neighborhood."

heart, soul, and spirit of soldiers and their families, he says.

Solhjem has manifold duties, including oversight of over 5,900 active, Guard, and Reserve chaplains, religious affairs specialists, and civilians engaged in Army religious work. He is based in the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and is responsible for the spiritual care of Army leaders.

But Solhjem is also connected with Army leaders in the field, regularly visiting division and corps commanders as well as noncommissioned officers on Army posts. In these sojourns, he likewise connects with chaplains. And Solhjem manages to visit seminaries to talk with those about to enter the military

mission field.

"We need to be recruiting the next generation of chaplains today," he says.

Despite his promotion to major general on May 30, he remains humble, as a testimony to his Christian faith — and his own history.

"I know what mercy is," says Solhjem, who accepted Jesus as Savior in 1975 in an Army barracks. "When you've received mercy, it's important to learn to dispense it — generously."

Solhjem enlisted in the Army in 1974 as a long-haired 17-year-old hoping to escape the trauma of a broken home.

"I know where I came from," Solhjem says. "I'm deeply flawed, yet profoundly forgiven."

STILL RIDING ON READING

BY ALLY HENNY

Reading became such a thriving railroad town that Parker Brothers immortalized the Pennsylvania city as one of the four railroads in its 1935 Monopoly board game. But as the railroad industry declined, Reading lost its footing. In 2010, the U.S. Census recorded that Reading had the highest proportion of citizens living in poverty in the nation. Gangs and drugs, specifically opioids, also are pressing issues.

However, there are people who have stuck with Reading.

Allen and Laurie Dawkins pastor The Place Church AG, a thriving multiethnic congregation in inner-city Reading. They are longtime residents who have stayed in the heart of the city through its ups and downs.

The couple, who are bivocational, became lead pastors of The Place Church AG in January. Community involvement has been an important element of the church since its inception. The afterschool program Hope Club provides free art and cooking classes, as well as a free snack and dinner for students in grades seven through 12 who attend.

Allen works for the Reading School District as a security guard and has been able to use his influence to make a difference in the local schools. Laurie works as associate director for the Literacy Council of Reading-Berks, where she has helped develop the organization's English as a second language program.